

THE GOLDEN KEY

Or "The Adventures of Leggard."
By the Author of "What He Coat Her."

CHAPTER II.—(Continued).

"That's all very well, my friend," he said, "but kindly remember that you are young, and well, and strong. I am old, and an invalid. I need support. Don't be hard on me, Trent. Sixty-five is no laughing matter."

"No, nor fifty hundred," Trent answered shortly. "I don't want your money. Don't be such a fool, or you'll never live to enjoy it."

Monty shuffled on to his feet, and walked aimlessly about the hut. Once or twice as he passed the place where the bottle rested he hesitated; at last he paused, his eyes lit up, he stretched out his hand stealthily. But before he could possess himself of it Trent's hand was upon his collar.

"You poor fool!" he said, "leave it alone, can't you? You want to poison yourself. I know. Well, you can do as you jolly well like when you are out of this—no more."

Monty's eyes flashed evil fires, but his time remained persuasive.

"Trent, I have a reasonable offer. Look at me! I ask you now whether I am not better for that last drop. I tell you that it is food and wine to me. I need it to brace me up for to-morrow. Now listen. Name your own stake! Set it up against that single glass! I am not a mean man, Trent. Shall we say one hundred and fifty?"

Trent looked at him half scornfully, half deprecatingly.

"You are only wasting your breath, Monty," he said, "I couldn't touch money won in such a way, and I want to get you out of this alive. There's fever in the air all around us, and if either of us gets a touch of it that drop of brandy might stand between us and death. Don't worry me like a spoilt child. Roll yourself up and get to sleep. I'll keep watch."

"I will be reasonable," Monty friend, and worry no more when I have had just one sip of that brandy! It is the finest medicine in the world for me. It does the fever off. You do not want money you say? Come, is there anything in this world which I possess, which you will set against that three inches of brown liquid?"

Trent was on the point of an angry negative. Suddenly he stopped, hesitated—and said nothing. Monty's face lit up with sudden hope.

"Come," he cried, "there is something I see. You're the right sort, Trent. Don't be afraid to speak out. It's yours, man, if you win it. Speak up."

"I will stake that brandy," Trent answered, "against the picture you let fall from your pocket an hour ago."

For a moment Monty stood as though dazed. Then the excitement which had come to his face slowly subsided. He stood quiet, staring, muttering softly to himself, his eyes fixed on Trent.

"Here picture! My little girl's picture, Trent, you are joking, you're mad!"

"Am I?" Trent answered nonchalantly. "Perhaps so! Anyhow those are my terms! You can play or not as you like. I don't care."

A red spot burned on Trent's cheeks, and a sudden passion took hold of him. He threw himself upon Trent and would have struck him but that he was as a child in the younger man's grasp. Trent held him at a distance dully and without effort.

"There's nothing for you to make a fuss about," he said gruffly. "I answered a plain question, that's all. I don't want to play at all. I should most likely lose, and I'm much better without the brandy."

Monty was foaming with passion and baffled desire.

"You beast!" he cried, "you low, ill-bred cur! How dare you look at my picture! How dare you make me such an offer! Let me go, I say! Let me go!"

But Trent did not immediately relax his grasp. It was evidently not safe to let him go. His fit of anger bordered upon hysterics. Presently he grew calmer but more maudlin. Trent at last released him, and thrusting the bottle of brandy into his coat-pocket, returned to his game of Patience. Monty lay on the ground watching him with red, shifty eyes.

"Trent," he whimpered, "but Trent did not answer him."

"Trent, you needn't have been so beastly rough. My arm is black and blue and I am sore all over."

But Trent remained silent. Monty crept a little nearer. He was beginning to feel a very injured person.

"Trent," he said, "I'm sorry we've had words. Perhaps I said more than I ought to have done. I did not mean to call you names. I apologise."

"Granted," Trent said tersely, bending over his game.

