

The Ma. From Brodney's

By GEORGE BARR M'UTCHEON

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(CHAPTER XI, Continued)

Von Blitz and Rasula laughed scornfully and turned to the crowd. The latter began to harangue his fellows. "This man is a—a—" he began. "A bluff!" prompted Von Blitz, glaring at his tall accuser. "A bluff," went on Rasula. "He can do none of these things. Nor can the Americans at the chateau. I know that they are liars. They—" "I'll make you pay for that, Rasula. Your time is short. Men of Japat, I don't want to serve you unless you trust me!"

A dozen voices cried: "We don't trust you, dog of a Christian, son of a snake!" Von Blitz glowed with satisfaction. "One moment, please. Rasula knows that I came out here to represent Sir John Brodney. He knows how I am regarded in London. He is jealous because I have not listened to his chatter. I am not responsible for the probable delay in settling the estate. If you are not very careful you will ruin every hope for success that you may have had in the beginning. The crown will take it out of your hands. You've got to show yourselves worthy of handling the affairs of this company. You can't do it if you listen to such carping as Von Blitz and Rasula. Oh, I'm not afraid of you! I know that you have written to Sir John, Rasula, asking that I be recalled. He won't recall me, rest assured, unless he throws up the case. I have his own letters to prove that he is satisfied with my work out here. I am satisfied that there are enough fair minded men in this crowd to protect me. They will stand by me in the end. I call upon!"

But a howl of dissent from the throng brought him up sharply. His face went white, and for a moment he feared the malevolence that stared at him from all sides. He looked frequently in the direction of the distant chateau. Knives slipped from many mouths. Von Blitz was screaming with insane laughter, pointing his finger at the discredited American. While they shouted and cursed, his gaze never left the cleft in the hills. He did not attempt to cry them down. The effort would have been in vain. Suddenly a wild, happy light came into his anxious, searching eyes. He gave a mighty shout and raised his hands, commanding silence.

Selin, clinging to his side, also had seen the skyrocket which arose from the chateau and dropped almost instantly into the wall of trees. "There was something in the face and voice of the American that quelled the riotous disorder. "You fools!" he shouted. "Take warning! I have told you that I would not turn the guns of England and America against you unless you turned against me. I am your friend. But by the great Mohammed you'll pay for my life with every one of your own if you resort to violence. Listen! Today I learned that my life was threatened. I sent a message in the air to the nearest battleship. There is not an hour in the day or night that I or the people in the chateau cannot



The unexpected crowd parties to let Chase pass.

Von Blitz leaped upon a platform and shouted madly: "Fools! Don't believe him! He cannot bring der ships here! He lies, he lies! He—" At that moment a shrill clamor of voices arose in the distance, the cries of women and children. Chase's heart gave a great bound of joy. He knew what it meant.

Chase pointed his finger at Von Blitz and shouted: "I can't, eh? There's a British warship standing off the harbor now, and her guns are trained—" But he did not complete the astounding, stupefying sentence. The women were screaming: "The warship, the warship! Fly, fly!"

In a second the entire assemblage was racing furiously, doubtfully, yet fearfully, toward the pier. Von Blitz and Rasula shouted in vain. They were left with Chase, who smiled triumphantly upon their ghastrly faces. "Gentlemen, they are not deceived. There is a warship out there. You came near to showing your hand to-night. Now come along with me, and I'll show my hand to you. Rasula, you'd better draw in your claws. You're entitled to some consideration. But Von Blitz! Jacob, you are standing on very thin ice. I can have you shot tomorrow morning."

Von Blitz sputtered and snarled. "It is all a lie! It is a trick!" He would have drawn his revolver had not Rasula grasped his arm. The native lawyer dragged him off toward the pier, half doubting his own senses. Just outside the harbor, plainly distinguishable in the moonlight, lay a great cruiser, her searchlights whipping the sky and sea with long white lashes.

