

The Ma. From Brodney's

By GEORGE BARR
M'UTCHEON

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The enemy planted the mint in its bed of clipped ice. "The sagacity that Tarwell Skaggs displayed in erecting an ice plant and cold storage house here is equaled only by John Wyckholme's foresightedness in maintaining a contemporaneous mint bed. I imagine that you, gentlemen, are hoping to prove the old codgers insane. Between the three of us, and man to man, how can you have the heart to propose anything so unkind when we look, as we now do, upon the result of their extreme soundness of mind? Here's how!"

Selma passed the straws, and the three men took a long and simultaneous "pull" at the refreshing julep. Mr. Saunders felt something melt as he drew the subsequent long and satisfying breath. It was the outer rim of his cautious reserve.

"I think we'll take you up on that proposition to trade mint for cigarettes," said Mr. Britt. "Mr. Browne, my client, for one, will sanction the deal. How about your client, Saunders?"

"I can't say as to Lady Deppingham, but I'm quite sure his lordship will make no objection."

"Then we'll consider the deal closed. I'll send one of my boys over tomorrow with a bunch of mint. Telephone up to the bungalow when you need more. By the way," dropping into a curiously reflective air, "may I ask why Lady Deppingham is permitted to ride alone through the unfrequented and perilous parts of the island?" The question was directed to her solicitor.

"Perilous? What do you mean?" "Just this, Mr. Saunders," said the enemy, leaning forward earnestly. "I'm not responsible for the acts of these islanders. There are men among them who would not hesitate to dispose of one or both of the heirs if they could do it without danger to their interests. What could be more simple, Mr. Saunders, than the death of Lady Deppingham if her horse should stumble and precipitate her to the bottom of one of those deep ravines? She wouldn't be alive to tell how it really happened."

"My word!" was all that Saunders could say, forgetting his julep in contemplation of the catastrophe.

"He's right," said Britt promptly. "I'll keep my own client on the straight and public path. He's liable to tip over too."

"Dence take your Browne," said Saunders, with mild asperity. "He never rides alone."

"I've noticed that," said the enemy coolly. "He's usually with Lady Deppingham. It's lucky that Japat is free from gossip, gentlemen."

"Oh, I say," said Saunders, "none of that talk, you know."

"There's another thing I want to speak of," said the enemy, arising to prepare the second round of juleps. "I hear that your clients and their partners for life are in the habit of gambling like fury up there."

"Gambling?" said Britt. "What rot!"

"The servants say that they play bridge every night for vast piles of rubies and turn the wheel daily for supplies uncountable. Oh, I get it straight."

"Why, man, it's all a joke. They use gun wads and simply play that they are rubies."

"My word," said Saunders, "there isn't a ruby or sapphire in the party."

"That's all right," said the enemy, standing before them with a bunch of mint in one hand and the bowl of ice in the other. "Every man in Japat thinks that your people are gambling with jewels that belong to the corporation. They think there's something crooked, d'ye see? My advice to you is, stop that sort of joking."

"By Jove," said Saunders, taking a straw and at the same time staring in open mouthed wonder at the tall host. "you appall me! It's most extraordinary."

"This is all offered in a kindly spirit, you understand," said the magnanimous enemy. "We might as well live comfortably as to die unseasonably here. Another little suggestion, Mr. Saunders. Please tell Lord Deppingham that if he persists in snooping about the ravines in search of rubies he'll be liable to a bullet in the back of his head some day soon. He has no right to a single ruby, even if he should be one and know what it was. Just tell him that, please, Mr. Saunders."

"I shall, confound him," exploded Saunders, smiting the table mightily. "He's too uppish anyhow. He needs taking down."

"Ah, Selma," interrupted the enemy as the native boy entered, "mail, eh?"

"No, excellency, the ship is due to arrive for two weeks."

"Ah, but, Selma, you forget that I am expecting a letter from Von Blitz's

...es. They promised to let me know how soon he is able to resume work at the mines."

"I hear you polished him off neatly," said Britt, with a grin.

"Just the rough edges, Mr. Britt. He is now a gem of purest ray serene. By the way, I hope you'll not take my mild suggestions amiss."

"There's nothing I object to except your power to call strikes among our servants. That seems to me to be rather high handed," said Britt good naturedly.

"No doubt you're right," agreed the other, "but you must remember that I needed the cigarettes."

