

BULL-DOG DRUMMOND

The Adventures of A Demobilized Officer Who Found Peace Dull

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"SAPPER"

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(Continued from last week.)

PROLOGUE.—In December, 1918, four men gathered in a hotel in Berne and heard one of the quartet outline a plan to paralyze Great Britain and at the same time seize world power. The other three, Hocking, American, and Steineman and Von Gratz, Germans, all millionaires, agree to the scheme, providing another man, Hiram Potts, an American, is taken in. The instigator of the plot gives his name as Comte de Guy, but when he leaves for England with his daughter he decides to use the name Carl Peterson.

CHAPTER I.—Capt. Hugh (Bulldog) Drummond, a retired officer, advertises for work that will give him excitement, signing "X10." As a result he meets Phyllis Benton, a young woman who answered his ad. She tells him of strange murders and robberies of which she suspects a band headed by Carl Peterson and Henry Lakington of being the leaders.

"Drummond—Captain Drummond, late of the Loamshires." He leaned back in his chair, and lit a cigarette. "My dear Phyllis," said a voice behind his back, "this is a pleasant surprise. I had no idea that you were in London."

A tall, clean-shaven man stopped beside the table, throwing a keen glance at Drummond. "The world is full of such surprises, isn't it?" answered the girl lightly. "I don't suppose you know Captain Drummond, do you? Mr. Lakington—art connoisseur and—er—collector."

The two men bowed slightly, and Mr. Lakington smiled. "I do not remember ever having heard my harmless pastimes more concisely described," he remarked suavely. "Are you interested in such matters?"

"Not very, I'm afraid," answered Drummond. "Just recently I have been rather too busy to pay much attention to art."

The other man smiled again, and it struck Hugh that rarely, if ever, had he seen such a cold, merciless face. "Of course you've been to France," Lakington murmured. "Unfortunately a bad heart kept me on this side of the water. Sometimes I cannot help thinking how wonderful it must have been to be able to kill without fear of consequences. There is art in killing, Captain Drummond—profound art."

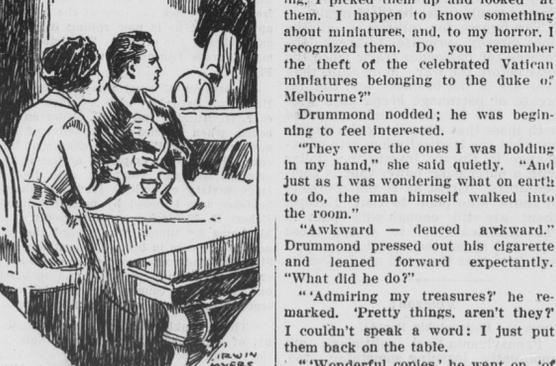
He looked at his watch and sighed. "Alas! I must tear myself away. Are you returning home this evening?"

The girl, who had been glancing round the restaurant, shrugged her shoulders. "Probably," she answered. "I haven't quite decided. I might stop with Aunt Kate."

"Fortunate Aunt Kate." With a bow Lakington turned away, and through the glass Drummond watched him get his hat and stick from the cloakroom. Then he looked at the girl, and noticed that she had gone a little white.

"What's the matter, old thing?" he asked quickly. "Are you feeling faint?"

She shook her head, and gradually the color came back to her face. "I'm quite all right," she answered. "It gave me rather a shock, that man finding us here. You've stumbled right into the middle of it, my friend—rather sooner



"That is One of the Men You Will Probably Have to Kill."

than I anticipated. That is one of the men you will probably have to kill. Her companion lit another cigarette. "What is his particular worry?" "First and foremost the brute wants to marry me," replied the girl. "I loathe being obvious," said Hugh, "but I am not surprised." "But it isn't that that matters." She looked at Drummond quietly. "Henry Lakington is the second most danger-

black velvet shelves were ropes of pearls, a gorgeous diamond tiara, and a whole heap of loose, uncut stones. And in one corner I caught a glimpse of the most wonderful gold chaliced cup—just like the one for which Samuel Levy, the Jew moneylender, was still offering a reward. Then he shut the door and locked it, and again stared at me in silence.

