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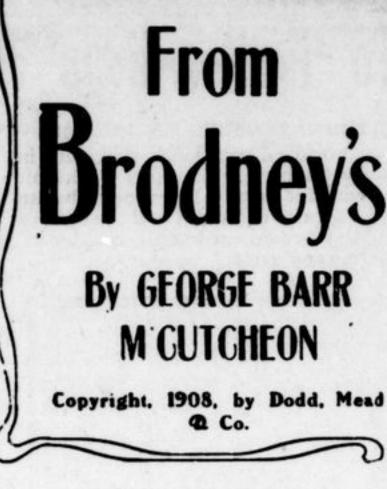
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CHAPTER XXIII. THE DISQUIETING END OF PONG.

ATER on he and Deppingham visited the underground chamber, accompanied by Mr. Britt They found that the door to the passage had been blown away by the terrific concussion. The subterra nean passage at this place was com pletely filled with earth and stone.

Deppingham stared at the closed mouth of the passage. "They've cu off our exit, but they've also secured us from invasion from this source. wonder if the beggars were cleve enough to carry the plunder above the flood line. If not they've had their work for nothing."

"Selim says there is a cave near th mouth of the passage," said Chase "The tunnel comes out halfway up the side of the mountain overlooking the sea, and the hole is very carefully screened by the thick shrubbery. Trust Von Blitz to do the safe thing."

"I don't mind Von Blitz escaping so much, Chase," said his lordship earnestly, "as I do the unfortunate closing of what may have been our way to leave the chateau in the end." "You must think me an ungrateful

fool," said Chase bitterly. He had already stated his position clearly. "Not at all, old chap. Don't get that

into your bead. I only meant that a hole in the ground is worth two war ships that won't come when we need Chase looked up quickly. "You don't

believe that I can call the cruisers?" "Oh, come now, Chase; I'm not a demmed native, you know." The other grinned amiably. "Well,

you just wait, as the boy says." After satisfying themselves that there was no possibility of the enemy ever being able to enter the chateau through the collapsed passage the trio returned to the upper world.

Robert Browne and Lady Agnes were seated on the edge of the fountain in Apollo's grotto, conversing earnestly, even eagerly, with Mr. Bowles, who stood before them in an unmistakable attitude of indecision and perturbation. Deppingham gave Chase a look which plainly revealed his un-

headed Saunders," said Chase, with a court for a second. Ask Britt."

Britt cleared his throat, "Not for haif a second," he said. "I'm only wondering if Bowles has authority to grant divorces." "I dare say he has," said Depping-

ham, tugging at his mustache. "He's -he's a magistrate." "It doesn't follow," said Chase, "that

he has unlimited legal powers." "But what are they ragging him about down here, Chase?" blurted out

the unhappy Deppingham.

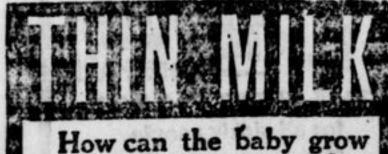
"Come in and have a drink," said Chase suddenly. Deppingham was shivering. "You've got a chill in that damp cellar. I can assure you posttively as representative of the opposition that the grandchildren of Skaggs and Wyckholme are not going to divorce or marry anybody while I'm bere, Britt and Saunders and Bowles to the contrary. And Lady Deppingham is no fool. Come on and have something to warm the cockles."

"All right, old chap," Deppingham said, with a laugh. "I am chilled to the bone. I'll join you in a few minutes." To their surprise, he started off across the terrace in the direction of the consulting trio.

"Just the same, Chase," said Britt after a long silence, "he's worried, and not about marriage or divorce either. He's jealous. I didn't believe it was in

"See here, Britt; you've no right to stir him up with those confounded remarks about divorce. You know that it's rot. Don't do it."

"My dear Chase," said Britt, waving his hand serenely, "I can't help laughing at the position you're in at present. 'It doesn't matter what you get on to in connection with our side of the case, you're where you can't take sdvantage of it without getting killed



strong if the nursing mother is pale and delicate?

makes the mother strong and well: increases and enriches the baby's food. Druggists

by your own clients. Horrible para dox, eh?"

When Deppingham rejoined them be was pale and very nervous. His wife, who had been weeping, came up with him, while Browne went off toward the stables with the ex-banker.

