



CHAPTER I.

What's in a Name?

To possess two distinctly alien red porcupines in one's blood, metaphorically if not in fact, two characters or individualities under one epidermis, is, in most cases, a peculiar disadvantage. One hears of scoundrels and saints striving to assume one another in one body, angels and harpies; but oftentimes, quite the contrary to being a curse, these two warring temperaments become a man's ultimate blessing, as in the case of George P. A. Jones, of Mortimer & Jones, the great metropolitan Oriental rug and carpet company, all of which has a dignified, sonorous sound. George was divided within himself. This he would not have confessed even into the trusted if battered ear of the Egyptian Sphinx. There was, however, no demon-angel sparring for points in George's soul. The difficulty might be set forth in this manner: On one side stood inherent common sense; on the other, a boundless, rosy-tempered imagination which was likewise inherent—a kind of quixotic imagination of suitable modern patterns. This alter ego terrified him whenever it raised its strangely beautiful head and shouldered aside his guardian angel (for that's what common sense is, argue to what end you will) and pleaded in that luminous rhetoric under the spell of which our old friend Sancho often fell asleep.

P. A., as they called him behind the counters, was but twenty-eight, and if he was vice-president in his late father's shoes he didn't wobble round in them to any great extent. In a crowd he was not noticeable; he didn't stand head and shoulders above his fellow-men, nor would he have been mistaken by near-sighted persons, the myopes, for the Vatican's Apollo in the flesh. He was of medium height, beardless, slender, but tough and wiry and enduring. You may see his prototype on the streets a dozen times a day, and you may also pass him without turning round for a second view. Young men like P. A. must be intimately known to be admired; you did not throw your arm across his neck, first-off. His hair was brown and closely clipped about a head that would have gained the attention of the phrenologist, if not that of the casual passer-by. His bumps, in the phrenology of that science, were good ones. For the rest,



He Haunted the Romantic Quarters of the Globe; He Was Romantic.

he observed the world through a pair of kindly, shy, blue eyes. Young girls, myopic through ignorance or silliness, seeing nothing beyond what the eyes see, seldom gave him a second inspection; for he did not know how to make himself attractive, and was mortally afraid of the opposite, or opposing sex. He could bullyrag a sheik out of his camel's saddlebags, but petticoats and lace parasols and small Oxford shoes had the same effect upon him that the prodding stick of a small boy has upon a retiring turtle. But many a worldly-wise woman, drawing out with tact and kindness the truly beautiful thoughts of this young man's soul, sadly demanded of fate why a sweet, clean boy like this one had not been sent to her in her youth. You see, the worldly-wise woman knows that it is invariably the lay-figure and not Prince Charming that a woman marries, and that matrimony is blind-man's buff in grown-ups.

Many of us lay the blame upon our parents. We shift the burden of wondering why we have this fault and lack that grace to the shoulders of our immediate forbears. We go to the office each morning denying that we have any responsibility; we let the boss do the worrying. But George never went prospecting in his soul for any such dross philosophy. He was grateful for having had so beautiful

a mother: proud of having had so honest a sire; and if either of them had ended him with false weights he did his best to even up the balance.

The mother had been as romantic as any heroine out of Mrs. Radcliffe's novels, while the father had owned to as much romance as one generally finds in a thorough business man, which is practically none at all. The very name itself is a bulwark against the intrusions of romance. One can not lift the imagination to the prospect of picturing a Jones in ruffles and highboots, plinking a varlet in the midriff. It smells of sugar-barrels and cotton-bales, of steamships and railroads, of stolid routine in the office and of placid concern over the daily news under the evening lamp.

Mrs. Jones, lovely, lettered yet not worldly, had dreamed of her boy, bayed and decorated, marrying the most distinguished woman in all Europe, whoever she might be. Mr. Jones had had no dreams at all, and had put the boy to work in the shipping department a little while after the college threshold had been crossed, outward bound. The mother, while sweet and gentle, had a will, from under velvet, and when she held out for Percival Algernon and a decent knowledge of modern languages, the old man agreed if, on the other hand, the boy's first name should be George and that he should learn the business from the cellar up. There were several tilts over the matter, but at length a truce was declared. It was agreed that the boy himself ought to have a word to say upon a subject which concerned him more vitally than any one else. So, at the age of fifteen, when he was starting off for preparatory school, he was advised to choose for himself. He was an obedient son, adoring his mother and idolizing his father. He wrote himself down as George Percival Algernon Jones, promised to become a linguist and to learn the rug business from the cellar up. On the face of it, it looked like a big job; it all depended upon the boy.