The gaping, awestruck crowd in the street parted to let Chase pass through on his way to the bungalow. His manner was that of a medieval conqueror. He looked neither to right nor to left. "It's more like a Christian Endeavor meeting than it was ten minute ago," he was saying to himself, all the time wondering when some reckless unbeliever would hurl a knife at his back. He gravely winked his eye in the direction of the chateau. "Good old Britt!" he muttered in his exultation.

Near the chateau there was a real waterfall, reminding one in no small sense of the misty veils at Lauterbrunnen or Giesbach. The swift stream which obtained life from these falls, big and little, ran along the base of the cliff for some distance and was

then diverted by means of a deep, artificial channel into an almost complete circuit of the chateau, forming the moat. It sped along at the foot of the upper terrace, a wide torrent that washed between solid walls of masonry, which rose to a height of not less than ten feet on either side. There were two drawbridges, seldom used, but always practicable. A small stationary bridge crossed the vicious stream immediately below the hanging garden and led to the ladders by which one ascended to the caverns that ran far back into the mountain.

Two big black irregular holes in the face of the cliff marked the entrance to these deep, rambling caves, wonderful caverns wrought by the convulsions of the dead volcano, cracks made by these splintering earthquakes when the island was new.

The garden hung high between the building and the cliff, swung by a score of great steel cables. These cables were riveted soundly in the solid rock of the cliff at one end and fastened as safely to the stone walls of the chateau at the other. It swung stanchly from its moorings with the constancy of a suspension bridge and trembled at the slightest touch.

It was at least a hundred feet square. The floor was covered with a foot or more of soil, in which the rich grass and plants of the tropics flourished. Cool fountains sprayed the air at either end of the green inclosure. The illusion was complete.

The walls surrounding the garden were three feet high and were intended to represent the typical English garden wall of brick. To gain access to the hanging garden one crossed a narrow bridge which led from the second balcony of the chateau. There was not an hour in the day when protection from the sun could not be found in this little paradise.

Bobby Browne was holding forth with his usual exuberance on the magnificence of the British navy. "There she is now, sleeping out there in the harbor, a great big thing with the kindest of hearts inside of those steel ribs—her majesty's ship the King's Own! Think of it! She conveys a private yacht, she stops off at this beautiful island to catch her breath and to see that all are safe, then she charges off into the horizon like a bird that has no home. May I offer you an cigarette, princess? By the way, I wonder how Chase came off with his side show."

"Saunders tells me that he was near to being butchered, but luck was with him," said Deppingham. "His ship came home."

"It was a daring trick. I'm glad he pulled it off. He's a man, that fellow is," said Browne. "See, princess, away up there in the mountain is his home. There's a light. See it? He keeps rather late hours, you see."

"Tell me about him," said the princess suddenly. She arose and walked to the vine covered wall, followed by Bobby Browne.

"I don't know much to tell you," said he. "He's made an enemy or two, and they are trying to drive him out. We've asked him down here just because we can't bear to think of a fellow creature wasting his days in utter loneliness, but he has so far declined with thanks. The islanders are beginning to hate him. They distrust him, Britt says. Of course you know why we are here. You—"

don't see why I shouldn't if you stop to think how near to being married to each other we are at this very instant."

"I wonder if help could reach him quickly in the event of an attack."

"It could if he'd have the kindness to notify us by phone," said Browne.

"But he wouldn't telephone to us," said Lady Deppingham ruefully. "He's not so communicative as that."

"Surely he would call upon you for help if he—"

"You don't know him, Geneva."

The princess smiled in a vague sort of way. "I've met him quite informally, if you remember."

"I should say it was informally. It's the most delicious story I've ever heard. You must tell it to Mr. Browne, dear. It's all about the enemy in Thorberg, Mr. Browne. There's your wife calling, Bobby. She wants you to tell that story again about the bishop who rang the doorbell."

The next morning the captain of the King's Own came ashore and was taken to the chateau for dejeuner. Late in the afternoon the marquis and his party, saying farewell to the princess and the revived legatee, put out to the yacht and steamed away in the wake of the great warship. The yacht was to return in a month to pick up the princess.