"You see, Trent," he went on, "you're not a family man, are you? If you were, you would understand. I've been down in the mire for years, broken-down creature. But I've always kept that picture? It's my little girl! She doesn't know I'm alive, never will know, but it's all I have to remind me of her and I couldn't part with it, could I?"

"You'd be a blackguard if you did," Trent answered curtly.

Monty's face brightened.

"I was sure," he declared, "that upon reflection you would think so. I was sure of it. I have always found you very fair, Trent, and very reasonable. Now shall we say two hundred?"

"You seem very anxious for a game," Trent remarked. "Listen, I will play you for any amount you like, my I O U against your I O U. Are you agreeable?"

Monty shook his head. "I don't want your money, Trent," he said. "You know that I want that brandy. I will leave you to name the stake I am to set up against it."

"As regards that," Trent answered

shortly, "I've named the stake; I'll not consider any other."

Monty's face once more grew black with anger.

"You are a beast, Trent—a bully!" he exclaimed passionately. "I'll not start with it!"

"I hope you won't," Trent answered shortly. "I've told you what I should think of you if you did."

Monty moved a little nearer to the opening of the hut. He drew his photograph hesitatingly from his pocket, and looked at it by the moonlight. His eyes filled with maudlin tears. He raised it to his lips and kissed it.

"My little girl," he whispered. "My little daughter."

Trent had re-lit his pipe and started a fresh game of Patience. Monty, standing in the opening, began to mutter to himself.

"I am sure to win—Trent is always unlucky at cards—such a little risk, and the brandy—ah—"

He could no longer ignore the hoarse, plaintive cry. He looked unwillingly up. Monty was standing over him with white, twitching face and bloodshot eyes.

"Don't look at me," he muttered simply, and sat down.

Trent hesitated. Monty misunderstood him and slowly drew the photograph from his pocket and laid it face downwards upon the table. Trent bit his lip and frowned.

"Rather a foolish game this," he said. "Let's call it off, eh? You shall have—well, a thimbleful of the brandy and go to bed. I'll sit up, I'm not tired."

But Monty swore a very profane and a very ugly oath.

"I'll have the lot," he muttered. "Every drop; every drop! Ay, and I'll keep the picture. You see, my friend, you see; deal the cards."

Then Trent, who had more faults than most men, but who hated bad language, looked at the back of the table, and, shuddering, hesitated no longer. He shuffled the cards and handed them to Monty.

"Your deal," he said laconically. "Same as before I suppose?"

Monty nodded, for his tongue was hot and his mouth dry, and speech was not an easy thing. But he dealt the cards, one by one with jealous care, and when he had finished he snatched upon his own, and looked at each with sickly disappointment.

"How many?" Trent asked, holding out the pack. Monty hesitated, a half made up his mind to throw away three cards, then put one upon the table. Finally, with a little whim, he laid three down with trembling fingers and snatched at the three which Trent handed him. His face lit up, a scarlet flush burned in his cheek. It was evident that the draw had improved his hand.

Trent took his own cards up, looked at them nonchalantly, and helped himself to one card. Monty could restrain himself no longer. He threw his hand upon the ground.

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Trent laid down his own cards calmly.

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Monty rose to his feet and balanced himself against the post.

"Never mind—about the brandy," he faltered. "Give me back the photograph."

Trent shrugged his shoulders. "Why?" he asked coolly. "Full hand beats three, don't it? It was my win and my stake."

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"I never heard you speak of her before," Trent remarked.

There was a moment's silence. Then Monty crept but between the posts into the soft darkness, and his voice seemed to come from a great distance.

"I have never told you about her," he said, "because she is not the sort of woman who is spoken of at all to such men as you. I am not more worthy to be her father than you are to touch the hem of her skirt. There was a time, Trent, many, many years ago when I was proud to think that she was my daughter, my own flesh and blood. When I began to go down—it was different. Down and down and lower still! Then she ceased to be my daughter! After all it is best. I am not fit to carry her picture. You keep it Trent—you keep it—and give me the brandy."

