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291

The SKELETON FINGER

by Headon Hall

BEGIN HERE TODAY.

Sir Dudley, believed to be the murderer of his cousin, James Glenister, following the finding of a skeleton finger of the dead man, asks the hand of Kathleen Glenister, sister of the dead man, in marriage. He is refused by Kathleen, who believes him a murderer, and who is in love with Norman Slater. Kathleen is tricked by Sir Dudley into visiting a lonely place to obtain information about her brother's death. Slater, fearful of her safety, follows on a motorcycle.

NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY.

CHAPTER XVII.—(Cont'd.)

"No, sir. It leads to Beechwood village and Colnbrook beyond. But both places are a long way off—a lonely walk for a young lady."

Norman's anxiety was increasing.

"Did the young lady use the telephone while she was here?"

"We ain't on it, sir "

Norman gave the waiter five shillings and retreated into the hall.

He had reached the entrance and was making for his cycle, which he had left at the curb, when the throaty voice of the waiter stopped him:

"Arf a mo', sir. I dunno if this has to do with you. I found it when I was sweeping up after the luncheon people were gone."

"This" was a scrap of paper, the creases in it suggesting that it had originally been twisted into that homely form of communication, a three-cornered note. It bore a few words in pencil:

"Prevented at last moment from joining you. Come to keeper's cottage. You will find me there without fail."

Putting the note in his pocket, Norman added a pound to his first tip. Then he went out and started his motorcycle, the drone of it drowning the chuckle with which the wheezy waiter retreated into the hotel.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE TRAP CLOSES.

The ancients who named Cupid "the blind god" were wise in their generation. No one not under the influence of that divinity would have behaved quite so rashly as did Norman Slater after "picking up his clues" at The Bull. It never occurred to him that they had been planted on him as a card is planted by three-card tricksters.

Alf Grinstead's selection of a mobike had been sound, and the seven miles of road vanished like a lurid dream. With a blast from his horn he tore through Beechwood village, past the lodge gates of Beechwood Grange and so into the network of lanes that led to the stile beyond which wound the woodland path to the cottage of the head-keeper.

The cycle had earned its rest. Norman bestowed it among the bracken in a dry ditch close to the stile and of necessity set out to finish his ourney on foot. Eventually he came out into the clearing. The diamond-paned windows of the cottage were laced with light from within, but there was no moon to show the old mill across the stream.

He walked up to the door and rapped with his knuckles. The scroop of a chair sounded within and a sour-faced woman opened to him.

"Bless us and save us! I thought 'twas the man with the poultry food," she exclaimed. "What might you please to want, sir?"

"I came to inquire about Miss Glenister," replied Norman. "I have reason to believe that she was here this afternoon."

Mrs. Grimes moved away from the doorway in an implied invitation to enter which Norman instantly accepted.

"I dunno nothing about Miss Glenister," she said. "I've been out all day. You'd best ask me husband. There he sets."

At the other end of the low-ceiled living room John Grimes sat on a stool warming his hands at a wood fire. His great shoulders were hunched in an attitude of dejection. Norman, who was quicker in action than at arm-chair theory, noticed this, and he also noticed two other things. On the wall was a telephone. And Mrs. Grimes was struck with sudden solicitude for an oil lamp which stood on a table in the window-bay. She went over to it and moved the lamp three times before she got it to her satisfaction.

His hand flew to the pistol in his pocket.

Norman had got to know the silent head-keeper rather well during the short period when he had been a shooting guest at the Grange.

"How are you, Grimes?" he said, forcing the cordial note. "You can't have forgotten me yet."

The keeper reared his giant bulk from the stool and confronted his visitor. But he ignored his visitor's outstretched hand and avoided his eye. "I mind ye well enough, sir," he said in surly fashion. "Come to stay with the master again?"

"No, I just wanted to ask you a few questions," rejoined Norman. He did not like the look of things. The man's manner was furtive. The woman's action with the lamp might have been a signal.

"We've got a rare pack of pheasants left," Grimes remarked with baffling irrelevance. He lifted his gaze now, but it was directed over Norman's shoulder—toward the door. The keeper's hard, gray eyes seemed to put a question and to receive an answer.

Norman took the warning of that interchange a fraction of a second too late. His hand flew to the pistol in his pocket, but the bear's hug of John Grimes pinioned his arms and a jujitsu kick in the small of his back did the rest. He was borne to the floor and a moment later he was vainly fighting the fumes of a chloroformed sponge pressed to his mouth and nostrils.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE ART OF FINESSE.

