

Belgrave Mystery.

BY A. CURTIS YORKE.

CHAPTER VIII—CONTINUED.

"Well, Scott—any news?" said Kennard looking up sharply. "Well yes, sir, I have," said the man, "though I don't say it's altogether what you would call good news," he added.

table. Then he said in quick, irritable tones: "But if Lady Denham committed the murder, which I cannot believe, why should she have screamed as she did and brought a whole crowd of people round her? And besides," he continued, with a sudden thought, "the doctors said life had been extinct for half an hour when the body was discovered. Why did she wait all that time and then scream? The thing is preposterous."

"Oh, Harcourt," said Gladys faintly. "Is it—it is what you feared?" "Yes," he answered. "Go dear." When she had left the room, Kennard advanced towards Olive. She had not seemed to be aware of his entrance; but she turned toward him now, and tried to smile. Her face was so white and still, so sweet! It was not the face of a murderer, he thought—forgetting how the soul may contradict the body sometimes.

In America skeletons are neither legal tender nor monuments of title, but it is different at the antipodes—in that is in many other things. In New Zealand, for instance, a European can not acquire title to a new piece of land till the individual Maori title is extinguished, and that has to be done before a native land court. In this court the "tuongas" or judges of local law declare that there is no valid title unless the last preceding owner's thoracic skeleton be produced. It appears that among the Maoris, when the land of a descendant becomes the property of another man the new-comer hangs up the skeleton of the descendant's body fastened into a cage, with a parrot inside the ribs. This is fact before the eyes of all and no one would dare to dispute the claims of the holder of such paramount evidence.

A Skeleton as Title Deed. In America skeletons are neither legal tender nor monuments of title, but it is different at the antipodes—in that is in many other things. In New Zealand, for instance, a European can not acquire title to a new piece of land till the individual Maori title is extinguished, and that has to be done before a native land court.

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