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

Mr. Willoughby Melville, and James Wragge.

NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY.

CHAPTER IX.—(Cont'd.)

"Thank you, madam, on the whole I think I'd better not," replied the inspector in a tone of self-negation. "Trickey mightn't like it. Besides, I can find him all right—the old blighter."

"So long then." "Miss Blair" retired into the narrow entrance. "Look in any time you're passing."

Wragge promised to do so and got into the waiting taxi. And as he drove away he assured himself that he would certainly have to revisit that abode at no distant date. For Mrs. Simon Trickey had not only been revealed as "Maud Blair," the cinema actress, but without any manner of doubt she was also the original of the photograph which Kathleen Glenister, not an hour ago, had identified as that of Sally Grimes, the daughter of the head gamekeeper at Beechwood Grange.

CHAPTER X.

THE ENTRY IN THE CASE BOOK.

On the evening after his return to Hadley Street Doctor Willoughby Melville, having finished his solitary dinner, retired to his consulting room.

Switching on the electrics, he unlocked an antique corner cupboard and ran his eye over several neatly piled stacks of books in a uniform binding which bespoke them as manuscript. Taking down one of the columes he carried it to a deep-seated easy chair and began to turn the pages.

"About five years ago," he murmured.

His meeting with Inspector Wragge at the lodge gates of Beechwood Grange on the previous day had struck a chord of memory awakening the liveliest curiosity. He had already become obsessed with the mystery of the skeleton finger, and when he recognized the ascetic looking clergyman loitering there as a Scotland Yard officer whom he had treated professionally years before, he at once guessed that he was engaged on the case.

Ignoring the clerical disguise, he had given Wragge the surprise of his life by addressing him by name and recalling their old relations as medical adviser and patient. Immediately afterwards he had made amends by assuring that the inspector was on duty there and informing him that a shadowy individual had just forced himself upon Sir Dudley Glenister.

He found the entry—his system of cross-indexing was the last word in method—without any trouble and he settled down to peruse it. His first glance at the length of the entry told him that the state of Inspector Wragge's nerves five years ago had demanded careful attention.

He read his own diagnosis of the symptoms with a revived interest that recalled the examination to which he had submitted Mr. Wragge.

"James Wragge, Inspector Criminal Investigation Department," the page was headed. "Age 43, height 5 ft. 10 in., weight 12 stone. No traces of organic disease. Appearance and pulse indicate temperate habits."

The specialist paused in his reading and in his mind's eye visualized the bogus clergyman whom he had met at the lodge gates of Beechwood Grange.

"And if," he reflected, "I had to diagnose Mr. Wragge over again I should probably have to use precisely the same words I used five years ago. He looks as fit as ever, and barring a few gray hairs not a day older. But there was a look of mental strain about his eyes."

Melville sead on:

"When I pressed him for the cause of what I was compelled to describe as a nervous breakdown which threatened creeping paralysis, his frank demeanor disappeared. He prevaricated and fenced with my questions till I was obliged to tell him that unless I was informed of the source of worry I could do but little to remove it."

Placing his finger between the leaves, the doctor leaned back in his chair and closed his eyes. The scene in that consulting room, now so long ago, came back to him as though it were yesterday. The hard-bitten detective officer, pressed for the cause of his trouble, had burst into tears, confessing that he had been caught by a high official, holding a minor post in the government of the day, accepting a bribe for allowing a defaulting banker to escape from justice. The official accuser, whom Wragge had not named, had consented to hush the matter up, while giving him to understand that it was only held in abeyance. If at any future time the delinquent misbehaved himself the old misconduct would be brought up.

Melville read on:

"Having once broken down Wragge's guard, I found it easy to give him immediate relief by suggestion and drugs. The most potent factor used for his cure was the belief I succeeded in inspiring that he had nothing to fear so long as he did not misbehave again."

CHAPTER XI.

NUMBER 16 LIPSCOMBE ROAD.

Kathleen turned a deaf ear to Norman Slater's plea that he should accompany her to Simon Trickey's house in Brixton.

Trickey was evidently a drink-sodden reprobate, formidable possibly as a crafty rascal where money was concerned, but not the sort of ruffian who would use methods of violence.

So it was that Kathleen drove to Brixton without escort, to be set down in front of the garish little villa in the middle of the afternoon. Telling the taxi-driver to wait, she rang the bell and was admitted by the smart maid without the opposition encountered by Wragge on the previous day. She was shown into a tawdry sitting-room to the right of the narrow entrance passage, and it was not until the servant had closed the door on her that she awoke to the fact that she had neither been asked nor given her name.

