

The BLACK GANG

By CYRIL McNEILE
SAPPER

Copyright by GEORGE H. DORAN CO.
U. S. Service

"BULLDOG" AGAIN

Here's a sequel to "Bulldog Drummond," by Cyril McNeile, who writes under the pen name of "Sapper." "Bulldog Drummond" was a success as book, serial, stage play and moving picture—and "The Black Gang" will be like unto it. Capt. Hugh (Bulldog) Drummond; Phyllis, his wife; Carl Peterson, the arch-villain; the girl Irma, and the principal character in the first story are all in this, with equally exciting parts and thrilling encounters and adventures.

CHAPTER I

In Which Things Happen Near Barking Creek

The wind howled dully round a house standing by itself almost on the shores of Barking creek. The house seemed deserted. Every window was shuttered; the garden was uncared for and a mass of weeds; the gate leading on to the road, apparently feeling the need of a deficient top hinge, propped itself drunkenly on what once had been a flower-bed. A few gloomy trees swaying dully in the wind surrounded the house and completed the picture—one that would have caused even the least imaginative of men to draw his coat a little tighter round him, and feel thankful that it was not his fate to live in such a place.

But then few people ever came near enough to the house to realize its sinister appearance. The road—it was little better than a cart track—which passed the gate, was out of the beaten way; only an occasional fisherman or farm laborer ever used it, and that generally by day when things assumed their proper proportion, and it was merely an empty house gradually falling to pieces through lack of attention. At night they avoided it if possible; folks did say that twelve years ago some prying explorer had found the bones of a skeleton lying on the floor in one of the upstairs rooms with a mildewed rope fixed to one of the beams in the ceiling. And then it had been empty for twenty years.

Even now when the wind lay in the east or northeast and the tide was setting in, there were those who said that you could see a light shining through the cracks in the shutters in that room upstairs, and that should a man climb up and look in, he'd see no skeleton, but a body with purple face and staring eyes swinging gently to and fro, and tied by the neck to a beam with a rope which showed no trace of mildew. Ridiculous, of course; but then so many of these local superstitions are. Useful, too, in some cases; they afford a privacy for the prying attentions of local gossips far more cheaply and effectively than high walls and bolts and bars.

So, at any rate, one of the two men who were walking briskly along the rough track seemed to think. "Admirable," he remarked, as he paused for a moment at the entrance of the weed-grown drive. "Quite admirable, my friend. A house situated as this one is, is an acquisition, and when it is haunted in addition it becomes a godsend."

He spoke English perfectly with a slight foreign accent, and his companion nodded abruptly. "From what I heard about it I thought it would do," he answered. "Personally I think it's a damnable spot, but since you were so set against coming to London, I had to find somewhere in this neighborhood."

"I will explain my reasons in due course," said the first speaker shortly. "You may take it from me that they were good. What's that?"

He swung round with a little gasp, clutching his companion's arm. "Nothing," cried the other irritably. For a moment or two they stood still, peering into the dark undergrowth.

"What do you think it was?" "I thought I heard a bush creaking as if—as if someone was moving," he said, relaxing his grip. "It must have been the wind, I suppose."

He still peered fearfully into the gloomy garden, until the other man dragged him roughly toward the house. "Of course it was the wind," he muttered angrily. "For heaven's sake, Zaboleff, don't get the jumps. If you will insist on coming to an infernal place like this to transact a little perfectly normal business you must expect a few strange noises and sounds. Let's get indoors; the others should be here by now. It oughtn't to take more than an hour, and you can be on board again long before dawn."

The man who had been addressed as Zaboleff ceased looking over his shoulder, and followed the other through a broken-down lattice-gate to the rear of the house. They paused in front of the back door, and on it the leader knocked three times in a peculiar way. It was obviously a prearranged signal, for almost at once stealthy steps could be heard coming along the passage inside. The door was cautiously pulled back a few inches, and a man peered out, only to throw it open wide with a faint sigh of relief.

"It's you, Mr. Waldock, is it?" he muttered. "Glad you've got 'ere at last. This place is fair giving us all the 'ump."

"Evening, Jim." He stepped inside followed by Zaboleff, and the door closed behind them. "Our friend's boat was a little late. Is everyone here?"

"Yep," answered the other. "All the six of us. And I reckons we'd like to get it over as soon as possible. Has he—his 'ole, sank to a hoarse undertone—"has he brought the money?" "You'll all hear in good time," said Waldock curtly. "Which is the room?" "Ere it is, guv'nor." Jim flung open a door. "And you'll have to sit on the floor, as the chairs ain't safe."

