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Select Poetry.

IN THE LONG RUN.

The old-fashioned saying
So lightly expressed
And so carelessly uttered,
Is one of the best.
Oh, ponder, young trifler,
With young life begun,
The deep, earnest meaning
Of "in the long run."

For "in the long run," boys,
The seed will spring up
That was sown in the garden
Or dropped in the cup.
And, remember! not roses
Will spring from the weed,
And no beautiful fruit
From the unworthy seed.

How many a stripling
In trouble to-day,
By riotous living
With comrades too gay,
With character shipwrecked
And duties undone,
Will be sorrows harvesting
"In the long run."

And "in the long run" will
The toiler fare best
Who performs honest labor
And takes honest rest;
Who, contented and happy,
Hastes not, in a day,
Or a year, to heap riches,
That will pass away.

The good and the evil
That bide on the earth,
The joy and the sorrow,
The pain, the mirth,
The battles unheeded,
The victories won,
Will yield what was sown, lad,
"In the long run."

GUIDED BY A GHOST,

The Professor's Courtship.

IT WAS an afternoon in late February, and Tom Kingsley was lounging in the bay-window of the little sitting-room, his Latin and Greek books all around him, and what was worse, a broad snow covered the hill in front of him, down which sled after sled was gliding with the most tantalizing rapidity. Tom was twenty, and devoted to learning, but he was not above a good coast when the chance presented itself. Occasionally he favored his sister, who was the only other occupant of the room, with very audible growlings against the restrictions of study hours.

The two were students in the academy whose mathematically square building rose almost opposite to the Kingsley's house. They were nearly of an age; but one was preparing to enter college; the education of the other was considered nearly completed. The two young people with their father and mother, made up the whole family; but Mr. Kingsley's, in the simple, unpretending way of the village, received into his house as a boarder one of the academic professors, and also occasional students when they happened to be friends of the children. It was this first named individual that was exciting Tom's attention, in lack of anything better to look at.

"May," he said, jerking his head over his shoulder with a quick, characteristic movement, "just come here and see Professor Rensel go by."

His sister dropped her work and came to the window. On the other side of the street stood a tall ungainly man, with a scholarly stoop in his shoulders, a head of bushy hair much threaded with grey, a pair of mild, wise spectacles, and a general air of perplexed acquiescence in all mundane affairs, whatever. In his hands he held a very tiny sled, looking at it at arm's-length, as if it was some-

thing of an explosive nature. One six-year-old little fellow was surveying his broken plaything with despairing eyes, while two other excited urchins danced up and down in front of the professor, endeavoring duly to set forth the nature of the accident that had happened to the runner. Two dogs wagged their tails hopefully in the background, and, to complete the procession, a disabled crow, the pet of the villagers, brought up the rear. It hopped gravely along, now on one foot now on the other, setting its head on one side in oracular fashion, and looking ten times blacker and wickeder than ever against the whiteness of the snow.

After considering the situation a few minutes the professor started off again, dragging the sled by the rope, and his procession, crow and all, trotted along behind him.

"Now," said Tom, "he will go straight to the carpenter's shop to get that thing mended; and the carpenter, after impressing upon him the arduous nature of the job, will charge just ten times what it is worth, and he will pay it without a word."

"No doubt he will."

"And those little beggars will run off without even thanking him."

"But they are fond of him, Tom."

"I don't care. May, you can make that man believe anything."

"I know it."

"Just fancy his going out with a telescope and watching the moon all night because we boys told him there were changes on its surface indicating some great interior convulsion! And when he couldn't find them, and came to me to point them out, we pretended to see them plainly enough, told him his eyes were getting weak, and he believed every word of it, and has taken to wearing spectacles from that day."

"Well, they are becoming, at any rate, and he is short-sighted," said his sister, laughing.

"But, May, the best joke of all you ever heard of. Promise me you won't tell anybody about it."

"Of course not, except Jem."

"Oh, Jem knows all about it already; he was in it. Seems to me you're very dutiful, though, all at once. Getting engaged has improved you."

"Well, pray that it may last," said his sister, demurely.

"Which?—the improvement or the engagement? How many people have you been engaged to before this, May?"

"About half a dozen, I think."

"I think so too. Don't treat Jem in that way. He's a friend of mine; and after all it's rather mortifying, you know, to a fellow."

"It can't very well be mortifying in this case, because nobody is to know of the engagement."

"I should like to know if they don't. Why, May, it is known all over town.—Jem told of it himself. You see, you are rather pretty for a girl; and then there's that bit of money grandmother left you. On the whole, Jem's rather proud of it, and no wonder."

