Abbeville Progress

J. W. O'BRYAN

PHONE 248.

A new motto: "Don't take care of your health—to excess."

Speaking of strikes, they have never been popular with ball players.

Coal was once used as money. It is nearly worth its weight in gold today.

Nothing but kind words for the hen will do. Fresh eggs are available daily.

That new nickel may serve to teach a careless public that a bison is not a buffalo.

The air cocktail, with its oxygen flavor, is the most invigorating drink these days.

A New Yorker says that stingy men are always poor. Now, who wants to be poor?

The gross debt of the city of New York is $1,082,662,851. This is also a new altitude record.

Though the new nickels are in demand, they are still twenty times less popular than the old dollar.

A 13 cent piece is now recommended. We may yet have 13 cent stores or "superstitious" establishments.

The Chicago burglar who robbed the sheriff's office is entitled to a Carnegie medal for his high attainment.

"Resolved, That the tipless barber shop has been tried and found wanting." By whom, gentlemen, by whom?

Somebody is going to explore the Amazon river, evidently being fired with a desire to discover the torrid pole.

The English poet, who declared that he has supported himself by his poetry alone, has attained a high ambition.

The color of hair is due to iron, which further emphasizes why advice fails to enter the brains of many people.

There are better authorities than a Harvard professor to tell us just how many hours of sleep will do us the most good.

There will be more money to jingle in the pockets if the bill for the coinage of ½ cents in the United States goes through.

Somebody says that there is a general art awakening in America. Yet the low crowned derby persists and even flourishes.

Biological experts declare that the intellectuality of the female is superior to the male dog. But the male dog runs the kennel.

All doubt of progress in aviation is set aside by the fact that an aviator has just succeeded in falling 1,000 feet without getting hurt.

A court has ruled that a brass band is not a necessary part of a funeral. Literally speaking, they are "out of tune" with the occasion.

As for the patriotic citizen who is to lead a donkey 4,500 miles across the continent in payment of an election bet—well, two is company.

An Italian count was discovered in the role of a waiter in a Baltimore hotel the other day. Having no other means of visible support, he was kept on the job.

California is to have a "Father's day." The "head of the house" is not being forgotten after all.

"The average life of a $10 bill is a little more than twelve months." That man must live in Philadelphia.

Now Vesuvius shows signs of breaking out. The volcano can always be depended on to threaten an eruption when other big world matters get into the limelight.

A Brooklyn court has ruled that a sandwich is not a meal. The court must have been visiting some popular restaurant at its busy hour to get data for its decision.

There is no truth in the report that theaters will equip seats with Maxim silencers so that, in the event of the act not pleasing, all that is required is to turn on the switch.

An aviator in England has made the astonishing speed of ninety-four miles an hour. Such a flight is enough to take away contemporary breath, to say nothing of the aviator's.

The prediction that women will some day sweep the streets of New York makes it plain that long skirts are coming back into style again.

Seventy per cent. of the films used in European theaters are from American houses. We always contended that Europe couldn't live without us.

A New York man in Kansas City pawned his false teeth to buy something to eat. Our guess is that he didn't top off with water biscuit and cheese.

A London scientist reports that there is plenty of room yet on earth which will not be overpopulated for ten thousand years. This relieves much apprehension that was felt about the fate of our great-great-great-grandchildren.

A Wilmington, Del., drunk who objected to being embalmed and assaulted the undertaker who was starting in on the process should take the precaution of carrying a placard informing all and sundry that he is already pickled.

The Carpet from Bagdad

by HAROLD MAC GRATH

Author of HEARTS AND MASKS, The MAN ON THE BOX etc.

Illustrations by M. G. KETTNER . . .

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SYNOPSIS.