Geneva, her maids, her men and her boxes, her poodle and her dachshund were left behind for the month of March—not without misgiving, it must be said, for the marquis, her uncle, was not disposed to look upon the island situation as a spot of long continued peace.

"You won't be able to get help as cleverly and as timely as that American chap got it last night," protested the marquis. "Warships don't browse around like gulls, you know. Karl will never forgive me if I leave you here."

"Karl is of a very forgiving nature, uncle, dear," said Geneva sweetly. "He forgave you for defending Mr.



"I hope no harm comes to you here in this beastly place!"

Chase, because you are such a nice Englishman. I've induced him to forgive Mr. Chase because he's such a nice American—although Mr. Chase doesn't seem to know it—and I'm quite sure Karl would shake his hand if he should come upon him anywhere. Leave Karl to me, uncle."

And so they sailed away without her, just as she had intended from the beginning. Lord Deppingham stood beside her on the pier as the shore party waved its adieus to the yacht.

"By Jove, Geneva, I hope no harm comes to you here in this beastly place!" said he, a look of anxiety in his honest eyes. "There goes our salvation if any rumpus should come up. We can't call 'em out of the sky as Chase did last night. Lucky beggar! That fellow Chase is ripping, by Jove! That's what he is. I wish he'd open up his heart a bit and ask us into that devilish American bar of his."

"I'd like to hear the story of Chase and his adventures in the queen's garden," reminded Bobby Browne.

"I'll tell it to you tonight, my child," said the princess as they strolled for the pianoquins.

Hollingsworth Chase dodged into the American bar just in time to escape the charge of spying.

CHAPTER XIII.

MR. SAUNDERS HAS A PLAN.

MISS PELHAM'S affair with Thomas Saunders with this time had reached the stage where observers feel a hesitancy about twitting the parties most concerned.

"Miss Pelham is a clever girl, much cleverer than Saunders would be if he were a girl," said Britt. "She's found out that he carries a thousand a year and that his mother is a very old woman. That shows foresight. She says she's just crazy about London, although she doesn't know where Hammegeton is. That shows discretion. She's anxious to see the boats at Putney and to like an encyclopedia

about Kew gardens. That shows diplomacy. You see, Saunders lives in Hammegeton, not far from the bridge, all alone with his mother, who owns the house and garden. It's all very appealing to Miss Pelham, who has got devilish tired of seeing the universe from a nineteenth story in Broadway."

"She's a very nice girl," agreed Bobby Browne.

"A very saucy one," added Deppingham, who had come a severe cropper in his single attempt to interest her in a mild flirtation.

"She's off with Saunders now," went on Britt. "That's why you can't find him, my lord. If you really want him, however, I think you can reach him by strolling through the lower end of the park, but don't fail to shout."

"I do want him, confound him! I want to ask him how many days there are left before our time is up on the island. Demmed annoying that I can't have legal advice when I—"

"How many days have you been here?"

"How the devil should I know? That's what we've got Saunders here for. He's supposed to tell us when to go home and all that sort of thing, you know."

Deppingham, phlegmatic soul, was forever disturbing Saunders with calls to duty, although Saunders was brutal enough in his British way to maintain in confidence, of course—that he was in the employ of Lady Deppingham or no one at all. Nevertheless he always lived under the shadow of duty. At any moment his lordship was liable to send for him to ask the time of day or some equally important question. And this brings us to the hour when Saunders unfolded his startling solution to the problem that confronted them all.

First he confided in Britt soberly, sagely and in perfect good faith. Britt was bowled over. He stared at Saunders and gasped. Nearly two minutes elapsed before he could find words to reply, which proves conclusively that it must have been something of a shock to him. When at last he did express himself, however, there was nothing that could have been left unsaid—absolutely nothing. He went so far as to call Saunders a doddering fool and a great many other things that Saunders had not in the least expected.

