

The BLACK GANG

By CYRIL MCNEILE
SAPPER

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SCOTLAND YARD

SYNOPSIS—To a gathering of anarchists in Barking, London suburb, Zaboloff, foreign agitator, tells of the operations of a body of men who have become a menace to their activities. He says they are masked and wear black cloaks and are acting without the law. He is interrupted by the men he is describing (the Black Gang), who break up the meeting, sentencing some of the participants to condign punishment and carrying away others. A memorandum found on Zaboloff gives an address in Hoxton, which the leader of the attacking party considers of importance.

CHAPTER II

In Which Scotland Yard Sits Up and Takes Notice

Sir Bryan Johnstone, director of criminal investigation, leaned back in his chair and stared at the ceiling with a frown. His hands were thrust deep into his trousers pockets; his long legs were stretched out to their full extent under the big roll-top desk in front of him. He was puzzled, and the report lying on the desk in front of him was the reason.

For perhaps ten minutes he remained motionless, then he leaned forward and touched an electric bell. A girl secretary came quickly into the room.

"Miss Forbes," said Sir Bryan, "I wish you would find out if Chief Inspector McIver is in the building. If so I would like to see him at once; if not, see that he gets the message as soon as he comes in."

The door closed behind the girl, and after a moment or two the man rose from his desk and began to pace up and down the room with long, even strides. Every now and then he would stop and stare at some print on the wall, but it was the blank stare of a man whose mind is engrossed in other matters.

His eyes came round to the desk once more, the desk on which the report was lying. It was Inspector McIver's report—hence his instructions to the secretary. It was the report on a very strange matter which had taken place the previous night, and after a while Sir Bryan picked up the typed sheets and glanced through them again. And he was still standing by the desk, idly turning over the pages when the secretary came into the room.

"Chief Inspector McIver is here, Sir Bryan," she announced. "Tell him to come in, Miss Forbes." A square-jawed, rugged Scotsman, McIver looked the type to whom Holy Writ was Holy Writ only in so far as it could be proved. He was short and thick-set, and his physical strength was proverbial.

"What the dickens is all this about, McIver?" said Sir Bryan with a smile, when the door had shut behind the secretary.

"I wish I knew myself, sir," returned the other seriously. "I've never been so completely defeated in my life."

Sir Bryan waved him to a chair and sat down at the desk.

"I've read your report," he said, still smiling, "and frankly, McIver, if it had been anyone but you, I should have been annoyed. But I know you



"Miss Forbes," said Sir Bryan, "I wish you would find out if Chief Inspector McIver is in the building."

far too well for that. Look here"—he pushed a box of cigarettes across the table—"take a cigarette and let's hear about it."

"Well, sir," began McIver, "this is briefly what took place. At ten o'clock last night as we had arranged, we completely surrounded the suspected house on the outskirts of Barking. I had had a couple of good men on duty there lying concealed the whole day, and when I arrived at about nine-thirty with Sergeant Andrews and half-a-dozen others, they reported to me that at least eight men were inside, and that Zaboloff was one of them. He had been shadowed the whole way down from Limehouse with another man, and both the watchers were positive that he had not left the house. So I posted my men and crept

forward to investigate myself. There was a little chink in the wooden shutters of one of the downstairs rooms through which the light was streaming. I took a glimpse through, and found that everything was just as had been reported to me. There were eight of them there, and an unpleasant-looking bunch they were, too. Zaboloff I saw at the head of the table, and standing next to him was that man Waldoek who runs two or three of the worst of the Red papers. There was also Flash Jim, and I began to wish I'd brought a few more men."

McIver smiled ruefully. "It was about the last coherent wish I remember. And," he went on seriously, "what I'm going to tell you now, sir, may seem extraordinary and what one would expect in detective fiction, but as sure as I am sitting in this chair, it is what actually took place. Somewhere from close to, there came the sound of an owl hooting. At the same moment I distinctly heard the noise of what seemed like a scuffle, and a stifled curse. And then, and this is what beats me, sir," McIver pounded a huge fist into an equally huge palm. "I was picked up from behind as if I was a baby. Yes, sir, a baby."

Involuntarily Sir Bryan smiled. "You make a good substantial infant, McIver."