George Percival Algernon Jones, vice-president of the Metropolitan Oriental Rug company of New York, thirsting for romance, is in Cairo on a business trip. Horace Ryanne arrives at the hotel in Cairo with a carefully guarded bundle. Ryanne sells Jones the famous holy Yhiordes rug which he admits having stolen from a pasha at Bagdad. Jones meets Major Callahan and later is introduced to Fortune Chedsoye by a woman to whom he had loaned 150 pounds at Monte Carlo some months previously, and who turns out to be Fortune's mother. Jones takes Mrs. Chedsoye and Fortune to a polo game. Fortune returns to Jones the money borrowed by her mother. Mrs. Chedsoye appears to be engaged in some mysterious enterprise unknown to the daughter.

CHAPTER VI.—(Continued.)

Some one was sitting down beside him. It was Ryanne, in evening clothes, immaculate, blase, pink-cheeked. There are some men so happily framed that they can don ready-made suits without calling your attention to the fact. George saw at once that the adventurer was one of these fortunate individuals.

"Makes a rather good picture to look at; eh?" began Ryanne, rolling a flake-tobacco cigarette. "Dance?"

"No. Wish I could. You've done quick work," with admiring inspection.

"Not a flaw anywhere. How do you do it?"

"Thanks. Thanks to you, I might say. I did some tall hustling, though. Strange, how we love these funeral toggeries. We follow the dance and we follow the dead, with never a variation in color. The man who invented the modern evening clothes must have done good business during the day as chief-mourner."

"Why don't you send for your luggage?"

Ryanne caressed his chin. "My luggage is, I believe, in the hands of the enemy. It is of no great importance. I never carry anything of value, save my skin. I'm not like the villain in the melodrama; no incriminating documents, no lost wills, no directions for digging up pirates' gold."

"I suppose you'll soon be off for America?" George asked indifferently.

"I suppose so. By the way, I saw you at the game today."

"No! Where were you?"

"Top row. I am going to ask a favor of you. It may sound rather odd to your ears, but I know those two ladies rather well. I kept out of the way till I could find some clothes. The favor I ask is that you will not tell them anything regarding the circumstances of our meeting. I am known to them as a globe-trotter and a collector."

"That's too bad," said George contritely. "But I have already told them."

"The devil you have!" Ryanne dropper his cigarette into the ash-tray. "If I remember rightly, you asked me to say nothing."

"I know," said George, visibly embarrassed. "I forgot."

"Well, the fat is in the fire. I dare say that I can get round it. It was risky. Women like to talk. I expect every hour to hear of some one arriving from Bagdad."

"There's no boat from that direction till next week," informed George, who was a stickler on time-tables.

"There are other ways of getting into Egypt. Know anything about racing-camels?"

"You don't believe . . . ?"

"My friend, I believe in all things that haven't been proved impossible. You've been knocking about here long enough to know something of the tenacity of the Arab and the East Indian. Given a just cause, an idol's eye or a holy carpet, and they'll follow you round the world ten times, if need be. I never worry needlessly, but I lay out before me all the points of the game. There is one man in Bagdad who will never cease to think of me. This fellow is an Arab, Mahomed-El-Gebel by name, the real article, proud and savage into whose keeping the Holy Yhiordes was given; Mahomed-El-Gebel, the Pasha's right-hand, a sheik in his own right."

"But you haven't got the rug now."

"No, Mr. Jones, I haven't; but on the other hand, you have. So, here we are together. When he gets through with me, your turn."

George laughed. Ryanne grew thoughtful over this sign. Percival Algernon did not seem exactly worried.

"Aren't you a little afraid?"

"I? Why should I be?" inquired George innocently. "Certainly, whatever your Arab friend's arguments may be, moral or physical, I'm going to keep that Yhiordes."

Was he bluffing? Ryanne wondered. Did he really have nerve? Well, within forty-eight hours there would come a test.

"Say, do you know, I rather wish you'd been with me on that trip—that is, if you like a rough game." Ryanne said this in all sincerity.

"I have never been in a rough game, as you call it; but I've often had a strong desire to be, just to find out for myself what sort of a duffer I am."

