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The GOLDEN EGG

By M. J. Phillips

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When Buckley asked the sanction of his employer, Professor Rudolph Kinfeln, to the marriage of that young man and Kinfeln's niece, Donna, he expected that there would be extraordinary conditions attached to Kinfeln's approval. Kinfeln was a wealthy and eccentric scientist, metallurgist and physician, who dabbled in various strange matters for his amusement. Buckley, his assistant, had grown in time to understand the old man's oddities and to have a profound respect for the intellect which had already made several valuable scientific discoveries. Kinfeln smiled benevolently and combed his long white beard with his fingers when the younger man spoke. "Well, John," he began, "Donna is twenty-two, and of course she will marry some time. I suppose you are no worse than other men. Now, if I impose a task upon you before I give my consent you will agree to perform it?"

"If I can," replied Buckley cautiously.

The old gentleman chuckled. "It won't be very hard, John. From a private compartment beneath the laboratory shelf he drew out a box and handed it to Buckley. "Open it," he said.

John did so and revealed an oval yellow object nearly the size of a football and practically of the same shape. It seemed to be of metal.

"Now, John, there's your golden egg," went on the scientist. "I fixed it up for you in my leisure moments. If you open it inside of a month you get Donna and a wedding present too. If not, you'll have to wait awhile."

"What tools may I use in opening it?"

"That's the point, John. You may use your own two good hands and any instrument which does not weigh over fifty grains."

"Fifty grains!" repeated John, amazed. "Why, that's less than a quarter of an ounce."

"Exactly."

John stared first at the egg and then at the scientist. "But, professor," he expostulated, "an instrument weighing fifty grains will be practically useless. Why, the blade of a small penknife weighs that much. A thin latchkey weighs more."

"But an instrument much less in weight will open that egg."

John looked dubious. "But supposing I use something which weighs more?"

"You wouldn't do it, John, if you agreed not to," responded the professor comfortably, "and I'd catch you at it if you did."

John was young, in love, and energetic. His three years' work in the various hobbies which the scientist affected had given him an unusual technical education, great confidence in himself, and a certain delicate manual dexterity which almost surpassed that of his employer, clever as the older man was. It was very natural that he should accept the challenge and bear away the egg.

He found Miss Donna in the parlor and explained the situation. It is hardly germane to mention that when the girl placed her elbows on the table and settled her chin in her pink palms to listen she looked distressingly pretty—so pretty, in fact, that John was compelled to interrupt his narrative while he gazed at her.

When he had finished his account of the conditions, she rose. "You are to go right to your room, John. I'm commanded, and open that egg. I'm dying to see what's in it. No; you can't stay here with me and work on it; I would disturb you." With the wariness of long experience she dodged around the table at this moment, anticipating by the fraction of a second a lunge on the part of John. From a place of safety behind a chair, she pointed to the door. "Avaunt! And tell me tomorrow morning what you found."

John reluctantly gave up a chase which promised to be fruitless, and obeyed.

Settled in the easy chair in his own room, he paid the professor the compliment of examining the egg very carefully before beginning operations. He went over it with his fingers, but could feel no joints beneath the yellow paint which covered the metal. There was no depression on the surface. It was his theory that a hidden spring would open the sphere, and he spent the balance of the evening in searching for it. At midnight the secret was still undiscovered, and he gave it up for the time being.

Donna was inclined to poke fun at his failure the next morning. As the chuckling professor readily allowed her to try her hand, she spent an hour and broke two halpins in an equally fruitless effort.

The egg was rather light than otherwise for its size, but John felt certain that machinery of some description, hidden within it, controlled the situation. By shaking it persistently he was finally rewarded by the sound of a very faint clicking. That evening he made a sort of cat's cradle of string and placed the egg therein. With the contrivance he was able to whirl the egg over and over, in this way hoping to start the machinery. Occasionally he reversed the motion, but he tired his arms with the monotonous labor to no purpose.

Next he essayed to saw his way through the metal. He secured a burglar's saw of the finest steel, but was compelled to discontinue with the handle, as it brought the weight of

the little instrument up to nearly 100 grains.

Intermittent labor for the next three evenings with the saw, a bit of cloth service as a handle, resulted in some badly blistered fingers and the scratching of the paint in several places. That was all, if the fact that the egg was proved to be steel as fine and hard as the saw is excepted. In desperation Buckley attempted to crush the obstinate oval between his hands and failed again.

"I've made up my mind to get the paint off," he announced to Donna. "Then I can tell where we're at."

"We're at sea," she replied dolefully, tenderly kissing one of the blistered fingers.

Buckley secretly agreed with her, but his pride had been aroused by repeated failures and the whole soulful chuckling of the professor, whose sides seemed to be shaking constantly with merriment over his assistant's predicament. He would open the egg now or die.

The young man took his penknife apart, sharpened the lightest blade to a razor edge and attacked the paint. Although it clung exasperatingly, in time he had cleared it from the surface. This revealed the presence of thousands of little holes in the metal, each closed by a minute fleck of the paint which the blade would not dislodge.

It was well into the fourth week when this was done. "Just look at those confounded needle holes!" he exclaimed in disgust.

Under the stress of a brilliant inspiration Donna jumped up and clapped her hands delightedly. "That's it, John—a needle!"