"Let's have the joke now, Tom; never mind the compliments."

"Never complimented anybody in my life. What are you talking about? But about that little affair; you remember when we were experimenting with that nitrogen iodide in the laboratory, May?"

"Yes."

"You remember how explosive it was—safe as long as you kept it wet, but going off like nitro-glycerine and dynamite put together when it got dry?"

"It didn't go off without some one touched it, Tom."

"I rather guess it did. If a fellow merely breathed a yard away from it, off it went. But that's of no consequence, for in this case somebody was expected to touch it."

"And that somebody was the professor, of course?"

"Of course. We had a lot of it, and put some on the handle of his door, some in his slippers, and some among his books; the rest we scattered around promiscuously. And, as good luck would have it, there came up a heavy thunder shower that very afternoon. The professor came hurrying in; accidentally Jem and I met him on the stairs. We asked him to explain a difficult Latin passage."

"Oh, come right in—come right in, boys," he says, in that benevolent way of his, and laid his hands on the door-knob.

Bang! He jumped back as if he had been shot, "Bless me, what's the matter?" he exclaimed, rubbing his nose.—"We didn't say anything, but acted as if 'twas the most every-day occurrence.—Well, we went in, and he pulled off his boots and started to get his slippers on. Bang! bang! Oh, May, you never saw the like of that jump! I believe he actually struck the ceiling. When he went to draw down the window-curtain, bang! again. When he took down the Latin book—it was a big and heavy one—bang! bang! bang! And so on with every thing he touched in the room, till I began to think the poor man would lose his wits. But the best of it was he never even suspected the cause. You know his wisdom lies in Latin and Greek; he doesn't know anything about the sciences, though I believe he regards them with more awe than all the rest of the curriculum put together. Well, Jem just told him the thunder shower had done it, that it had charged the room with electricity, and that he himself was a first-class prime conductor. Jem expatiated learnedly for half an hour or more on the freaks of electricity; talked, you know, as if it was a usual thing to see rooms behaving in that fashion.—And, if you'll believe me, the professor actually took it all in; is writing a paper now—if Jem's any authority on the subject—on these extraordinary natural phenomena."

Tom was in ecstasies of laughter by this time, and his sister was not slow in joining him.

"I was only afraid father would hear the noise, and stop the fun," gasped he at last, when he was able to speak.—"Luckily he didn't come in till it was all over. I suggested to the professor that it might frighten mother if he was to mention it at the table, and he has been as mum about it as possible ever since. May, we can make him believe anything—anything whatever. If I told him there were ghosts in the house, he'd put out his light and sit watching for one the very next night."

"Why don't you show him a ghost then?" queried May. "You know we read how they did it at the spiritualistic seances. I'll help you, and—"

"May!" cried Tom, jumping to his feet and dancing the Fisher's Hornpipe, "you're a trump! Just wait till Jem comes, and we'll have it all fixed. The professor never locks his door."

The two pairs of brown eyes looked at each other, and the respective owners of them burst out laughing, with the delightful unanimity of sentiment that occurs whenever any specially delectable piece of mischief is on foot.

Jem in no way dissented from the programme when he presented himself at night, but on the contrary added some timely suggestions. Tom considered his friend the quickest-witted mortal in the world, and a handsome fellow besides, which last was true enough. The young people soon found out that to copy the spirits successfully required more time and practice than they had counted upon, their ghostly advisers having failed to provide any short road to perfection. They were very patient, however, as people will be when engaged in something which they have no manner of business, and in about a week had all their arrangements completed. Jem was to personate the ghost, Tom and his friends the audience—Tom having reluctantly yielded the post of distinction to Jem in consideration of his abilities.

But when it came to the point the would-be ghost had a new proposal to make. "Let's tell him to do something or other," he said—"something that he would never think of himself—so that we shall know by that afterward whether he believes in it at all or not."

This being hailed with acclamation, Tom suggested that the professor should be commanded to wear a cocked hat for a month; May, that he should make a daily pilgrimage to the top of Meeting-house hill for that length of time. But Jem rejected both of these proposals; they would be liable to bring about discovery, and were not solemn enough to be accredited to a ghost.

"No; it must be something that will affect his whole life," he said—"something of so much consequence that he would think it likely that the spirits would be charged to deliver it. We'll tell him he must go as a missionary; or, no, better still, let's tell him to marry

somebody—May, here, for instance; he was always fond of her, and she is right in the same house."

"But, unluckily, May is not fond of him, but of you," observed Tom, wick-edly.

"Well, he doesn't know that. He will think it's his duty to ask her. And when she says no, he will wait for some spiritual light. You don't mind, do you May?"