Ryanne had met this sort of man before; the fellow who wanted to know what stuff he was made of, and was ready to risk his hide to find out. His experience had taught him to expect nothing of the man who knew just what he was going to do in a crisis.

"Did you ever know, Mr. Jones," said Ryanne, his eyes humorous, "that there is an organization in this world of ours, a company that offers a try-out to men of your kidney?"

"What's that? What do you mean?"

"What I say. There is an established concern which will, upon application for a liberal purchase of stock, arrange any kind of adventure you wish."

"What?" George drew in his legs and sat up. "What sort of a jolly is this?"

"You put your finger upon the one great obstacle. No one will believe that such a concern exists. Yet it is a fact. And why not?"

"Because it wouldn't be real; it would be going to the moon a la Coney Island."

"Wrong, absolutely wrong. If I told you that I am a stockholder in this company and that the adventure of the Yhiordes rug was arranged for my special benefit, what would you say?"

"Say?" George turned a serious countenance toward the adventurer. "Why, the whole thing is absurd on the face of it. As a joke, it might go; but as a genuine affair, utterly impossible."

"No," quietly. "I admit that it sounds absurd, yes; but ten years ago they'd have locked up, as insane, a man who said that he could fly. But think of last summer at Paris, at Rheims, at Frankfort; the Continental air was full of flying-machines. Bah! It's pretty difficult to impress the average mind with something new. Why shouldn't we cater to the poetic, the romantic side of man? We've concerns for everything else. The fact is, mediocrity is always standing behind the corner with brickbats for the initiative. Believe me or not, Mr. Jones, but this company exists. The proof is that you have the rug and I have the scars."

"But in these prosaic times!" murmured George, still skeptical.

"Prosaic times!" sniffed Ryanne. "There's one of your brickbats. They swung it at the head of the first printer. Prosaic times! My friend, this is the most romantic and bewildering age humanity has yet seen. There's more romance and adventure going about on wheels and steel-bottoms than ever there was in the days of Drake and the Spanish galleons. There's an adventure lurking round the nearest corner—romance, too. What this organization does is to direct you; after that you have to shift for yourself. But, like a first-rate physical instructor, they never map out more than a man can do. They gave me the rug. Your bones, on such a quest, would have been bleaching upon the banks of the Tigris."

"And You Aren't Afraid to Admit It?"

"What the deuce is this company called?" George was enjoying the conversation immensely.

"The United Romance and Adventure company, Ltd., of London, Paris, and New York."

"Have you any of the company's paper with you?" George repressed his laughter because Ryanne's face was serious enough.

"Unfortunately, no. But if you will give me your banker's address I'll be pleased to forward you the prospectus."

"Knauth, Nachod and Kuhne. I am shortly leaving for home. Better send it to New York. I say, suppose a chap buys an adventure that is not up to the mark; can he return it or exchange it for another?"

"No. It's all chance, you know. The rules of the game are steel-bound. We find you an adventure; it's up to you to make good."

"But, once more suppose a chap gets a little too rough a game, and doesn't turn up for his dividends; what then?"

"In that event," answered Ryanne sadly, "the stock reverts to the general fund."

George lay back in his chair and let go his laughter. "You are mighty good company, Mr. Ryanne."

"Well, well; we'll say nothing more about it. But a moment gone you spoke as if you were game for an exploit."

"I still am. But if I knew the adventure was prearranged, as you say, and I was up against a wall, there would be the inclination to cable the firm for more instructions."

Ryanne himself laughed this time. "That's a good idea. I don't believe the company ever thought of such a contingency. But I repeat, our business is to give you the kick-off. After that you have to fight for your own downs."

"The stock isn't listed?" again laughing.

"Scarcely. One man tells another, as I tell you, and so on."

"You send me the prospectus. I'm rather curious to have a look at it."

"I certainly shall do so," replied Ryanne, with gravity unassumed. "Ah! Here come Mrs. Chedsoye and her daughter. If you don't mind, I'll make myself scarce. I do not care to see them just now, after your having told them about the stolen Yhiordes."

