

# THE GOLDEN KEY

Or "The Adventures of Ledgard."

By the Author of "What He Cost Her."

## CHAPTER XVII.—(Cont'd.)

"Well, I am glad to tell you this at any rate," he said. "I always liked your father, and I saw him off when he left England, and have written to him often since. I believe I was his only correspondent in this country, except his solicitors. He had a very adventurous, and, I am afraid, not a very happy time. He never wrote cheerfully, and he mortgaged the greater part of his income. I don't blame him for anything he did. A man needs some responsibility, or some one dependent upon him to keep straight. To be frank with you, I don't think he did."

"Poor dad," she murmured, "of course he didn't! I know I'd have gone to the devil as fast as I could if I'd been treated like that!"

"Well, he drifted about from place to place and at last he got to the Gold Coast. Here I half lost sight of him, and his few letters were more bitter and despairing than ever. The last I had told me that he was just off on an expedition into the interior with another Englishman. They were to visit a native king and try to obtain from him certain concessions, including the right to work a wonderful gold-mine somewhere near the village of Bekwando."

"Why, the great Bekwando Land Company!" she cried. "It is the one Scarlett Trent has just formed a syndicate to work."

Davenport nodded.

"Yes. It was a terrible risk they were running," he said, "for the people were savage and the climate deadly. He wrote cheerfully for him, though. He had a partner, he said, who was strong and determined, and they had presents, to get which he had mortgaged the last penny of his income. It was a desperate enterprise perhaps, but it suited him, and he went on to tell me this, Ernestine. If he succeeded and he became wealthy, he was returning to England just for a sight of you. He was so changed, he said, that no one in the world would recognize him. Poor fellow! It was the last line I had from him."

"And you are sure," Ernestine said slowly, "that Scarlett Trent was his partner?"

"Absolutely. Trent's own story clinches the matter. The prospectus of the mine quotes the concession as having been granted to him by the King of Bekwando in the same month as your father wrote to me."

"And what news," she asked, "have you had since?"

"Only this letter—I will read it to you—from one of the missionaries of the Basle Society. I heard nothing for so long, that I made enquiries, and this is the result."

Ernestine took it and read it out steadily.

"Fortrenig.

"Dear Sir,—In reply to your letter and inquiry respecting the whereabouts of a Mr. Richard Grey, the matter was placed in my hands by the agent of Messrs. Castle, and I have personally visited Buckomari, the village at which he was last heard of. It seems that in February, 18— he started on an expedition to Bekwando in the interior with an Englishman by the name of Trent, with a view to buying land from a native king, or obtaining the concession to work the valuable gold-mines of that country. The expedition seems to have been successful, but Trent returned alone and reported that his companion had been attacked by bush-fever on the way back and had died in a few hours."

"I regret very much having to send you such sad and scanty news in return for your handsome donation to our funds. I have made every enquiry, but cannot trace any personal effects or letter. Mr. Grey, I find, was known out here altogether by the nickname of Monty."

"I deeply regret the pain which

this letter will doubtless cause you, and trusting that you may seek and receive consolation where alone it may be found,

"I am, yours most sincerely,  
"Chas. Addison."

Ernestine read the letter carefully through, and instead of handing it back to Davenport, put it into her pocket when she rose up. "Cecil," she said, "I want you to leave me at once! You may come back to-morrow at the same time. I am going to think this out quietly."

He took up his hat. "There is one thing more, Ernestine," he said slowly. "Enclosed in the letter from the missionary at Attra was another and a shorter note, which in accordance with his request, I burnt as soon as I read it. I believe the man was honest when he told me that for hours he had hesitated whether to send me those few lines or not. Eventually he decided to do so, but he appealed to my honor to destroy the note as soon as I had read it."

"Well!"

"He thought it his duty to let me know that there had been rumors as to how your father met his death. Trent, it seems, had the reputation of being a reckless and daring man, and according to some agreement which they had, he profited enormously by your father's death. There seems to have been no really definite ground for the rumor except that the body was not found where Trent said that he had died. Apart from that, life is held cheap out there, and although your father was in delicate health, his death under such conditions could not fail to be suspicious. I hope I haven't said too much. I've tried to put it to you exactly as it was put to me!"

"Thank you," Ernestine said, "I think I understand."

## CHAPTER XVIII.

Dinner at the Lodge that night was not a very lively affair. Trent had great matters in his brain, and was not in the least disposed to make conversation for the sake of his unbidden guests. Da Souza's few remarks he treated with silent contempt, and Mrs. Da Souza he answered only in monosyllables. Julie, nervous and depressed, stole away before dessert, and Mrs. Da Souza soon followed her, very massive, and frowning with an air of offended dignity. Da Souza, who opened the door for them, returned to his seat, moodily flicking the crumbs from his trousers with his serviette.

