

## The Golden Age.

BY J. M.

THE Golden Age is not a myth of the philosophers. Nor is it a dream of poets. It comes to man in the care-free, irresponsible days of childhood, when "to-morrow" is but a figure of speech and existence is summed up in "to-day." In all the tract of time there have been but one man, and a woman, his helpmeet, upon whom its sunlight has not shone. But they had their compensations.

This is a tale of the Golden Days; and what is more the tale is true.

Whether my story is uncommon I know not, but I think the telling of it may wake a chord of memory in the minds of others.

However that may be, the hallucination that, sooner or later, seizes upon all the sons of Adam came to me—at the somewhat immature age of eight—with a vision of "Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt." I fell in love.

It was an affection born of an exchange of "conversation lozenges"—the legends on which were of a distinctly amatory nature—and fostered I fear by a spirit of bravado.

Still, in the beginning it was an unselfish passion: freely bestowed, untrammelled by convention, idyllic. Later there entered the Commercial Idea, which rings the death-knell of sentiment.

Her name was Jean; and we attended a school presided over by a maiden lady, uncertain as to age and of rigid propriety, for whom the wine of life had turned to vinegar.

To her pupils Miss Melville was the incarnation of the Majesty of Law; and the symbol of her godhead was a stout cane, with which she not infrequently "did us good." Nevertheless looking backward across the years, I think she regarded us with a certain step-motherly affection—and I know that she was an excellent teacher.

With others, Jean and I had been set to learn "twelve