One was brought, and John set himself to the task of thrusting it carefully as far as it would go into each of the little holes. This removed the fleck of paint, and as the absence of paint showed that a hole had been tested no time was lost in subsequent explorations.

"Poxy old gentleman, your uncle," smiled John, "but he overlooked that point. If he'd thought about it, I know he'd fixed it to keep the paint out of these wretched holes."

It was the evening of the last day of the allotted month that the busy needle, penetrating farther than usual, produced the hoped-for result. There was a whirl of clockwork, and a heavy spring, the pressure upon it suddenly removed, thrust itself through the side of the egg.

John fished a metal cylinder from the broken shell, opened it out, and, with his arm around Donna's neck, read the paper which it contained. It was a check for \$5,000 signed by Professor Kinfeln and payable to "Mr. and Mrs. John Buckley."

The Coughing Stopped.

At a certain army post there was a sentry on duty near the hospital. The surgeon was preparing to go to bed in a room when he was annoyed and alarmed at the sentry's coughing. His experienced ear told him that the man had a severe bronchial affliction, needing a strong remedy. He debated awhile with himself and then, going into the dispensing room, compounded a powerful mixture. This he took outside to the sentry, with instructions to swallow it immediately. The man refused. The surgeon insisted and finally commanded the soldier to take the medicine, which he did, with much grumbling. Then the worthy surgeon went to bed, pleased to hear no more coughing.

Next morning to his surprise the commanding officer sent for him and said that the sentry had complained, declaring that the surgeon had forced him to swallow something he thought was poison. An investigation followed and revealed the fact that while the surgeon was mixing the medicine the coughing sentry had been relieved and consequently the remedy had been given to the wrong man.—London Tit-Bits.

Singular Foods.

In this country the large octopus, or squid, common on many a coast, feeds the palate, but the Italian, Frenchman and Portuguese eats it a delicacy. The meat is clear and white, like chicken, and has the flavor of duck. We find the Chinaman selling eggs of unknown age, especially duck eggs containing ducklings ready to be hatched. Shark fins, a tough, disagreeable food, are in demand, while deer horns in the velvet and lizards of various kinds are eaten. The nest of the swallow, with its embedded secretion of the mouth glands of the bird, is nearly worth its weight in gold. Trepan, the tough, impossible holothurian, is eaten, and its collection is an important industry along the Malay coast, amounting to at least \$100,000 per annum. In France the sea anemone is used as food; stuffed and boiled it calls to mind crab or crayfish. The sea urchins of various species are also used, cooked in their covering, like an egg, and eaten with a spoon.

Recognized by His Lung.

An eminent Scotch surgeon and professor in the University of Edinburgh was entirely devoted to his profession. A quaint incident in his practice will show this. The poet Tennyson had at one time consulted him about some affection of the lungs. Years afterward he returned on the same errand. On being announced he was nettled to observe that Mr. Syme had neither any recollection of his face nor, still more galling, acquaintance with his name. Tennyson thereupon mentioned the fact of his former visit. Still Syme failed to remember him. But when the professor put his ear to the poet's chest and heard the peculiar sound which the old patient had made chronically at once exclaimed: "Ah, I remember you now! I know you by your lung." Can you imagine a greater humiliation for a poet than to be known, not by his lyre, but by his lung?



A WONDER OF JAPAN.

The Famous Castle of the Gold Dolphins at Nishima.

Is the novel castle at Nishima, Japan, the palace which Marco Polo described in his tale of the marvels of far Cathay as covered with gold slabs? At the ends of the ridge of the pyramidal structure are large solid gold dolphins.

Beneath the pile is a well which is literally a salted gold mine. It is gold mined and will hold sufficient water to supply 5,000 persons. The dolphins, which were placed on the top several centuries ago, have excited the curiosity of foreign relic hunters, as any one might imagine they would. So many have climbed to the top of the high structure to discover by testing if they are real gold that the dolphins have become seriously disfigured. Strong steel wire bags have been put over them to prevent further vandalism.

Only by good fortune does one of these dolphins still grace the old castle. A number of years ago it was taken down and sent to Vienna for exhibition at the world's fair held there as a rare specimen of ancient Japanese art. The vessel on which it was being returned sank, and it lay at the bottom of the sea for several years in spite of every attempt to raise it. Persistence was rewarded at last, for it was finally recovered and placed again in its old position.

The castle is used by the emperor of Japan as his headquarters during the army and navy reviews. State balls are also held there.

THE WHALE'S SENSES.

Ability of the Ponderous Animal to Hear Under Water.

It seems perfectly evident that whales must hear when in the water, says the London Field. This inference is confirmed by the comparatively small development of the other sense organs. For instance, the eye is very small and can be of little use even at the comparatively small depths to which whales are now believed to descend.

Again, the sense of smell, judging by the rudimentary conditions of the olfactory organs, must be in abeyance, and whales have no sense organs comparable to the lateral line system of fishes. Consequently it would seem that when below the surface of the water they must depend chiefly upon the sense of hearing. Probably this sense is so highly developed as to enable the animals in the midst of the vibrations made by the screwlike movements of the tail or flukes to distinguish the sound (or vibrations) made by the impact of the water against the rocks even in a dead calm, and in the case of piscivorous species, to recognize by the pulse in the water the presence of shoals of fish.

Failing in this explanation, it is difficult to imagine how whales can find their way about in the semidarkness and avoid collisions with rocks and rockbound coasts.

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