"I'm sorry," said George, rising eagerly.

"It's all in the game," gallantly.

George saw him gracefully maneuver his way round the crush toward the stairs leading to the bar. Really, he would like to know more about this amiable free-lance. As the old fellows used to say, he little dreamed that destiny, one of those things from Pandora's box, was preparing a deeper and more intimate acquaintance.

"And what has been amusing you, Mr. Jones?" asked Mrs. Chedsoye. "I saw you laughing."

"I was talking with the rug chap. He's a droll fellow. He said that he had met you somewhere, but concluded not to renew the acquaintance, since I told him that his adventure in part was known to you."

"That is foolish. I rather enjoy meeting men of his stamp. Don't you, Fortune?"

"Sometimes," with a dry little smile. "I believe we have met him, mother. There was something familiar about his head. Of course, we saw him only from a distance."

"I do not think there is any real harm in him," said George. "What made me laugh was a singular proposition he set before me. He said he owned stock in a concern called 'The United Romance and Adventure company;' and that for a specified sum of money, one could have any adventure one pleased."

"Did you ever hear of such a thing?" cried the mother merrily. Fortune searched her face keenly. "The United Romance and Adventure Company! He must have been joking. What did you say his name is?"

"Ryanne. Joking is my idea exactly," George agreed. "The scheme is to plunge the stockholder into a real live adventure, and then let him pull himself out the best way he can. Sounds good. He added that this rug business was an instance of the success of the concern. There goes the music. Do you dance, Miss Chedsoye?"

"A little." Fortune was preoccupied. She was wondering what lay behind Mr. Ryanne's amiable jest.

"Go along, both of you," said Mrs. Chedsoye. "I am too old to dance. I prefer watching people." She sat down and arranged herself comfortably. She was always arranging herself comfortably; it was one of the secrets of her perennial youth. She was very lovely, but George had eyes for the daughter only. Mrs. Chedsoye saw this, but was not in the least chagrined.

"It is so many years since I tripped the light fantastic toe," George confessed, reluctantly and nervously, now that he had bravely committed himself. "It is quite possible that the accent will be primarily upon the trip."

"Perhaps, then," replied the girl, who truthfully was out of tune, "perhaps I had better get my wraps and we'll go outside. The night is glorious."

She couldn't have suggested anything more to his liking. And so, after a little hurrying about, the two young people went outside and began to promenade slowly up and down the mole. Their conversation was desultory. George had dropped back into his shell and the girl was not equal to the task of drawing him out. Once he stumbled over a sleeping beggar, and would have fallen had she not caught him by the arm.

"Thanks. I'm clumsy."

"It's rather difficult to see them in the moonlight; their rags match the pavements."

The Egyptian night, that sapphirine darkness which the flexible imagination peoples with lovely and terrible shades, or floods with mystery and romance and wonder, lay softly upon this strip of verdure aslant the desert's face, the Valley of the Nile. The moon, round, brilliant, strangely near, suffused the scarred old visage of the world with phantom silver; the stones of the parapet glowed dully, the pavement glistened whitely, all things it touched with gentleness, lavishing beauty upon beauty, mellowing ugliness or effacing it. The deep blue Nile, beribboned with the glancing lights from the silent feluccas, curling musically along the sides of the frost-like dahabeahs and steamers, rolled on to the sea; and the blue-white arc-lamps, spanning the Great Nile bridge, took the semblance of a pearl necklace. From time to time a caravan trooped across the bridge into Cairo.

"Do you care for poetry, Mr. Jones?"

"I? I used to write it."

"And you aren't afraid to admit it?"

"Well, I shouldn't confess the deed to every one," he answered frankly. "We all write poetry at one time or another; but it's generally not constitutional, and we recover."

"I do not see why any one should be ashamed of writing poetry."