"Exactly, sir," grunted the Inspector. "If a man had suggested such a thing to me yesterday I'd have laughed in his face. But the fact remains that I was picked up just like a child in arms, and doped, sir, doped. Me—at my time of life. They chloroformed me, and that was the last I saw of Zaboloff or the rest of the gang."

The Inspector leaned forward and stared at his chief.

"You've heard the rumors, sir," he went on after a moment, "the same as I have."

"Perhaps," said Sir Bryan quietly. "But go on, McIver. I'd like to hear what's on your mind."

"It's the Black Gang, sir," said the Inspector, leaning forward impressively.

"There have been rumors going round, rumors which our men have heard here and there for the past two months. I've heard 'em myself; and once or twice I've wondered. Now I'm sure—especially after what Flash Jim said. That gang is no rumor, it's solid fact."

"Have you any information as to what their activities have been, assuming for a moment it is the truth?" asked Sir Bryan.

"None for certain, sir; until this moment I wasn't certain of its existence. But now—looking back—there have been quite a number of sudden disappearances. We haven't troubled officially, we haven't been asked to. Hardly likely when one realizes who the people are who have disappeared."

"All conjecture, McIver," said Sir Bryan. "They may be lying doggo, or they'll turn up elsewhere."

"They may be, sir," answered McIver doggedly. "But take the complete disappearance of Granger a fortnight ago. He's one of the worst of the Red men, and we know he hasn't left the country. Where is he? His wife, I happen to know, is crazy with anxiety, so it don't look like a put-up job. Take that extraordinary case of the Pole who was found lashed to the railings in Whitehall with one-half of his beard and hair shaved off and the motto 'Portrait of a Bolshevik' painted on his forehead. Well, I don't need to tell you, sir, that that particular Pole, Strambowski, was undoubtedly a messenger between—well, we know who between and what the message was. And then take last night."

"Well, what about last night?"

"For the first time this gang has come into direct contact with us."

"Always assuming the fact of its existence."

"Exactly, sir," answered McIver. "Well, they've got Zaboloff and they've got Waldoek, and they laid eight of us out to cool. I guess they're not to be sneezed at."

With a thoughtful look on his face Sir Bryan rose and strolled over to the window. Though not prepared to go quite as far as McIver, there were certainly some peculiar elements in the situation—elements which he, as head of a big public department, could not officially allow for an instant, however much it might amuse him as a private individual.

"We must find Zaboloff and Waldoek," he said curtly, without turning round. "Waldoek, at any rate, has friends who will make a noise unless he's forthcoming. And . . ."

But his further remarks were interrupted by the entrance of his secretary with a note.

"For the Inspector, Sir Bryan," she said, and McIver after a glance at his chief, opened the envelope. For a while he studied the letter in silence, then with an enigmatic smile he rose and handed it to the man by the window.

"No answer, thank you, Miss Forbes," he said, and when they were once more alone, he began rubbing his hands together softly—a sure sign of being excited. "Curtis and Samuel Bauer, both flogged nearly to death and found in a slum off Whitechapel. The note said two of 'em had been flogged."

"So," said Sir Bryan quietly. "These two were at Barking last night?"

"They were, sir," answered the Inspector. "And their line?" queried the chief.

"White slave traffic of the worst type," said McIver. "They generally drug the girls with cocaine or some dope first. What do you say to my theory now, sir?"

"It's another point in its favor, McIver," conceded Sir Bryan cautiously; "but it still wants a lot more proof. And, anyway, whether you're right or not, we can't allow it to continue. We shall be having questions asked in parliament."

McIver nodded portentously. "If I can't lay my hands on a man who can lift me up like a baby and dope me, may I never have another case. Like a baby, sir. Me—"

He opened his hands out helplessly, and this time Sir Bryan laughed outright, only to turn with a quick frown as the door leading to the secretary's office was flung open to admit a man.



"Has Someone Stolen the Gold Fish?" Queried Sir Bryan With Mild Sarcasm.

He caught a vague glimpse of the scandalized Miss Forbes hovering like a canary eating bird-seed in the background; then he turned to the newcomer.

"Confound it, Hugh," he cried. "I'm busy."

Hugh Drummond grinned all over his face, and lifting a hand like a leg of mutton he smote Sir Bryan in the back, to the outraged amazement of Inspector McIver.