He staggered up on to his feet and crept back into the hut. His hands were outstretched, claw-like and bony, and his eyes were fierce as a wild-cat. But Trent stood between him and the brandy bottle.

"Look here," he said, "you shall have the picture, back—course you'll. But listen. If I were you and had wife or daughter, or sweetheart like this—she touched the photograph almost reverently—why, I'd go through fire and water, but I'd keep myself decent, and you a silly, old fool, now? We've made our piles, you can go back and take her a fortune, give her jewels and pretty dresses, and all the bal-de-lis that women would love. You'll never do it if you yourself up with that stuff, old 'un. Chuck the drink till we've seen this thing through at any rate!"

"You don't know my little girl," Trent muttered. "How should you? She'd care little for money or jewels, but she'd break her heart to see her old father—come to this—broken down—worthless—a hopeless, miserable wretch like you. I think Trent, I'll have just a glass, I think it will do me good. I see how pale I am."

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"Never mind—about the brandy," he faltered. "Give me back the photograph."

Trent shrugged his shoulders. "Why?" he asked coolly. "Full hand beats three, don't it? It was my win and my stake."

"Then—then take that!" But the blow never touched Trent. He thrust out his hand and held his assailant away at arm's length.

"She is nothing to me, of course," Trent answered. "A moment or so ago her picture was worth less to you than a quarter of a bottle of brandy."

"Was that?" Monty moaned. "She was my own little daughter, God help her!"

"I never heard you speak of her before," Trent remarked.

There was a moment's silence. Then Monty crept but between the posts into the soft darkness, and his voice seemed to come from a great distance.

"I have never told you about her," he said, "because she is not the sort of woman who is spoken of at all to such men as you. I am not more worthy to be her father than you are to touch the hem of her skirt. There was a time, Trent, many, many years ago when I was proud to think that she was my daughter, my own flesh and blood. When I began to go down—it was different. Down and down and lower still! Then she ceased to be my daughter! After all it is best. I am not fit to carry her picture. You keep it Trent—you keep it—and give me the brandy."

He staggered up on to his feet and crept back into the hut. His hands were outstretched, claw-like and bony, and his eyes were fierce as a wild-cat. But Trent stood between him and the brandy bottle.

"Look here," he said, "you shall have the picture, back—course you'll. But listen. If I were you and had wife or daughter, or sweetheart like this—she touched the photograph almost reverently—why, I'd go through fire and water, but I'd keep myself decent, and you a silly, old fool, now? We've made our piles, you can go back and take her a fortune, give her jewels and pretty dresses, and all the bal-de-lis that women would love. You'll never do it if you yourself up with that stuff, old 'un. Chuck the drink till we've seen this thing through at any rate!"

"You don't know my little girl," Trent muttered. "How should you? She'd care little for money or jewels, but she'd break her heart to see her old father—come to this—broken down—worthless—a hopeless, miserable wretch like you. I think Trent, I'll have just a glass, I think it will do me good. I see how pale I am."

He staggered towards the bottle. Trent watched him, interfering no longer. With a little chuckle of content he seized upon it and, so fearful of interference from Trent to wait for a glass, raised it to his lips. There was a gurgling in his throat—a little spasm as he choked, and released his lips for a moment. Then the bottle slid from his nerveless fingers to the floor, and the liquor oozed away in a half brown stream; even Trent dropped his pack of cards and sprang up started. For heading down the sloping roof with trembling fingers and snatched at the three which Trent handed him. His face lit up, a scarlet flush burned in his cheek. It was evident that the draw had improved his hand.

Trent took his own cards up, looked at them nonchalantly, and helped himself to one card. Monty could restrain himself no longer. He threw his hand upon the ground.

"Three's," he cried in fierce triumph, "three of a kind—nines."

Trent laid down his own cards calmly.

"Full hand," he said, "kings up. Monty gave a little gasp and then

ALL LEEDS IS DOING WAR WORK

WOMEN AND GIRLS MAKING MUNITIONS FOR ARMY.

