

GOLDEN ROD.

ERE the stout year be waxen shrewd and old,
 And white the grain upon the well-piled stack
 Waits yet unthrashed, by every woodland tract,
 By stream and meadow and wide-waste out-rolled.
 By every fence that skirts the forest mould,
 Sudden and thick as at the reapers' hail,
 Ye come, companions of the harvest, frail
 Green forests yellowing upward into gold.

Lo, when yon shaft of level sunshine gleams
 Full on those pendent wreathes, those bounteous plumes
 So gracious and so golden; mark them well;
 They are the last from summers' empty looms,
 Her benediction and dream of dreams,
 The fullness of her soul made visible.

ARCHIBALD LAMPMAN.

TRUE ACCOUNT OF THE DEBENHAM AFFAIR.

SINCE it has become known that I once occupied the room which has always been called "Debenham's room," and that I had a rather strange adventure there, I have been asked if I would not relate what happened. I have thought the matter over and I do not see that there can be any harm in acceding to this request. I therefore beg to submit the following simple statement of the facts.

When I was in college Debenham's room was quite away from all the other students' rooms. I do not know if it is the same now, but in those days it was the only student's room in the corridor. On one side of it at the end of the wing was the chemical laboratory; on the other side a sort of temporary museum, where quite a valuable collection of skulls and bones of deceased Indians was stored. No one seemed to care to go down there and live all alone amongst bottled smells and skeletons, and indeed I should not have gone there myself, if I had been able to get two rooms elsewhere, as I was promised. But at the beginning of my second year the building was very full, and I had either to put up with a little room amongst the other fellows, or take Debenham's room, which was a large and commodious one, "down amongst the dead men" as Snigsby put it. I chose the latter.

Snigsby chaffed me a good deal about the thing, and got the other men to join in, but that only made me more determined to stick to Debenham's room. There was an idea that a fellow had died there many years before, under mysterious circumstances, and that the affair had been hushed up, and that the fellow's name was Debenham. I never found him in the calendar, but Snigsby, who had paid a good deal of attention to matters connected with the history of the college, assured me that the idea was correct, and that he had found out all about it. He said that Debenham was a man of studious habits, who chose that room for better opportunities of reading. When Debenham was in his third year there was a fellow among the freshmen who was so hot tempered, and at the same time so strong, that he escaped the occasional knocking about which was thought to be good for freshmen in the old days, though I suppose it is different now. One night, to the surprise of all, Debenham undertook to "rout" the strong freshman. He entered the room of the latter after midnight, but unfortunately failed to carry out his purpose, for the freshman rose up silently and swiftly and threw him out of the window. Debenham was picked up subsequently and brought to his own room where he soon succumbed to his injuries. This was Snigsby's story. He used to add that Debenham's friends took legal advice about prosecuting the freshman, but were told it was no use, as the freshman had a right to assume that it was a burglar, and to act accordingly.

Well, just before the Christmas vacation in my second year, I received word from home that my people were getting

over the measles, and that I must not come home, but must make arrangements to stay in the college. I was amused at the idea of a man in his second year being liable to the measles, but my instructions were peremptory and I had to stay. It certainly was not pleasant. I had no society, for even the Professor of Greek and Roman Mythology, who was a single man and usually lived in residence, had gone off somewhere, and there was no one else in the building but the steward and servants. The weather was cold; the building was not heated; my meals were served lukewarm. I thought I should spend a miserable Christmas, and indeed I should have done so if I had not stumbled against a gentleman who had gone to school with my father. This gentleman when he found out my circumstances, asked me to come and dine on Christmas day with his daughter and himself. Of course I went and got a very good dinner.

There were just the three of us. My father's friend was a very learned old gentleman, with a rather dejected manner. I fancy this was because he had always some tough mental problem on hand, and he could not feel happy till he had solved it. At this time I understood he was very much dissatisfied with the system of dividing up the year, and was engaged on a scheme for perfecting the calendar. It was of course an effort for him to come down to my level, and I could not expect him to do so often. Once during dinner he talked to me for quite a long time on the subject of cramming. This had nothing to do with the plum-pudding, of which I was partaking freely, but referred to the habit of cramming for examinations, which he condemned very strongly, and rightly enough and which I mention here because, as will be seen, the subject came up again a little later.

The young lady was very entertaining. She was exceedingly clever and whimsical, and had travelled a good deal and laid in a stock of varied information. After dinner my host excused himself and went to his library, his daughter explaining that the calendar weighed heavily on him just now. I noticed a guitar on the wall, and at my request the young lady kindly took it down and entertained me in a wonderful manner for over an hour. She sang songs and snatches of songs in four different languages. I shall never forget the way she sang "The Mistletoe Bough." She repeated the words, "Oh the Mistletoe bough! the Mistletoe bough!" at the end of each stanza, each time with greater intensity of expression. The last repetition of the refrain, "Oh h h! the mistletoe bough? the mistletoe bough!" was so weird and tragic, that I was quite thrilled and seemed to see the mouldering form of the young bride in the chest which had become her coffin. After the singing the young lady told me some curious experiences of hers, which were very strange indeed, almost like ghost stories, though she gave me her word of honor that they were perfectly true.

I went away about eleven o'clock feeling that I had had a very enjoyable evening.

As I groped my way along the dark, cold corridors of the deserted college, I felt the contrast with the luxurious home which I had left very keenly. I did not lose much time, however, in regrets, for the night was excessively cold and I hastened to get into bed. I was soon asleep.

After a time I woke up and was very much surprised to find that some one was sitting at my table. The window was at the opposite end of the room, and between me and the window was the table, and there, in the full light of the moon, which was now shining brilliantly, was the figure of a man. He was seated in my easy chair; his arms were folded, and he was gazing out of the window, as if he were waiting for something. I soon knew what he was waiting for, for he turned to me and said: "If you are quite awake I shall explain why I am here."