

Bull-Dog Drummond

The Adventures of a Demobilized Officer Who Found Peace Dull

By Cyril McNeile
"Sapper"

Copyright by Geo. H. Doran Co.

CHAPTER VII—Continued.

Hugh bowed gravely. "My only regret is that it failed to function," he remarked. "As I told you outside, I'd quite forgotten your menagerie. In fact"—his glance wandered slowly and somewhat pointedly from face to face at the table—"I had no idea it was such a large one."

"So this is the insolent young swine, is it?" The bloodshot eyes of the man with the scarred face turned on him morosely. "What I cannot understand is why he hasn't been killed by now."

Hugh wagged an accusing finger at him.

"I knew you were a nasty man as soon as I saw you. Now look at Henry up at the end of the table; he doesn't say that sort of thing. And you do hate me, don't you, Henry? How's the jaw?"

"Captain Drummond," said Lakington, ignoring Hugh and addressing the first speaker, "was very nearly killed last night. I thought for some time as to whether I would or not, but I finally decided it would be much too easy a death. So it can be remedied tonight."

If Hugh felt a momentary twinge of fear at the calm, expressionless tone, and the half-satisfied grunt which greeted the words, no trace of it showed on his face. Already the realization had come to him that if he got through the night alive he would be more than passing lucky, but he was too much of a fatalist to let that worry him unduly. So he merely stifled a yawn, and again turned to Lakington.

"So it was you, my little one, whose fairy face I saw pressed against the window. Would it be indiscreet to ask how you got the dope into us?"

Lakington looked at him with an expression of grim satisfaction on his face.

"You were gassed, if you want to know. An admirable invention of my friend Kaufner's nation."

A guttural chuckle came from one of the men, and Hugh looked at him grimly.

"The scum certainly would not be complete," he remarked to Peterson, "without a filthy Boche in it."

The German pushed back his chair with an oath, his face purple with passion.

"A filthy Boche," he muttered thickly, lurching toward Hugh. "Hold him the arms of, and I will the throat tear out."

It all happened so quickly. At one moment Hugh was apparently intent upon selecting a cigarette, the next instant the case had fallen to the floor; there was a dull, heavy thud, and the Boche crashed back, overturned a chair, and fell like a log to the floor, his head hitting the wall with a vicious crack. The bloodshot being resumed his seat a little limply. Hugh resumed his search for a cigarette.

"After which breezy interlude," remarked Peterson, "let us to business get."

Hugh paused in the act of striking

an accident in the night; in a house like this one never can tell. Or"—he carefully cut the end off a cigar—"you might go mad, in which case we shouldn't bother to kill you. In fact, if you go mad, we shall not be displeased."

Once again he smiled genially. "As I said before, in a house like this, you can never tell. . . ."

The intimidated rabbit, breathing heavily, was staring at Hugh fascinated; and after a moment Hugh turned to him with a courteous bow.

"Ladde," he remarked, "you've been eating onions. Do you mind deflecting the blast in the opposite direction?"

His calm imperturbability seemed to madden Lakington.

"You wait," he snarled thickly; "you wait till I've finished with you. You won't be so d-d humorous then. . . ."

Hugh regarded the speaker languidly.

"Your supposition is more than probable," he remarked, in a bored voice. "I shall be too intent on getting into a Turkish bath to remove the contamination to think of laughing."

Slowly Lakington sank back in his chair, a hard, merciless smile on his lips; and for a moment or two there was silence in the room. It was broken by the unkempt man on the sofa, who, without warning, exploded unexpectedly.

"A truce to all this fooling," he burst forth in a deep rumble; "I confess I do not understand it. Are we assembled here tonight, comrades, to listen to private quarrels and stupid talk?"

A murmur of approval came from the others, and the speaker stood up waving his arms.

"I know not what this young man has done; I care less. In Russia such trifles matter not. He has the appearance of a bourgeois, therefore he must die. Did we not kill thousands—aye, tens of thousands of his kindred, before we obtained the great freedom? Are we not going to do the same in this accursed country? Kill him now—throw him in a corner and let us proceed."

He sat down, amidst a murmur of approval, in which Hugh joined heartily.

"Splendid," he murmured. "A magnificent peroration. Am I right, sir, in assuming that you are what is vulgarly known as a Bolshevik?"