"All copies," he said quietly, "wonderful copies. And should you ever be tempted to think otherwise—ask your father, Miss Benton. Be warned by me: don't do anything foolish. Ask your father first."

"And did you?" asked Drummond. She shrugged. "That very evening," she answered. "And daddy flew into a frightful passion, and told me never to dare meddle in things that didn't concern me again. Then gradually, as time went on, I realized that Lakington had some hold over daddy—that he'd got my father in his power."



"Admiring My Treasures?" He remarked. "Pretty Things, Aren't They?"

Her hands were clenched, and her breast rose and fell stormily. Drummond waited for her to compose herself before he spoke again. "You mentioned murder, too," he remarked.

She nodded. "I've got no proof," she said, "less even than over the burglaries. But there was a man called George Dringer, and one evening, when Lakington was dining with us, I heard him discussing this man with daddy."

"He's got to go," said Lakington. "He's dangerous!"

"And then my father got up and closed the door; but I heard them arguing for half an hour. Three weeks later a coroner's jury found that George Dringer had committed suicide while temporarily insane. The same evening daddy, for the first time in his life, went to bed the worse for drink."

The girl fell silent, and Drummond stared at the orchestra with troubled eyes. Things seemed to be rather deeper than he had anticipated.

"Then there was another case." She was speaking again. "Do you remember that man who was found dead in a railway carriage at Oxhey station. He was an Italian—Giuseppe by name; and the jury brought in a verdict of death from natural causes. A month before, he had an interview with Lakington, which took place at our house: because the Italian, being a stranger, came to the wrong place, and Lakington happened to be with us at the time. The interview finished with a fearful quarrel." She turned to Drummond with a slight smile. "Not much evidence, is there? Only I know Lakington murdered him. I know it. You may think I'm fanciful—imagining things; you may think I'm exaggerating. I don't mind if you do—because you won't for long."

Drummond did not answer immediately. Against his saner judgment he was beginning to be profoundly impressed, and, at the moment, he did not quite know what to say.

"What about this other man?" he asked at length. "I can tell you very little about him," she answered. "He came to The Elms—that is the name of Lakington's house—three months ago. He is about medium height and rather thick-set; clean-shaven, with thick brown hair, flecked slightly with white. His forehead is broad, and his eyes are a sort of cold grey-blue. But it's his hands that terrify me. They're large and white and utterly ruthless." She turned to him appealingly. "Oh! don't think I'm talking wildly," she implored. "He frightens me to death—that man; far, far worse than Lakington. He would stop at nothing to gain his ends, and even Lakington himself knows that Mr. Peterson is his master."

"Peterson!" murmured Drummond. "It seems quite a sound old English name."

The girl laughed scornfully. "Oh! the name is sound enough, if it was his real one. As it is, it's about as real as his daughter."

"There is a lady in the case, then?" "By the name of Irma," said the girl briefly. "She lies on a sofa in the garden and yawns. She's no more English than that waiter."

A faint smile flickered over her companion's face; he had formed a fairly vivid mental picture of Irma. Then he grew serious again.

"And what is it that makes you think there's mischief ahead?" he asked abruptly.

The girl shrugged her shoulders. "What the novelists call feminine intuition, I suppose," she answered. "That—and my father." She said the last words very low. "He hardly ever sleeps at night now; I hear him pacing up and down his room—hour after hour, hour after hour. Oh! it makes me mad. . . . Don't you understand? I've got to get him away from those devils, before he breaks down completely."

Drummond nodded, and looked away. While she had been speaking he had made up his mind what course to take, and now, having outstayed everybody else, he decided that it was time for the interview to cease. Already an early dinner was having a cocktail, while Lakington might return at any moment. And if there was anything in what she had told him, it struck him that it would be as well for that gentleman not to find them together.