In the train, going down to Beechwood next day, Inspector Wragge was not in the guise of a subscription-hunting clergyman. On this occasion he was in his own natural semblance, since he wished Sir Dudley to recognize him at sight as the police officer who had pulled Norman Slater off him in the fracas at Cadogan Gardens.

He alighted at the little wayside station, went to the lodge gates of the Grange, walked up the avenue, and rang the bell at the great oaken front door. Hinkley rather jibbed at admitting him, but yielded at once on being informed of the visitor's official position.

There was no one in the library and Wragge had to wait a long half-hour before Sir Dudley joined him.

"Come to arrest me for murdering my cousin?" Sir Dudley sneered.

Wragge assumed a servility he was far from feeling.

"You will have your little joke, Sir Dudley," the inspector laughed. "I am after Mr. George Glenister's murderer all right, but it is your help I want—not you."

"The object of my call, Sir Dudley," said Wragge, "is to beg you to tell me if you have heard the names of any local gentlemen mentioned in connection with the keeper's daughter. You must have all the local gossip at your finger tips."

The baronet shook his head. "They don't tell me much, these village clods," he said. "No, I never heard who Sally's mashes were except that there were plenty of them. The talk is that she was married to some fellow in London."

Wragge made a wry face expressive of disappointment. "That's not very informing," he said. "I seem to have had my journey for nothing. But I should value your opinion on one other point, Sir Dudley. How about your keeper, John Grimes, as the murderer?"

Had a high explosive shell burst within a hundred yards of the house the effect on its owner could not have been more marked. He sprang to his feet, his face gone all purple and working strangely.

"What on earth put such tommy rot into your head?" he hectored. "Why should Grimes want to kill my cousin?"

"I don't say he did; it is only a conjecture," replied the inspector soothingly. "There might have been the old melodramatic motive of the outraged father who wants to get square on his daughter's seducer, eh?"

Sir Dudley broke into a cackle of harsh laughter. "That's a bad break, Wragge," he said. "I was beginning to be impressed with your cleverness but now you've gone and spoilt it."

"We will rule Grimes out then," said Wragge, rising to depart. "Good-day, Sir Dudley, and many thanks."

(To be continued.)

Minard's Liniment kills warts.

Forgiven

Because he went to church last Sunday and donated a dollar to the collection an old offender was saved a jail sentence at El Dorado. The man had been arrested more than twoscore timeson charges of drunkenness during the last two years, but when the city attorney learned of his attendance at church services he recommended his dismissal.

I am sorry, but at Buckingham Palace it is extremely difficult to get Continental stations. As a matter of fact, I have given up trying to get Germany from the palace at all on Sunday nights.—King George V.

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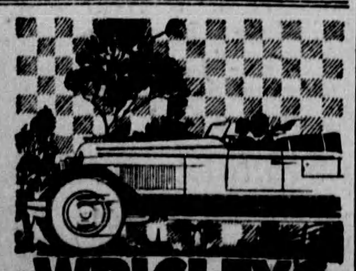

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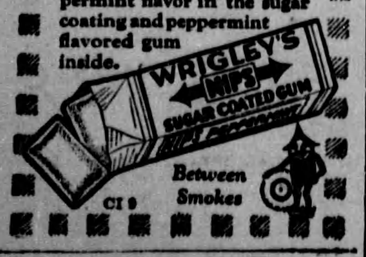

CI 9

ISSUE No. 11—'28

Rearing a Chinese Boy

Doctor to Experiment to See if Environment Offsets Heredity

Ip Tin Cadbury, 3½-year-old son of a Chinese General, who is to be reared as an Occidental, sailed with his foster parents, Dr. and Mrs. William Cadbury of Lingnan University, Canton, China, and his three foster sisters recently on the White Star liner Celtic for Liverpool.

The boy, whose Occidental diminutive is Jimmy, was given to the doctor when he was a year old as a reward for the physician's treatment of General Lee Buk Lum's oldest son. The General would like Jimmy, whom he named Ip Tin, to become a physician, but Jimmy is to choose his career when the time comes.

Meantime, with a set allowance and a private nurse of his own, Jimmy is being reared as a member of the Cadbury family. His Occidental training is to be free of all traditional influences save that of the Chnese New Year, when he is to be returned to his own father's household so that he may make obeisance to the venerable memories of his ancestors.