"Hang it all, Trent," he remarked in an aggrieved tone, "you might be a bit more amiable! Nicely lively dinner for the women I must say."

"One isn't usually amiable to guests who stay when they're not asked," Trent answered gruffly. "However, if I hadn't much to say to your wife and daughter, I have a word or two to say to you, so fill up your glass and listen."

Da Souza obeyed, but without heartiness. He stretched himself out in his chair and looked down thoughtfully at the large expanse of shirt-front in the centre of which flashed an enormous diamond.

"I've been into the City to-day as you know," Trent continued, "and I found as I expected that you have been making efforts to dispose of your share in the Bekwando Syndicate."

"I can assure you—"

"Oh, rot!" Trent interrupted. "I know what I'm talking about. I won't have you sell out. Do you hear. If you try it on I'll queer the market for you at any risk. I won't marry your daughter, I won't be blackmailed, and I won't be bullied. We're in this together, sink or swim. If you pull me down you've got to come too. I'll admit that if Monty were to present himself in London to-morrow and demand his full pound of flesh we should be ruined, but he isn't going

to do it. By your own showing there is no immediate risk, and you've got to leave the thing in my hands to do what I think best. If you play any hanky-panky tricks—look here, Da Souza, I'll kill you, sure! Do you hear? I could do it, and no one would be the wiser so far as I was concerned. You take notice of what I say, Da Souza. You've made a fortune, and be satisfied. That's all!"

"You won't marry Julie, then?" Da Souza said gloomily.

"No, I'm shot if I will!" Trent answered. "And look here, Da Souza, I'm leaving here for town to-morrow—taken a furnished flat in Dover Street—you can stay here if you want but there'll only be a caretaker in the place. That's all I've got to say. Make yourself at home with the port and cigars. Last night, you know! You'll excuse me! I want a breath of fresh air."

Trent strolled through the open window into the garden, and breathed a deep sigh of relief. He was a free man again now. He had created new dangers—a new enemy to face—but what did he care? All his life had been spent in facing dangers and conquering enemies. What he had done before he could do again! As he lit a pipe and walked to and fro, he felt that this new state of things lent a certain savor to life—took from it a certain sensation of finality not altogether agreeable, which his recent great achievements in the financial world seemed to have inspired. After all, what could Da Souza do? His prosperity was altogether bound up in the success of the Bekwando Syndicate—he was never the man to kill the goose which was laying such a magnificent stock of golden eggs. The affair, so far as he was concerned, troubled him scarcely at all on cool reflection. As he drew near the little plantation he ever forgot all about it. Something else was filling his thoughts!

The change in him became physical as well as mental. The hard face of the man softened what there was of coarseness in its rugged outline became altogether toned down. He pushed open the gate with fingers which were almost reverent; he came at last to a halt in the exact spot where he had seen her first. Perhaps it was at that moment he realized most completely and clearly the curious thing which had come to him—to him of all men, hard-hearted, material, an utter stranger in the world of feminine things. With a pleasant sense of self-abandonment he groped about searching for its meaning. He was a man who liked to understand thoroughly everything he saw and felt, and this new atmosphere in which he found himself was a curious source of excitement to him. Only he knew that the central figure of it all was this girl, that he had come out here to think about her, and that henceforth she had become to him the standard of those things which were worth having in life. Everything about her had been a revelation to him. The women whom he had come across in his battle upwards, barmaids and their fellows, fifth-rate actresses, occasionally the suburban wife of a prosperous City man, had impressed him only with a sort of coarse contempt. It was marvellous how thoroughly and clearly he had recognized Ernestine at once as a type of that other world of womanhood, of which he admittedly knew nothing. Yet it was so short a time since she had wandered into his life, so short a time that he was even a little uneasy at the wonderful strength of this new passion, a thing which had leaped up like a forest tree in a world of magic, a live, fully-grown thing, mighty and immovable in a single night. He found himself thinking of all the other things in life from a changed standpoint! His sense of proportions was altered, his financial triumphs were no longer omnipotent. He was inclined even to brush them aside, to consider them more as an incident in his career. He associated her now with all those plans concerning the future which he had been dimly formulating since the climax of his successes had come. She was of the world which he sought to enter—at once the stimulus and the object of his desires. He forgot all about Da Souza and his threats, about the broken-down, half-witted old man was gazing with wistful eyes across the ocean which kept him there, an exile—he remembered nothing save the wonderful, new thing which he had come into his life. A month ago he would have scoffed at the idea of there being anything worth considering outside the courts and alleys of the money-changers' market. To-night he knew that all he had done so far was as nothing—that as yet his foot was planted only on the threshold of life, and in the path along which he must hew his way lay many fresh worlds to conquer. To-night he told himself that he was equal to them all. There was something out here in the dim moonlight, something suggested by the shadows, the rose-perfumed air, the delicate and languid stillness, which crept into his veins and course through his blood like magic.