"My word!" muttered Saunders admiringly.

"Look here, old man," said Britt, his cheeks glowing; "it's mighty good of you to take this trouble for—"

"Don't mention it. I'd only ask in return that we three be a little more sociable hereafter. We're not here to cut each other's throat, you know, and we've got a deadly half year ahead of us. What say?"

For answer the two lawyers arose and shook hands with the excellent enemy. When they started for the chateau at 7 o'clock, each with six mint juleps about his person, they were too mellow for analysis. The enemy, who had drunk but little, took an arm of each and piloted them sturdily through the town.

CHAPTER K.

THE SLOUGH OF TRANQUILLITY.

THREE months stole by with tantalizing slowness. The autumn passed on into winter without a change of expression in the benign face of nature. Christmas day was as hot as if it had come in mid-summer; the natives were as naked, the trees as fully clad. The six months were passing away in spite of themselves. Ten weeks were left before the worn but determined heirs could cast off their bonds and rush away to other climes. It mattered little whether they went away rich or poor. They were to go! Go! That was the richest thing the future held out to them.



The enemy piloted them sturdily through the town.

True, they rode and played and swam and romped without restraint, but beneath all of their abandon there lurked the ever present pathos of the jail, the asylum, the detention ward.

Not until the end of January was there a sign of revolt against the ever growing, insidious condition of melancholy. As they turned into the last third of their exile they found heart to rejoice in the thought that release was coming nearer and nearer. The end of March—eight weeks off! Soon there would be but seven weeks, then six!

And all this time the islanders toiled as they had toiled for years. They reckoned in years, while the stranger, east up time's account in weeks and called them years. Each day the brown men worked in the mines piling gems into the vaults with a resolute-ness that never faltered.

From London came disquieting news for all sides to the controversy. The struggle promised to be drawn out for years, perhaps. The lonely logeetee, marooned in the far south sea, began to realize that even after they had spent their six months of probation they would still have months, even years, of waiting before they could touch the fortune they laid claim to. The islanders also were vaguely awake

to the fact that everything might be tied up for years despite the provisions of the will. A restless, stubborn feeling of alarm spread among them. This feeling gradually developed itself into bitter resentment. Hatred for the people who were causing this delay was growing deeper and fiercer.

Their counselor, the complacent enemy, held himself aloof from the men and women that his charges were fighting. He met the two lawyers often, but nothing passed between them that could have been regarded as the slightest breach of trust. He lived like a rajah in his shady bungalow, surrounded by the luxuries of one to whom all things are brought indivisible. If he had any longing for the society of women of his own race and kind, he carefully concealed it. His indifference to the subtle though unmistakable appeals of the two gentlemen in the chateau was irritating in the extreme. When he deliberately, though politely, declined their invitation to tea one afternoon their humiliation knew no bounds.

Lady Deppingham and Mrs. Browne should not be misunderstood by the reader. They loved their husbands—I am quite sure of that—but they were tired of seeing no one else, tired of talking to no one else. Moreover, in support of this one-sided assertion, they experienced from time to time the most melancholy attacks of jealousy. If Mrs. Browne in plain despair went off for a day's ride with Lord Deppingham, that gentleman's wife was sick with jealousy. If Lady Agnes strolled in the moonlit gardens with Mr. Browne, the former Miss Bate of Boston could scarcely control her emotions. They shed many tears of anguish over the faithlessness of husbands, tears of hatred over the viciousness of temptresses. Their quarrels were fierce, their upbraidings characteristic, but in the end they cried and kissed and "made up."

They did not know, of course, that the wily Britt, despite his own depression, was all the while accumulating the most astounding lot of evidence to show that a decided streak of insanity existed in the two heirs.

"If they could only be married in some way," was Britt's private lament to Saunders from time to time when despair overcame confidence.

"I've got a ripping idea," Saunders said one day.

"Let's have it. You've always got 'em. Why not divide with me?"

"Can't do it just yet. I've been looking up a little matter. I'll spring it soon."

"How long have you been working on the idea?"

"Nearly four months," said Saunders, yawning.

"Gad, this climate is enervating!" was Britt's caustic comment.

Saunders was heels over head in love with Miss Pelham at this time, so it is not surprising that he had some sort of an idea about marriage, no matter whom it concerned.