"What do you think has happened?" demanded his lordship, addressing the two men, who stood by irresolutely. "Somebody's trying to poison us! Lady Deppingham's dog is dead-poisoned. gentlemen!" He was wiping the mois- would"- He checked the words ture from his brow.

"I'm sorry, Lady Deppingham," said at of laughter. But I hardly think he could have eaten ed his wife. "No one is trying to poiwhat was intended for any of us. If son you." he was poisoned, the poison was "Who's saying that he's going to poimeant for him and for no one else. son me?" demanded Deppingham He bit one of the stable boys yester- shortly. "I'm objecting because I

"That may all be very true, Chase," from a man just out of college." see it goes to show that some one has old man. She's got a nervous heada stock of poison on hand, and we ache," urged Browne tolerantly. may be the next to get it. He died "Your wife!" exclaimed Deppinghalf an hour after eating-after eating ham, sitting up. "The devil!" He a biscuit that was intended for me! looked hard at Browne for a moment. It's-it's demmed uncomfortable, to "Oh, I say, now, old chap, don't you say the least."

all this. Come along. Will you join us, Lady Deppingham?" said Chase. "No. I'm going to bed!" She start- pingham"her busband, her eyes wide with sud- ham hastily. "I'm not afraid of your

"My dear!" "I couldn't have lived if"-

"But, my dear, I didn't eat it-and me. See what I mean?" French window Deppingham put his by one of these beastly island ail turned to Britt.

"I don't know what you're thinking. Britt, but it isn't so, whatever it is."

intended for either Lord or Lady Dep- the medicine. "You don't mean to say, Lord Dep- | wiches which came up to their rooms | He was in a dripping perspiration. pingham, that you're afraid the heirs at 11 o'clock, the hour at which they Genevra drew a chair up beside his will follow the advice of that rattle invariably drank off a cup of bouillon. couch and sat down. Lady Agnes was Drusilla Browne was jesting, no yawning sleepily over a book.

laugh. "Why, it wouldn't hold in doubt, but it is doubtful if any one "Do you know, I believe I'd feel betwhen she observed, in mock concern, said "I'm so beastly hot now that I ing to get rid of their incumbrances fresh air? I'm a brute to have kept after the good old Borgia fashion and you moping in here all evening." that she would never again have the Lady Agnes sighed prettily and courage to eat a mouthful of food so stepped out into the murky night. long as she stood between her husband "I say, Genevra, what's the news?" and a hymeneal fortune.

"You know, my dear," she concluded, Chase?" turning to her husband, "that I might Now, the princess, it is most distresshave had Lord Deppingham's biscuit, ing to state, had willfully avoided Mr. His wife asked me to take it. Good- Chase since early that morning. . ness, you're a dreadful Borgia person, "I'm sure I don't know. I had din-Agnes," she went on, smiling brightly ner with Mrs. Browne in her room. I at her ladyship. Deppingham was fancy he's off attending to the guard. fumbling pervously at his monocle, I haven't seen him." "I should think you would be nervous, "Nice chap," remarked Deppingham. Lord Deppingham."

The most rigid questioning elicited out there? no information from the servants. Baillo's sudden, involuntary look of voice came in to them from the baland Robert Browne, did not escape the soft laugh. keen eye of Hollingsworth Chase. "Impossible!" he said, half aloud.

He looked up and saw that the prin-He shook his head without thinking. Despair settled upon the white people. They were confronted by a new her voice.

and serious peril-poison. At no time could they feel safe. carry a note from Chase to Rasula, man, my dear. She rather likes it."

tion of grave importance before him. been married less than a year." Chase suggested to Rasula that he "It really doesn't amount to anyshould meet him that evening at the thing, Genevra," he argued. "It will west gate, under a flag of truce. The blow over in a fortnight. Aggy's altone of the letter was more or less per- ways doing this sort of thing, you

Rasula came, sullen but curious. At "I know, Deppy," she said sharply. dealing, going so far as to charge the days." deposed American with plotting against "Aggy's had dozens of men in love more ways than one. At last, however, feebly. "She's not"he agreed to follow the advice of the "They've come and gone, and she's none the less determined.

bank. I could have taken him red suddenly. handed and given him over to Lord

Deppingnam, but you would never have known the truth. Now I ask you to judge for yourselves. Give him a fair trial, Rasula—as you would any man accused of crime-and be just. If you need a witness-an eyewitnesscall on me. I will come, and I will appear against him. I've been honest with you. I am willing to trust you to be honest with me."