"I think," he said, "we'd better go. My address is 60A Half Moon street; my telephone 1234 Mayfair. If anything happens, if ever you want me—at any hour of the day or night—ring me up, or write. If I'm not in, leave a message with my servant Denny. He is absolutely reliable. The only other thing is your own address."

"The Larches, near Godalming," answered the girl, as they moved toward the door. "Oh! if you only knew the glorious relief of feeling one's got some one to turn to. . . ." She looked at him with shining eyes, and Drummond felt his pulse quicken suddenly.

"May I drop you anywhere?" he asked, as they stood on the pavement, but she shook her head.

"No, thank you. I'll go in that taxi." She gave the man an address, and stepped in, while Hugh stood bare-headed by the door.

"Don't forget," he said earnestly. "Any time of the day or night. And while I think of it—we're old friends. Can that be done? In case I come and stay, you see."

She thought for a moment and then nodded her head. "All right," she answered. "We've met a lot in London during the war."

With a grinding of gear wheels the taxi drove off, leaving Hugh with a vivid picture imprinted on his mind of blue eyes, and white teeth, and a skin like the bloom of a sun-kissed peach.

For a moment or two he stood staring after it, and then he walked across to his own car. With his mind still full of the interview he drove slowly along Piccadilly, while every now and then he smiled grimly to himself. Was the whole thing an elaborate hoax? Somehow deep down in his mind, he wondered whether it was a joke—whether, by some freak of fate, he had stumbled on one of those strange mysteries which up to date he had regarded as existing only in the realms of dime novels.

He turned into his rooms, and stood in front of the mantelpiece taking off his gloves. It was as he was about to lay them down on the table that an envelope caught his eye, addressed to him in an unknown handwriting. Mechanically he picked it up and opened it. Inside was a single half-sheet of notepaper, on which a few lines had been written in a small, neat hand.

"There are more things in heaven and earth, young man, than a capability for eating steak and onions, and a desire for adventure. I imagine that you possess both; and they are useful assets in the second locality mentioned by the poet. In heaven, however, one never knows—especially with regard to the onions. Be careful."

Drummond stood motionless for a moment, with narrowed eyes. Then he leaned forward and pressed the bell.

"Who brought this note, James?" he said quietly, as his servant came into the room. "A small boy, sir. Said I was to be sure and see you got it most particular." He unlocked a cupboard near the window and produced a tautalus.

"Whisky, sir, or cocktail?" "Whisky, I think, James." Hugh carefully folded the sheet of paper and placed it in his pocket. And his face as he took the drink from his man would have left no doubt in an onlooker's mind as to why, in the past, he had earned the name of "Bull-Dog" Drummond.

CHAPTER II.

In Which He Journeys to Godalming and the Game Begins.

ONE.

"I almost think, James, that I could toy with another kidney." Drummond looked across the table at his servant, who was carefully arranging two or three dozen letters in groups. "I've got a journey in front of me today, and I require a large breakfast."

James Denny supplied the deficiency from a dish that was standing on an electric heater. "Are you going for long, sir?" "I don't know, James. It all depends on circumstances. Which, when you come to think of it, is undoubtedly one of the most fatuous phrases in the English language. Is there anything in the world that doesn't depend on circumstances?"

"Will you be motoring, sir, or going by train?" asked James prosaically. Dialectical arguments did not appeal to him. "By car," answered Drummond. "Pajamas and a tooth-brush." "You won't take evening clothes, sir?" "No. I want my visit to appear unpremeditated, James, and if one goes

about completely encased in boiled shirts, while pretending to be merely out for the afternoon, people have doubts as to one's intellect."

James digested this great thought in silence. "Will you be going far, sir?" he asked at length, pouring out a second cup of coffee.

"To Godalming. A charming spot, I believe, though I've never been there. Charming inhabitants, too, James. The lady I met yesterday at the Carlton lives at Godalming."