Night after night the Deppinghams and Brownes gave dinners, balls, musicales, "bridges," masks and theater suppers at the chateau. First one would invite the other to a great ball, then the other would respond by giving a sumptuous dinner.

One morning during the first week in February the steamer from Aden brought stacks of mail—the customary newspapers, magazines, novels, telegrams and letters. It was noticed that her ladyship had several hundred letters, many bearing crests or coats of arms.

At last she came to a letter of many pages covered with a scrawl that looked preposterously fashionable. Lady Agnes gave a sudden shriek and, leaping to her feet, performed a dance that set her husband and Bobby Browne to gasping.

"She's coming!" she cried ecstatically, repeating herself a dozen times.

"Who's coming, Aggy?" roared her husband for the sixth time.

"The princess! Deppy, I'm going to squeeze you! I must squeeze somebody! Isn't it glorious? Now—now—now life will be worth living in this beastly place."

Her dearest friend, the princess, had written to say that she was coming to spend a month with her.

"In her uncle's yacht, Deppy—the big one that came to Cowes last year, don't you know? Of course you do. Don't look so dazed. He's cruising for a couple of months and is to set her down here until the yacht returns from Borneo and the Philippines. She says she hopes it will be quiet here. Quiet! She hopes it will be quiet!"

"I say, Deppingham, you can take her out walking and pick up a crownful of fresh rubies every day or so," said Browne.

"Hang it all, Browne, I'm afraid to pick a violet these days. Every time I stoop over I feel that somebody's going to take a shot at me. I wonder why the beggars select me to shoot at. They're not always popping away at you, Browne. Why is it?"

"It's all right so long as they don't kill you," was Browne's consoling remark.

"By Jove!" said Deppingham, starting up with a look of horror in his eyes, sudden comprehension rushing down upon him. "I wonder if they think I am you, Browne? Horrible!"

The enemy's office hours were from 3 to 5 in the afternoon. Twice a week Miss Pelham came down from the chateau in a gayly bedecked jirikista to sit opposite to him in his study corner of the banking house. Aisles between them, a notebook trembling with propinquity. Mr. Britt generously lent the pert lady to the enemy in exchange for what he catalogued as "happy days."

Miss Pelham made it a point to look as fascinating as possible on the occasion of these interesting trips into the

enemy's territory.

The enemy, doing his duty by his clients with a determination that seemed incontrovertible, was the last to realize that an intrigue was shaping itself to combat his endeavors. Von Blitz, openly his friend and ally, despite their sad encounter, was the thorn which pricked the natives into a state of uneasiness and doubt as to their agent's sincerity.

They began to believe that no good could come out of the daily meetings of the three lawyers.

It was Von Blitz who told the leading men of the island that their wives—the Persians, the Circassians, the Egyptians and the Turkish bouris—were in love with the tall stranger. It was he who advised them to observe the actions, to study the moods of their women.

The German knew the condition of affairs in his own household. His overthrow at the hands of the American had cost him more than physical ignominy; his wives openly expressed an admiration for their champion. Every eye in Japat was upon him; every hand was turning against him.

It was Miss Pelham who finally took it upon herself to warn the lonely American. The look of surprise and disgust that came into his face brought her up sharply.

"Miss Pelham," he said coldly, "will you be kind enough to carry my condolences to the ladies at court and say that I recommend reading as an antidote for the poison which idleness produces. Neither my home nor my barroom is open to ladies. If you don't mind we'll go on with this report."

Miss Pelham flushed and looked very uncomfortable.

"You're wrong about Lady Deppingham and Mrs. Browne," she began hurriedly. "They've never said anything mean about you. It was just my miserable way of putting it. The talk comes from the islanders. Mr. Bowles has told Mr. Britt and Mr. Saunders. He thinks Von Blitz is working against you, and he is sure that all of the men are furiously jealous."

"Perhaps there is something in what you say. I'm grateful to you for preparing me." It had suddenly come to mind that the night before he had seen a man skulking in the vicinity of the bungalow.

"I just thought I'd tell you," murmured Miss Pelham nervously. "I—we don't want to see you get into trouble—none of us."