The first day at school his misery began. He had signed himself as George P. A. Jones, no small diploma for a lad; but the two initials, standing up like dismantled plines in the midst of uninteresting landscapes, roused the curiosity of his schoolmates. Boys are boys the world over, and possess a finesse in cruelty that only Indians can match; and it did not take them long to unearth the fa-

mal secret. For three years he was Percy Alger, and not only the boys laughed, but the pretty girls laughed. Many a time he had returned to his dormitory decorated (not in accord with the fond hopes of his mother) with a swollen ear, or a ruddy proboscis, or a green-brown eye. There was a limit, and when they stepped over that, why, he proceeded to the best of his ability to solve the difficulty with his fists. George was no milkop; but Percival Algernon would have been the Old Man of the Sea on broader shoulders than his. He dimly realized that had he been named George Henry William Jones his son would have been many diameters larger. There was a splendid quality of pluck under his apparent timidity, and he stuck doggedly to it. He never wrote home and complained. What was good enough for his mother was good enough for him.

It seemed just an ordinary matter of routine for him to pick up French and German verbs. He was far from being brilliant, but he was sensitive and his memory was sound. Since his mother's ambition was to see him an accomplished linguist, he applied himself to the task as if everything in the world depended upon it, just as he knew that when the time came he would apply himself as thoroughly to the question of rugs and carpets. Under all this filial loyalty ran the

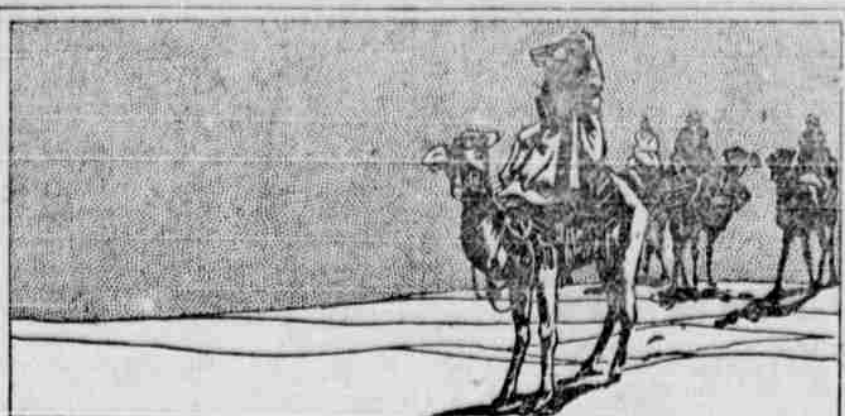
pure strain of golden romance, side by side with the lesser metal of practicality. When he began to read the romances he preferred their romances to their novels. He even wrote poetry in secret, and when his mother discovered the fact she cried over the sentimental verses. The father had to be told. He laughed and declared that the boy would some day develop into a good writer of advertisements. This quiet laughter, unburdened as it was with ridicule, was enough to set George's muse a-awing, and she never came back.

After leaving college he was given a modest letter of credit and told to go where he pleased for a whole year. George started out at once in quest of the Holy Grail, and there are more roads to that than there are to Rome. One may be reasonably sure of getting into Rome, whereas the Holy Grail (diversified, variable, innumerable) is always the exact sum of a bunch of hay hanging before old Dobbin's nose. Nevertheless, George galloped his fancies with loose rein. He haunted romance, burrowed and plowed for it; and never his spade clanged musically against the hidden treasure, never a forlorn beauty in distress, not so much as chapter one of the Golden Book offered its dazzling first page. George lost some confidence.

Two or three times a woman looked into the young man's mind, and in his guilelessness they effected sundry holes in his letter of credit, but his soul singularly untouched. The red corpuscle, his father's gift, though it lay dormant, subconsciously erected barriers. He was innocent, but he was no fool. That one year taught him the lesson, rather cheaply, to come uninvited, and if courted and sought was as quick on the wing as that erstwhile pious must.

The Pet from Carpat Bagdad

by HAROLD MAC GRATH
Author of HEARTS AND MASKS
The MAN ON THE BOX etc.
Illustrations by M. G. KETNER
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ness of the world, more precisely, of the people who inhabited it.

She and her companion passed on into the hotel, and if George's eyes veered again toward the desert over which the stealthy purples of night were creeping, the impulse was mechanical; he saw nothing. In truth, he was desperately lonesome, and he knew, moreover, that he had no business to be. He was young; he could at a pinch tell a joke as well as the next man; and if he had never had what he called an adventure, he had seen many strange and wonderful things and could describe them with that mental afterglow which still lingers over the sunset of our first expressions in poetry. But there was always that hydra-headed monster, for ever getting about his feet, numbing his voice, paralyzing his hands, and never he lopped off a head that another did not instantly grow in its place. Even the sword of Perseus could not have saved him, since one has to get away from an object in order to cut it down.

Had he really ever tried to overcome this monster? Had he not waited for the propitious moment (which you and I know never comes) to throw off this species from Hades? It is all very well, when you are old and dried up, to turn to ivories and metals and precious stones; but when a fellow's young! You can't shake hands with an ivory replica of the Taj Mahal, nor exchange pleasantries with a Mandarin's ring, nor yet confide joys and ills into a casket of rare emeralds; indeed, they do but emphasize one's loneliness. If only he had had a dog; but one can not carry a dog half way round the world and back, at least not with comfort. What with all these new-fangled quarantine laws, duties, and fussy ship officers who wouldn't let you keep the animal in your state-room, traveling with a four-footed friend was almost an impossibility. To be sure, women with poodles. . . . And then, there was

Perchance his mother's spirit, hovering over him this evening, might have been inclined to tears. For they do say that the ghosts of the dear ones are thus employed when we are near to committing some folly, or to exploring some forgotten chamber of Pandora's box, or worse still, when that lady intends emptying the whole contents down upon our unfortunate heads. If so be, they were futile tears: Percival Algernon had accomplished its deadly purpose.