The Englishman was stubborn. They had it back and forth, from legal and other points of view, and finally Britt gave in to his colleague, reserving the right to laugh when it was all over. Saunders, with a determination that surprised even himself, called for a conference of all parties in Wyckholme's study at 4 o'clock.

"Now, what's it all about, Saunders?" demanded Deppingham, with a wide yawn. Saunders looked hurt.

"It is high time we were discussing some way out of our difficulties," he said. "But five weeks remain before our stay is over. The apparent impossibility of marriage between Lady Deppingham and Mr. Browne naturally throws our joint cause into jeopardy. There would be no controversy, of course, if the terms of the will could be carried out in that respect. The islanders understand our position and seem secure in their rights. They imagine that they have us beaten on the face of things. Now, the thing for us to do is to get married."

He came to this conclusion with startling abruptness. Four of his hearers stared at him in blank astonishment.

"Get married?" murmured first one, then another.

"Are you crazy?" demanded Browne. Britt was grinning broadly.

"Certainly not," snapped Saunders. "Oh, by Jove!" exclaimed Deppingham, relieved. "I see. You mean you contemplate getting married. I congratulate you. You gave me quite a shock, Saunders."

"I don't mean anything of the sort, my lord," said Saunders, getting very red in the face. Miss Pelham looked up from her notebook quickly. He winked at her, and her ladyship saw him do it. "I mean that it is high time that Lady Deppingham and Mr. Browne were getting married. We haven't much time to spare, by—"

"Good Lord!" gasped Bobby Browne. "You are crazy, after all."

"Open the window and give some air," said Britt coolly.

"See here, Saunders, what the devil is the matter with you?" roared Deppingham.

"My lord, I am here to act as your legal adviser," said Saunders, with dignity. "May I be permitted to proceed?"

"Rather queer legal advice, 'pon my word."

"Please let him explain," put in Mrs. Browne, whose sense of humor was strongly attracted by this time. "If there is anything more to be learned concerning matrimony I'd like to know it."

"Yes, Mr. Saunders, you may proceed," said Lady Agnes, passing a hand over her bewildered eyes.

"Thank you, my lady. Well, here it is in a nutshell: I have not spoken of it before, but you and Mr. Browne can very easily comply with the provisions of the will. You can be married at any time. Now, I—"

"And where do I come in?" demanded Deppingham sarcastically.

"Yes, and I?" added Mrs. Browne. "You forget us, Mr. Saunders."

"I include Mrs. Browne," amended Deppingham. "Are we to be assassinated?" By Jove, clever idea of yours, Saunders! Simplifies matters tremendously.

"I hear no objection from the heirs," remarked Saunders meaningly, whereupon Lady Agnes and Bobby came out of their stupor and protested vigorously.

"Miss Pelham," said Britt, brooding sharply, "I trust you are getting all of this down. I wish to warn you,

indies and gentlemen, that I expect to overthrow the will on the ground that there is insanity on both sides. You'll oblige me by uttering just what you feel."

"My plan is very simple," began Saunders helplessly.

"Demmed simple," growled Deppingham.

"We are living on an island where polygamy is practiced and tolerated. Why can't we take advantage of the custom and beat the natives at their own game? That's the ticket!"

Of course this proposition, simple as it sounded, brought forth a storm of laughter and expostulation, but Saunders held his ground.

"You have only to embrace Mohammedanism or paganism, or whatever it is, temporarily—just long enough to get married and comply with the terms. Then, I dare say, you could resume your Christian doctrine once more, after a few weeks, I'd say, and the case is won."

"I pay Lady Deppingham the compliment by saying that it would be most difficult for me to become a Christian again," said Browne smoothly, bowing to the flushed Englishwoman.

"How very sweet of you!" she said, with a grimace which made Drusilla shiver with annoyance.

"You don't need to live together, of course," bellowed Saunders, getting rather beyond his depth.