Two candles guttered on a square table in the center of the room, showing up the faces of the five men who sat on the floor, leaning against the walls. Three of them were nondescript specimens of humanity of the type that may be seen by the thousand hurrying into the city by the early business trains. They were representative of the poorer type of clerk. And yet to the close observer something more might be read on their faces: a greedy, hungry look, a shifty, untrustworthy look—the look of those who are jealous of everyone better placed than themselves, but who are incapable of trying to better their own position except by the relative method of dragging back their more fortunate acquaintances; the look of little men dissatisfied not so much with their own littleness as with the bigness of other people.

The two others were Jews; a little flashily dressed, distinctly addicted to cheap jewelry. They were sitting apart from the other three, talking in low tones, but as the door opened their conversation ceased abruptly and they looked up at the newcomers with the keen, searching look of their race. Waldock they hardly glanced at; it was the stranger, Zaboleff, who riveted their attention. They took in every detail of the shrewd, foreign face—the olive skin, the dark, piercing eyes, the fine-pointed beard; they measured him up as a boxer measures up his opponent, or a business man takes stock of the second party in a deal; then once again they conversed together in low tones which were barely above a whisper.

It was Jim who broke the silence—Flash Jim, to give him the full name to which he answered in the haunts he frequented.

"Vot abait getting on with it, guv'nor?" he remarked with an attempt at a genial smile. "This 'ere 'ouse ain't got I'd choose for a bloomin' 'oney-moon."

With an abrupt gesture Waldock silenced him and advanced to the table. "This is Mr. Zaboleff, gentlemen," he said quietly. "We are a little late, I am afraid, but it was unavoidable. He will explain to you now the reasons why you were asked to come here, and not meet at our usual rendezvous in Soho."

He stepped back a couple of paces and Zaboleff took his place. For a moment or two he glanced round at the faces turned expectantly toward him; then resting his two hands on the table in front of him, he leaned forward toward them.

"Gentlemen," he began, and the foreign accent seemed a little more pronounced, "I have asked you to come here tonight through my good friend, Mr. Waldock, because it has come to our ears—no matter how—that London is no longer a safe meeting place. Two or three things have occurred lately the significance of which is impossible to disregard. Our chief, with whom I spent last evening, is seriously concerned about these things."

"You spent last night with the chief?" said Waldock, and his voice held a tremor of excitement, while the others leaned forward eagerly. "Is he, then, in Holland?"

"He was at six o'clock yesterday evening," answered Zaboleff with a faint smile. "Today—now—I know no more than you where he is."

"Who is he—this man we're always hearing about and never seeing?" demanded one of the three clerks aggressively.

"He is—the Chief," replied the other, while his eyes seemed to bore into the speaker's brain. "Just that—and no more. And that is quite enough for you." His glance traveled round the room, and his audience relaxed. "By the way, is not that a chink in the shutter there?"

"All the safer," grunted Flash Jim. "Anyone passing will think the ghost is walking."

"Nevertheless, kindly cover it up," ordered Zaboleff, and one of the Jews

rose and wedged his pocket handkerchief into the crack. There was silence in the room while he did so, a silence broken only by the mournful hooting of an owl outside.

"Owls is the only things wot comes to this d—a museum," said Flash Jim morosely. "Owls and blinkin' fools like us."

"Stow it, Jim," snarled Waldock furiously. "Anyone would think you wanted a nurse."

"Gentlemen—please," Zaboleff held up a protesting hand. "We do not want to prolong matters, but one or two explanations are necessary. To return, then, to these things that have happened recently, and which necessitated a fresh rendezvous for this evening—one which our friend Mr. Waldock so obligingly found. Three messengers sent over during the last three weeks bearing instructions and—what is more important—money, have disappeared."

"Disappeared?" echoed Waldock stupidly.

"Absolutely and completely. Money and all. Two more have been abominably ill-treated and had their money taken from them, but for some reason they were allowed to go free themselves. It is from them that we have obtained our information."

"Blimey!" muttered Flash Jim; "is it the police?"

"It is not the police, which is what makes it so much more serious," answered Zaboleff quietly, and Flash Jim breathed a sigh of relief. "It is easy to keep within the law, but if our information is correct we are up against a body of men who are not within the law themselves. A body of men who are absolutely unscrupulous and utterly ruthless; a body of men who appear to know our secret plans as well as we do ourselves. And the difficulty of it is, gentlemen, that though, legally speaking, on account of the absurd legislation in this country we may keep within the law ourselves, we are hardly in a position to appeal to the police for protection. Our activities, though allowed officially, are hardly such as would appeal even to the English authorities. And on this occasion particularly that is the case. You may remember that the part I played in stirring up bloodshed at Cowdenheath, a few months ago, under the name of MacTavish, caused me to be deported. So though our cause is legal—my presence in this country is not. Which was why tonight it was particularly essential that we should not be disturbed. Not only are we all up against this unknown gang of men, but I, in addition, am up against the police."

