BULL-DOG DRUMMOND

The Adventures of a Demobilized Officer Who Found Peace Dull

By CYRIL McNEILE "SAPPER"

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CHAPTER XI—Continued.

—17—

"Did I not say," he answered, "that there was power in the box? But in the name of that power—mind you—I warn you: Do not touch those pearls till the light has burned low in the brazier. If you do they will disappear—never to return. Watch but do not touch!"

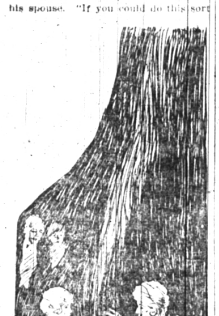
Slowly he backed toward the window, unperceived in the general excitement; and Hugh dodged rapidly toward the car. It struck him that the seance was over, and he just had time to see Lakington snatch something which appeared to have been let down by a string from above, before turning into the lashes and facing for the car. As it was he was only a second or two in front of the other, and the last vision he had through a break in the trees, before they were spinning smoothly down the deserted road, was an open window in Laidley Towers from which dense volumes of vapor poured steadily out. Of the house party behind, waiting for the light to burn low in the brazier, he could see no sign through the opaque wall of green fog.

It took five minutes, so the gathered afterward from a member of the house party, before the light had burned sufficiently low for the duchess to consider it safe to touch the pearls.

In various stages of bewilderment the assembled guests had peered at the box, while the critical comments of the men were rightly treated by the ladies with the contempt they deserved. Was the necklace not there, wrapped in its gold and silver tissue, where a few minutes before there had been nothing?

"Some trick of that beastly light," remarked the duke peevishly. "For heaven's sake throw the stuff out of the window."

"Don't be a fool, John," retorted his spouse. "If you could do this sort



"Did I Not Say That There Was Power In the Box?" He Said Dreamily.

of thing the house of lords might be some use to somebody."

When two minutes later they stared horror-struck at a row of ordinary marbles hideously unwrapped from a piece of gold and silver tissue, the duke's comment of agreement with his wife's sentiment passed uncontradicted. In fact it is to be understood that over the scene which followed it was best to draw a decent veil.

THREE.

Drummond bunched low over the wheel in his endeavor to conceal his identity from the man behind, knowing of that at the time. And Lakington was far too busy to bother with the chauffeur.

One snarling curse as they had started, for not having done as he had been told, was the total of their conversation during the trip. During the rest of the time the transformation to the normal kept Lakington busy, and Hugh could see him reflected in the wind-screen removing the make-up from his face, and changing his clothes.

Even now he was not quite clear how the trick had been worked. That there had been two cabinets, that was clear—one false, the other the real one. That they had been changed at the crucial moment by the girl Irene was also obvious. But how had the pearls disappeared in the first case, and then apparently reappeared again? For one thing, he was quite certain, whatever was inside the parcel of gold and silver tissue which, for all he knew, they might be still skirting at, it was not the historic necklace.

And he was still puzzling it over in his mind when the car swung into the drive at The Elms.

"Change the wheels as usual," snapped Lakington as he got out, and Hugh bent forward to conceal his face. "Then report to me in the central room."

And out of the corner of his eye Hugh watched him enter the house with the Chinese cabinet clasped in his hand.

"Toby," he remarked to that worthy, whom he found mournfully eating a ham sandwich in the garage, "Let's go on the roof."

Silently they both climbed the ladder which had been placed in readiness to find Peter Darrell and the American detective already in position. A brilliant light streamed out through the glass dome, and the inside of the central room was clearly visible. In the three chairs sat the motionless, bound figures so swathed in rope that only the tops of their heads were visible, just as Lakington had left him and Toby and Algy earlier in the evening. The only moving thing in the room was the criminal himself, and at the moment he was seated at the table with the Chinese cabinet in front of him. With a quick turn of his wrist he pried open two flaps of wood, and folded them back against the side. Then he lifted out a parcel of gold and silver tissue from underneath.

"My hat!" muttered Hugh, "what a fool I was not to think of it! Just a false bottom actuated by closing the lid."

But the American, whistling gently to himself, had his eyes fixed on the rope of wonderful pearls which Lakington was holding lovingly in his hands.

"So easy, you scum," continued Lakington, "and you thought to pit yourselves against me!"—he rose and stood in front of the chair where he had last left Drummond. "That fool of a chauffeur failed to carry out my orders, and create a diversion. You will see what happens to people who fail to carry out my orders, in a minute. And after that you'll never see anything again."

"Say, he's a dream, that guy," muttered the American. "What pearls are those he's got?"

"The duchess of Lampshires," whispered Hugh. "Lifted right under the nose of the whole bally house party."

The four watchers on the roof glued their eyes to the glass. And the sight they saw a moment or two afterward startled even the phlegmatic Mr. Green.

