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**THE MAN FROM BRODNEY'S**

Continued from page 3.  
 owners ride them. The servants at the chateau turned Mr. Skaggs' horses out to pasture before they left."

"Before who left?"  
 "The servants, my lord."

Lady Deppingham's eyes grew wide with understanding. "You don't mean to say that the servants have left the place?" she cried.

"Yes, my lady. They were natives, you know."

"What's that got to do with it?" demanded Deppingham.

"I'm afraid you don't understand the situation," said Mr. Bowles patiently. "You see, it's really a triangular controversy, if I may be so bold as to say so. Lady Deppingham is one of the angles; Mr. Browne, the American gentleman, is another; the native population is the last. Each wants to be the hypotenuse. While the interests of all three are merged in the real issue, there is nevertheless a decided disposition all around to make it an entirely one-sided affair."

"I don't believe I grasp"—muttered Deppingham blankly.

"I see perfectly," exclaimed his wife. "The natives are allied against us, just as we are, in a way, against them and Mr. Browne. Really, it seems quite natural, doesn't it, dear?" turning to her husband.

"Very likely, but very unfortunate. It leaves us to broil our brains out down here on this pier. I say, Mr.—er—old chap, can't you possibly engage some sort of transportation for us? Really, you know, we can't stand here all day."

"I've no doubt I can arrange it, my lord. If you will just wait here until I run back to the bank I dare say I'll find a way. Perhaps you'd prefer standing under the awning until I return."

It was fully half an hour before he was seen coming down the street, followed by a score or more of natives, their dirty white robes flapping about their brown legs. At first they could not believe it was Bowles. Lord Deppingham had a sharp thrill of joy, but it was short lived. Bowles had changed at least a portion of his garb. He now wore the tight red jacket of the British trooper, while an ancient army cap was strapped jauntily over his ear.

"It's all right, my lord," he said, as he came up. "They will do anything I tell 'em to do when I represent the British army. This is the only uniform on the island, but they've been taught that there are more where this one came from. These fellows will carry your boxes up to the chateau, sir, and I've sent for two carts to draw your party up the slope. They'll be here in a jiffy, my lady."

Then, turning majestically to the huddled natives, he waved his slender stick and said: "Lively now! No loafing! Lively!"

Whereupon the entire collection of boxes, bags and bundles figuratively picked itself up and walked off in the direction of the chateau.

**CHAPTER VI. THE CHATEAU.**

THE road to the chateau took its devious way through the little town out into the green foothill beyond. Two lumbering wooden wheeled carts, none too clean, each drawn by four perspiring men, served as conveyances by which the arrivals were to make the journey to their new home.

Lady Deppingham's pert little nose lifted itself in disgust as she was joggled through the town behind the grunting substitutes for horseflesh. She sat beside her husband in the foremost cart. Mr. Bowles, very tired, but quite resplendent, walked dutiful-



"Most of the islanders have got three or four wives already."

ly beside one wheel; Mr. Saunders took his post at the other. The servants came along behind in the second cart. Far ahead, like hounds in full cry, toiled the unwilling luggage bearers. From the windows and doorways of every house, from the bazars and cafes, from the side streets and mosque approaches, the gaze of the sullen populace fastened itself upon the little procession. The town seemed ominously silent.

At last they came to the end of the sunlit street and plunged into the shady road that ascended the slope through what seemed to be an abso-

lutely unbroken though gorgeous jungle. The cool green depths looked most alluring to the sun baked travelers. They could almost imagine that they heard the dripping of fountains, the gurgling of rivulets, so like paradise was the prospect ahead. Lady Agnes could not restrain her cries of delight and amazement.

"It's like this all over the island, your ladyship," volunteered Mr. Bowles, mopping his brow in a most unimpressive way, "except at the mines and back there in the town."

"Where are the mines?" asked Deppingham.

"The company's biggest mines are seven or eight miles eastward as the crow flies, quite at the other side of the island. It's very rocky over there, and there's no place for a landing from the sea. Everything is brought overland to Ararat and placed in the vaults of the bank. Four times a year the rubies and sapphires are shipped to the brokers in London and Paris and Vienna. It's quite a neat and regular arrangement, sir."

"But I should think the confounded natives would steal everything they got their hands on."

"What would be the use, sir? They couldn't dispose of a single gem on the island, and nothing is taken away from here except in the company's chests. Besides, my lord, these people are not thieves. They may kill people occasionally, but they are quite honest, believe me. And, in any event, are they not a part of the great corporation? They have their share in the working of the mines and in the profits. Mr. Wyckholme and Mr. Skaggs were honest with them, and they have been just as honest in return."

"I should think they'd be terribly tempted," said Lady Agnes. "They look so wretchedly poor."

"My lady," said Bowles, "there are but four poor men on the island—myself and the three Englishmen who operate the bank. There isn't a poor man, woman or child among the natives. This is truly a land of rich men. The superintendent of the mines is a white man—a German—and the three foremen are Boers. They work on shares, just as the natives do, and save even more, I think. The clerical force is entirely native. There were but ten white men here before you came, including two Greeks. Being part owners, the natives have decided that four hours constitute a day's work. They pay themselves accordingly, as it were. No one works after midday, sir."

"I say, wouldn't this be a paradise for the English workingman?" said Deppingham. "That's the kind of day's labor they'd like. Do you mean to say that these fellows trudge eight miles to work every morning and back again at noon?"

"Certainly not, sir. They ride their thoroughbred horses to work and ride them back again."

"You take my breath away," said the other, lapsing into a stunned silence.