The fumes of a strong cigar had assailed her nostrils on entering the house, and she concluded that Mr. Trickey had observed her arrival from the room on the other side of the passage and that he would join her presently. She only hoped that he would be sober.

But five minutes passed and neither drunk nor sober, did Mr. Simon Trickey or anyone else appear. Another five minutes passed and the door opened to admit the tinted lady who had parleyed with Wragge from the doorstep the previous day. Recognition was mutual and instantaneous.

"Sally Grimes!" exclaimed Kathleen.

"Miss Maud Blair" advanced a tentative hand ready, but dropped when no responsive sign of it being grasped was shown.

"Do sit down, Miss Glenister," she simpered. "My husband told me he was expecting a lady on business, but who would have dreamed that it would be you!"

Bewildered, and with a sense of physical nausea she could not account for, Kathleen sank into a gaudy, plush-covered chair.

"Mr. Trickey is your husband?" she gasped.

"Yes. I am quite an old married woman," was the giggled reply. "Though I daresay they have another tale to tell of me at Beechwood, Miss Glenister."

Kathleen ignored the brazen suggestion. "Nothing but the local gossip that you were married reached me," she replied coldly. "I have not been much at Beechwood lately."

"But you were there when the crow flew over the shooting lunch," the lady of the house insinuated slyly.

"That is a matter I cannot discuss with you," said Kathleen. "Is it likely to be long before I can see your husband?"

"He will be in directly. I left him in the dining room with—with a man who's rather difficult to get rid of. You don't show much interest, Miss Glenister, in my present circumstances. You would be surprised to hear that I am the chief breadwinner in this humble abode—'Miss Maud Blair,' if you please, of the films.

Kathleen had the haziest idea of what the woman was talking about, but she made a few polite inquiries which more than enlightened her as to the nature of "Miss Blair's" occupation and the fame she had won thereby. And then a sudden intuition told her that her hostess was not only talking from vanity but to gain time—and that all the time she was listening intently.

Kathleen listened, too, and she was almost instantly rewarded by two sounds in quick succession. The first was the swish of a silk petticoat in the passage and the second was the furtive opening and shutting of the front door. Kathleen was sitting too far back in the room to obtain a full view of the person leaving the house, but she caught a glimpse of a purple aigrette—a singular ornament if worn by "the man" with whom, according to his wife, Mr. Simon Trickey had been engaged on the other side of the passage.

(To be continued.)

Miss Maud Blair advanced a tentative hand.

Improving Home Conditions

Parents Are Reasoned With and Instructed in Better Methods by Children's Aid Officer

Where children are neglected, it is not our custom, says J. J. Kelso, Superintendent of the Children's Department, to order prosecution. That is only resorted to when milder methods fail. Ossasionally however, neglectful parents are brought before the Court and warning given of the danger of losing their children. In one case, with a family of six children, ranging in age from eleven down to one year, the conditions in the house were deplorable. The children were found to be in an extreme state of dirt, and all looked miserable and ill nourished. Their clothing was described as being nothing but rags. The house itself was in a filthy condition, infested with vermin the natural result of unclean living. This state of matters was not due to poverty, as the parents were quite able to do better. It was simply laziness and indifference. It is pleasing to report that bringing them before the magistrate proved a salutary lesson, and conditions are now decidedly better.

The modern woman is considered too delicate to shoulder a gun, but nobody questions her ability to bare arms.

Minard's Liniment relieves pain.

Quick Thinking Is Big Factor In Car Driving

Not Only Must Operator Watch Own Affairs, But It Is Necessary to Look Out for the Errors of Others

Vigilance Brings Safety

Children in Streets Have Become added Responsibility for Automobilists

The modern motorist, that is, the automobilist of these days of excessive traffic, must have an ample supply of gray mater under his hat. He must do the thinking for two people. He must think for himself and for the other fellow. The time is gone when the driver of a motor vehicle can expect to be a safe operator and do only his own thinking. He must develop a much larger mental capacity than that.

And who is the other fellow for whom the motorist must have thought? The child playing in the street, going to and from school is one other fellow. A very thoughtless creature. It is estimated that about 20 per cent. of all those who are fatally injured are children. Probably a larger number of the accidents which do not result in death involve children.

Protection for Children

It is reported on reliable authority that some fathers who take a great interest in their children to see that they are sent to some first-class camping place for the summer, primarily for the benefit of a better physical development will during the same period drive their own automobiles at high speed past playgrounds and camping sites where the children of other parents are getting their chance for recreation and health. Such a father would not break any speed where his own son might be located, but will be less thoughtless in the vicinity of other camping properties.

