

### "LONG FINGER NAILS."

A TRUE STORY OF THE MASSACRE AT KUCHENG,  
CHINA, ONLY SIXTEEN MONTHS AGO.

On the south-eastern coast of China you will find the large city of Foochow, at the mouth of the Min river. Follow the Min one hundred miles inland, and you will reach Kucheng, a walled city, where noble English missionaries have labored for many years, and hundreds of Chinese people have become Christians.

But Kucheng is a hot place in summer; so the missionaries have been in the habit of going out on the mountains, twelve miles away, to spend the sultry days of July and August at the little village of Whasang ("Flowery Hill"), which is two thousand feet higher than Kucheng, and therefore much healthier and cooler.

To this village July, 1895, went as usual the Kucheng band of missionaries, the Rev. Mr. Stewart, his wife and five children, Mildred, Kathleen, Herbert, Evan and Baby Hilda, together with seven young lady missionaries. In this pleasant summer retreat they little dreamed, in the closing days of July, of the dreadful plans that were being laid for their destruction only a little way off among the mountains.

Fifteen miles distant, up among the mountain crags, was a fastness called Kunsang, where nearly three hundred desperate men, called "Vegetarians," were holding secret meetings, like a band of robbers, to decide what to do. For these lawless men had, for more than a year past, given their own Chinese neighbors so much trouble by burning, killing and plundering, that the governor of the district had sent two regiments of Chinese soldiers to punish them.

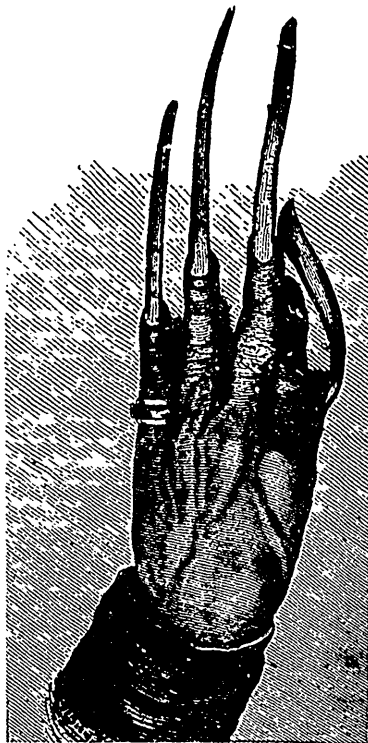
Although safely hidden far up among the crags of the mountains, these wicked men were growing desperate, and all agreed that they must plunder somebody—but whom?

Their captain, or leader, was a man named Tang, but generally known by his nickname, "Long Finger Nails," because he always allowed his nails to grow two inches long! He was a fortune teller, and being the most intelligent of the "Vegetarians" (a people so called because they profess to eat no meat), and a writer of popular songs, he soon became the leader of this band of desperadoes.

It was he who was chiefly responsible for all the horrible things they soon afterwards did. He had written notes to all the ring-

leaders in the country around, ordering them to meet him at the mountain fastness of Kunsang. When they came he told their fortunes, and told them they must do some dark and dreadful thing if they would escape ruin by soldiers.

A council of war was held on Monday night, July 29, and three plans were proposed—to rob a rich Chinaman in a neighboring village of Tangteuk; or to set fire to



"Long Finger Nails."

the city of Kucheng and plunder it while the people were fleeing; or to rob the foreign missionaries at Whasang.

But there were many opinions, and the leaders could not agree. The wild precipices rang with the loud voices of these fierce men as they broke the stillness of the night in angry dispute. At length "Long Finger Nails" cried:

"Let's draw straws!"