The man turned his sunken eyes, glowing with the burning fires of fanaticism, on Drummond.

"I am one of those who are fighting for the freedom of the world," he cried harshly, "for the right to live of the proletariat. He flung out his arms wildly. "It is freedom; it is the dawn of the new age."

Hugh looked at him with genuine curiosity; it was the first time he had actually met one of these wild visionaries in the flesh. And then the curiosity was succeeded by a very definite amazement: what had Peterson to do with such as he?

For the moment his own deadly risk was forgotten; a growing excitement filled his mind. Could it be possible that here, at last, was the real object of Peterson's organizing a deliberate plot to try and Bolshevize England? He looked up to find Peterson regarding him with a faint smile.

"It is a little difficult to understand, isn't it, Captain Drummond?" he said, carefully flicking the ash off his cigar. "I told you you'd find yourself in deep water." Then he resumed the contemplation of the papers in front of him.

Hugh half closed his eyes, while a general buzz of conversation broke out round the table.

Fragments of conversation struck his ears from time to time. The intimidated rabbit, with the light of battle in his watery eye, was declaiming on the glories of workmen's councils; a bullet-headed man was shouting an inspiring battle cry about no starvation wages and work for all.

"Can it be possible," thought Hugh, grimly, "that such as these have the power to control big destinies? And then, because he had some experience of what one unbalanced brain, whose owner could talk, was capable of achieving; because he knew something about mob psychology, his half contemptuous amusement changed to a bitter foreboding.

"You fool!" he cried suddenly to the Russian; and everyone ceased talking. "You poor d-d boob! You—and your new earth! In Petrograd today bread is two pounds four shillings a pound; tea, fifteen pounds a pound. Do you call that freedom?" He gave a contemptuous laugh.

Too surprised to speak, the Russian sat staring at him; and it was Peterson who broke the silence with his suave voice.

"Your distress, I am glad to say, is not likely to be one of long duration," he remarked. "In fact, the time has come for you to retire for the night, my young friend."

He stood up smiling; then he walked over to the bell behind Hugh and rang it.

"Dead or mad—I wonder which," he threw the end of his cigar into the grate as Hugh rose. "While we deliberate down here on various mat-

ters of importance we shall be thinking of you upstairs—that is to say, if you get there. I see that Lakington is even now beginning to gloat in pleasant anticipation."

Not a muscle on the soldier's face twitched; not by the hint of a look did he show the keenly watching audience that he realized his danger. Lakington's face was merciless, with its fiendish look of anticipation, and Hugh stared at him with level eyes for a while before he turned toward the door.

"Then I will say 'Good night,'" he remarked casually. "Is it the same room that I had last time?"

"No," said Peterson. "A different one—specially prepared for you, if you get to the top of the stairs a man

of his arms. Then came the clang beside him, and with a series of ominous thuds a body rolled down the stairs into the hall below.

"You fool," he heard Lakington's voice, shrill with anger. "You've killed him. Switch on the light. . . ."

But before the order could be carried out Hugh had disappeared, like a great cat, into the darkness of the passage above. As luck would have it the first room he darted into was empty, and he flung up the window and peered out.

A faint, watery moon showed him a twenty-foot drop onto the grass, and without hesitation he flung his legs over the sill. And at that moment something prompted him to look upward.

It was a dormer window, and to an active man access to the roof was easy. Without an instant's hesitation he abandoned all thoughts of retreat; and when two excited men rushed into the room he was firmly ensconced, with his legs astride of the ridge of the window, not a yard from their heads.

Securely hidden in the shadow, he watched the subsequent proceedings with genial toleration. A raucous bellow from the two men announced that they had discovered his line of escape; and in half a minute the garden was full of hurrying figures. One, calm and impassive, his identity betrayed only by the inevitable cigar, stood by the garden door, apparently taking no part in the game; Lakington, blind with fury, was running round in small circles, cursing everyone impartially.

"The car is still there." A man came up to Peterson, and Hugh heard the words distinctly.

"Then he's probably over at Benton's house. I will go and see."