"Indeed, sir," murmured James non-committally. "You d—d old humbug," laughed Drummond, "you know you're itching to know all about it. I had a very long and interesting talk with her, and one of two things emerges quite clearly from our conversation. Either, James, I am a congenital idiot, and don't know enough to come in out of the rain; or we've hit the goods. That is what I propose to find out by my little excursion. Either our legs, my friend, are being pulled till they will never resume their normal shape; or that advertisement has succeeded beyond our wildest dreams."

"There are a lot more answers in this morning, sir." Denny made a movement toward the letters he had been sorting. "One from a lovely widow with two children."

"Lovely," cried Drummond. "How forward of her!" He glanced at the letter and smiled. "Care, James, and accuracy are essential in a secretary. The misguided woman calls herself lonely, not lovely. She will remain so, as far as I am concerned, until the other matter is settled."

"Will it take long, sir, do you think?" "To get it settled?" Drummond lit a cigarette and leaned back in his chair. "Listen, James, and I will outline the case. The maiden lives at a house called The Larches, near Godalming, with her papa. Not far away is another house called The Elms, owned by a gentleman of the name of Henry Lakington—a nasty man, James, with a nasty face—who was also at the Carlton yesterday afternoon for a short time. And now we come to the point. Miss Benton—that is the lady's name—accuses Mr. Lakington of being the complete IT in the criminal line. She went even so far as to say that he was the second most dangerous man in England."

"Indeed, sir. More coffee, sir?" "Will nothing move you, James?" remarked his master plaintively. "This man murders people and does things like that, you know."

"Personally, sir, I prefer a picture-palace. But I suppose there ain't no accounting for 'obbies. May I clear away, sir?"

"No, James, not at present. Keep quite still while I go on, or I shall get it wrong. Three months ago there arrived at The Elms, the most dangerous man in England—the IT of ITS. This gentleman goes by the name of Peterson, and he owns a daughter. From what Miss Benton said, I have doubts about that daughter, James." He rose and strolled over to the window. "Grave doubts. However, to return to the point, it appears that some unpleasing conspiracy is being launched by IT, the IT of ITS, and the doubtful daughter, into which Papa Benton has been unwillingly drawn. As far as I can make out, the suggestion is that I should unravel the tangled skein of crime and extricate papa."

In a spasm of uncontrollable excitement James sucked his teeth. "Lumme, it wouldn't aif go on the movies, would it?" he remarked. "Better than them Red Indians and things."

"I fear, James, that you are not in the habit of spending your spare time at the British museum, as I hoped," said Drummond. "And your brain doesn't work very quickly. The point is not whether this hideous affair is better than Red Indians and things—but whether it's genuine. Am I to battle with murderers, or shall I find a house party roaring with laughter on the lawn?"

"As long as you laughs like 'ell yourself, sir, I don't see as 'ow it makes much odds," answered James. "The first sensible remark you've made this morning," said his master hopefully. "I will go prepared to laugh."

He picked up a pipe from the mantelpiece, and proceeded to fill it, while James Denny waited in silence. "A lady may ring up today," Drummond continued. "Miss Benton, to be exact. Don't say where I've gone, if she does; but take down any message, and write it to me at Godalming postoffice. If by any chance you don't hear from me for three days, get in touch with Scotland Yard, and tell 'em where I've gone. That covers everything if it's genuine. If, on the other hand, it's a hoax, and the house-party is a good one, I shall probably want you to come down with my evening clothes and some more kit."

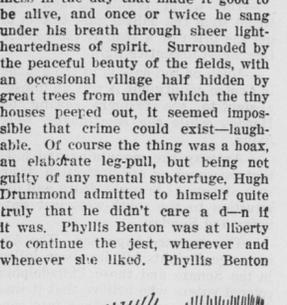
"Very good, sir. I will clean your small Colt revolver at once."