CHAPTER XXIV.

DEPPINGHAM FALLS ILL. took to his bed with violent by turns and spent a most distressing night. Bobby Browne came in twice to see him before retiring. For some reason unknown to any one but treated by the young man, notwithstanding the fact that Browne laid claim to a physician's certificate and breaking up "the ague." Lady Agnes entreated her liege lord to submit to the doses, but Deppingham was res inte to irascibility.

"A Dover's powder, Deppy, or a few grains of quinine. Please be sensible. You're just like a child."

"What's in a Dover's powder?" demanded the patient, who had never been ill in his life.

"Ipecac and optum, sugar of milk or sulphate of potash. It's an anodyne diaphoretic," said Browne. "Opium, eh?" came sharply from the couch. "Good Lord, an overdose of it

abruptly and gave vent to a nervous Chase earnestly. "He was a nice dog. | "Don't be a fool, George," command-

don't like the idea of taking medicine

protested his lordship, "but don't you "I've just given my wife a powder,

think it's rather too much of a coinci-

"I'm sure you need the brandy after dence?" Browne arose quickly, a flash of resentment in his eyes. "See here, Dep-

ed away, then stopped and looked at "I apologize, Browne," said Deppingden comprehension. "Oh, Deppy, I medicine. I'm only thinking of my should have died! I should have died!" wife. If I should happen to die, don't you know, there would be people who might say that you could have cured

here we are. God bless you!" He "You dear old goose!" cried his wife. turned abruptly and walked off beside "I fancy Selim or Baillo or even her, ignoring the two distressed Amer- Bowles knows what a fellow doses icans. As they passed through the himself with when he's bowled over arm about his wife's waist. Chase ments. Oblige me, Agnes, and send for Bowles.'

He immediately recommended an old fashioned Dover's powder and ven-"Good Lord, man, I wasn't thinking tured the opinion that a "good sweat" would soon put his lordship on his There was not the slightest doubt in feet, "better than ever." Deppingham the minds of those conversant with kept Bowles beside him while Browne the situation that the poison had been generously prepared and administered

pingham. The drug had been subtly. Later in the night the princess came skillfully placed in one of the sand- to see how the patient was getting on.

grasped the delicacy of her humor ter if I could have another chill," he addressing the assembled mourners, can't stand it. Aggy, why don't you that she believed the heirs were try- turn out on the balcony for a bit of

demanded his lordship. "Where is

"Isn't that he now speaking to Agnes Genevra looked up quickly. A man's

suspicion, directed toward Lady Agnes cony, following Lady Deppingham's "No," she said, settling back calmly. "It's Mr. Browne."

"Oh," said Deppingham, a slight cess was staring at him questioningly, shadow coming into his eyes. "Nice chap, too," he added a moment later. "I don't like him," said she, lowering

"I've no doubt Agnes is as much to

blame as he," said his lordship at last. One of the stable boys volunteered to "She's made a root of more than one asking the opportunity to lay a ques "He's behaving like a brute. They've

know."

first he would not believe, but Chase "But this man is different. He's not a was firm in his denunciation of Jacob gentleman. Mr. Skaggs wasn't a genvon Blitz. Then he was pleased to as tleman. Blood tells. He will boast of cuse Chase of duplicity and double this flirtation until the end of his acre. A bargain surely.

Von Blitz to further his own ends in with her-really in love," he protested

American-grudgingly, to be sure, but still the same old Agnes, and you're the same old Deppy. I'm not thinking of "You will find everything as I have you or Aggy. It's Drusilla Browne."

stated it, Rasula," said Chase. "I'm "I see. Thanks for the confidence sorry you are against me, for I would you have in Aggy. I dare say I know be your friend. I've told you how to how Drusilla feels. I've-I've had a reach the secret cave. The chests are bad turn or two myself lately, andthere. The passage is closed. You can but never mind. By the way, what

Continued on page 7.

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