

## The Golden Egg

By Victor Redcliffe

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"I am speaking from my heart, Elva. Can you give me any hope?" Youth and love were enshrined in the mellow golden sunlight which irradiated Elva Parsons and Maurice Houghton, seated on a mossy bank at the riverside.

It was the critical, ecstatic or despairing moment in the fate of Maurice Houghton which he had anticipated for many months. He was a small farmer in the district, laboring mightily from dawn to dark to wrest a living from the little twenty-acre farm patch his father had left him badly encumbered with debt. At last he faced the unequal struggle in a manly, practical way. It would take ten years to lift the interest-devouring mortgage, but by close, calculating and persistent effort he could feed the consuming monster, finally extinguish it and meantime live comfortably, at least. With Elva Parsons by his side Maurice was sure of hopeful counsel and co-operation and happiness.

So he had come to the little home, had decoyed her into a stroll which she regarded as merely casual, and now Elva sat blushing divinely, her eyes averted, but her heart throbbing with responsive love for her suitor of a year, whose brave, loyal spirit had long since appealed to her.

Alas! the words of reply that would make Maurice Houghton a happy man were fluttering on her honey sweet lips, when, suddenly—

Crash!

The startling sound aroused both from their dream of bliss. They arose to their feet.

Splash!

"Oh, Maurice, a man in the water! He will drown. No! no! do not imperil your own life!"

But Maurice was gone. In a flash he had taken in the picture of an old



Helpless in the Strong Current.

man who, crossing the old bridge spanning the stream, had sunk with yielding, rotten timbers. Now he was in mid-stream, his arms waving wildly, whirled round and round helplessly in the strong central current.

A natural born athlete, a superb swimmer, Maurice soon had the insensible victim of the bridge accident in his grasp after a plunge into the water and a few speedy swinging strokes. He got the man ashore and laid him on the bank, kneeling to chafe his cold hands and pressing his chest to exude the water from his lungs.

"Oh, I know him!" cried the pale and trembling Elva. "He is the strange old man who came early in the summer and who lives like a hermit in the old Percy cottage near the edge of the town. He never speaks to anyone. They call him mis—mis—"

"Miser?" supplied Maurice.

"No—misanthrope, that's it. He lives poorly, but they say he has money and had some business or family disappointment, and buries himself here to get away from all his old friends and associates."

"We had better get him home," suggested Maurice. "See, he is recovering. Courage, sir," spoke Maurice in his hearty, helpful way. "We got you out of your trouble just in time."

The old man was still half dazed. He shivered with cold and shock. Between them Elva and Maurice assisted him to the wretched home where he lived. He was so weak when he reached it that they had to almost carry him into the house. They placed him on a bed in a miserably furnished room.

"I will make a fire and get him undressed and comfortable," Maurice advised Elva.

"But you will stop on your way home and tell me how Mr. Trask is getting along?" pleaded Elva and her eyes fell and she flushed consciously, for while she was truly sympathetic and humane, she longed to have Maurice take up the thread of that welcome love discourse where the inci-

dent of the broken bridge had rudely disturbed it.

"I will, Elva," promised Maurice, and an hour later, true to his word, he joined Elva at the gate of her lowly home. Elva lived with an old maiden aunt and they were even poorer than Maurice. She greeted her lover eagerly. Old Mr. Trask was all right. It might be well, however, Maurice suggested, to have Elva or her aunt visit the cottage the next day and see that he was keeping so. Then Maurice leaned closer to his fair companion.

"As I was saying when that splash startled us," he spoke, low-voiced and smiling, and lower went the blushing face of Elva, and his utterance faded down to a tender whisper, and her's was responsive, and the soft, balmy air quivered with the echo of their first love kiss.

Elva went to see Mr. Trask the next day. She found him dressed and seated in a chair near to the open doorway. He was wrapped up and his face looked pinched and troubled. It brightened as Elva came into view.

"I was too stricken to even thank you and your brave, good friend yesterday," spoke Mr. Trask, and in a very few minutes Elva felt easy and friendly with the old recluse. She detected that it was with difficulty that he got around. Playfully and then insistently she declared he must let her tidy up things and started at work forthwith. Elva was truly appalled at the disorder and barrenness of the three little rooms the cottage contained. When she came to the larder her pretty face took on a pitying expression.

Some dry bread was all that she found. Without saying a word to Mr. Trask, she hurried away by the rear door, reached home and went around to the barn of the place.

Elva had a rare docile pet in Whitey, the one hen she had raised and owned. In the feed box were a dozen eggs she had accumulated to make a setting for Whitey. Resolutely Elva gathered them up in her sun bonnet. Then she hastened back to the cottage.

The old recluse devoured the toast, coffee and four fresh eggs with an avidity that showed he had been negligent of his eating in the past. For several days Elva continued to go down to the cottage and act the helpful housekeeper. Her presence seemed to have a humanizing influence on its inmate. Mr. Trask came out of his shell. He had money, Elva learned, and she induced him to order household necessities from the village.

Maurice came to call upon her one evening to find his lady-love in a state of great excitement.

"Suppose we stroll down to the cottage and see how Mr. Trask is getting along?" he suggested.

"Why, Maurice, he is gone!" said Elva.

"Gone?" repeated Maurice vaguely.

"Yes, only two hours since. Oh, Maurice! it is like a story book. It seems that he had quarreled with his wife and had isolated himself here, and what do you think!—she traced him and came to see aunt and me this morning, and I took a message to Mr. Trask, and they are reconciled, and I am glad that we have all been able to so happily mend two broken lives."

It was a month later, and Maurice and Elva were seated in the garden discussing details of their approaching marriage, when the parcels post man drove up in his delivery gig.