Hugh watched the thick-set, massive figure stroll down toward the wicket gate, and he laughed gently to himself. Then he grew serious again, and with a slight frown he pulled out his watch and peered at it. Half-past one . . . two more hours before dawn. And in those two hours he wanted to explore the house from on top; especially he wanted to have a look at the mysterious central room of which Phyllis had spoken to him—the room where Lakington kept his treasures. But until the excited throng below went indoors, it was unsafe to move. Once out of the shadow, any one would be able to see him crawling over the roof in the moonlight.

At times the thought of the helpless man for whose death he had in one way been responsible recurred to him, but he shook his head angrily. It had been necessary, he realized; you can carry someone upstairs in a normal house without him having his neck broken—but still. . . . And then he wondered who he was. It had been one of the men who sat round the table—that he was tolerably certain. But which . . . ? Was it the frightened bunny, or the Russian, or the gentleman with the bloodshot eye? The only comfort was that whoever it had been, the world would not be appreciably the poorer for his sudden decease. The only regret was that it hadn't been dear Henry. . . .

He had a distate for Henry which far exceeded his dislike of Peterson.

"He's not over there," Peterson's voice came to him from below. "And we've wasted time enough as it is."

The men had gathered together in a group, just below where Hugh was sitting, evidently awaiting further orders.

"Do you mean to say we've lost the young swine again?" said Lakington angrily.

"Not lost—merely misled," murmured Peterson. "The more I see of him the more do I admire his initiative."

Lakington snorted.

"It was that d-d fool Ivolsky's own fault," he snarled; "why didn't he keep still as he was told to do?"

"Why, indeed," returned Peterson, his cigar glowing red. "And I'm afraid we shall never know. He is very dead." He turned toward the house. "That concludes the entertainment, gentlemen, for tonight. I think you can all go to bed."

He disappeared into the house, and the others followed slowly. For the time being Hugh was safe, and with a sigh of relief he stretched his cramped limbs and lay back against the sloping roof. If only he had dared to light a cigarette.

THREE.

It was half an hour before Drummond decided that it was safe to start exploring. First he took off his shoes, and tying the laces together, he slung them around his neck. Then, as silently as he could, he commenced to scramble upward.

It was not an easy operation; one slip and nothing could have stopped him sliding down and finally crashing into the garden below, with a broken leg, at the very least, for his pains. In addition, there was the risk of dislodging a slate, an unwise proceeding in a house where most of the occupants slept with one eye open. But at last he got his hands over the ridge of the roof, and in another moment he was sitting straddled across it.

A sudden rattle close to him made him start violently; only to curse himself for a nervous ass the next moment, and lean forward eagerly. One of the blinds had been released from inside the room, and a pale, diffused light came filtering out into the night from the side of the glass roof. He was still craning backward and forward to try and find some chink through which he could see, when, with a kind of uncanny deliberation, one of the panes of glass slowly opened. It was worked on a ratchet

from inside, and Hugh bowed his thanks to the unseen operator below. Then he leaned forward cautiously, and peered in. . . .

The whole room was visible to him, and his jaw tightened as he took in the scene. In an armchair, smoking as unconcernedly as ever, sat Peterson. He was reading a letter, and occasionally underlining some point with a pencil. Beside him on a table was a big ledger, and every now and then he would turn over a few pages and make an entry. But it was not Peterson on whom the watcher above was concentrating his attention; it was Lakington, taking a red velvet box out of a drawer in the desk. He opened it lovingly, and Hugh saw the flash of diamonds. Lakington let the stones run through his hands, glittering with a thousand flames, while Peterson watched him contemptuously.

"Baubles," he said, scornfully. "Pretty baubles. What will you get for them?"

"Ten, perhaps fifteen thousand," returned the other. "But it's not the money I care about; it's the delight in having them, and the skill required to get them."

Peterson shrugged his shoulders.

"Skill which would give you hundreds of thousands if you turned it into proper channels."

Lakington replaced the stones, and threw the end of his cigarette into the grate.

"Possibly, Carl, quite possibly. But it boils down to this, my friend, that you like the big canvas with broad effects; I like the miniature and the well-drawn etching."

"Which makes us a very happy combination," said Peterson. "The pearls, don't forget, are your job. The big thing"—he turned to the other, and a trace of excitement came into his voice—"the big thing is mine."