A heavy door was swinging slowly open, apparently of its own volition, though Hugh, stealing a quick glance at Lakington, saw that he was pressing some small studs in a niche in one of the walls. Then he looked back at the door, and stared dumfounded. It was the mysterious cupboard of which Phyllis had spoken to him, but nothing he had imagined from her words had prepared him for the reality. It seemed to be literally crammed to overflowing with the most priceless loot. Gold vessels of fantastic and beautiful shapes littered the floor, while on the shelves were arranged the most wonderful collection of precious stones, which shone and scintillated in the electric light till their glitter almost blinded the watchers.

The pearls were carefully placed in a position of honor, and for a few moments Lakington stood gloating over his collection.

"Do you see them, Captain Drummond?" he asked quietly. "Earth'ling obtained by my brains—my hands. All mine, mine!" His voice rose to a shout. "And you pit your puny wits against me." With a laugh he crossed the room, and once more pressed the studs. The door swung slowly to and closed without a sound, while Lakington still stood with silent mirth.

"And now," he resumed, rubbing his hands, "we will prepare your bath, Captain Drummond. And while it is getting ready, we will just deal with the chauffeur who neglected his orders."

For a few minutes he bent over the chemicals, and then he poured the mixture into the water, which half filled the long bath at the end of the room. "About five minutes before we're quite ready," he announced, "just time for the chauffeur."

He went to a speaking-tube down which he blew. Somewhat naturally there was no answer, and Lakington frowned.

"A stupid fellow," he remarked softly. "But there is no hurry; I will deal with him later."

Lakington returned to the chair which contained, as he thought, his chief enemy, and was standing beside it with an unholy joy shining on his face.

"And since I have to deal with him later, Captain Drummond, D. S. O., M. C., I may as well deal with you now. Then it will be your friends' turn. I am going to cut the ropes, and carry you, while you're so numbed that you can't move, to the bath. Then I shall drop you in, Captain Drummond, and when, afterward, you pray for death, I shall mercifully spare your life—for a while."

He slashed at the ropes behind the chair, and the four men craned forward expectantly.

"There," snarled Lakington. "I'm ready for you, you young swine."

And even as he spoke, the words died away on his lips, and with a dreadful cry he sprang back. For with a dull, heavy thud the body of the dead German Heinrich rolled off the chair and sprawled at his feet.

"My God!" screamed Lakington. "What has happened? I—I—"

He rushed to the bell and pealed it frantically, and with a smile of joy Hugh watched his frenzied terror. No one came in answer to the ring, and Lakington dashed to the door, only to recoil into the room with a choking noise in his throat. Outside in the hall stood four masked men, each with a revolver pointing at his heart.

"My cue," muttered Hugh. "And you understand, fellows, don't you?—he's my meat."

The next moment he had disappeared down the ladder, and the three remaining watchers stared motionless at the grim scene. For Lakington had shut the door and was crouching by the table, his nerve utterly gone. And all the while the puffed, bloated body of the German sprawled on the floor. . . .

Slowly the door into the hall opened, and with a scream of fear Lakington sprang back. Standing in the doorway was Hugh Drummond, and his face was grim and merciless.

"You sent for your chauffeur, Henry Lakington," he remarked quietly. "I am here."

"What do you mean?" muttered Lakington thickly.

"I drove you back from Laidley Towers tonight," said Hugh with a slight smile. "The proper man was foolish and had to be killed." He advanced a few steps into the room, and the other shrank back. "You look frightened, Henry. Can it be that the young swine's wits are, after all, better than yours?"

"What do you want?" gasped Lakington, through dry lips.

"I want you, Henry—just you. Hitherto you've always used gangs of your ruffians against me. Now my gang occupies this house. But I'm not going to use them. It's going to be just—you and I. Stand up, Henry; stand up—as I have always stood up to you." He crossed the room and stood in front of the cowering man.

"Take half—take half," he screamed. "I've got treasure—I've . . ."

And Drummond hit him a fearful blow on the mouth.

"I shall take all, Henry, to return to their rightful owners. Boys"—he raised his voice—"carry out these other two, and undo them."

The four masked men came in, and carried out the two chairs.

"The intimidated rabbit, Henry, and the kindly gentleman you put to guard Miss Benton," he remarked as the door closed. "So now we may regard ourselves as being alone. Just you and I. And one of us, Lakington—you devil in human form—is going to die that bath."

"But the bath means death," shrieked Lakington—"death in agony."

"That will be unfortunate for the one who goes in," said Drummond, taking a step toward him.

"You would murder me?" half sobbed the terrified man.

"No, Lakington; I'm not going to murder you." A gleam of hope came into the other's eyes. "But I'm going to fight you in order to decide which of us two ceases to adorn the earth; that is, if your diagnosis of the contents of the bath is correct. What little gleam of pity I might have possessed for you has been completely extinguished by your present exhibition of nauseating cowardice. Fight, you worm, fight; or I'll throw you in."