For "Miss Elva Parsons" there was a small boxlike package.

"What can it be?" murmured Elva, as her eager fingers undid the coverings.

"Why! an egg, golden egg!" exclaimed Maurice, as such, lying in a soft nest of wool, was disclosed.

"It opens!" said Elva. "See the little card! From Robert Trask as a grateful acknowledgment of the care and kindness of true, unselfish friends."

And inside the quaint treasure case, suggestive of "Whitey" and her product, was a new, crisp one thousand dollar bill, and the worries of the future were past for the happy pair.

### Dimensions in Language.

Perhaps there are states of mind perfectly expressible in language; but any reader with a love for something beyond cleverness will value a passage not so much for a content small enough to be exactly adjusted to its form as for a content which is felt to have expanded the form, to overflow it, to circle beyond it, writes George Soule in the New Republic. This is, for instance, the charm of Henry James' style; he did not take language as it was given him and busy himself with the game of finding meanings which neatly and gracefully would fit into it; he kept stretching it and using it for new purposes until he made of this one-dimensional medium an imitation of three dimensions, something in which recurring variations of suggestion lead outward and back again until it conveys not a simplified procession of ideas, but a rich mind as it exists to itself.

### The Only Way.

Theodore Dreiser, the New York novelist, helped himself to some tiny rice-birds at a luncheon at Sherry's.

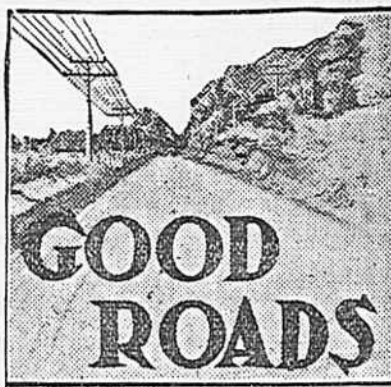
"What little things rice-birds are!" said a poet. "Here are nine on this one piece of toast. How do you kill enough rice-birds for a meal, anyhow?"

"Why, with insect powder, of course," said Mr. Dreiser, taking up a brace of birds on his fork.

### Identification.

"Your mother was talking about some women of moods and tense moments."

"I'll bet it was our grammar teacher."

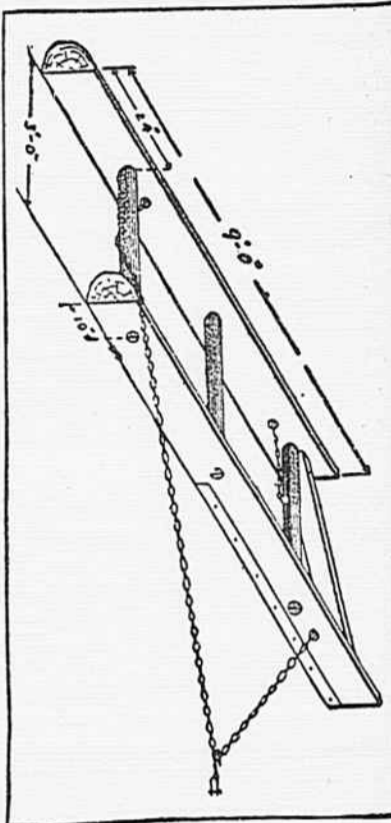


### PROPER WORKING OF A DRAG

Rules From Highway Magazine Tell How to Get Best Results—Drag Whenever Possible.

If a dirt road is properly built, the road drag will keep it in good condition. Like any other work there is a best way to do it. These rules from the Highway Magazine, tell how to get the right results.

"Use a light drag.  
"Haul it over the road at an angle so that a small amount of earth is pushed toward the center of the road.  
"Drive a team at a walk.  
"Ride on the drag; do not walk.  
"Begin at one side of the road, returning up the opposite side.  
"Drag the road as soon after every rain as possible, but not when the mud



Details of Split-Log Drag.

is in such condition as to stick to the drag.

"Do not drag a dry road.  
"Drag whenever possible at all seasons of the year.

"The width of the traveled way to be maintained by the drag should be from 13 to 20 feet; first drag a little more than the width of a single wheel track, then gradually increase until desired width is obtained.

"Always drag a little earth towards the center of the road until it is raised from 10 to 12 inches above the edges of the traveled way.  
"If the drag cuts too much, shorten the hitch.

"The best results for dragging are obtained only by repeated application."

### VOLUNTEER FOR GOOD ROADS

We Can Have Anything Good If We Will Get Together and Work Hard for Desired End.

Why, bad roads, even, is a moral question. Why should men wade in mud and punish their beasts when they have the power to prevent it? It is moral in that we fail to use to advantage the powers and possibilities that God has given us, writes R. F. Beasley in Progressive Farmer.

We can have good roads if we will. We can have any good thing if we will—communities acting together. Half a dozen men could volunteer to delegate themselves as leaders in a good roads movement and the people soon would follow them.

A million volunteers will rush to arms to shoot down a million others who have done them no harm; why should not some volunteer to be leaders in the romances of peace and progress?

### ARMY ENLISTING ROAD MEN

Corps of Thoroughly Experienced Specialists in Constructing Work Being Organized.

Enlisted men with a knowledge of road building are being recruited in the engineer reserve corps of the United States army. This is the corps of experienced men which is being organized as a reserve body of thoroughly trained specialists in every branch of construction work.

### Measure Community Value.

The roads furnish a yardstick to measure the value of any community. A settled country that is not worth a good road is not worth living in.

### Obtain Best Results.

Best results are obtained by dragging the road as soon as possible after each rain.

### Bad Roads a Hindrance.

Poor roads are a bar to better markets, better schools, better churches, better living.

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