"Thank you." After a long pause he went on, lowering his voice: "Miss Pelham, I have had a hard time here in more ways than I care to speak of. It may interest you to know that I had decided to resign next month and go home. I'm a living man, and a living man objects to a living death. But I've changed my mind. I'll stick my time out. I've got three months longer to stay, and I'll stay. If Von Blitz thinks he can drive me out, he's mistaken. I'll be here after you and your friends up there have sailed away. Miss Pelham—God bless you, you're all white—and I'll be here when Von Blitz and his wives are dancing to the tunes I play. Now let's get back to work. If Von Blitz is working in the dark, I'll compel him to show his hand. And, Miss Pelham," he concluded very slowly, "I'll promise to use a club, if necessary, to drive the Persian ladies away. So please rest easy on my account."

The next morning the town bustled with a new excitement. A trim, bearded yacht, flying strange colors, steamed into the little harbor of Ararat. Every one knew that the yacht brought the princess who was to visit her ladyship.

The enemy came down from his bungalow, attracted by the unusual and inspiring spectacle of a ship at anchor. A line of anxiety marked his brow. Two figures had watched his windows all night long, sinister shadows that always met his eye when it penetrated the gloom of the moonlit forest.

Lord and Lady Deppingham were on the pier before him. Excitement and joy illumined her face. Her eyes were sparkling with anticipation. He could almost see that she trembled in her eagerness. He came quite close to them before they saw him. Exhilaration no doubt was responsible for the very agreeable smile of recognition that she bestowed upon him. The enemy could do no less than to them with his pleasantest acknowledgment. His rugged face relaxed into a most charming, winsome smile, half distant, half assured.

He passed among the wives of his clients without so much as a sign of recognition, coolly indifferent to the admiring glances that sought his face. The dark, languorous eyes that flashed eager admiration a moment before now turned sullen with disappointment. He had ignored their owners.

"I have heard that you expect a visitor," said the enemy in his most agreeable manner.

"Won't you go aboard with us?" asked Deppingham, at a loss for anything better to say. The enemy shook his head and smiled.

"You are very good, but I believe my place is here."

"The princess is to be with me for a month. We expect more sunshine than ever at the chateau," ventured her ladyship.

"I sincerely hope you may be disappointed," said he commiseratingly, fanning himself with his hat. She laughed and understood, but Deppingham was halfway out to the yacht before it became clear to him that the enemy hoped literally, not figuratively.

The enemy sauntered back to the American bar, lonelier than ever before in his life. He now knew what it was that he had missed more than all else—a woman.

Britt and Saunders were waiting for him under the awning outside.

"Hello!" called Britt. "We saw you

down there, but couldn't get near. By ginger, old man, I had no idea you Persians were so beautiful. They are oriental gems of—"

"My Persians? What the devil do you mean, Britt? Come in and sit down; I want to talk to you fellows. See here, this talk about those women has got to be stopped. It's dangerous for you, and it's dangerous for me. It is so full of peril that I don't care to look at them, handsome as you say they are. Do you know what I was thinking of as I came over here after leaving one of the most charming of women—your Lady Deppingham? I was thinking what a wretched famine there is in women. I'm speaking of women like Lady Deppingham and Mrs. Browne, neither of whom I know, and yet I've known them all my life—the kind of women we love, not the kind we despise or pity. Don't you see? I'm hungry for the very sight of a woman."

"You see Miss Pelham often enough," said Saunders surlily. The enemy was making a pitcher of lemonade.

"My dear Saunders, you are quite right. I do see Miss Pelham often enough. In my present frame of mind I'd fall desperately in love with her if I saw her oftener." Saunders blinked and glared at him through his pale eyes.

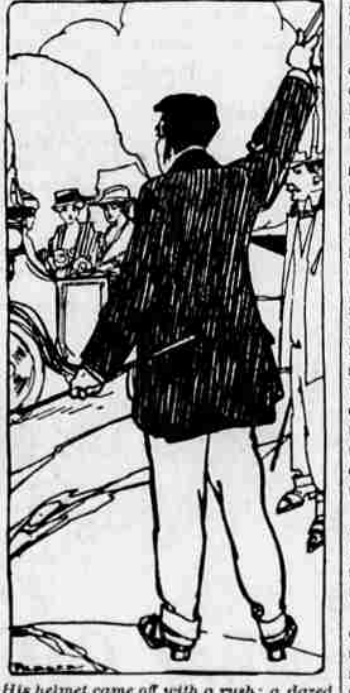
"My word!" he said. Then he got up abruptly and stalked out of the room. Britt laughed immoderately.