"You priceless old bean," boomed Hugh affably. "I gathered from the female bird punching the what-not outside that the great brain was heaving—but, my dear old lad, I have come to report a crime. A crime which I positively saw committed with my own eyes: an outrage: a blot upon this fair land of ours."

He sank heavily into a chair and selected a cigarette. He was a vast individual with one of those phenomenally ugly faces which is rendered utterly pleasant by the extraordinary charm of its owner's expression. No human being had ever been known to be angry with Hugh for long. He was either moved to laughter by the perennial twinkle in the big man's blue eyes, or he was stunned by a playful blow on the chest from a fist which rivaled a steam hammer. Of brain he apparently possessed a minimum: of muscle he possessed about five ordinary men's share.

And yet unlike so many powerful men his quickness on his feet was astounding—as many a good heavy-weight boxer had found to his cost. In the days of his youth Hugh Drummond—known more familiarly to his intimates as Bulldog—had been able to do the hundred in a shade over ten seconds. And though the mere thought of such a performance now would have caused him to break out into a cold sweat, he was still quite capable of a turn of speed which many a lighter-built man would have envied.

Between him and Sir Bryan Johnstone existed one of those friendships which are founded on totally dissimilar tastes. At school, for some inscrutable reason, the quiet scholarship of the elder boy had appealed to the kid of fourteen who was even then a mass of brawn. Their friendship started then, and it never died, though their ways lay many poles apart. To Johnstone a well-deserved knighthood and a high position in the land; to Drummond as much money as he wanted and a life of sport.

"Has someone stolen the goldfish?" queried Sir Bryan with mild sarcasm.

Well, with Scotland Yard on the job, the three-handed war ought to be lively—and then some.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Roads to Failure
Two battered old wrecks were sitting on a bench in the common, when one remarked: "I'm a man who never took advice from anybody." "Shake, brother," said the other. "I'm a man who followed everybody's advice."—*Merchants Record.*

WHO SAID

"I would rather obey than work miracles."

MARTIN LUTHER, the author of the words quoted above, who is known to history as one of the great religious reformers, was destined by his father to be a lawyer. He was deeply religious from his youth, however, and in 1505, contrary to his father's wishes, he entered the monastery at Erfurt, Germany.

Five years after his entrance into the monastery Luther made a pilgrimage to Rome. That pilgrimage had a great effect upon his later life. Many of those occupying high places in the established church in Rome were untrue to the high trust reposed in them as the heads of the church and their conduct changed Luther's attitude toward the Roman church. He wrote his celebrated ninety-five theses condemning the sale of indulgences, and the consequent action of the religious authorities in declaring them heretical drove Luther to still further activity.

Luther originally intended no separation from the established church. He wrote a modest letter to the pope seeking pardon and asking that several reforms be incorporated in the church law. This was followed by a bull excommunicating Luther and his friends. Aroused to passion, Luther publicly burned the bull of excommunication and his severance from the established church was completed.

The reformation now spread throughout Germany and the power of the established church to curb Luther by means of bulls of excommunication was rendered useless. In his fight Luther was greatly aided by a powerful German prince whose protection saved him from punishment.

Luther died February 18, 1546, at Eisleben, Germany, his birthplace.—*Wayne D. McMurray.*

Among the NOTABLES

LOUIS XVI

LAST of the French kings before the Revolution, weak-willed and with no special desire and certainly no aptitude for statecraft—such was Louis XVI.

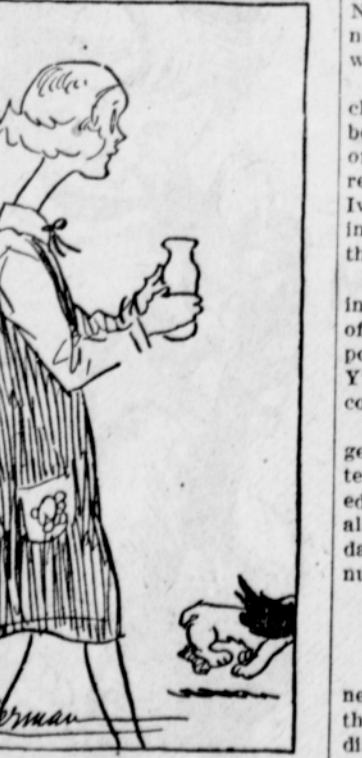
He was born August 23, 1754, at Versailles, grandson of Louis V, became heir to the throne when he was eleven, and was married at sixteen to Marie Antoinette in order to make more firm the peace between France and Austria. At first he did not care for his wife, but after a time, during which he had ascended the throne, he came considerably under her influence.