Even the Very Old Occupants of the Poor-Houses Are Working.

She was very old, with as kindly a face as I have ever seen. She hobbled up to the gateway of the munitions works and enquired if there was any chance of a job, writes James Sherliker from Leeds, England.

"Sorry, mother," said the doorkeeper. "We turn a hundred women and girls away every morning. Wait till the new evening is finished. That'll be your time."

"A German killed my son," she explained in a shaky voice. "I want to make a bullet to kill a German. Appen I'm wrong . . . appen it's wicked to 'ev such a wish . . . but a German killed my son."

Hope lit up her eye as she hobbled away with the renewed intimation that an opportunity for work would come with the addition of the new wine.

By the courtesy of the management I was permitted to see the women and girls of Leeds making the war material for the men at the front. They work day and night in turns, and they work on Sundays as well. There is a keen competition in the matter of output. The winners hold a challenge shield, which is decorated with the flags of the allies and hung in a prominent position over the machines at which sit the successful girls.

Soldiers' Wives Work.

If a girl is taken ill or feels faint she is at once helped to a cosy room, where a charming matron and a trained nurse wait upon her. Up and down the big yard tramp armed sentries in khaki, and a Boy Scout conducts the visitor to the official whom he wishes to see.

All sorts and conditions of women come here. It is difficult to-day in Leeds and the surrounding districts to get a servant because domestic servants are giving up their work to go and make bullets. Girls of good middle-class families are here. Soldiers' wives are here and soldiers' mothers; and it is fine to see the smiles of satisfaction when they increase the output. Ladies in all parts of the country write asking to be allowed to help in the work. A clergyman's wife has offered to come along and bring her daughters, and applicants come from places as far distant as the Channel Islands.

I am glad to learn that a film has been made showing the women and girls at work in this munitions factory. I trust that it will be thrown on every cinema screen in the country. It will help recruiting, I am sure. These women are not working for the money alone; they are working to help save the lads who are saving them.

Paupers Helping.

"Well," said my local friend, with a laugh, "if you can find a man under eighty out of work round about here you will have done more than I can do. The war was not very old when the workhouses were appealed to, and now hundreds of men who were paupers are helping to serve the guns. Hundreds of men who left their work years ago have returned to it. Turners and fitters who believed that their working days were gone seem to have found a new lease of life and energy. The habitual loafer, the street-corner man—they are all missing from their customary haunts. They are too old

His Status.

Longhorn Luke—Are you for the allies or for Germany, stranger?

Affable—Stranger—I'm neutral—I've been swindled in every country in Europe.

It's sometimes hard for a man to adjust his religion to fit his business.

CHAPTER III.

For a moment Monty stood as though dazed. Then the excitement which had come to his face slowly subsided. He stood quiet, staring, muttering softly to himself, his eyes fixed on Trent.

"Here picture! My little girl's picture, Trent, you are joking, you're mad!"

"Am I?" Trent answered nonchalantly. "Perhaps so! Anyhow those are my terms! You can play or not as you like. I don't care."

A red spot burned on Trent's cheeks, and a sudden passion took hold of him. He threw himself upon Trent and would have struck him but that he was as a child in the younger man's grasp. Trent held him at a distance dully and without effort.

"There's nothing for you to make a fuss about," he said gruffly. "I answered a plain question, that's all. I don't want to play at all. I should most likely lose, and I'm much better without the brandy."

Monty was foaming with passion and baffled desire.

"You beast!" he cried, "you low, ill-bred cur! How dare you look at my picture! How dare you make me such an offer! Let me go, I say! Let me go!"

But Trent did not immediately relax his grasp. It was evidently not safe to let him go. His fit of anger bordered upon hysterics. Presently he grew calmer but more maudlin. Trent at last released him, and thrusting the bottle of brandy into his coat-pocket, returned to his game of Patience. Monty lay on the ground watching him with red, shifty eyes.

"Trent," he whimpered, "but Trent did not answer him."