The sound of the door opening made both men swing round instantly; then Peterson stepped forward with a smile as Irma entered.

"Back, my dear. I hardly expected you so soon."

In a few words he told the girl what had happened, and she clasped her hands together delightedly.

"Assuredly I shall have to marry that man," she cried. "He is quite the best boring individual I have met in this atrocious country." She sat down and lit a cigarette. "I saw Walter tonight. He came over especially to see you. They want you there for a meeting at the Ritz."

Peterson frowned.

"It's most inconvenient," he remarked with a shade of annoyance in his voice. "Did he say why?"

"Among other things I think they're uneasy about the American," she answered. "My dear man, you can easily slip over for a day."

"Of course I can," said Peterson irritably; "but that doesn't alter the fact that it's inconvenient. Things will be shortly coming to a head here, and I want to be on the spot. However—"

He started to walk up and down the room, frowning thoughtfully.

"Your fish is hooked, mon ami," continued the girl to Lakington. "He has already proposed three times; and he has introduced me to a dreadful-looking woman of extreme virtue, who has adopted me as her niece for the great occasion."

"What great occasion?" asked Lakington.

"Why, his coming of age," cried the girl. "I am to go to Laidley Towers as an honored guest of the duchess of Lamphire." She threw back her head and laughed. "What do you

think of that, my friend? The old lady will be wearing pearls and all complete, in honor of the great day, and I shall be one of the admiring house party."

"How do you know she'll have them in the house?" said Lakington.

"Because dear Freddie has told me so," answered the girl. She blew two smoke rings and then laughed.

"Freddie is really rather a dear at times. I don't think I've ever met any one who is so nearly an idiot without being one. Still," she repeated thoughtfully, "he's rather a dear."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

The world needs good men much more than it needs either rich men or great men.—Uncle Henry's Sayings

WOULD GO FROM HOUSE TO HOUSE

Tennessee Farmer Wants to Go From House to House and Tell Everybody About Tanlac.

"If I were not so busy with my farm work I would go from house to house and tell the people about Tanlac," said A. J. Livingston, a well-known farmer, living near Ashland City, Tenn.

"I had stomach and kidney trouble and suffered torment with my back and side. The doctors could do nothing for me, so I wrote to a friend of mine in Nashville about Tanlac, and he advised me to try it, saying he had heard so many favorable reports about it and sent me a bottle.

"After taking the first bottle I felt so much better that I ordered another bottle myself and the result is I am a well man. I told a friend of mine about it and ordered a bottle for him and he had good results. I can eat anything I want and it don't hurt me, and can sleep like a log. To tell you the truth, I just simply feel like a new man and have more strength and energy than I have had in years. It is simply the grandest medicine in the world. I would like to see all of my friends and get those who are suffering to try it, and I hope you will reach them through this testimonial, which I have gladly given."

Tanlac, the celebrated medicine, which accomplished such remarkable results in this man's case, is a wonderful tonic, appetizer and invigorant. It builds up the system, creates a healthy appetite, promotes digestion and assimilation of the food and makes you feel strong, sturdy and well as nature intended.

Sold by leading druggists everywhere.—Advertisement.

Old Ed Howe's Neighbor.

If you want to talk blue talk; business all gone to pot; country facing the worst time in its history; haven't begun to see the hard times yet; prices going lower and half the merchants are going to fail; two-thirds of the farms will be foreclosed, and all that line of conversation, don't come around and talk it to the Times. In the first place we don't believe it, and in the second place it makes us feel bad and nervous for a while.—Clay Center (Kan.) Times.

LADIES CAN WEAR SHOES

One size smaller and walk in comfort by using ALLEN'S FOOT-GRASS, the anti-septic powder for the feet. Shaken into the shoes and sprinkled in the foot-bath, Allen's Foot-Grass makes tight or new shoes feel easy; gives instant relief to corns, bunions and calluses, prevents Blisters, Callous and sore Spots.

Around the Clock.

"Yes, boys," continued the steep-leak, who was telling "true" and thrilling stories, "yex I was working a clock tower one afternoon about 12 minutes to 6, when I slipped, slid down the roof and caught on the long hand of the clock. There I dangled while the town folks collected below. So I yells to 'em, 'Say, you folks, go home to your suppers, it'll be close to half an hour before I drop.'—Houston Post.