Another mature automobile operator who takes it for granted that his own children have little capacity for looking after themselves will nevertheless expect other children of the same age to be perfectly capable of dodging in front of his car. He will frequently sound his automobile horn as warning, which requires quick and intelligent action on the part of those warned. It should be taken for granted that children under such circumstances do not readily think clearly for themselves and the motorist must d osome of this kind of thinking for them.

In general, it might be said that any pedestrian is one of those other fellows for whim the motorist must think There are many adults about on foot who are highly excitable. Some are ignorant, some stupid, probably a few mentally unbalanced. Most of these people can hardly be expected to act rationally in any kind of emergency such as obtains in an automobile crisis. Even the most intelligent of grown-ups are often so thoroughly absorbed in various thoughts that they cannot be depended upon by motorists to act in any specific fashion.

More Reckless Operator

Not all the extra thinking of the motorist can be directed toward pedestrians. There are many motorists driving automobiles, but not doing a very good job of it. In other words, it becomes essential for the safe driver to do considerable thinking for the more reckless operator. While this kind of mental exercise is not always enjoyable to the motorist and certainly does not give him any great opportunity from the standpoint of observing the scenic beauty along the road and some of the points of interest, nevertheless it seems to be his fate.

The manufacturers of automobiles are contributing their share toward helping to improve this situation. They are perfecting the braking facilites on cars and making other improvements in the interest of safe driving and easier manipulation of a car. Those improvements go far in relieving the strain in handling a modern motor vehicle.

With the stage all set by the makers of cars in the interest of safety, it is now up to the drivers to sharpen their wits, exercise their gray matter and cut down the actual number of accidents. It is safe to say that motorists are doing this with increasingly satsfactory results.

It was the young advocate's first case in Court, and he was very nervous. "My lord," he begun, "I appear in this matter to—er—to—er—" "Yes, yes," interrupted the Judge, "but it's not your business to err, Mr. Smith. That is my privilege."

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Lanterns on Floor Serious Menace

Should Be Hung On Hook Out of Way—Electric Light Safest

A nervous brindle cow, being milked for the first time, kicked over the lantern set on a box behind her, and a great city was wiped out. That was in Chicago, back in the last century, but the same thing has been going on in a minor way ever since. Each year, several good barns in Ontario go up in smoke, as a result of a lantern being knocked over, and while a city is not wiped out, the loss to the individual, especially when mows and stalls are full of valuable stock and equipment, is disastrously high. And the tragedy of the thing is that it is all due to carelessness.

Firm hooks, fixed in the ceiling of the stable at convenient intervals will cost but a few cents, and yet when the lantern ise swung from these, not only is the light better distributed, but a nervous heifer, a spirited horse, or a hurrying man cannot knock it over and set fire to the place. The Ontario Fire Marshal suggests that it would be good business if the country insurance companies would buy several thousand of these hooks and present half a dozen to each policy holder. Even if one fire was prevented as a result, the saving effected would pay for the hooks for all time to come.

Where possible, Ontario fire fighting officials urge the installation of electric lights, which they mantain make the safest illuminaton. Where the wring is done by a competent electrician, and the work inspected by a government official, fire risk is reduced to the minimum. Where it is impossible to put in electric light, and unfortunately, this is often the case in the country, good safety lanters should be procured and the hooks provided.

Importance of Our Water-Power

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Give a small boy a watch and he will have the time of his life.

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Hostess: Willy, won't you have some more Christmas pudding? Willy: No, thanks; mother says I don't want any more.

Minard's Liniment for asthma.

Royal Bank Annual Meeting

The annual General Meeting of shareholders of The Royal Bank of Canada marked the close of the most successful year in the history of the Bank.

Sir Herbert Holt, President, in his address, dealt more particularly with general conditions throughout the country, but touched on many developments of great importance, more especially from the standpoint of trade and industry.

C. E. Neill, General Manager, reviewed the growth of the Bank to the foremost position it now occupies and gave to the shareholders an interesting insight into the part the bank is playing in all centres in which it is now doing business.

Outlook Favorable.

Sir Herbert referred to the year's developments in industry, trade and finance as generally satisfactory. The foundation for the development which has taken place is sound. Sir Herbert declared that as yet there are no indications of industrial and commercial inflation. Production is not expanding to a point unwarranted by growth and demand and it is noteworthy fact that the whole expansion has taken place during a period characterized by moderately declining prices. On the whole the financial situation in agriculture, industry and commerce is more settled than at the beginning of the period. Summing up the business situation, Sir Herbert stated that the "outlook was never more favorable for prolonged prosperity in Canada."

Necessity For Curbing Unwise Speculation.