Yet every now and then the same thought came; it lay like a small but threatening black shadow across all those brilliant hopes and dreams which were filling his brain. So far he had played the game of life as a hard man, perhaps, and a selfish one, but always honestly. Now, for the first time, he had stepped aside from the beaten track. He told himself that he was not bound to believe Da Souza's story, that he had left Monty with the honest conviction that he was past all human help. Yet he knew that such consolation was the merest

## Fresh and Refreshing

# "SALADA!"

B76

is composed of clean, whole young leaves. Picked right, blended right and packed right. It brings the fragrance of an Eastern garden to your table.

BLACK, MIXED OR GREEN

sophistry. Through the twilight, as he passed to and fro, he fancied more than once that the wan face of an old man, with wistful sorrowing eyes was floating somewhere before him—and he stopped to listen with bated breath to the wind rustling in the elm-trees, fancying he could hear that same passionate cry ringing still in his ears—the cry of an old man parted from his kin and waiting for death in a lonely land.

(To be continued.)

## HINTS TO HOUSEHOLDERS.

### How the Dangers of Fire May Be Minimized.

The season is fast approaching when cool evenings will demand the starting of fires in our homes. September and October have become known to firemen as the months when chimneys and flues cause the most trouble.

The following suggestions of a practical nature, if faithfully followed, will do much to prevent damage to property and loss of life:

Stoves.—Place a metal stove-board on the wood floor under the stove, and extending at least twelve inches in front of the ash-pit door. Protect all walls and partitions within two feet of any stove with a metal shield, leaving an air space between the shield and the wall. Leave no kindling or other wood in the oven overnight. Do not hang clothes too near the stove or stovepipes.

Pipes.—See that the lengths of stovepipe are well fitted together, free from rust holes and parted seams, wired firmly and fitted perfectly into the chimney. Stovepipes passing through partitions, walls, floors, attics and roofs are dangerous at best. Where these must pass through partitions, walls or floors, always use a large, ventilated double thimble. You should examine the stovepipes in the attic. They may come apart or rust. Fluff and spider webs are likely to gather on and around them, to be set on fire when you least expect it.

Chimneys.—Chimneys should be built from the ground up, and never rest on wood supports. The settling of the woodwork will cause cracks in the chimney. Nor should the chimney walls be used to support joists or

other woodwork. Soft brick and poor mortar are often responsible for defects in the chimney. Use a good quality of brick and cement mortar. Chimney walls should be at least eight inches thick, the flue of ample size and lined with rags or paper, nor cover them with anything but a metal stock. Chimneys should be cleaned frequently.

Furnaces.—Protect all woodwork above and around boilers, if within three feet, with a metal shield, also all woodwork near furnace pipes. It is best to rivet the lengths of pipe together to prevent disjoining. The pipe should fit perfectly into the chimney. Examine the pipe frequently for rust holes or other defects. Keep them free from dust, fluff and spider webs, which are easily ignited.

Defects.—Defective stoves, boilers, furnaces, pipes and chimneys should be promptly repaired or replaced.

Overheating.—Beware of overheating stoves, boilers, furnaces and pipes. Ashes.—These should never be placed in wooden receptacles or bins, on wood floors or against wood partitions, walls, fences, buildings or any other woodwork. Use metal receptacles only, and dump ashes away from all buildings.

Care.—These matters are technical, but very simple and merely call for ordinary care. You cannot afford to be careless, when the lives of your loved ones, and the property of yourself and neighbors, are at stake. Let "Care and Caution" be the watchword and in this way assist in reducing Canada's enormous fire loss.—Bulletin from Commission of Conservation.

### He Opened It.

A little girl stood one day before a closed gate. A man passed, and the little girl said to him—"Will you please open this gate for me?" The man did so. Then he said, kindly—"Why, my child, couldn't you open the gate for yourself?" "Because," said the little girl, "the paint's not dry yet."

Even a wise man and his money are soon parted—by the undertaker. Lord Nelson was one of eleven children.

# PRACTICAL FARMING



## Hints for the Farmer.

Every farmer should raise bees.

Dryness is more essential than warmth in the hog-house.

Honey is an especially profitable crop for the fruit farmer.

Bees are easier to care for than chickens, and yield good returns on the investment.

Late-sown carrots, beets, etc., store much better than those which are sown early and are too old when harvested.

Cut out and burn the old raspberry canes as soon as they are through fruiting. Cultivate the young shoots and keep out all the weeds.