And Lakington fought. The sudden complete turning of the tables had for the moment destroyed his nerve; now, at Drummond's words, he recovered himself. There was no mercy on the soldier's face, and in his inmost heart Lakington knew that the end had come. For strong and wiry though he was he was no match for the other.

Relentlessly he felt himself being forced toward the deadly liquid he had prepared for Drummond, and as the irony of the thing struck him, the sweat broke out on his forehead and he cursed aloud. At last he backed into the edge of the bath and his strings gave redoubled. But still there was no mercy on the soldier's face, and he felt himself being forced farther and farther over the liquid until he was only held from falling into it by Drummond's grip on his throat.

Then, just before the grip relaxed and he went under, the soldier spoke once.

"Henry Lakington," he said, "the retribution is just."

Drummond sprang back, and the liquid closed over the wretched man's head. But only for a second. With a dreadful cry Lakington leaped out,

But Still There Was No Mercy on the Soldier's Face, and He Felt Himself Being Forced Farther and Farther Over the Liquid.

and even Drummond felt a momentary qualm of pity. For the criminal's clothes were already burnt through to the skin, and his face—ors what was left of it—was a shining copper color. Mad with agony, he dashed to the door, and flung it open. The four men outside, aghast at the spectacle, recoiled and let him through. And the kindly mercy which Lakington had never shown to any one in his life was given to him at the last.

Blindly he groped his way up the stairs, and as Drummond got to the door the end came. Some one must have put in gear the machinery which worked on the fifth step, or perhaps it was automatic. For suddenly a heavy steel weight revolving on an arm whizzed out from the wall and struck Lakington behind the neck. Without a sound he fell forward, and the weight, unchecked, changed suddenly home. And thus did the invention of which he was proudest break the inventor's own neck. Truly, the retribution was just.

"That only leaves Peterson," remarked the American, coming into the hall at that moment, and lighting a cigar.

"That only leaves Peterson," agreed Drummond. "And the girl," he added as an afterthought.

CHAPTER XII.

In Which the Last Round Takes Place.

ONE.

It was during the next hour or two that the full value of Mr. Jerome K. Green as an acquisition to the party became apparent. Certain other preparations in honor of Peterson's arrival were duly carried out, and then arose the question of the safe in which the all-important ledger was kept.

"There it is," said Drummond, pointing to a heavy steel door flush with the wall, on the opposite side of the room to the big one containing Lakington's ill-gotten treasure. "And it doesn't seem to me that you're going to open that one by pressing any buttons in the wall."

"Then, Captain," drawled the American, "I guess we'll open it otherwise. It's sure plumb easy. I've been getting pay with some of the household effects, and this bar of soap sort of caught my eye."

From his pocket he produced some ordinary yellow soap, and the others glanced at him curiously.

"I'll just give you a little demonstration," he continued "of how our swell cracksmen over the water open safes when the owners have been so thoughtless as to remove the keys."

Deliberately he proceeded to seal up every crack in the safe door with the soap, leaving a small gap at the top unsealed. Then round that gap he built what was to all intents and purposes a soap dam.

"If any of you boys," he remarked to the intent group around him, "think of taking this up as a means of livelihood, be careful of this stuff." From another pocket he produced an india-rubber bottle. "Don't drop it on the floor unless you want to be measured for your coffin. There it just is a hundred-and-one times as fatal."

The group faded away, and the American laughed.

"Might I ask what it is?" murmured Hugh politely from the neighborhood of the door.

"Sure thing, Captain," returned the detective, carefully pouring some of the liquid into the soap dam. "That is what I told you I'd get gelignite; or, as the boys call it, the oil. It runs right round the cracks of the door inside the soap." He added a little more, and carefully replaced the stopper. "Now, a quarter-inch and a bit of fuse, and I guess we'll leave the room."

"It reminds one of those dreadful barbarians, the sappers, trying to blow up things," remarked Toby, stepping with some agility into the garden; and a moment or two later the American joined them.

"It may be necessary to do it again," he announced, and as he spoke the sound of a dull explosion came from inside the house. "On the other hand," he continued, going back into the room and quietly pulling the safe door open, "it may not. There's your book, Captain."

He calmly relit his cigar, as if safe-opening was the most normal undertaking, and Drummond lifted out the heavy ledger and placed it on the table.

"Go out in gangs, boys," he said to the group of men by the door, "and get your breakfasts. I'm going to be busy for a bit."

He sat down at the table and began to turn the pages. The American was amusing himself with the faked Chinese cabinet; Toby and Peter sprawled in two chairs, unashamedly snoring. And after a while the detective put down the cabinet and, coming over, sat at Drummond's side.

