

GEORGE H. DORAN CO.

BY CYRIL MCNEILE SAPPER

SYNOPSIS

CHAPTER I.—To a gathering of anarchista in Barking, London suburb, Zaboleff, foreign agitator, tells of the operations of a body of men who have become a menace to their activities. He is interrupted by the men he is describing (the Black Gang), who break up the meething, sentencing some of the participants to condign punishment and carrying away others. A memorandum found on Zaboleff gives an address in Hoxton, London, which the leader of the attacking party considers of importance.

CHAPTER II.—Sir Bryan Johnstone, director of criminal investigation, hears from Inspector McIver, sent to arrest Zaboleff the night before, of his discomfiture. He had been seized and chloreformed and his raid frustrated. Hugh Drummad, man of leisure and old friend of Johnstone's arrives and tolls of seeing the kidnapers and their victims. He becomes an unpaid agent of the police, to be under the direction of McIver, and takes up his duties at once.

CHAPTER II.—A "Mr. William Atkin-

Melver, and takes up its duties at once.

CHAPTER III.—A "Mr. William Atkinson," extensibly pawnbroker and money lender, really Count Zadowa, director of anarchy in England, does business in an other London suburb. A mysteriom atraninvades the premises. Count Zadowa r a brief glimpse f the intruder, i

### CHAPTER IV

In Which a Bomb Bursts at Unpleasantly Close Quarters.

WAS perhaps because the thought of failure never entered Hugh Drummend's head that such a considerable measure of success had been possible up to date—that and the absolute, unquestioning obe-dience which he demanded of his pals, members of the Black Gang, and which they accorded him willingly. As they knew, he laid no claims brilliance; but as they also knew, he hid a very shrewd common sense, beneath his frivolous manner. And having once accepted the sound military truism that one indifferent general is better than two good ones, they accepted his lendership with unswerving loyalty What was going to be the end of their self-imposed fight against the pests of society did not worry them greatly; all that mattered was that there should be a certain amount of sport in the collection of the specimens. Granted the promise of that, they willingly sacrificed any engagements and car ried out Hugh's orders to the letter. Up to date, however, the campaign though far from being dull, had not produced any really big results. A number of sprats and a few moderate-sized fish had duly been caught in the landing-net, and been sent to the private pool to meditate at leisure. But nothing really large had come their way. Zaboleff was a good haul. But the Black Gang, which aimed merely at the repression of terrorism by terrorism, had found it too easy. The nauseating cownrdice of the majority of their opponents was becoming monotonous, insanitary. They wanted big game -not the rats that emerged from the

Even Drummond had begun to feel that patriotism might be carried too far, until the moment when the address in Hoxton had fallen into that lives eternal in the hunter's breast, fresh hope had arisen in his mind. He had determined on his chuck the thing up altogether. Phyl- of you. lis, he knew, would be overjoyed if he did.

"Just this one final coup, old girl," he said, as they sat waiting in the Carlton for the awe-inspiring relatives. "I've got it cut and dried, and we'll dissolve ourselves—at any rate for the present. If only—" He sighed, and his wife looked at

him reproachfully. "I know you want another fight with Petersen, you old goat," remarked "But you'll never see him again, or that horrible girl."

Don't you think I shall, Phyl?" He stared despondently at his shoes "I can't help feeling myself that somewhere or other behind all this that cheery bird is lurking. My dear, it would be too ghastly if I never saw him again."

"The next time you see him, Hugh," she answered quietly, "he won't take any chances with you."

"But my angel child," he boomed cheerfully. "I don't want him to. Not on your life! Nor shall I. Good Lord! Here they are. Uncle Timothy looks more like a mangel-whrtzel than

And so at nine-thirty that evening, a party of five men sat waiting in a small sitting-room of a house situasington. Some easels stood around walls covered with half-finished sketches, as befitted a room belong ing to a budding artist such as Toby Sinclair. Not that he was an artist or even a budding one, but he felt that a man must have some excuse for living in South Kensington. And so he had bought the sketches and put them round the room, principally to deceive the landlady. The fact that he was never there except at strange hours merely confirmed that excellent woman's opinion that all artists were dissolute rascals. But he paid his rent regularly, and times were hard, especially in South Kensington. Had the worthy soul known

was the rendezvous of this Black Gang, it is doubtful if she would been so compineent. But she didn't know, and continued her weeky dusting of the sketches with char-

cteristic zeal. "Ted should be here soon," said Drummond, glancing at his watch "I hope he's got the bird all right."