"Well, that's a concession on your part," said Mrs. Browne, a flash in her eye.

"I never heard of such an ashine proposition," sputtered Deppingham. Saunders went completely under at that.

"On the other hand," he hastened to remark, "I'm sure it would be quite legal if you did live to—"

"Stop him, for heaven's sake!" screamed Lady Agnes, bursting into uncontrollable laughter.

"Stop him? Why?" demanded her husband, suddenly seeing what he regarded as a rare joke. "Let's hear him out. By Jove, there's more to it than I thought. Go on, Saunders."

"Of course if you are going to be nasty about it—began Saunders in a huff.

"I can't see anything nasty about it," said Browne. "I'll admit that our wife and our husband may decide to be stubborn and unreasonable, but it sounds rather attractive to me."

"Robert!" from his wife.

"He's only joking, Mrs. Browne," explained Deppingham magnanimously. "Now, let me understand you, Saunders. You say they can be married according to the customs—which, I take it, are the laws—of the islanders. Your plan provides Browne with two charming wives and gives me but one. There's nothing to compel Mrs. Browne to marry me."

"But, my lord," said Saunders, "doesn't the plan give Lady Deppingham two husbands? It's quite a fair division."

"It would make Lord Deppingham my husband-in-law, I imagine," said Drusilla quaintly. "I've always had a horror of husbands-in-law."

"And you would be my wife-in-law," supplemented Lady Agnes. "How interesting!"

"Saunders," said Deppingham soberly, "I must oppose your plan. It's quite unfair to two innocent and uninvolved parties. What have we done that we should be exempt from polygamy?"

"You are not exempt!" exclaimed the untrussed solicitor. "You are merely not obliged to; that's all. You can do as you choose about it, I'm sure. I'm sorry my plan causes so much levity. It is meant for the good of our cause. The will doesn't say how many wives Mr. Browne shall have. It simply says that Agnes Ruthven shall be his wife. He isn't restricted, you know. He can be a polygamist if he likes."

"You're right," said Britt. "The will doesn't specify. But, my dear Saunders, you are overlooking your own client in this plan."

"I don't quite understand, Mr. Britt."

"As I understand the laws on this island—the church laws, at least—a man can have as many wives as he likes. Well, that's all very well for Mr. Browne. But isn't it also a fact that a woman can have no more than one husband? Lady Deppingham has one husband. She can't take another without first getting rid of this one."

"Saunders," said Deppingham, arising and lighting a fresh cigarette, "you have gone clean daft. You're loony with love. You've got marriage on the brain. I'd advise you to take some one for it."

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"Oh!" exclaimed every one, in a panic. It took nearly ten minutes to pacify the ruffled stenographer.

"Perhaps we could arrange for a divorce all round," cried Saunders, suddenly inspired.

"On what grounds?" laughed Browne. "Give me time," said the lawyer.

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"Are you quite sure?"

"Reasonably. If there was such a law I'll bet my head two-thirds of the men in Ararat would be getting rid of their wives before night."

"I'm tired," said Lady Deppingham and only. She yawned and stretched her arms. "It's been very entertaining, Saunders, but really I think we'd better dress for dinner. Come, Mr. Browne. Shall we look for the princess?"

"With pleasure, if you'll promise to spare Deppingham's life."

"On condition that you will spare Deppingham's wife," very prettily and

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"I'm tired," said Lady Deppingham and only. She yawned and stretched her arms. "It's been very entertaining, Saunders, but really I think we'd better dress for dinner. Come, Mr. Browne. Shall we look for the princess?"

"With pleasure, if you'll promise to spare Deppingham's life."

"On condition that you will spare Deppingham's wife," very prettily and

and gentlemen, that I expect to overthrow the will on the ground that there is insanity on both sides. You'll oblige me by uttering just what you feel."

"My plan is very simple," began Saunders helplessly.

"Demmed simple," growled Deppingham.