In commenting on the annual statement, Mr. Neill referred at length to the importance of call loans, which represent loans against stock exchange collateral, not only of the Royal Bank, but of all banks. He pointed out that this was indicative of three things:

"1. Increase in the number of securities available to investors.

"2. Increase in the market value of securities.

"3. Increase in speculation.

"In a growing country the development of its resources produces new securities. Prosperous times result in the enhancement in value of securities and for these reasons it is clear that the two first mentioned causes for the increase in Call Loans are at least to some extent justified. As to the third, it is obvious that speculation has reached a dangerous stage. The best-informed financial and brokerage firms are already operating on an unusually conservative basis by calling for increased margins, by declining to open new accounts and by restricting the liability of their customers to reasonable amounts. In times of excessive speculation, the lure of easy profits cannot be denied, but speculation can be checked and held within reasonable bounds by the financial interests, particularly the banks, and bond and brokerage houses."

Lock of Borgia's Hair Put Under Glass at Milan

Strand Sent to Poet Bembo by Beautiful Lucrezia in 1505 Nearly Worn Away by Hands of Curious

TRESS INSPIRED BYRON

Wrote Poem About It; Originally Bought by Ambrostian Library Founder

Rome.—The lock of Lucrezia Borgia's hair, jealously kept in the Ambrostian Library, of Milan, toogether with a number of her love leiters, as well as the letter itself which accompanied the lock, has been put where it cannot be touched by the curious. For years it had reposed in a paper box; now it has been placed in a special glass reliquary and stands on a shelf, where the golden remnants of a past glory can be seen. So many visitors have stroked this lock that it was being worn away.

The hair is tied at two ends with silk, just as Lucrezia prepared it prior to sending it to her poet lover, Bembo, the Venetian, who, having studied at the University of Ferrara, had returned there on a visit and met the beautiful duchess, who had married Alphonse d'Este by proxy in Rome in 1505, and had journeyed with her suite to her bridegroom's home in Ferrara.

Discovery Meant Death.

It was when Bembo left and was visiting the Strozzi family at Villa Ostellato that the love missives were exchanged by means of trusty messengers who knew that the discovery meant death, as Alphonse d'Este was jealous.

Cardinal Borromeo, when he collected 8,000 manuscripts, including the letters between Lucrezia and Bembo and the lock of hair, founded the Ambrostian Library. For years this lock of hair had been almost forgotten. Then one day the poet Byron visited the library and was shown the lock. He wrote a poem about it and called it "the softest and lightest hair in the world." From that day until the present time visitors journeyed to Milan just for the privilege of touching the hair and gradually its color and quantity dwindled until the director of the library thought that little of this relic of a famous beautiful woman would remain.

Bought By Cardinal.

When Lucrezia wished to send to her lover a remembrance she cut this lock from her head and placed it in the piece of parchment, together with the letter, where it still remained when Cardinal Borromeo bought it. Besides the original with the hair, there are others, dating to the same period, together with Bembo's poetic answers. In one missive Lucrezia mentions that it is no longer safe to sign her own name, and that in future only the double initial F. F. will bear evidence that the letter is from her. Only a year had passed since Lucrezia had journeyed to Ferrara as the bride of the heir of the powerful D'Este family.

Lucrezia was so proud of her hair that during the journey northward from Rome she stopped five times for the purpose of washing her golden locks, according to the Venetian fashion, with a hair wash compounded according to a recipe of Catherine Storza.

It is said that her two handmaidens spent much of their time brushing it and sometimes gathering it into a golden net, as light as a cobweb, or else arranging it over her shoulders where it seemed as if colored with the rays of the sun. Now this lock is an ashy blond, for time has bereft it of its golden tints.

Leniency Shown Slayers Stirs French to Protest

Paris—"The Crimes of Juries," as one critic describes the acquittals of husbands, wives and lovers who shoot to kill, are stirring many to protest against conditions.

Many jury reforms have been debated in Parliament, but nothing has been done. There remains, however, much agitation for the jury's participation in fixing penalties, now the prerogative of the judge. It is argued that in murder trials juries often return "not guilty" verdicts rather than take a chance on the judge being too severe.

This element of sympathy for the defendant is because most murder trials now involve women, either as the killer or the killed. Women of late do more shooting than men in Paris, and their aim generally is good.

A peculiar feature of these cases is that the old "triangle," where an outsider does a little family wrecking, soon followed by gunfire, figures more often in the provincial courts, while in Paris, the bright light, night life centre, family quarrels result in criminal deaths more often than do love affairs.

