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The SKELETON FINGER

by Headon Hall

BEGIN HERE TODAY.

Sir Dudley Glenister, suspected of the murder of his cousin, James Glenister, has a strange caller in the person of

Simon Trickey, whose bloated face culminates in one big red blob at the end of his nose. Trickey's plan to blackmail Sir Dudley is interrupted by the arrival of

Dr. Willoughby Melville, and James Wragge.

NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY.

CHAPTER XI.—(Cont'd.)

The chatter of the cinema actress meandered on, but with less animation, as if she had accomplished her purpose in concentrating the visitor's attention on herself. But still the husband of this minor star of the film firmament came not, and Kathleen reverted to her old fear that the master of the house had been drinking. The vainglorious boasts of the gamekeeper's daughter suddenly petered out. The same idea had occurred to her.

"Whatever is Simon up to!" she exclaimed.

She quitted the room, every movement studied as though in front of the camera, and Kathleen anxiously awaited developments. The discovery that John Grime's daughter was the wife of the man who had offered his allegiance against Sir Dudley rather discounted the value of that aid. Kathleen suddenly felt out of her depth and began to wonder if she was the victim of a conspiracy.

She wished that she had brought Wragge with her, or even dear, dunder-headed Norman would have been a better companion in that meretricious house than one at all.

Then, loud and clear from across the passage, a scream rang out and away in the back of the house an electric bell whirred as though it would never stop. A quick patter of footsteps sounded in the hall, the bell ceased ringing and a confused clatter of women's voices arose in the oppocite room.

A minute later the befrilled and hoydenish maid-servant stood in the doorway, white as paper.

"Please, miss," she faltered, "the missis says will you kindly go away. The master's dead."

"Dead?" Kathleen repeated blankly.

"Seizure or somethink of that. And missis says will you kindly stop your cab at Doctor Wilson's at the end of the street and leave word for him to step round. He's been attending the master for his 'eart."

There was nothing for it but to comply and Kathleen passed out to her waiting taxi, catching a glimpse of the famous "Maud Blair" bending over a crumpled heap of humanity in the dining room. Mr. Simon Trickey seemed to have started to meet his Maker from a spindle-legged Tottenham Court Road chair. His head lay on the table.

Kathleen gave the desired message at the house of the local practitioner and drove back to Cadogan Gardens. As she was paying the driver of the taxi an inspiration came to her.

"Did you," she asked, adding a generous tip, "notice a gentleman come out of the house at Brixton while I was there?"

"No, miss," was the prompt reply. "Only a lady. Stylish party, and seemed in a bit of a hurry."

CHAPTER XII.

THE PURPLE AIGRETTE.

On entering the house, after ascertaining that Lady Marrables was out gadding as usual, Kathleen rang up Inspector Wragge at Scotland Yard. Within half an hour he was with her, listening to her story of what had happened during her call in the Lipscombe Road.

"A bad business," was his comment. "Mr. Trickey has been very inconsiderate."

"But don't you see, Mr. Wragge, that his death on the eve of further revelations is very suspicious," Kathleen could hardly conceal her exacperation of official stolidity. "Trickey's death comes just right for Sir Dudley, and I should not be surprised if he had contrived it."

"We musn't beg the question, Miss Glenister, but I shall certainly have to see the local medical man," replied the inspector. "The fact of Mrs.

Wragge noticed that her smart hat was adorned with a purple aigrette.

Trickey being a Beechwood girl is a complication which will either add to or lesson our difficulties."

"I am glad that you see it in that light," said Kathleen dryly.

"You are convinced that Mrs. Trickey asserted that her husband was engaged with a man, whereas you saw a woman leaving the house?" inquired the inspector.

"I did not say I saw a woman leave the house," Kathleen rejoined. "I said I heard the swish of a silk skirt in the passage and saw the tip of a purple aigrette departing from the front door. The taxi-driver described the wearer as 'a stylish party in a bit of a hurry.' But it might have been a man disguised as a woman."

Wragge expressed his thanks and took his departure, alleging the need for haste in seeing the local doctor before the death certificate was given.

He found Doctor Wilson to be a sandy-haired young Scotchman, newly established, but with a fund of native shrewdness which Wragge was quick to appreciate.

"I see," he said. "Your interest in Mr. Trickey's death is that he would have been an important witness in a case you are working on. Suspicion of foul play? Well, I think you can disabuse your mind of anything of the sort. In fact I have already signed the death certificate as indicating cardiac affection. The symptoms of the body point to that, and I have been treating Mr. Trickey for heart trouble ever since I came here."

The inspector nodded. "Bit of bad luck then, doctor, and that's all there is to it," he said. "We are up against too many coincidences at the Yard to disbelieve in them."