"Have you any information with regard to this gang?" It was the Jew who had closed the chink in the shutters speaking for the first time. "None of any use—save that they are masked in black, and cloaked in long black cloaks." He paused a moment as if to collect his thoughts. "They are all armed, and Petrovitch—who escaped from them—was very insistent on one point. It concerned the leader of the gang, who he affirmed was a man of the most gigantic physical strength; a giant powerful as two ordinary strong men. He said . . . Ah! Mein Gott!"

His voice rose to a scream as he covered back, while the others, with terror on their faces, rose hurriedly and huddled together in the corners of the room. "Here's mystery the very first thing—one gang of desperadoes beset by another gang equally mysterious and dangerous!"

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Recognized Jokes

The Scots are making an effort to stop the hoary old joke that they never spend any money. Scientists who have gone into the antiquity of jokes and made a study of the subject say that there are only about six original examples and that all humor is based on them. Old jokes come back into style or else appear wearing new habiliments. Excursions into new fields sometimes are dangerous and unprofitable. The plumber joke may not have been one of the early sextet, but it has been a favorite not only with the almanacs, but with the comic strippers and the higher class weekly funny magazines. If the plumber joke has to go, the joke writers merely will understand that they have one less subject upon which to work.

Squirrel Pest

Despite his pretty appearance and amusing ways, the common red squirrel is said to be one of the most destructive pests found in the woods today. Ornithologists claim that his depredations on birds rank second only to those of the hunting cat, and that he not only kills young birds, as does the cat, but he will destroy the eggs before they are hatched. Around farm buildings he is considered a nuisance because of his propensity for chewing a hole through some building which he has selected as a likely place to store his winter's supply of food.

YOUR Last Name

IS IT DE PAUW?

THE name De Pauw has been so thoroughly assimilated in nomenclature of the United States that it is with something of surprise that we first learn that the founder of the family here did not come until the time of the Revolution and that the name is fairly recent in the Old world, having been originally De Pau. It was first applied as a local descriptive name to one who came from Pau, the capital of Navarre in France.

Presumably the French ancestors of the family went to Flanders because of religious persecution in France. Michael de Pau or De Pauw was a member of the Dutch West India company, and, having made something of a fortune, retired and died in Ghent. His son, Cornelius de Pauw, born in 1737, was a private under Frederick the Great; and his son, Charles, born in Ghent in 1757, joined Lafayette when he came to help the colonies in their struggle for liberty in the Revolution. At the close of the Revolution he married a young woman from Virginia and settled in Kentucky. His son, John de Pauw, removed to Indiana.

The founder of the college that bears the name was Charles de Pauw, who was born in Salem, Ind., in 1822. He was the son of John and Elizabeth Battiste de Pauw.

BLOOD—This name is not so sanguine as it seems. The fact is that it is a Welsh name and was originally "ap Lud" or "Ap Lloyd." This means simply son of Lloyd. Ap or A often found in combination in Welsh names is a contraction of Map, which has the same significance and origin as the Scotch Mac.

DEACON—This looks at first sight as if it was derived from deacon, as applied to one of the dignitaries in the church, but it is more probably a form of Dakin, which is derived from David.

WHO SAID

"The art of poetry is to touch the passions, and its duty to lead them on the side of virtue."

WILLIAM COWPER was an iconoclast at heart. While in school he was deemed a good student and he left Westminster with a considerable reputation for learning; but he also left with an undying hatred for discipline and a disgust for routine.

Cowper was never physically robust. And the lack of health which prevented him from sharing in the rougher sports of his playmates also encouraged him to read and study. After leaving school the young man was apprenticed for three years to a solicitor with the idea of later becoming a lawyer. He did so, but he never practiced. It was in 1745 that he was called to the bar and with the call came an opportunity to become clerk of the house of lords.

This latter position was procured through the good offices of a friend of his family. Cowper accepted it with eagerness but his rejoicing was turned to anxiety when he was informed that he would have to appear in person before the house of lords for examination. The thought of such publicity so preyed on his mind that his reason gave way and he soon after became insane.

From December of 1763 to June of 1765 Cowper remained under the care of Doctor Cotton at St. Albans. The latter was widely known as an authority on mental diseases and the help which he gave the insane poet was invaluable. Cowper recovered and was free from the malady for years. With advancing age, however, he again became subject to recurring attacks of insanity and died in 1800 a mental wreck.—Wayne D. McMurray.

(By George Matthew Adams.)