The road had become so steep and laborious by this time that Bowles was very glad to forego the pleasure of talking. He fell back with Mr. Saunders and proceeded to give the inquisitive lawyer's clerk all the late news of the island.

The inhabitants of Japat had been prompt to protect themselves in a legal sense. They had engaged the services of eminent solicitors in London, who were to represent them in the final settlement of the estate. London was to be the battleground in the coming conflict. A committee of three had journeyed to England to put the matter in the hands of these lawyers and were now returning to the island with a representative of the firm, who was coming out to stand guard, so to speak. Von Blitz, the German superintendent, was the master mind in the native contingent. The absent committee was composed of Ben Adl, Abdallah Ben Sablat and Rasula, the Ararat lawyer. They were truly wise men from the east—old, shrewd, crafty and begotten of Mohammed.

The mines continued to be operated as usual pending the arrival of the executors' representative, who, as we know, was now on the ground in the person of Thomas Saunders. The fact that he also served as legal adviser to Lady Deppingham was not of sufficient moment to disturb the arrangements on either side.

As for the American heir, Robert Browne, he had not yet arrived. He was coming by steamer from the west, according to report, and was probably in the Boswell, Sumatra or Madagassar, due off Ararat in two or three days.

"The islanders," said Mr. Bowles, lighting a cigarette, "it looks to me, save all the best of the situation. They get the property whether they marry or not, while the original beneficiaries have to marry each other or get off the island at the end of the year. Most of the islanders have got three or four wives already."

"You mean to say that they can have as many wives as they choose?" demanded Saunders, wrinkling his brow.

"Yes, just so long as they don't choose anybody else's."

"My word!"

"Eh?" queried Bowles, arousing himself.

"I didn't say anything," retorted Saunders, looking up into the treetops.

Standing out against the sky fully a mile ahead was the home to which they were going. The chateau, beautiful as a picture, lifted itself like a dream castle above all that was earthly and sordid. It smiled down from its lofty terrace and glistened in the sunset glow like the jewel that had been its godmother.

According to its own records, the chateau, fashioned quite closely after a famous structure in France, was de-

signed and built by La Marche, the ill-fated French architect who was lost at sea in the wreck of the Vendome. Three years and more than £700,000—to make it seem more prodigious, nearly 18,000,000 francs—were consumed in its building.

Apartments fit for a king abounded. Suits which took one back to the luxuries of Marie Antoinette were common. Banquet halls, ballrooms, reception halls, a chapel and even a crypt were to be found if one undertook a voyage of discovery.

Lord and Lady Deppingham, being first in the field, at once proceeded to settle themselves in the choicest rooms—a Henry VI. suit, which looked out on the sea and the town as well. It is said that Wyckholme slept there twice, while Skaggs looked in perhaps half a dozen times—when he was lost in the building and trying to find his way back to familiar haunts.

There was not a sign of a servant about the house or grounds. The men whom Bowles had engaged carried the luggage to the rooms which Lady Deppingham selected and then vanished as if into space.

"They say these Americans are a wonderful people, my lord," ventured Mr. Bowles. "I dare say when Mr. and Mrs. Browne arrive they'll have some way of—"

"Browne!" cried her ladyship. "This very evening I shall give orders concerning the rooms they are to occupy. I suppose, however, that the rooms we have taken are the best?"

"The choicest, my lady," said Bowles, bowing.

"See here, Mr.—er—old chap, don't you think you can induce the servants to come back to us? By Jove, I'll make it worth your while."

"What are we to do?" wailed Lady Agnes, sitting down suddenly upon the edge of a fountain.

"You see, my lady, they take the position that you have no right here," volunteered Bowles. "They've got the ridiculous idea into their noddies that you can't be the heiress unless Lord Deppingham passes away inside of a year, and—"

"If I do!" roared the perspiring obstacle. "I'm not so obliging as that, let me tell you. If it comes to that, what sort of ass do they think I'd be to come away out here to pass away? London's good enough for any man to die in."

"You are not going to die, Deppy," said his wife consolingly. "Unless you starve to death," she supplemented, with an expressive moue.

**CHAPTER VII. THE BROWNES ARRIVE.**

CONTRARY to all expectations, the Browns arrived the next morning. The Deppinghams and their miserably frightened servants were scarcely out of bed when Saunders came in with the news that a steamer was standing off the shallow harbor. Bowles had telephoned up that the American claimant was on board.

The deepest gloom pervaded the household when Lady Deppingham discovered that not one of their retinue knew how to make coffee or broil bacon—not that she cared for bacon, but that his lordship always asked for it when they did not have it.

Browne upset the last peg of endurance by hoping that the Americans were bringing a cook and a housemaid with them.

"The Americans always travel like lords," she concluded, forgetting that she served a lord and not in the least intending to be ironical.

"That will do, Bromley," said her mistress sharply. "If they're like most Americans I've seen they'll have nothing but wet nurses and chauffeurs. I can't eat this vile stuff. Come on, Deppy. Let's go up and watch the approach of the enemy."

Scarcely half an hour passed before the advance guard of the Browne company came into view at the park gates below. Deppingham recalled the fact that an hour and a half had been consumed in the accomplishment yesterday. He was keeping a sharp lookout for the magic red jacket and the Tommy Atkins lid. Quite secure from observation, he and his wife watched the forerunners with the hand bags; then came the sweating trunk bearers and then crated objects in—what? Yes, by the Lord Harry, in the very carts that had been their private chariots the day before!

Deppingham's wrath did not really explode until the two were gazing

Continued on page 2.

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