"His appearance was a fairly truthful mirror of his habits, inspector," replied the young doctor.

"Well," Doctor Wilson," Wragge said, "I am very much obliged to you for saving me a wild-goose chase. As you have granted a certificate there will be no inquest, and, consequently, no interference by the police."

Drawn by an irresistible impulse, Wragge walked along Lipscombe Road in the direction of Number 16. He knew that the blinds would be drawn at the house of mourning, but there was the chance that one of the inmates might be peeping.

Sure enough the blinds were all down, but as he walked quickly past he detected no sign of peeping, nor was any sound audible from within. He went on toward the end of the street and was nearing the corner when a cab swung into the Lipscombe Road and flashed by him. Looking back, he saw it stop at Number 16. A lady got out, paid off the driver and vanished so suickly into the house as to suggest that someone had been waiting to admit her. Not so quickly, however, that Wragge had failed to notice that her smart hat was adorned with a purple aigrette.

From her having dismissed her cab he argued that she was going to remain some time. He dared not risk recognition by hanging about himself so he repaired to a public-house in the main thoroughfare and 'phoned headquarters for an assistant. While waiting he kept observation on Number 16 from the end of the street, and when his subordinate arrived he was able to assure him that the lady he had to shadow was still inside.

"Find out where she lives, Peter, and report to me at the Yard directly you have located her," was his instruction. "Name and address are all I want from you. I will deal with the matter then."

The young detective, whose spurs were yet to win, promised results. He was as good as his word. About ten o'clock that night he turned up in Wragge's room at Scotland Yard with the information that the lady of the purple aigrette lived in a flat in Vectis Mansions, Grosvenor Gate, and that her name was Mrs. Coningsby.

"Fine!" Wragge commended his junior. "Good night, Peters."

But the young detective lingered a moment. "I hope I did right, sir, in bringing this along," he said nervously, laying a book on the desk. "She dropped it as she entered the block of flats. I reckoned that it could be returned to her anonymously through the post if you had no use for it."

Wragge took up the volume and his eyes snapped like stars.

"No error there," he said quietly. "Chalk yourself up another twenty points, my son."

CHAPTER XIII.

A DEAD MAN'S DIARY.

His assistant having left him, Inspector Wragge quickly confirmed the value of the book which fortune had placed in his hands. His first glance had told him that it might have a bearing on the case. It was a "Scribbling Diary," with the name of Simon Trickey scrawled on the cardboard cover. Further examination showed that it covered the period of Trickey's mission to America disclosed by him to Kathleen Glenister and repeated by her to Wragge himself.

A still closer scrutiny showed that six months afterwards, but in the same year, Trickey had paid a second visit to the Montana mining camp, also at the instance of his employer, Dudley Glenister. It was this second journey to the west that nearly drew the inspector's eyes out of his head as he perused it.

The perusal did not take long. Mr. Simon Trickey had no literary style, confining his entries to mere scrappy information, but pieced together it gave a lurid record of what he had been up to in Lone Wolf City on behalf of the present baronet.

(To be continued.)

Machinery and the Millennium

London Observer (Ind.): The machine has created the modern industrial world. Its almost infinite capacity for the production of new wealth dazzled the nineteenth century mind so that mechanical efficiency came to be viewed as an end i nitself. The worker was mechanized. His humanity forgotten, he became the mere "hand' 'that pulled the lever and turned the wehel. This notion, pitifully narrow, but intelligible enough in the circumstances of its time, has brought tragic consequences. By a strange compromise between economic pressure and the spirit of revolt, the worker has accepted his status, but has declared that if the object of his life be purely material, its rewards shall at lease be his and not his employer's. That is the Marxian gospel which bids its devotees march through bloodshed to a pig-sty millennium.

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The Kindness of Understanding

A great many people claim affection for the cat. A very few understand it, says Margaret F. Bussing, in The Cat Review. To one who really loves an animal an article on humane treatment is unnecessary, for real love for anything includes understanding. How can an intelligent woman allow a child to dress a cat in doll's clothes, to force it to walk on its hind legs, or to hug it to suffocation? A little child will do such things with no thought of the torture inflicted on the sensitive animal, and the cat is probably the most sensitive creature on earth. It is the business of grown people to correct children for thoughtless actions, in a gentle, kindly way.

Surely any reader of The Cat Review knows how more than useless it is to punish a cat. If you are not kind enough to shudder at the thought of inflicting pain on a creature wholly at your mercy, then, for your own sake, please remember that the cat probably knows nothing about what the punishment is for, and that if you strike it, or deliverately hurt it in any way, you are simply ruining it as a pet or for show purposes.

I have recently heard of people, otherwise kind, who forget to have fresh, clean, cool water where the cat can always find it. I wonder how those humans will feel if their supply of drinking water depended on some one and that one forgot to furnish it?