"You didn't get into the inner room, iid you Hugh?" said Peter Darrell. "No. But I saw enough to know that it's beyond our form, old lad. We've got to have a skilled cracks-man to deal with one of the doorsand almost certainly anything impor-

"Just run over the orders again." Toby Sinclair came back from drawing the blinds even more closely to

"Perfectly simple," said Hugh. Ted and I and Ginger Martin-if he's got him-will go straight into know the geography of the place all right, and I've already laid out the caretaker clerk fellow once. Then we must trust to luck. There shouldn't be anybedy there except the little blighter of a clerk. The rest of you will hang about outside in case of blighter of a clerk. The rest of you with a short pointed steel tool, any trouble. Don't bunch together; keep on the move; but keep the doors in sight. When you see us come out again, make your own way home. Can't give you any more detailed in structions because I don't know my salf what may turn up I shall rie well known to run risks."

floor; then he gave a sudden, tony or it rest or order.

On your faces—for your lizes!"
His voice cut through the room like a knife. "Behind\*the desk, you fools! It's a bomb!"

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Can't give you any more detailed in the flax the state buying all the flax L. P. Davidson, vice president; C. B. that the prison plant has its limits, and when that is reached it will have to enlarge and increase its output or to enlarge and increase its output or the annual routine matters of busself what may turn up, I shall rig well known to run risks."
myself out here, after Ted arrives. Still no sound came from a You had better go to your own rooms;

"Ted's here, and he's got the bird sworn that he heard the sound of sail right. Unpleasant looking bloke voices close by With a flattened face."

Drummond rose, and Fight. Drummond rose, and crossed to a cupboard. "Clear off, you fellows. Zero—twelve, midnight."

From the cupboard be pulled a long black cloak and mask, which he proceeded to put on, while the others disappeared with the exception of Jerry Seymour, who came into the room. He was dressed in livery like a chauffeur, and he had, in fact, been driving the car in which Ted had at last, after what seemed an interminable pause, Drummond switched on inable pause, Drummond switched on.

"Any trouble?" asked Drummond.

the table facing the door.

den start and cry on the part of the only way out was by the door three as to which was which. "Blimey!" muttered muttered the

ing back as he saw the huge in black confronting him. "It is all right!" he muttered turn ing round to the other two. "Mus shrinking back as he

fresh hope had arisen in his been told what you're wanted for, had determined on higger haven't you? A little professional if it falled if they don't If it failed-if they drew assistance tonight, for which you will be had almost decided to be paid fifty pounds, is all we ask

But Ginger Martin still seemed far from easy in his mind. "You're one of this 'ere Black Gang," he said sullenly, glancing at the door in front of which Jerningham was standtives. "Twe got it cut and dried, and ing. Should be chance it and make it comes off tonight. If it's a dud, a dash to get away? Fifty pounds we'll dissolve ourselves at any cate are fifty pounds, but He gave i little shiver as his eyes came around again to the motionless figure on the

"Quite correct, Martin," said the same reassuring voice. "And it's only because I don't want you to recognize me that I'm dressed up like this We don't mean you any harm." The voice paused for a memont, and then went on again. "You understand went on again, "You understand that, Martin, We don't mean you any harm, unless" and once again there came a pause—"unless you try any monkey tricks. You are to do exactly as I tell you, without question and at once. If you don't-well, Martin, I have ways of dealing with people who don't do what I tell them

There was silence while Ginger Martin fldgeted about, looking like a trapped animal. "What do yer want me to do, guv'nor?" he said "Open a safe amongst other things,"

namered Drummond "Have you brought your tools and things?"
"Yus -I've brought the outfit," mutered the other. "Where is the safe?

"No, Martin, not here. Some distance away, in fact. We shall start in about an hour. Until then you will stop in this room. You can nave a whisky and-soda, and my triend here will stay with you. He has a gun, Martin, so remember what I said. No monkey tricks."

With fascinated eyes the crook watched the speaker rise and cross to an inner door. Standing he seen ed more huge than ever, and Martin gave a sigh of relief as the do-closed behind him.

that her second best sitting-room | The entrance to Number 5 Green

street proved easier than Drummond for the door. But the door which ha had expected—so easy as to be al- opened so easily a few moments be-most suspicious. No lights shone in fore now refused to budge, though the windows above; the house seem- he tugged at it, cursing horribly. And ed completely described. Moreover, the door into the street was unboiled, and without a moment's beditation. Brummond opened it and steeped ingide, followed by Martin and Ter Jerningham. The long black cloak had been discarded; only the black had been discarded the downstairs office toward the flight

offices," he explained in a low voice to the other two. "At the far end is another door which we shall prol-ably find locked . Beyond that is the inner office," "Well, let's go on wiv it, guv'nor,"

muttered Ginger Martin hoarsely. "There's no good in 'anging abaht," Drummond switched on his electric torch, and flashed it cautiously round. Doors leading off the passage were open in most cases, and all the rooms were empty; it was obvious that none of the staff were about. And yet he felt an indefinable sense of danger, which he tried in vain to shake off. Somehow or other, he felt becoming impatient. To open the door at the end of the passage, if it should

in the circle of the torch, his ill-kept

Still no sound came from anywhere, and do it, but wait first to make sure back had been norribly loud in the that he's roped in Ginger Martin."