"Ah, but there is poetry and poetry. My kind and Byron's is born of kindred souls; but he was an active genius, whereas, I wasn't even a passive one. In all great poets I find my own rejected thoughts, as Emerson says; and that's enough for my slender needs. Poets are rather uncomfortable chaps to have round. They are capricious, irritable, temperamental, selfish, and usually demand all the attention."

The little vocal stream died up again, and once more they listened to the magic sounds of the night. She stopped abruptly to look over the parapet, and his shoulder met hers; after that the world to him was never going to be the same again.

Moonlight and poetry; not the safest channels to sail uncharted. The girl was lonely, and George was lonely, too. His longing had now assumed a definite form; hers moved from this to that, still indefinitely. The quickness with which this definition had come to George rather startled him. His first sight of Fortune Chedsoye had been but yesterday; yet, here he was, not desperately but consciously in love with her. The situation bore against all precepts; it ripped up his preconceived ideas of romance as a gale at sea shreds a canvas. He felt a bit panicky. He had always planned a courtship of a year or so, meetings, separations, and remeetings, pleasurable expectations, little junkets to theaters and country places; in brief, to witness the rose grow and unfold. Somewhere he had read or heard that courtship was the plummet which sounded the depths of compatibility. He knew nothing of Fortune Chedsoye, save that she was beautiful to his eyes, and that she was as different from the ordinary run of girls as yonder moon was from the stars.

Again she stopped, leaning over the parapet and staring down at the water swirling past the stone embankment. He did likewise, resting upon his folded arms. Suddenly his tongue became alive; and quietly, without hesitancy or embarrassment, he began to tell her of his school life, his life at home. And the manner in which he spoke of his mother warmed her; and she was strangely and wonderingly attracted.

"Of course, the mother meant the best in the world when she gave me Percival Algernon; and because she meant the best, I have rarely tried to hide them. What was good enough for her to give was good enough for me to keep. It is simply that I have been foolish about it, supersensitive. I should have laughed and accepted the thing as a joke; instead, I made the fatal move of trying to run away and hide. But, taking the name in full," lightly, "it sounds as incongruous as playing Traumerei on a steam-piano."

He expected her to laugh, but her heart was too full of the old ache. This young man, kindly, gentle, intelligent, if shy, was a love-child. And she? An offspring, the loneliest of the lonely, the child that wasn't wanted. Many a time she had thought of flinging all to the winds, of running away and hiding where they never should find her, of working with her own hands for her bread and butter. Little they'd have cared. But always the rebel spirit died within her as she stepped outside the villa gates. To leave behind for unknown privations certain assured comforts, things of which she was fond, things to which she was used, she couldn't do it, she just couldn't. Morally and physically she was a little coward.

"Let us go in," she said sharply. Another moment, and she would have been in tears.

CHAPTER VII.

Ryanne Tables His Cards.

During this time Mrs. Chedsoye, the major, Messrs. Ryanne and Wallace, officers and directors in the United Romance and Adventure Company, Ltd., sat in the major's room, round the boudoir-stand which had temporarily been given the dignity of a table. The scene would not have been without interest either to the speculative physiognomist or to the dramatist. To each it would have represented one of those astonishing moments when the soul of a person comes out into the open, as one might express it, incautiously, to be revealed in the expressions of the eyes and the mouth. These four persons were about going forward upon a singularly desperate and unusual enterprise. From now on they were no longer to fence with one another, to shift from this topic to that, with the indirect maneuvers of a house-cat intent upon the quest of the Friday mackerel. The woman's face was alive with eagerness; the oldest man looked from one to the other with earnest calculation; Wallace no longer hid his cupidity; Ryanne's immobility of countenance was in itself a tacit admission to the burning of all his bridges that he might become a part of this conclave.

"Smuggling," said the major, with prudent lowering of voice, evidently continuing some previous debate, "smuggling is a fine art, a keen sporting proposition; and the consequences of discovery are never serious. What's a fine of a thousand dollars against the profits of many successful excursions into the port of New York? Nothing, comparatively. For several years, now, we have carried on this business with the utmost adroitness. Never have we drawn serious attention. We have made two or three blunders, but the suspicions of the secret-service were put to sleep upon each occasion. We have prospered. Here is a gem, let us say, worth on this side a thousand; over there we sell it for enough to give us a clean profit of three or four hundred. Forty per cent. upon our investment. That ought to be enough for any reasonable person. Am I right?"

