

THE GOLDEN TALISMAN.

"I cannot recommend you, believing you to be a thief, but I will be so merciful that I will let you depart. Goat once."

The voice and face were stern and unyielding. Geoffrey Baird knew that all the piteous appeals he had made, the assertions of innocence he had frantically declared, had all been in vain.

"You have been very kind to me, Mr. Hoyt," he said, his voice quivering with pain, "and I hope some day you will know that I have rather cut off my right hand than let it rob you."

There was no reply, and the boy, for he was not 19, walked slowly from the room, where he had been accused of a crime, condemned and punished in a brief half hour.

He was a widow's only son, and very poor, but Abraham Hoyt had been very kind to him, employing him in light labor about his extensive grounds, trying him well, and allowing him to read whatever he wished in his library.

And from the library a valuable watch and chain had been stolen from a table drawer, when there was no one as far as could be ascertained, in the room, but Geoffrey Baird.

Crushed, humiliated almost heart-broken, the lad walked from the house across the wide garden, bright with summer bloom, that seemed to mock his misery. He had his hand upon the latch of the great iron gate leading into the road, when he heard his name called, in a clear, childlike voice.

"Jeff! Jeff! O, what a moment!" And then, turning his heavy eyes, he saw a fairy of ten summers, a golden haired darling, dressed all in white, coming down the broad walk with flying feet.

Of all the treasures his employer possessed, Geoffrey knew this, his only child was the dearest. Motherless from her birth, she had been her father's idol her whole petted life.

"Jeff!" she panted, coming to his side, "you must go away, papa says, but I know you never, never took the watch! Did you?"

"No, Miss Daisy, I never took it." "I know it! I'm going to find out who did take it. And Jeff, you must tell me!"

She opened her tiny white hand to show lying upon the palm a broad twenty-dollar gold piece. But the boy shrunk back.

"No, no, Miss Daisy," he said, "I can't." "But you must. It is my own, my very own. Aunt Louise gave it to me on my birthday. In the corner I scratched 'M. H. Hoyt' and 'Margaret' with a pin, but I guess it won't hurt it. Please, please, dear Jeff, do take it."

She pressed it into his reluctant hand and then throwing her arms around his neck, kissed him with her child's lips, saying: "I will find out who did take the watch, Jeff, and then you will come back."

Before he could answer she was speeding back to the house, her curls flying out on the summer air that waited to Geoffrey's last:

"Good-by, dear Jeff!" "With a heavy heart he went homeward, to tell his sorrow and disgrace. He feared it would almost kill his mother, but after hearing him patiently she said:

"I had a letter from Albany this morning, Geoffrey, from my father's lawyer. Twenty-five years ago my father cast me off for marrying a poor man. He died without forgiving me, but to you he has left his fortune—nearly half a million of money—upon condition you take his name when you are of age. I have packed up your possessions, and we will go to Albany to-night."

"Margaret!" The voice was sharp and imperative, and Margaret Hoyt looked up from the task of teaching little Alice Bristow her letters, but before she spoke the beautiful girl who entered the school-room said:

"Margaret, I want you to come and show Elsie how to trim my dress for to-night. Every body said you had such exquisite taste before your father failed and died."

The pale, patient face flushed a little at the cruel words, but Laura Bristow did not heed the pain she had given.

"Come, now," she said impatiently, "I want to look particularly well, for Willard Wharton is coming. It is the first party since he came from Europe, he has been vegetating in Florence ever so long, with a consumptive mother, but she died a year ago, and after traveling awhile he has come home. Did you know him?"

"I never heard the name." "Come to think of it, he left long before you came."

Allie's primer was put aside, and Margaret accompanied Laura to the room where her finery was being prepared for a brilliant party a few hours later.

"Miss Hoyt," Mrs. Bristow said, looking up from the cloud of tulle under her fingers, "I wish you to come down to play, and I wish you to wear white lace ruffles and a white flower or two in your hair. That will interfere with your mourning, but you will look a little less like a mute at a funeral."

To hear was to obey. Mrs. Bristow was a distant connection of M. Hoyt's and when he died, leaving his only child to poverty, the lady impressed upon poor stricken Daisy that she was under an enormous weight or obligation by being permitted to be governess, lady's maid, generally useful factotum in her family.