He glanced up as the door opened cautiously turned the handle and the country to the countr though the click of the lock shot and Jerry Seymour sometime of the pushed open the door, Drummond -put his head into the room, switched off his torch. He could have

> Only for a second-they were is stantly silenced; but just for that

driving the car in which Ted had brought Ginger Martin. The passage was empty; the door of the inner office "Any trouble?" asked Drummond.
"No. Once he was certain Ted had nothing to do with the police he came like a bird." said Jerry. "The fifty made a mistake that it had been his quid did it." Then he grinned, "You know Ted's a marvel. I'll defy any-body to recognize him."

Thrumword said and and the grinned the first for caye to him, and still with him and still with him and still with him. Drummond nodded, and sat down at door gave to him; and still with him torch held well in front of him, h "Tell Ted to bring him up. And stepped into the room, turning the I don't want him to see you, Jerry, light into every corner. Not a trace so keep out of the light." Undoubtedly Jerry Seymour was lutely empty. He flashed the light right with regard to Jerningham's all round the walls, as far as he could becoming monotonous, their make-up As he and Martin came aversion to soap and water, into the room, it was only the sudcrook that made Drummond certain which they had just entered, which was obviously impossible for anyone to have done without his knowledge.

up the big roll-top desk.
"Right-ho, guv'nor. Keep the beam

on the keyhole The crook bent over his task, only to straighten up suddenly as all the

lights went on. "Yer d-d fool!" he snarled.
"Switch 'em off! It ain't safe "
"I didn't put 'em on!" snapped Drummend,

"Nor I." said Jerningham. then Ginger Martin made a wild dive



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# FROM THE STATE

sence of actual danger was as ment advice regarding the new flax indusmask concealed his face, as the three men stood inside the door, listening intently. Not a sound was audible, and after a moment or two Drummond felt his way cautiously through voices which came from that very had to go to the growers themselves in the not gone into the matter room in which they now were. Jen era ask for is will they be warranted very much beyond the needs of our the downstairs office toward the flight of stairs that led to the rooms above. In single file they crept up the stairs, Drummond leading. The door at the top was ajar, and for a while they stood in the carpeted passage above listening again.

Toom in which they now were. Men had got out by some other way. And Ginger Martin was trapped—all of them. More out of thoughtlessness than anything else, he brushed the swearing crook aside with the back of his if the two new flax mills will be able larged to meet increased production. The information most of the grow-fishnet twine and linen fabrics, and we get our material from the prison plant after they work it up for use. Crop; what the price outlook is, and if the two new flax mills will be able larged to meet increased production.

Like a flash, Drummond swung round, and looked at the safe. Ted was right; he could see the eyes himself, and they were fixed on him with an expression of malignant force. another opening appeared—one much ufacturer into many different pro-larger than the first. He stopped in-voluntarily as something was thrown "So it appears to me that at the Without a sound the cracksman set voluntarily as something was thrown to work; his coarse features outlined through into the room—something present time the success of flax grow-ing depends very largely on the mill which hissed and spluttered.

# MARKET AGENT

"There's a man watching us, Hugh.
i can see his eyes In that hig safe
door."

Like a flash Drummond swars

shake off. Somehow or other, he felt certain that they were not alone—that there were other people in the house. But Ginger Martin had no such presentiments, and was rapidly becoming impatient. To open the door at the end of the passage, if it should prove to be locked, was such child's prove to be locked, was such child's seemed to become part of the door, after the prison factory has worked seemed to become part of the door, after the prison factory has worked prove to be locked, was such child's play as to be absolutely contemptible. He wanted to get on with the safe, which might take time, instead of fooling round in a passage listening.

fingers handling his instruments as deftly as any surgeon. A little oil here and there; a steady pressure with a short pointed steel tool, a faint click.

For a moment he gazed at it unto the state prison and the success learned that the Morrow County and enlargement of that plant. There floor; then he gave a sudden, tones is no doubt but the farmers of the valley will farmer to the farmers of the valley will farmer to the farmers of the valley will farmer to the farmer

up in large stocks during the slow taling \$325,000.

ing crook aside with the back of his hand—much as one brushes away troublesome fly. And Martin, feeling as if he'd been kicked in the mouth by a horse, ceased to swear.

It was uncanny—devilish. The room empty, save for them, suddenly flooded with light. But by whom?

Drummond felt they were being watched. But by whom? And then suddenly he heard Ted Jerningham's voice low and tense.

If the two new flax mills will be able to take the production if farmers or whether others will put in like generally go into flax raising? As plants, I do not know, but certainly partially answering these inquiries, Mr. Spence quotes a farmer of Polk county, who has for ten years experial leading industry of the industry must be taken care of if we are to make flax mented with flax growing, and who is well informed on all phases of the industry:

"I believe that eventually flax production and manufacture will be leading industries for the Willamette val-

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