The young queen had reacted against her very strict bringing up, and was plunging recklessly into the dissipation and gaiety of the times. Politics were like a seething cauldron, then, bound to boil over; indeed it did boil over—into the Revolution of 1792. Marie Antoinette, by her extravagance and because she was Austrian (and there was a growing feeling against her country), became very unpopular. Louis, meantime, wanted nothing but to spend the days in hunting. Never bright mentally, he became more and more stupid and retiring as time passed.

The revolution came and the gayest court in the world was literally thrown into prison. Louis was condemned and guillotined early in 1793. One by one, the figures who make the tale of these courts so fascinating, were driven through the streets to their death—for the most part, going with dignity and a look of contempt for the rabble who had them in power. The queen herself was beheaded in 1793.

(© by George Matthew Adams.)

THE YOUNG LADY ACROSS THE WAY



The young lady across the way says she's always glad to see that a boxing match was won on points as she hates to think of them actually striking each other.

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In the JUNGLE

With Cheerups and the Quixies
By Grace Bliss Stewart

IT WAS A RAINY DAY

IT WAS pouring. Not a ray of sunshine greeted Cheerups when he opened his eyes. All the world was gray, and nothing could be heard but the sound of great drops tinkling on his tiny roof.

"I guess I shall have to stay at home today, sure enough," chuckled he, wagging his topknot; "and no visitors will come either, unless the ducks manage to get out. I feel a trifle moist, but it's worse for the Quixies out there on their spiderwebs in all this rain. Oh, Brighteyes, Quickear, Softfoot, Snifsniff; come here and get under as much cover as this summer house of mine offers!"

The Quixies didn't take long in answering that call. They were all very



These Birds Wear Brown Crests With White and Black Tips.

wet except Snifsniff, who said he had found a big mushroom to crawl under. "Now, boys, Old Brother East Wind has just whispered to me that he's going to keep this rain up all day. What shall we do? Supposing we play games?"

"Oh, please, Mr. Cheerups," begged Brighteyes, "tell us a story!"

"Yes, yes, a story," chimed the others in chorus, clapping their hands and squealing with delight.

"Oh, well, if it's a story you are wanting, you provoking young rascals, I suppose I can find one tucked away in my head somewhere," said Cheerups, smiling. "But I am getting decidedly damp on one side, and if you want a story, you will have to keep your story-teller dry in some way."

"I know how," cried Quickear. "We'll get some big leaves and hang them like curtains on the side of the house where the rain comes in." Before Cheerups could suggest that they would get all wet while doing it, they were off and back again with the leaves; almost before he had time to put on his little red shoes and straighten up his topknot for the day. Then

the great glossy leaves were fastened on two sides of the house in a twinkling, with strong grasses and bits of twisty vine, and the Jolly little Quixies, all snug and warm, sat down in a circle about Cheerups, their eyes shining, and their ears pricked for a story.

"Most stories begin 'Once upon a time,'" said Cheerups, beaming, for he was enjoying himself immensely, "but this one starts with just 'Yesterday.' Do you boys remember Mr. Hoopoe, who came for a singing lesson?"

"Remember him? I should say so!" piped Quickear. "I was out on the edge of the desert eating prickly pears with Jacky Monk, and I heard him all that way. Goodness, but he made a noise, worse than Fourth of July back home."

"There's quite a remarkable story about Mr. Hoopoe," said Cheerups hastily, trying to change the subject. It made him a little homesick to think of the Fourth of July, and he saw a tear in Softfoot's eye.