For nearly a year, she had filled the unenviable position of poor relation, unsalaried, and overworked, and much of the bloom of her pure blonde beauty had left Daisy's face.

But the soft violet eyes had lost nothing of their sweetness; the golden hair gathered into a rich knot, was full of waves and ringlets, making tiny curls around the delicate oval of her pale face, and the sensitive mouth was still expressive and lively.

She sighed a little as she put the soft white ruffle into her hair, and a few white flowers in her hair.

"It seems like forgetting dear father," she thought, but yet she knew her appearance had been too gloomy for a festive occasion.

The guests were gathering, and Daisy had gone into a small sitting-room opposite the wide drawing-rooms to wait until she was summoned to sing and play.

"Parson me," he said, "I thought this was the drawing-room."

"The parson's study," she said, and not realizing the familiarity of the address, she arose to stretch out both hands, saying:

"Jeff! It is Jeff!" "It is Jeff," he answered, "or rather it is Willard Wharton."

Through a mist of happy tears she held d d cupped, he told her of his grandfather's legacy, and the change of name.

Through good and ill, years of p adversity, and the many trials that assails all of us, I have carried a golden talisman, to keep my heart pure and true, that I might one day dare to bring it to your feet," he said.

And through a mist of happy tears she saw him open a large locked bag, and bring to her watch-chain. No miniature face, no lock of hair was there, but carefully set, a twenty-dollar gold piece, with 'M. H.' scratched with a pin in one corner.

In the drawing-room Mrs. Bristow wondered what detained her hero for the evening; but when he came in, she saw the gleam of the secret that was in his happy eyes.

She saw his courteous attention to her governess, but attributed them to the polite courtesy of the young gentleman, and Daisy sang as if inspired, and threw a shower of gleeful fantasies into her waltz and galop music.

But when Miss Hoyt was asked for it, she said, "I have a secret, a stylish trinket that was the admirer of all Albany stood at the door for Miss Hoyt to drive, Mrs. Bristow grew savage.

"You are too forward with strangers," she told Daisy.

"But Mr. Wharton is an old friend. I know him when I was a little girl, and—and we are to be married in the spring," said blushing Daisy.

"And considering Mr. Wharton's wealth and position, and his future wife's probable influence in society, Mrs. Bristow wisely made the best of it, and Daisy was provided with a trousseau and a wedding party, for—" "Your great kindness to Allie," said Mrs. Bristow gratefully.

Not a word was said on some days married did William Wharton say one day carelessly:

"By-the-by, Daisy, was that watch ever found?" "Yes," Felix was arrested six months afterward for stealing some of the plate, and in his trunk was the watch. Papa searched faithfully for it, and Daisy was provided with it, as if the earth had swallowed you."

"I knew it would turn up somewhere," said Mr. Wharton, quietly, "and perhaps now it is just as well it was not found. I had not left in disgrace my darling might not have given me my golden talisman."

A Street-Car Conductor's Prophecy. The New York Sun states that Conductor Michael Coyne, of the Fifth Avenue line, is a prophet. It was Mr. Coyne who inspired an editor of a morning paper with one of his predictions of a general war in Europe. This was based on Mr. Coyne's exposition of one St. Columbkille's prophecies. According to Mr. Coyne there were only two copies of the Saint's original prophecies in Ireland. One had been carefully preserved by the Coyles, and father and son had sworn to learn the prophecies by heart and defend the book with their lives.

Mr. Coyne's grandchild had, by means of the prophecies, predicted the Irish rebellion many years before it actually took place. The old gentleman was known to possess the sacred book of prophecies, and one day, when left alone, he was murdered, and the book stolen from him. Conductor Coyne was secretly taught the prophecies, and his predictions have turned out so true, it is said, that every one on the Big Island Avenue Railroad knows his powers. Conductor Coyne predicted the Turkish-Russian war a year before it actually took place. He predicted that England would get mixed up in the war, that Russia would be prevented from fighting through troubles in her Empire. He predicted the split in the English Cabinet, the Zulu war and the killing of a foreign Prince.

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She had never been in society in Albany, and knew none of Mrs. Bristow's friends, so she was graciously excused from taking any more active part in the social gathering than to amuse by her singing, or help living feet along by playing dance music.

She was turning over the leaves of a new magazine, quite sure of being interrupted, when the door opened, and, looking up she saw a strange gentleman.

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