"Trent, you needn't have been so beastly rough. My arm is black and blue and I am sore all over."

But Trent remained silent. Monty crept a little nearer. He was beginning to feel a very injured person.

"Trent," he said, "I'm sorry we've had words. Perhaps I said more than I ought to have done. I did not mean to call you names. I apologise."

"Granted," Trent said tersely, bending over his game.

"You see, Trent," he went on, "you're not a family man, are you? If you were, you would understand. I've been down in the mire for years, broken-down creature. But I've always kept that picture? It's my little girl! She doesn't know I'm alive, never will know, but it's all I have to remind me of her and I couldn't part with it, could I?"

"You'd be a blackguard if you did," Trent answered curtly.

Monty's face brightened.

"I was sure," he declared, "that upon reflection you would think so. I was sure of it. I have always found you very fair, Trent, and very reasonable. Now shall we say two hundred?"

"You seem very anxious for a game," Trent remarked. "Listen, I will play you for any amount you like, my I O U against your I O U. Are you agreeable?"

Monty shook his head. "I don't want your money, Trent," he said. "You know that I want that brandy. I will leave you to name the stake I am to set up against it."

"As regards that," Trent answered

There's a Flavour of Distinction in every cup of "SALADA"

—something intangible but truly entrancing. Skillful blending of the finest 'hill-grown' teas and scrupulous cleanliness in preparation is the secret. This flavour constitutes the individuality of SALADA and will never change, no matter how costs may rise.



Poultry Alphabet.

A utility bird is rarely worth doctoring, the axe being an excellent surgical instrument to apply to sick fowls.

Balanced rations supply maximum of nourishment with minimum of waste.

Cull closely, for it does not pay to board idlers.

Do not attempt too much to accomplish thoroughly.

Every insect left to mature will decrease the profits of the flock.

F-i-l-l spells failure.

Good stock is the best foundation but it must be handled with common sense.

Hens are not magicians; so cannot manufacture eggs unless given the proper materials.

Incubency and poultry-breeding make a combination which would bankrupt a wealthy financier.

Just a little observation will prove that the I-know-it-alls never make successful poultrymen.

Kindness shown to fowls pays in increased egg-supply.

Lie multiply rapidly in uncleanly surroundings.

May chicks pushed to maturity, make fall layers to fill in the time when earlier hatched birds are resting.

Mixed flocks can give the satisfaction of a single breed.

One's favorite breed is usually the best with which to win success.

Pullets should be separated from cockerels as soon as sex can be distinguished.

Quickly kill the chicks which are dwarfed or crippled when hatched.

Rush young birds towards maturity if you wish large profits.

Select breeders early and dispose of all other male birds.

Try to waste no feed, either by

over feeding, careless methods, or one-sided diet.

Unless you give your flock regular care, they do not pay to keep.

Very few poultrymen know so much that they can learn nothing from the experience of others.

Hens are Profitable Assets.

Possibly no farm live stock pays as big a profit for food as do hens. Seems strange, but true, that one egg will pay for the keep of a dozen hens one day.

A hen if given a chance to forage will find a large part of her feed and during certain seasons of the year will be able to lay a goodly number of eggs without any further feed.

This fact has caused the hen in a great many instances to be neglected and shits largely for herself. Of course when thus disregarded she cannot be expected to be as profitable as when given good care and attention.

The refuse from the kitchen can be profitably turned into eggs rather than given to some worthless cats and dogs. The table scraps are excellent diet for fowls. Care must be exercised in feeding refuse from the kitchen or the outcome may be fatal. If foods where large quantities of salt were used in their preparation are given to the fowls they may gorge themselves on this salty food and great loss of fowls may be encountered. One party who had salted a quantity of sweet corn found laid in the spring that this corn was no longer wanted for cooking purposes and thoughtlessly threw it to the chickens. An excessive amount of it was eaten and in a few hours many of the fowl had died. In such the same way a farmer lost a fine bunch of young chickens by feeding them salted mash potatoes.