"He's a lucky dog," reflected the enemy. "You see, he loves her, Britt—he loves little Miss Pelham. Do you know what that means? It means everything is worth while. Hello! Here he is back! Come in, Saunders. Here's your lemon!"

Saunders was excited. He stopped in the doorway, but looked over his shoulder into the street.

"Come along!" he exclaimed. "They are going up to the chateau—the princess and her party. My word, she's ripping!"

At the corner they stopped to await the procession of palanquins and jirikishas which had started from the pier. The smart English victoria from the chateau, drawn by Wyckholme's thoroughbreds, was coming on in advance of the foot brigade. In the rear seat of the victoria sat Lady Depping-



His helmet came off with a rush; a dazed smile of recognition lighted his face.

ham and one who evidently was the princess. Opposite to them sat two older but no less smart looking women.

"A gala day in Ararat," observed the stubby Mr. Britt. "We are to have the whole party overnight up at the chateau. Hello! By thunder, old man, she's—she's speaking to you!" He turned in astonishment to look at his companion's face.

The enemy was staring, transfixed, at the young woman in white who sat beside Lady Deppingham. He seemed paralyzed for the moment. Then his helmet came off with a rush; a dazed smile of recognition lighted his face. The very pretty young woman in the wide hat was leaning forward and smiling at him, a startled, uncertain look in her eyes. Lady Deppingham was glancing open mouthed from one to the other.

"I must be dreaming," murmured the enemy.

Britt took him by the arm. "Do you know her?" he asked. The enemy turned upon him with a radiant gleam in his once somber, disconsolate eyes.

"Do you think I'd be grinning at her like a fool if I didn't? Why the dickens didn't you tell me that it was the Princess Genevra of Rapp-Thorberg who was coming?"

CHAPTER XI.

CHASE PERFORMS A MIRACLE.

HOLLINGSWORTH CHASE now felt that he was on neutral ground with the Princess Genevra. His strange connection with the Skaggs will case is easily explained. After leaving Thorberg he went directly to Paris; thence, after ten days, to London, where he hoped to get on as a staff correspondent for one of the big dailies. He was at the Savage club he listened to a recital of the amazing conditions which attended the execution of Skaggs's will. He had shot wild game in South Africa with Sir John Brodney, chief counselor for the islanders, and when Sir John suddenly proposed that he go out to Japat as the firm's representative he leaped at the chance.

In truth Rasula was more than glad to have the services of an American. He had heard Wyckholme talk of the

manner in which civil causes were tried in the United States, and he felt that one Yankee on the scene was worth ten Englishmen at home.

The good looking Mr. Chase, writhing under the dread of exposure as an international jackass, welcomed the opportunity to get as far away from civilization as possible. He knew that the Prince Karl story would not lie dormant, but he could not banish the fair face of the Princess Genevra from his thoughts during the long voyage, nor would it be stretching the point to say that his day dreams were of her as he sat and smoked in his bungalow porch.

Before Chase left London Sir John Brodney bluntly cautioned him against the dangers that lurked in Lady Deppingham's eyes.

"She won't leave you a peg to stand on, Chase, if you seek an encounter," he said. "She's pretty and she's clever, and she's made fools of better men than you, my boy. I don't say she's a bad lot, because she's too smart for that. Remember, my boy, you are going out there to offset, not to beset, Lady Deppingham."

Chase was not in love with the proud Princess Genevra. He denied that to himself a hundred times a day as he sat in his bungalow and smoked the situation over.

He had proved to himself quite beyond a doubt that he was not in love, when, like a bolt from a clear sky, she stepped out of the oblivion into which he had cast her to smile upon him without warning. It was most unfair. Her smile had been one of the most difficult obstacles to overcome in the effort to return a fair and final verdict.

Could anything be more miraculous than that she should come to the uncharted island of Japat, unless, possibly, that he should be there when she came? She was there for him to look upon and love and lose, just as he had dreamed all these months. It mattered little that she was now the wife of Prince Karl of Brabatz. To him she was still the Princess Genevra of Rapp-Thorberg.

In his leather pocketbook lay the ever present reminder that she could be no more than a dream to him. It was the clipping from a Paris newspaper announcing that the Princess Genevra was to wed Prince Karl during the Christmas holidays.