Murphy—"Did ye hear that, poor Tim Casey's dead?" O'Flaherty—"Ye don't say so?" Murphy—"Yes; an' 'e's left all 'e 'ad to the Derry Poorhouse." O'Flaherty—"Ow much did he lave?" Murphy—"A wife an' ten children."

Prepare for an emergency and nine times out of ten you won't have to meet it.

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ISSUE No. 6—'28

PURITY FLOUR

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ONTARIO ARCHIVES
TORONTO

THE GIRL

A Short Story of the Do

Sally Deane hated Oscar Svense the giant Swede, almost as much she loved and adored her absent sa or-boy, Peter West.

More than all, she was afraid Chang, the fat, squat Chinaman, w was rich and powerful in Limehou and had a shop at the corner of t street where Sally lived, not far fr the docks.

Every day, as Sally was either g ing to her work at the factory in t Commercial-road, or when she was turning home, she would see Cha standing in his shop door.

His almond-shaped eyes would g ter as they looked at her fresh you beauty, and he would crease his y low face into a horrible leer.

"Longee waitee till best boy com back again!" he would chuckle.

And Sally would feel curious afraid, though she tried not to sh it, and was always polite in her sm ing answer.

But this morning, when he spo to her, she was without fear.

"No more waiting, Chang!" laughed gaily. "The Ocean St comes into dock this afternoon. Pe will be home this evening for good!

"Chang welly glad!" grinned Chinaman. 'Muchee nice boy, Pe West! You likee welly well, I t But Svensen fellow likee you ve well also. Plenty talk about you me."

"Oscar Svensen?" flashed Sal tossing her golden curls derisiv "He ain't in the same street with Peter, Chang; and he knows it. Pet is coming home this time for go Got a land job, and we're being m ried in a week or so."

"Allee same, my dear, Oscar Sv sen he swear he really you, and Peter!" chuckled the Chinaman ug ly, sending a chill of fear through ly as she passed on.

* * * *

It was not by chance that Os Svensen was waiting outside the t tory at the time when Sally would making her way back home th night.

He stepped in front of her, a and uncouth man with fair hair a cruel blue eyes.

Her mind was full of Peter—would have passed him by, but gripped her wrist and swung h round so that she was forced to sta beside him in a dark alley-way.

"You're in an almighty hurry, a you?" he sneered. "No time for to-night—eh?"

"Never did have, Oscar!" retor Sally coldly. "Let go of my wrist. wanted home to get supper read Peter'll be back to-night."

"Will he?" snarled the other. "M be, and maybe—not. Supposing don't come? Supposing he's be kept out in China?"

"Kept out in China?" laughed Sa ly. "Don't be soft! How'd that h pen, I'd like to know?"

"It has happened, anyhow. Chan seen to it all right."

"Chang—seen to it? What d'y mean, Oscar" gasped Sally, start by the queer certainty with which t Swede spoke.

"You remember, maybe, how the day after the Ocean Star left here th last time for China with your Pete aboard, the police made a raid o Chang's place?"

Sally nodded. The police had s pected to find a big haul of cocain the drug popularly known as "snow on Chang's premises. They had re ceived information from someone that effect.

But the raid had been without e fect. Nothing had been found.

Afterwards Chang had talked good deal about wanting to know wh had reported him to the police.

He had mentioned the matter Sally more than once, now she can to think of it.

"Well," laughed the big Swed harshly, "it was Peter who gave Chan away to the police, only luckily Chan had been cute enough to have the stuff hidden where the police couldn find it. But Chang didn't forget. Be ing a Chink, he took care to revenge himself, you can bet. When the Ocean Star got to China this trip, and you Peter went on shore, he was met by some of Chang's friends and—that's the last to be heard of him. So you might as well make up your mind, Sally, that you'll not see him aga.n."

"It's a lie!"

Sally was very near to fainting, so terrible was the fear that gripped at her heart.

She knew enough of Limehouse and Chinamen to understand that if Peter had given Chang away to the police the Chinaman was quite capable of acting as Svensen had said.

Peter, before leaving on this last trip, had been a good deal in Chang's company, and he had let drop in Sally's hearing some angry words about the traffic in "snow" which was going on. Peter had also been very friendly with Detective-Inspector Wade at the Limehouse police station.

Sally, trembling with a sudden dread in the darkness of the alley, tried hard to persuade herself that this story was not true.

"You're trying to frighten me!" she said, wrenching her wrist free from the Swede's hold. "I'm going home, and if Peter ain't there already I'm going to the docks to find out."

* * * *

But Peter was not at home when Sally reached the house, and, though her mother told her it was early to expect him as yet, fear took her straightway to the dock gates to find

MRS. A. D. [illegible]
Middaugh Apartments