Mrs. Chedsoye alone was unresponsive to this appeal.

"I continue, then. We are making enough to lay by something for our old age. And that's the only goal which never loses its luster. But this affair!"

"Talk, talk," said Mrs. Chedsoye impatiently.

"My dear Kate, allow me to relieve my mind."

"You have done so till the topic is threadbare. It is rather late in the day to go over the ground again. Time is everything just now."

"Admitted. But this affair, Kate, is big; big with dangers, big with pitfalls; there is a hidden menace in every step of it. Mayhap death; who knows? The older I grow, the more I cling to material comforts, to enterprises of small dangers. However, as you infer, there's no going back now."

"No," assented Ryanne, his mouth hard; "not if I have to proceed alone."

She smiled at him. "You talk of danger," speaking to the major. "What danger can there be?"

"The unforeseen danger, the danger of which we know nothing, and therefore are unable to prepare for it. You do not see it, my dear, but it is there, nevertheless."

Wallace nodded approvingly. Ryanne shrugged.

"Failure is practically impossible. And I want excitement; I crave it as you men crave your tobacco."

"It's the Excitement of Getting It and Coming Away Unscathed."

"And there we are, Kate. It really isn't the gold; it's the excitement of getting it and coming away unscathed. If I could only get you to look at all sides of the affair! It's the Rubicon."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Salt Put to Varied Uses

Invaluable to Mankind Though as a Condiment It Should Be Employed Sparingly.

If food is tasteless without salt, it is ruined with too much. Unappetizing cooking is often due to guesswork. A level teaspoonful of salt is sufficient for a quart of soup, sauce, or vegetables.

Salt used once a day is an excellent dentrifrice, tending to keep off tartar. It is said to retard receding gums.

A half teaspoonful of salt added to a cup of hot water—which many persons take each morning—will make it palatable.

Do not gargle with salt water. Throat specialists consider it injurious to the tender mucous membrane of the nose.

Salt water rots the hair, so never fail to rinse with fresh water after sea bathing.

To set color in wash materials and embroidery cottons soak them in strong salt water.

An excellent tonic for nervous people is to take salt rubs twice a day. As sea salt dissolves slowly, some of it can be kept in solution in a glass jar to be ready when needed.

When a child is inclined to bow legs or to have a weak back, rub it night and morning with strong salt water.

A faded carpet is freshened if wiped off with a wet cloth wrung from strong salt water. Sprinkle floor with dampened salt and sweep well.

Bad dyspepsia can be helped by dissolving pinches of salt on the tongue after eating, or when there is a sense of oppression.

Tact.

He (tired of dodging)—Would you marry a one-eyed man?

She—Good gracious, no!

He—Then let me carry your umbrella.—Illustrated Bits.

The Time of Her Life.

The new colored domestic, fresh from Kentucky, took her first "Thursday afternoon off" and failed to return to prepare the seven o'clock dinner for the family. Next morning she reappeared rather "donsie." "Why, Sibbie," said the lady of the house, "you look sick. What is the matter?"

"Yes'm, I done been sick, awful sick, but it was wuth it. Dat dollah you given me, I spent every cent of it an' I done had de time of my life. What I done with it? Well, missus, I tell de truf an' no more'n de truf. I bought ten glasses of soda and went to ten of dose movable pictuh shows. My, my, one cain't have no sich time in Kaintucky."—Indianapolis News.

In Fat Berth.

Towne—No; Grafton doesn't work at all now.

Browne—He doesn't? Why, when I knew him he seemed to be a young man with considerable push.

Towne — All that's changed now. He's a young man with considerable pull and doesn't have to work.—Catholic Standard and Times.