Dr. Cadbury said the boy provides an tineresting experiment in the question of whether heredity takes precedence over environment in race culture.

Michael Altman, wholesale grocer of Chicago, has attended theatrical first-nights for forty years and has recorded in forty-two volumes his impressions of 5,000 plays.

Keep Minard's in the Medicine Chest.

Nobody was ever sorry for being straight with the boys and square with the girls.

"Have you heard the last story about my boy, aged five?" "No, old man . . Nobody has."

Lady (having seen maid out with well-known but now elderly tenor): "Minna, who was the gentleman you were with last night?" Maid: "He was my brother, madam." Mistress: "Yes, he was my brother ten years ago."—Der Wah.

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29x4.40, 28x4.40, 27x 4.40, 29x4.75	6.95	1.95
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BIG PRICE REDUCTION IN ROGERS BATTERYLESS RADIOS

Canadian Company Leads Field In Production of Batteryless Sets

Price reductions of $26, $45 and $50 on the new 1928 Models of the famous Rogers Batteryless Radios were announced recently by Rogers dealers. These drastic changes are not a price "cut" on special models, but constitute the creation of an entirely new and lower price level for all Rogers Radios from now on. These big reductions represent savings, passed on to the public, through economies in purchasing, production and distribution of Rogers Sets due to the tremendously rapid increase in sales during the past two years.

There can be no doubt but that the inauguration of these new prices will stimulate radio sales, for it is now possible for anyone to own a Batteryless Radio with all its advantages and economies at the price of an ordinary battery set.

As a representative of the Q.R.S. Music Co., the Rogers distributors in Eastern Canada, expressed it: "Three years ago when the Rogers was first introduced it was the only Batteryless Radio on the market."

Not only does the Rogers eliminate all batteries, chargers, chemicals, attachments and complicated wires, so that all you have to do is plug it into your light socket and tune in, but it takes care of variations in line voltages in different localities and in the same locality during different times of the day, so there is no danger of burning out tubes. See your Rogers dealers for demonstration.

In England, at a teachers' meeting to protest against the "anti-working-class propaganda in British school-books," France was referred to as the only country that had placed in use history textbooks that were without bias.

The fat man said he liked to dance but he needed a concave partner.

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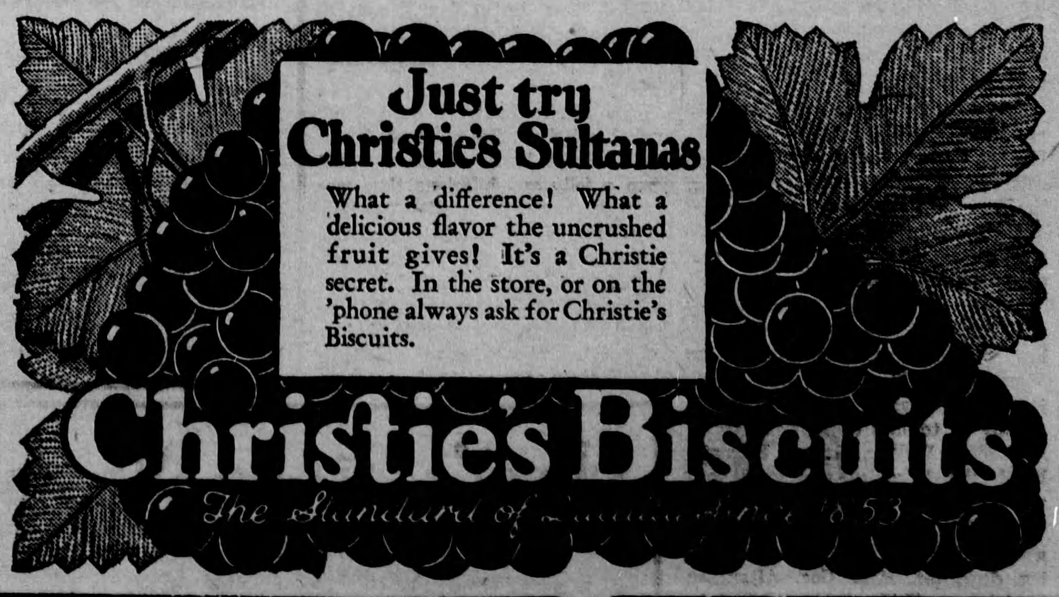

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