"We are living on an island where polygamy is practiced and tolerated. Why can't we take advantage of the custom and beat the natives at their own game? That's the ticket!"

Of course this proposition, simple as it sounded, brought forth a storm of laughter and expostulation, but Saunders held his ground.

"You have only to embrace Mohammedanism or paganism, or whatever it is, temporarily—just long enough to get married and comply with the terms. Then, I dare say, you could resume your Christian doctrine once more, after a few weeks, I'd say, and the case is won."

"I pay Lady Deppingham the compliment by saying that it would be most difficult for me to become a Christian again," said Browne smoothly, bowing to the flushed Englishwoman.

"How very sweet of you!" she said, with a grimace which made Drusilla shiver with annoyance.

"You don't need to live together, of course," bellowed Saunders, getting rather beyond his depth.

"Well, that's a concession on your part," said Mrs. Browne, a flash in her eye.

"I never heard of such an ashine proposition," sputtered Deppingham. Saunders went completely under at that.

"On the other hand," he hastened to remark, "I'm sure it would be quite legal if you did live to—"

"Stop him, for heaven's sake!" screamed Lady Agnes, bursting into uncontrollable laughter.

"Stop him? Why?" demanded her husband, suddenly seeing what he regarded as a rare joke. "Let's hear him out. By Jove, there's more to it than I thought. Go on, Saunders."

"Of course if you are going to be nasty about it—began Saunders in a huff.

"I can't see anything nasty about it," said Browne. "I'll admit that our wife and our husband may decide to be stubborn and unreasonable, but it sounds rather attractive to me."

"Robert!" from his wife.

"He's only joking, Mrs. Browne," explained Deppingham magnanimously. "Now, let me understand you, Saunders. You say they can be married according to the customs—which, I take it, are the laws—of the islanders. Your plan provides Browne with two charming wives and gives me but one. There's nothing to compel Mrs. Browne to marry me."

"But, my lord," said Saunders, "doesn't the plan give Lady Deppingham two husbands? It's quite a fair division."

"It would make Lord Deppingham my husband-in-law, I imagine," said Drusilla quaintly. "I've always had a horror of husbands-in-law."

"And you would be my wife-in-law," supplemented Lady Agnes. "How interesting!"

"Saunders," said Deppingham soberly, "I must oppose your plan. It's quite unfair to two innocent and uninvolved parties. What have we done that we should be exempt from polygamy?"

"You are not exempt!" exclaimed the untrussed solicitor. "You are merely not obliged to; that's all. You can do as you choose about it, I'm sure. I'm sorry my plan causes so much levity. It is meant for the good of our cause. The will doesn't say how many wives Mr. Browne shall have. It simply says that Agnes Ruthven shall be his wife. He isn't restricted, you know. He can be a polygamist if he likes."

"You're right," said Britt. "The will doesn't specify. But, my dear Saunders, you are overlooking your own client in this plan."

"I don't quite understand, Mr. Britt."

"As I understand the laws on this island—the church laws, at least—a man can have as many wives as he likes. Well, that's all very well for Mr. Browne. But isn't it also a fact that a woman can have no more than one husband? Lady Deppingham has one husband. She can't take another without first getting rid of this one."

"Saunders," said Deppingham, arising and lighting a fresh cigarette, "you have gone clean daft. You're loony with love. You've got marriage on the brain. I'd advise you to take some one for it."

"Do you mean that for me, Lord Deppingham?" demanded Miss Pelham sharply. She glared at him and then slammed her notebook on the table. "You can't josh Mr. Saunders, but you can't josh me. I'm sick of this job. Get somebody else to do your work after this. I'm through."

"Oh!" exclaimed every one, in a panic. It took nearly ten minutes to pacify the ruffled stenographer.

"Perhaps we could arrange for a divorce all round," cried Saunders, suddenly inspired.

"On what grounds?" laughed Browne. "Give me time," said the lawyer.

"It's barely possible that there is no divorce law in Japat," remarked Britt, enjoying his confere's misery.

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