Every page contained an entry—sometimes half a dozen—of the same type, and as the immensity of the project dawned on the two men their faces grew serious.

"I told you he was a big man, Captain," remarked the American, leaning back in his chair and looking at the open book through half closed eyes.

"One can only hope to Heaven that we're in time," returned Hugh. "D—n it, man," he exploded, "surely the police must know of this!"

The American closed his eyes still more.

"Your English police know most things," he drawled, "but you've sort of got some peculiar laws in your country. With us, if we don't like a man—something happens. He kind o' ceases to sit up and take nourishment. But over here, the more scurrilous he is, the more he talks bloodshed and riot, the more constables does he get to guard him from catching cold."

The soldier frowned.

"Look at this entry here," he grunted. "That blighter is a member of parliament. What's he getting four payments of a thousand pounds for?"

"Why, surely to buy some nice warm underclothes with," grinned the detective. Then he leaned forward and glanced at the name. "But isn't he some pot in one of your big trade unions?"

"Heaven knows," grunted Hugh. "I only saw the blighter once, and then his shirt was dirty." He turned over a few more pages thoughtfully. "Why, if these are the sums of money Peterson has blown, the man must have spent a fortune. Two thousand pounds to Ivolsky. Incidentally, that's the bloke who had words with the whatnot on the stairs."

In silence they continued their study of the book. The people of England and Scotland had been split up into districts regulated by population rather than area, and each district appeared to be in charge of one director. A varying number of sub-districts in every main division had each their sub-director and staff, and at some of the names Drummond rubbed his eyes in amazement. Briefly, the duties of every man were outlined; the locality in which his work lay, his exact responsibilities, so that overlapping was reduced to a minimum. In each case the

"What's He Getting Four Payments of a Thousand Pounds For?"

staff was small, the work largely that of organization. But in each district there appeared on a dozen names of men who were euphemistically described as lecturers, while at the end of the book there appeared nearly fifty names—both of men and women—who were proudly denoted as first-class lecturers. And if Drummond had rubbed his eyes at some of the names on the organizing staffs, the first-class general lecturers deprived him of speech.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

TRACED TO ANCIENT GREECE

Present Day Almanac Had Its Origin in the Kalends Used by Greeks as Records.

For back to the days of ancient Greece it was the custom to announce the first day of the month either through a herald or placards posted on the city walls. These placards were known as kalends, or kolendae from the Greek, "I call or proclaim." The book of accounts referring to the days of the year was known as a calendarium, hence the word calendar. Excavators at Pompeii have discovered a square block of marble which served the Greeks as a calendar. Each side served as a record of three months. Each month was headed by the proper sign of the zodiac, and contained astronomical, agricultural and religious information.

Tracing back the origin of the word almanac, Verstegan, the famous old lexicographer, says:

"Our ancient Saxon ancestors used to engrave on certain squared sticks about a foot in length, sometimes more, sometimes less, the courses of the moones of the whole yeare, where by they alwayes certainly tell what new moones, full moones and changes should happen, as also their festival dayes; and such a carved stick they called al-mon-ayht; that is to say, al-mon-heed, to wit, the regard or observation of all the moones, and hence is derived the name almanac."

No Success Without Effort.

It's seldom you can do what you want to do the first time you try. To be sure if you have been working along a given line there may not be any difficulty in your doing what is comparatively new without trouble. On the other hand there are few people who are gifted enough to walk off with the palm the first time the task comes up. Failure is not so much a matter of lack of ability as it is of unorganized effort. When young men learn to plod along until they are masters of the thing they would do there will be no question about success. Too many want to succeed without effort. Nature is a little slow in rewarding such.—Grit.

Ancient Pictures.

Mankind has always loved pictures. Races, without a written language have left behind them rude carvings and murals to attest the fact. When an industry arose that appealed to this ancient appetite with pictures that moved, it did not have to wait long to see whether it would die or flourish. A dozen years ago the motion picture business, as we now know it, did not exist. Today the American public supports 18,500 moving picture theaters makes 5,000,000,000 visits to them a year and spends $750,000,000 annually for the amusement.—The Nation's Business.

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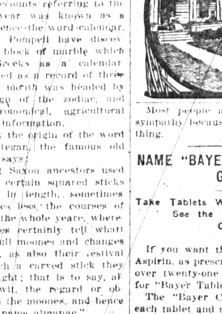

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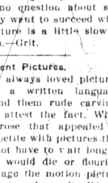
A Michigan Case



Frank Frost, stationary fireman, 506 2nd St., Ludington, Mich., says: "I was doing firing work and my back was so weak I had to strap a four-inch belt around me twice to brace my back. Every time I stooped such terrible catches took me, I couldn't straighten. My kidneys were weak and irregular and I could scarcely drag myself around. Doan's Kidney Pills cured me entirely."

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