He had seen the Christmas holidays come and go with the certain knowledge in his heart that they had given her to Brabatz as the most glorious present that man had ever received.

Now she was come to the island, and so far as he had been able to see, there was no sign of the Prince Brabatz in attendance. Her uncle by marriage, an English nobleman of high degree, in gathering his friends for the long cruise evidently had left the prince out of his party, for what reason Chase could not imagine. To say that the omission was gratifying to the tall American would be too simple a statement. There is no telling to what heights his thoughts might have carried him on that sultry afternoon if they had not been harshly checked by the arrival of a messenger from the chateau. His blood leaped with anticipation.

Could it be possible? But, no, she would not be writing to him. What a ridiculous thought! His hopes fell flat as the note was put into his eager hand. It was from Britt.

Still he broke the seal with considerable eagerness. As he perused the somewhat lengthy message his disappointment gave way to a no uncertain form of excitement. With its conclusion he was on his feet, his eyes gleaming with enthusiasm.

"By George!" he exclaimed. "What luck! Things are coming my way with a vengeance. I'll do it this very night, thanks to Britt. And I must not forget Browne. Ah, what a consolation it is to know that there are Americans wherever one goes. Selim! Selim!" He was standing as straight as a corporal and his eyes were glistening with the fire of battle when Selim came up and forgot to salute, so great was his wonder at the transformation. "Get word to the men that I want every mother's son of 'em to attend a meeting in the market place tonight at 9. Very important, tell 'em. Tell Von Blitz that he's got to be there. I'm going to show him and my picturesque friend, Rasula, that I am here to stay. And, Selim, tell that messenger to wait. There's an answer!"

Long before 9 o'clock the men of Japat began to gather in the market and trading place. Hollingsworth Chase, attended by Selim, came down from his mountain retreat. He heard the sibilant hiss of the scorned Persians as he passed among them on the outskirts of the crowd. He observed the threatening attitude of the men who waited and watched. He saw the white, ugly face of Von Blitz quivering with triumph. He felt the breath of disaster upon his cheek. And yet he walked among them without fear. His head erect, his eyes defiant.

The market place was a large open tract in the extreme west end of the town, some distance removed from the business street and the pier. Through a break in the foothills the chateau was plainly discernible, the sea being obscured from view by the dense forest that crowned the cliffs.

Chase made his way boldly to the nearest platform, exchanging bows with the surprised Von Blitz and the saturnine Rasula, who stood quite near. The men of Japat slowly drew close in as he mounted the platform. From where he stood looking out over those bronze faces he could pick out the scowling husbands who hated him because their wives hated them. Afar off stood the group of women who had inspired this hatred and distrust. Behind them, despised and uncounted by the oriental elect, were

crowded the native women. In their hearts loathed the of these simple women were mately stand at his side in for supremacy, and they were in the majority. If he could these men that his dealings were honest, Von Blitz could all there were against him. "Blitz!" he called suddenly. A man started and stepped back untidily, as if he had been re-

"I've called this meeting to give you a chance to say to some of the things you are a hind my back. Thank God, men understand English. I want to hear what Von Blitz has to public, and then I want you what I say to him. Von Rasula and others, I hear, dertaken to discredit my agent of your London. Let me say right here that who says that I have played in the slightest degree is — liar, if you prefer it. You have been told that I you out to the lawyers for tion. That is lie No. 1. I been led to believe that I reports to your London police No. 2. You have been told the story that I covet certain in this town, too numerous tion, I believe. That is lie No. 3. They are all beautiful, my fr I wouldn't have one of 'em as "For the past few nights has been watched. I w nounce to you that if I see hanging around the bungalow day I'm going to put a bullet him, just as I would through Now, to come down to Von I can't drive me out of this man. You have lied about since I bent you up that are sacrificing the best in these people in order to grant sional spite, in order to wa sorial vengeance. You—"

Von Blitz, foaming with r in: "I suppose you will call warships! We are not fool fool some of!"

"Now, see here, Von Blitz, whether I can call out a war ever I need one. I have ed to ask naval help except an attack by our enemies chateau. You can't believe t to turn those big guns again clients—the clients I cam o serve with my life's blood rry. But, hear me, you Dut I can have a British man of in ten hours to take you of and hang you from a yard charge of conspiracy ag crown."

(To be Continued)

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