Alfalfa offers one of the best honey making materials. Alsike is also valuable, as is sweet clover, which may be grown to advantage in most provinces.

It will cost not less than 75 cents to raise a baby Brahma chick up to the point of laying. Leghorn chicks could be raised for about 50 cents, as they mature much earlier in life.

It pays to prepare vegetables as well as fruits neatly for market. Clean, attractive packages do not cost much more than unattractive ones and bring much better prices. Try it.

When it is necessary to prune trees, the branches should be cut or sawed off smoothly and a thick coat of paint applied to the cut surface, and a second coat applied after the first is dry.

The mammoth Russian sunflower is grown for its seeds. While it is blooming at the back of a lot it is a sight worth seeing. The seeds are used for

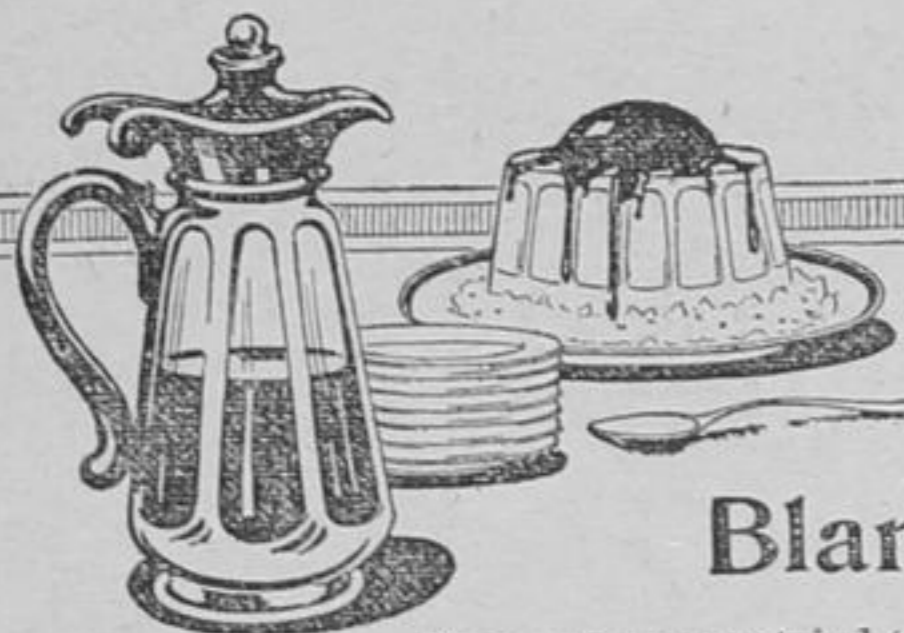
chicken feed and a variety of purposes.

Molting hens need particular care and attention. The change of coat is a big drain on the bird's system, and vitality. You must make up in food. An occasional feed of sunflower seed is good. Mix a little oil meal in the mash, and give increased ration of meat, green bone, beef scrap, or whatever it may be.

The colony plan of keeping poultry is best suited for the farmers and those who have plenty of land at their disposal. It makes it possible to keep several hundred hens on the ordinary farm without the expense of yarding them, and still have them away from the home buildings. It's the farmer's way.

From eight to fifteen colonies of bees are the right number for the average farmer to have, ten being usually preferable to a larger number, and still fewer being desirable to start with. For the fruit farmer bees should be regarded as a necessary side line just as chickens are in many parts of the country. The equipment cost for five colonies of bees is about \$50.

It is possible for careless help to leave a considerable portion of the grain crop in the field by neglecting to gather up scatterings, loose bundles, etc., and by hauling grain on open-bottom racks. From a few pounds to a few bushels of grain may be saved every day during stacking by using a tight-bottom rack, or a canvas over the rack that will catch all of the heads. In seasons when the grain shatters badly, a surprisingly large amount of grain can be saved in this way.



## Delicious with Blanc Mange

Have you never tried "Crown Brand" with Blanc Mange and other Corn Starch Puddings? They seem to blend perfectly—each improves the other—together, they make simple, inexpensive desserts, that everyone says are "simply delicious."



"LILY WHITE" is a pure white Corn Syrup—more delicate in flavor than "Crown Brand". Perhaps you would prefer it.

## EDWARDSBURG "CROWN BRAND" CORN SYRUP

is ready to serve over all kinds of Puddings—makes a new and attractive dish of such an old favorite as Baked Apples—is far cheaper than butter or preserves when spread on bread—and is best for Candy-making.

ASK YOUR GROCER—IN 2, 5, 10 AND 20 LB. TINS.  
THE CANADA SYRUP CO., LIMITED  
Head Office - Montreal