Don't Forget Cuticura Talcum

When adding to your toilet requisites. An exquisitely scented face, skin, baby and dusting powder and perfume, rendering other perfumes superfluous. You may rely on it because one of the Cuticura Trio (Soap, Ointment and Talcum). 25c each everywhere.

Glass Workers Lose Sight.

Many of the workmen in the glass factories of Venice begin to lose their sight after they have passed their fortieth year and soon become totally blind. The impairment of vision is caused by the excessive heat and the glare from the glass furnaces.

ABLE TO DO HER WORK

After Long Suffering Mrs. Siefert Was Restored to Health by Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound

Pottsville, Pa.—"I suffered with female trouble for four or five years and was very irregular. I was not fit to do my work at times and took medicine from a doctor and got no benefit. I saw Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound advertised in the newspapers and took it and got all right. I gained twenty pounds or more and am now able to do my work. I recommend the Vegetable Compound to my friends and you may use these facts as a testimonial."—Mrs. SALLIE SIEFERT, 313 W. Fourth Street, Pottsville, Pa.

The everyday life of many housewives is a continual struggle with weakness and pain. There is nothing more wearing than the ceaseless round of household duties and they become doubly hard when some female trouble makes every bone and muscle ache, and nerves all on edge.

If you are one of these women do not suffer for four or five years as Mrs. Siefert did, but profit by her experience and be restored to health by Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound.



"Because Dear Freddie Has Told Me So," Answered the Girl.



"Because Dear Freddie Has Told Me So," Answered the Girl.



He Opened the Door and Stood There Smiling.

will show you where it is." He opened the door and stood there smiling. And at that moment all the lights went out.

TWO.

The darkness could be felt, as real darkness inside a house always can be felt. Not the faintest glimmer even of greyness showed anywhere, and Hugh remained motionless, wondering what the next move was going to be. Now that the night's ordeal had commenced, all his nerve had returned to him. He felt ice-cold; and as his powerful hands clenched and unclenched by his sides, he grinned faintly to himself. Then very cautiously he commenced to feel his way toward the door.

At that moment someone brushed past him. Like a flash Hugh's hand shot out and gripped him by the arm. The man wriggled and twisted, but he was powerless as a child, and with another short laugh Hugh found his throat with his other hand. And again silence settled on the room. . . .

Still holding the unknown man in front of him, he reached the foot of the stairs, and there he paused. He had suddenly remembered the mysterious thing which had whizzed past his head that other night, and then changed suddenly into the wall beside him. He had gone up five stairs when it had happened, and now with his foot on the first, he started to do some rapid thinking.

If, as Peterson had kindly assured him, they proposed to try and send him mad, it was unlikely that they would kill him on the stairs. At the same time it was obviously an implement capable of accurate adjustment, and therefore it was more than likely that they would use it to frighten him. And if they did—if they did. . . . The unknown man wriggled feebly in his hands, and a sudden unholy look came on to Hugh's face.

"It's the only possible chance," he said to himself, "and if it's you or me, ladde, I guess it's got to be you."

With a quick heave he jerked the man off his feet, and lifted him up till his head was above the level of his own. Then clutching him tight, he commenced to climb. His own head was bent down, somewhere in the region of the man's back, and he took no notice of the feebly kicking legs.

Then at last he reached the fourth step, and gave a final adjustment to his semi-conscious burden. He pressed his head even lower in the man's back, and lifted him up another three inches.

"How awfully jolly!" he murmured. "I hope the result will please you."

"I'd stand quite still if I were you," said Peterson suavely. "Just listen."

As Hugh had gambled on, the performance was designed to frighten. Instead of that, something hit the neck of the man he was holding with such force that it wrenched him clean



"Kill Him Now—Throw Him in a Corner and Let Us Proceed."

a match, and for the first time a genuine smile spread over his face.

"There are moments, Peterson," he murmured, "when you really appeal to me."

Peterson took the empty chair next to Lakington.

"Sit down," he said shortly. "I can only hope that I shall appeal to you still more before we kill you."

Hugh bowed and sat down.

"Consideration," he murmured, "was always your strong point. May I ask how long I have to live?"

Peterson smiled genially.