Hugh Drummond paused in the act of lighting his pipe, and a grin spread slowly over his face. "Excellent," he said. "And see if you can find that water-squirt pistol I used to have—Son of a Gun, they called it. That ought to raise a laugh, when I arrest the murderer with it."

TWO.

The 30 h.p. two-seater made short work of the run to Godalming. As Drummond thought of the two guns rolled up carefully in his pajamas—the harmless toy and the wicked little automatic—he grinned gently to himself. The girl had not rung him up during the morning, and after a com-

fortable lunch at his club, he had started about three o'clock. The hedges, fresh with the glory of spring, flashed past; the smell of the country came sweet and fragrant on the air. There was a gentle warmth, a balminess in the day that made it good to be alive, and once or twice he sang under his breath through sheer light-heartedness of spirit. Surrounded by the peaceful beauty of the fields, with an occasional village half hidden by great trees from under which the tiny houses peeped out, it seemed impossible that crime could exist—laughable. Of course the thing was a hoax, an elaborate leg-pull, but being not guilty of any mental subterfuge, Hugh Drummond admitted to himself quite truly that he didn't care a d—n if it was. Phyllis Benton was at liberty to continue the jest, wherever and whenever she liked. Phyllis Benton



"And See If You Can Find That Water-Squirt Pistol I Used to Have—Son of a Gun, They Called It."

was a very nice girl, and very nice girls are permitted a lot of latitude. A persistent honking behind aroused him from his reverie, and he pulled into the side of the road.

An open cream-colored Rolls-Royce Crew level, with five people on board, and he looked up as it passed. There were three people in the back—two men and a woman, and for a moment his eyes met those of the man nearest him. Then they drew ahead, and Drummond pulled up to avoid the thick cloud of dust.

With a slight frown he stared at the retreating car; he saw the man lean over and speak to the other man; he saw the other man look around. Then a bend in the road hid them from sight, and still frowning, Drummond pulled out his case and lit a cigarette. For the man whose eye he had caught as the Rolls went by was Henry Lakington. There was no mistaking that hard-lipped, cruel face.

Presumably, thought Hugh, the other two occupants were Mr. Peterson and the doubtful daughter, Irma; Presumably they were returning to The Elms. And incidentally there seemed no pronounced reason why they shouldn't. But, somehow, the sudden appearance of Lakington had upset him; he felt irritated and annoyed. What little he had seen of the man he had not liked; he did not want to be reminded of him, especially just as he was thinking of Phyllis.

He watched the white dust-cloud rise over the hill in front as the car topped it; he watched it settle and drift away in the faint breeze. Then he let in his clutch and followed quite slowly in the big car's wake.

There had been two men in front—the driver and another, and he wondered idly if the latter was Mr. Benton. He accelerated up the hill and swung over the top; the next moment he braked hard and pulled up just in time. The Rolls, with the chauffeur peering into the open, had stopped in such a position that it was impossible for him to get by.

The girl was still seated in the back of the car, also the passenger in front, but the two other men were standing in the road apparently watching the chauffeur, and after a while the one whom Drummond had recognized as Lakington came toward him. "I'm sorry," he began—and then paused in surprise. "Why, surely it's Captain Drummond!"

Drummond nodded pleasantly. "The occupant of a car is hardly likely to change in a mile, is he?" he remarked. "I'm afraid I forgot to wave as you went past, but I got your smile all right. Are you likely to be long, because if so, I'll stop my engine?"

"The other man was now approaching casually, and Drummond regarded him casually. "A friend of our little Phyllis, Peterson," said Lakington, as he came up. "Any friend of Miss Benton's is, I hope, ours," said Peterson with a smile. "You've known her a long time, I expect?"

"Quite a long time," returned Hugh. "We have juzzed together on many occasions."

"Which makes it all the more unfortunate that we should have delayed you," said Peterson. "I can't help thinking, Lakington, that that new chauffeur is a bit of a fool."

(To be Continued.)