Pandora? Well, then, for the benefit of the children. She was a lady fit of the children. She was a lady who was an intimate friend of the mythological gods. They liked her appearance so well that they one day gave her a box, casket, chest, or whatever it was, to guard. By some marvelous method, known only of gods, they had got together all the trials and tribulations of mankind (and some of the joys) and locked them up in this casket. It was the Golden Age, as you may surmise. You recall Eve and the apple? Well, Pandora was a forecast of Eve; she couldn't keep her eyes off the latch, and at length her hands—fatal curiosity! Whirr! And everything has been at sixes and at sevens since that time. Pandora is eternally recurring, now here, now there; she is a blonde sometimes, and again she is a brunette; and you may take it from George and me that there is always something left in the casket. George closed the book and consulted his sailing-list. In a short time he would leave for Port Said, thence to Naples, Christmas there, and home in January. Business had been ripping. He would be jolly glad to get home again, to renew his comradeship with his treasures. And, by Jove! there was one man who slipped him on the shoulder, and he was no less a person than the genial president of the firm, his father's partner, at present his own. If the old chap had had a daughter now. . . . And here one comes at last to the bottom of the sack. He had only one definite longing, a



This Girl Was Elegant, in Dress, in Movement.

the bitter of acid in the knowledge that no one ever came up to him and slapped him on the shoulder with a—"Hello, George, old sport; what's the good word?" for the simple fact that his shoulder was always bristling with spikes, born of the fear that some one was making fun of him.

healthy human longing, the only longing that no one ever came up to him and slapped him on the shoulder with a—"Hello, George, old sport; what's the good word?" for the simple fact that his shoulder was always bristling with spikes, born of the fear that some one was making fun of him.

Bound to Exert Influence

Effects of the Passion of Sympathy, No Matter on What Object It is Lavished.

It is by the passion of sympathy that we enter into the concerns of others; that we are moved as they are moved, and are never suffered to be indifferent spectators of almost anything which men can do or suffer. For sympathy must be considered as a sort of substitution, by which we are put into the place of another man, and affected in a good measure as he is affected; so that this passion may either partake of the nature of those which regard self-preservation, and turning upon pain may be a source of the sublime; or it may turn upon ideas of pleasure, and then, whatever has been said of the social affections, whether they regard society in general, or only some particular modes of it, may be applicable here.

It is by this principle chiefly that poetry, painting and other affecting arts transfuse their passion from one breast to another, and are often capable of grafting a delight on wretch-

edness, misery and death itself. It is a common observation that objects in the reality which would shock, are, in tragical and such like representations, the source of a very high species of pleasure. This, taken as a fact, has been the cause of much reasoning. This satisfaction has been commonly attributed, first, to the comfort we receive in considering that so melancholy a story is no more than a fiction; and next, the contemplation of our own freedom from evils we see represented. I am afraid it is a practice much too common, in inquiries of this nature, to attribute the cause of feelings which merely arise from the mechanical structures of our bodies, or from the natural form or constitution of our minds, to certain conclusions of the reasoning faculty on the objects presented to us; for I have some reason to apprehend that the influence of reason in producing our passions is nothing near so extensive as is commonly believed.—Edmund Burke.

First Encyclopaedia. The most ancient attempt at what

is called in these days an "encyclopaedia" was Pliny's "Natural History." This old work, a very high authority throughout the Middle Ages, is really a remarkable production and well deserves the fame that for so many ages belonged to it. Pliny, who died in 79 A. D., was not a naturalist, a physician or an artist, and did not pretend to be the wisest man of his time, yet such was his interest in knowledge that he devoted the leisure hours of a busy public life to compiling the work which did a vast amount of good in the world and paved the way for the comprehensive encyclopaedias of the present time.

Still With Them. "I see that Holder isn't one of your bank's most reliable and entirely trusted employees." "Why so?" "He's been at his desk 30 years. I notice that it's always the trusted and reliable that go away to Canada."—Browning's Magazine.

Good Holder for Safety Matches. A holder for a box of safety matches, intended to be hung on a wall, but which can be folded for carrying in the pocket, is the invention of a New Yorker.

Not Used to "High Life." An old farmer was in London visiting his son, who had got on in the world, and who kept a large house, servants, etc. When the two sat down to dinner the first night a manservant waited upon them, and was most assiduous in his attentions to the old farmer. After watching his antics for a bit the guest exclaimed: "What the mischief are ye dancin' about like that for? Can ye not draw in yer chair and sit down? I'm sure there's enough here for the three of us."—London Mail.

A small boy doesn't find it very amusing to do the things his parents are willing to let him do.

It's a genuine surprise party if any one has a good time at it.

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