"Well, in Arabia, which is a country lying beyond the Desert of Sahara and the Red sea, far away from our jungle, the people have a legend about Mr. Hoopoe and King Solomon, who lived long, long ago. Once when King Solomon was traveling through the desert—for other lands have deserts, too, you know—he grew very faint from the hot rays of big bright Mr. Sun. Then a flock of Hoopoes came and formed a screen just above his head to protect him. King Solomon was so delighted and thought it was so kind of the Hoopoes that he asked what he could do for them as a reward. What do you suppose the foolish things asked for? Why, crowns of gold upon their heads! Of course, the king granted their request and they were very happy and proud of themselves for a while, looking into all the pools, and even the dewdrops to catch their reflections. But soon men began to trap them and hunt them to get their golden crowns. The Hoopoes were most dreadfully frightened then, and some of them went back to King Solomon and begged that he would take away the horrid crowns. The kind king listened to their troubles, of course, and gave them crowns of feathers instead of their golden ones. Ever since then these birds have worn brown crests with white and black tips. Didn't you notice Mr. Hoopoe's yesterday?"

"Oh, yes, Mr. Cheerups, we did," cried the Quixies in glee, "for we were peeping from behind the breadfruit tree all the time, except Quickear, who was away eating fruit. Thank you, sir; that was a lovely story."

"But you see now, don't you," said Cheerups, with a merry twinkle in his eye, "that

"Golden crowns and all the rest are not of gifts the very best." (© by Little, Brown & Co.)

THE WHY of SUPERSTITIONS

By H. IRVING KING

THE PIG'S TAIL

A NOT uncommon belief among farmers is that if you cut off a pig's tail he will fatten more readily—you will have a good fat hog at "killing time." This is one of those agricultural superstitions which go back to the most primitive times and can be clearly traced to that phase of nature-worship—the worship of the grain spirit—which in some of its forms regarded the spirit of the crops as taking on the shape, or at least symbolized by, an animal. To this day at harvest time in Bourgoine, the last sheaf gathered is said to be "the fox." A score of ears of grain are left standing near the sheaf to represent the "fox's tail."

The reapers then throw their sickles at it and cry, "We have cut off the fox's tail!" at the same time giving vent to cries of a peculiar nature which may be words of some long forgotten language. This proceeding is supposed to ensure a good crop for next year. In Scandinavia, Estonia, parts of Germany and among some Slavonic races the favorite representative of the corn spirit appears to have been the hog; for in those regions at times of planting and of harvest they pay the same attention to the hog as the Burgundian peasants do to the fox.

In Courland when barley is sown the farmer's wife boils a hog's chine and tail. The chine is eaten but the tail is cut off and stuck up in the field to insure a "fat" crop. The connection between the primitive custom of the peasants of northern Europe of cutting off the pig's tail to insure fat crops and the custom of the farmers of American states of cutting off the pig's tail to insure a fat hog is obvious. The latter is a survival of the worship of the grain spirit but little changed in its passage across the ocean and through the centuries from the heathen rites of our barbarian ancestors.

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The Nile flows for more than 1,000 miles without a tributary.

"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

YVONNE

YVONNE is almost a name without a history. It is a feminine name obviously invented from the masculine form for the purpose of honoring and no particular reason for being. In short, it is one of the few names in etymological records, which were probably originally bestowed upon some girl baby to perpetuate the name of the father in the event that there was no subsequent male heir.

The history of Yvonne dates back to legendary times when a Persian bishop named Ivar established a hermitage in Huntingdonshire in the Seventh century, and provided a patron for many an Ivar of Danish and Norman extraction. The use of this name spread throughout France, where it was known as Yvon or Ivone.

Yvon became popular among the chroniclers. It was Yvon de Taillebois, who was the villain in the story of "Hereward" and his camp of refuge. There was also the good St. Ivo de Chartres, who suffered unjust imprisonment, and St. Ives of Brittany, the advocate of the poor.

There have been scores of Yvones in ballad and romance, to say nothing of modern literature. Though most popular in families of French descent, Yvonne enjoys great vogue in this country.

The opal is Yvonne's talismanic gem. It is said to bring her that mysterious fascination which is associated with superwoman charm. It will also guard her from unhappiness. Friday is her lucky day and 7 her lucky number.

(© by Wheeler Syndicate.)

Babies Finger-Printed

At Pellstown, Ireland, it has become necessary to fingerprint babies under three months of age when they are discharged from the maternity hospital there. Such a scheme is designed to help the police to discover the mother or foster mother of the deserted child. The idea was suggested by a woman barrister who became interested in babies.

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