THE YOUNG LADY ACROSS THE WAY



The young lady across the way says she always speaks of the undertaker as the dietitian, as she thinks it sounds better.

(By McClure Newspaper Syndicate.)

In the JUNGLE

With Cheerups and the Quixies
By Grace Bliss Stewart

BRIGHTYES' MISTAKE

"OH, QUICK; come quick, boys," cried Brighteyes one day, as he sat on his spider web, resting during the heat of noontime. "Hurry, hurry!"

Up panted Quickear, Softfoot and Sniff-sniff as fast as they could and gathered around their playmate to see what the fun was.

"Look, look," whispered Brighteyes, "right over there; don't you see? His coat is all white with black stripes; maybe he is just out of prison."

"Well, for my part, I can't see a thing," grumbled Quickear; "but I can hear a most peculiar noise. It sounds harsh and rasping, like some



"Look, Look," whispered Brighteyes, "Right Over There."

one sawing wood back home on the steep mountain side."

"I don't see anything nor do I hear anything," piped Softfoot and Sniff-sniff in chorus. "What's the joke anyway, Brighteyes?"

"Can't you be a little quieter, boys?" said Cheerups, looking out of his house. "Dear, dear, I just thought I would have a wink or two while Mr. Sun was doing his worst. But, bless me, who is that?" as a plump little white horse all covered with black stripes came cantering up.

"How do you do, how do you do?" neighed the little horse in the same rasping tones which Quickear had heard. "I'm Zippy Zebra, and I've come a long way, I can tell you. It took a lot of courage to do it, too. All the family advised me not to come, said it was dangerous to get far from home and all that sort of thing, but

"Well," gasped Brighteyes, "I guess I was mistaken that time!"

(By Lattie, Brown & Co.)

"What's in a Name?"

By MILDRED MARSHALL
Facts about your name; its history; meaning; whence it was derived; significance; your lucky day, lucky jewel

BETSEY

THE quaint and charming name of Betsey, so endeared to American history, had its source far back in early times when the Muscovite princess Elisavetta, the daughter of Jaroslav, was the object of the romantic love of the great poet and sea king, Harald Hargrada of Norway, who sang nineteen songs of his own composition in her praise on his way from Constantinople and won her hand by his feats of prowess.

Her name, which means "God's oath," appears in many romantic tales and Danish ballads and finally spread, in numerous variations, throughout Europe by way of Germany, Elizabeths, Isabels, Elizas and Elisabeths were the most popular names in Europe—and still have tremendous vogue, for that matter—but Betsey is typically English and latter-day American.

Many famous women have borne the name in this country. Betsey Ross, whose skillful fingers fashioned the first American flag, is a heroine of history. A no less authentic, but more extravagant romantic character, was the beautiful Betsey Patterson, who captured the love of Jerome Bonaparte, brother of the great emperor, and suffered a broken heart.

The ruby is Betsey's talismanic gem. It brings her beauty and pride and brightness, according to ancient superstition. Wednesday is her lucky day and 3 her lucky number.

(By Wheeler Syndicate.)



(By McClure Newspaper Syndicate.)

THE WHY OF SUPERSTITIONS

By H. IRVING KING

THE EXTRA PLATE

IF AN extra plate be accidentally placed on the table when it is being set for a meal it is a sign that some visitor is coming hungry. This is a superstition found in various sections of the country; the American Folk-Lore society specified Ohio as one of its habitats. It is, of course, based upon the idea of the ancients that what was connected in thought must be connected in fact, which idea produced the theory of that sympathetic magic which, from primitive times, had such a strong hold upon the minds of our ancestors. They were diligent seekers after the relation of cause and effect. Every result had a cause, therefore, every cause, every act, must have an effect. What would be the natural effect of placing an extra plate upon the table? Why, the effect produced, or signified, by the association of ideas, which would be that of someone coming hungry. Only admit, as did the ancients, that what is connected in thought is connected in fact and the rest is easy—the sequence of events clearly marked out. It should be noted, too, that in this system of reasoning to avoid the cause was to avoid the effect. Most of the "don'ts" in modern superstitions are based upon this point. Avoid the omen and you avoid what the omen portends. Therefore, if you have barely enough for your own dinner, be careful not to place an extra plate on the table, and then if a hungry visitor should drop in it will be by pure accident and not owing to your own carelessness.

(By McClure Newspaper Syndicate.)

A LINE O' CHEER

By John Kendrick Bangs.

GOOD ENOUGH

I CAN'T forgive my enemies— 'Tis useless to deny it. And what is more though it displease I shall not even try it.

My reason's good enough for me— Just one among the many— I can't forgive 'em for you see I really haven't any.

(By McClure Newspaper Syndicate.)