When correcting a cat, speak in a low, firm tone. Please do not shriek at it! Stroke pussy's head gently and do not hold her against her wishes. How would you like to be lifted high in the air and held there by a giant against whom your struggles were in vain? Would not you, perhaps, scratch just a little?

The cat will repay your kindness with affection and sweetness.—The Cat Review.

Under-the-Table Manners

It's very hard to be polite
If you're a cat.
When other folks are up at table
Eating all that they are able,
You are down upon the mat
If you're a cat.

You're expected just to sit
If you're a cat.
Not to let them know you're there
By scratching at the chair,
Or a light, respectful pat
If you're a cat.

You are not to make a fuss
If you're a cat.
Tho' there's fish upo nthe plate
You're expected just to wait,
Wait politely on the mat
If you're a cat.

—Teachers' Magazine.

A Bilingual Ireland

London Truth (Ind. Lib.): Nationalism uncontrolled by reason is, like most isms, no better than sounding brass and tinkling cymbals, and reason boggles at the idea of trying to change a nation's language. . . . To teach a helpless Irish child at school a language which will never be spoken or understood outside of Ireland nor in Ireland itself north of the Free State frontier, and a language at the same time without a literature—why this is nothing better than cruelty to children.

Bonds of Empire

Brisbane Daily Mail: Probably of all the great dominions Canada is the most secure, for its mighty neighbor would never permit its independence to be challenged. Australia and New Zealand have no such guarantee. Their integrity depends wholly upon their association with the United Kingdom. . . . Fortunately, in Australia and New Zealand sentiment and interest combine, and, in the circumstances, it is not probable that any serious proposal will be made to destroy the imperial association.

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The Toronto Hospital for Incurables, in affiliation with Bellevue and Allied Hospitals, New York City, offers a three years' Course of Training to young women, having the required education, and desirous of becoming nurses. This Hospital has adopted the eight-hour system. The pupils receive uniforms of the School, a monthly allowance and traveling expenses to and from New York. For further information write the Superintendent.

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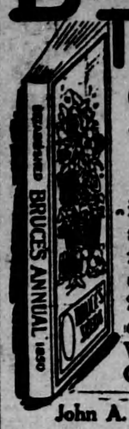

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New Vermilion Map Index of Progress

Its Revision Assisted by Aerial Photography to Bring This Section Up to-date and of Real Value

Buffalo Paths Now Roads

A score or more of years ago one travelled from Saskatoon to Battleford and Edmonton and there were no intervening settlements. The gopher and the badger had their way with the land and viewed with a placidity born of ignorance the straggling parties of surveyors at work on laying out the farms of the next generation.

To-day most of these areas are filled with settlers. The stupendous change that the years have brought is clearly pictured in the latest edition of the Vermilion Map Sheet, located seventy-five miles east of Edmonton, now on the press of the Topographical Survey, Department of the Interior, Ottawa. The wilderness that was has been made to blossom into something distinctly more profitable than the rose. An area of eighty-four miles east and west by forty-eight miles north and south is, except in three wooded townships, settled to the extent of one farmstead to the quarter-section in many cases.

The new map will be of incalculable use to prospective settlers, travellers, business men and others. Shown on it are farmhouses, schools, roughly four miles apart, churches, grain elevators, post offices, towns and villages, telegraph offices, telephone lines and railroads.

Also clearly indicated in different colors are the main roads, secondary roads and lesses travelled trails along which canters the ubiquitous motor car where formerly the buffalo alone ranged.

Traversing the region from east to west are the trough-like valleys of the North Saskatchewan and the tortuous Vermilion. Many small lakes and lesser waterways, both ornamental and useful, brought to light by the photographs of the Aerial Survey, have been mapped.

The 1885 rebellion is recalled in the location of the site of the Frog Lake massacre.

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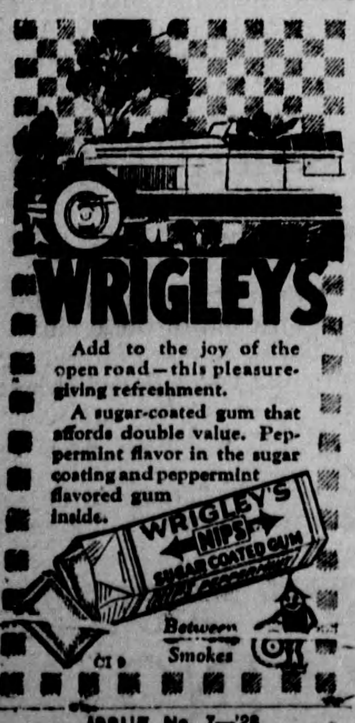

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