May did mind very much at first, but the two boys, aided by her own sense of fun, at last persuaded her into it. Perhaps the thought that it was sure to be discovered, and that the professor could not possibly carry his credulity to that point, helped to quiet her conscience.—At any rate, she not only yielded, but after the fashion of womankind was the one to originate the boldest part of the scheme.

"If I let you do that, boys, you must let me do what I want to."

Of course they both asked, "What is it?"

May refused to tell them. "You'll know soon enough," she said, with the mischievous sparkles coming and going in her brown eyes. "Only, if I don't say anything to spoil your fun, you must promise not to spoil mine."

They both gave the promise very readily, finding a new interest in the project now that something not laid down in the plan might possibly happen.

In about a week everything was ready and the night set in for the ghostly visitation. The professor, after putting out his light was just getting into bed still absorbed in the true interpretation of a difficult orist construction, when the door creaked gently, seemed to swing open of itself, and presently, to his astonished eyes, a tall white figure presented itself, with a faint blue light encircling it, and a general misty uncertainty of outline that might be attributed to the shifting of some thick vapor, but to an uninitiated person, was highly suggestive of uncorporeal spirits.

"Bless me, bless me!" said Professor Rensel, staring at this vision. "Who are you, my friend?"

"I am a disembodied spirit," replied a sepulchral voice.

"Dear, dear, what a pity! Can't—can't anything be done for you?"

"Nothing. I am sent to you."

"Well, my friend, I am here"—after a pause, in which he seemed to imagine that the embarrassed spirit required some encouragement. His face shone with a mild benevolence. "I am here," he repeated, "what can I do for you?"

The blue light was shaken for a moment, as if the spectral visitor was disturbed by this tantalizing calmness, and even disposed to back out of the situation. Then the sepulchral voice replied:

"You are commanded to marry Mary Kingsley."

"How? What? My good friend, you are talking like a—ghost!" exclaimed the astonished professor. A slight flush rose to his benevolent face.

"You are commanded to do it," repeated the spirit monotonously.

"Bless me! bless me! It isn't possible!"

"With us, all things are possible."

"Indeed?" said the professor, inquiringly. "Indeed?" he repeated, with as much deliberation as if he were addressing his classes. "Well, well. Let us consider that settled, and—pass on to something else," with a certain mild dignity, as if he objected to discussing the lady they had named even with a ghost. He was evidently disposed to be hospitable, but somewhat at a loss how to entertain his visitor.

"You are not," said the professor, glancing hesitatingly at the suggestive blue light, "from the celestial regions, I am afraid?"

"No."

"Dear me! dear me! what a pity! It must be very unpleasant. Yet if you could—if you could be persuaded to give me a little information about the other place. The truth is I have a young friend who is going that way, I very much fear, and—"

Here something not laid down in the programme happened; the ghost incontinently bolted, blue light and all. Outside there was a suspicious scuffling and hurrying of feet that may have been

produced spiritually, but was very much like scampering humanity.

The professor deliberately got up and closed the door, murmuring to himself:

"Very singular—very singular, indeed!"

The same embarrassed flush still lingered on his face, but he got into bed and calmly went to sleep, as if nothing unusual had happened.

Meanwhile the ghost and audience were holding a hurried consultation down stairs. All three were considerably taken back.

"He knew," said Jem, disconsolately. "He must have known us the very first thing. His young friend! This was cool, at any rate. Which of us does he mean Tom—you or me?"

"Perhaps he didn't know himself which it was," said Tom.

As neither of them could settle this point, they at last adjourned to bed, each, perhaps with a little sense of discomfiture under all his merriment.

The next morning, after watching Tom out of the house, May sat down to some feminine work of her own, to ponder over the ill-fated schemes, when in walked Professor Rensel, who was supposed to be safe in his class-room.—May was aghast at the sight of him.

"Now for it!" she thought. "It is too bad that I should have to take the scolding alone."

For it could not be but even so mild a man would be angry at such an escapade. True, he could not know of her share in it, but then it was nearly as bad to have Tom made the scape-goat.

Miss May was an audacious young lady, but conscience made a coward of her, and she dared not look up or ask him why he was not at school.

"Why don't he begin?" she mused still keeping her eyes on her work, as the tall figure shuffled unasily about the room.

Presently the professor stopped in front her and cleared his throat.

"My dear Miss May, do you think you could ever bring yourself to marry me?"

The work fell out of her hands, and May sat fair dumb with astonishment. The professor picked it up again for her.

"I am very much older than yourself, Miss May," he went on, "and a very awkward man in action and speech, as you see. Not such a one as a young lady would ever be likely to fancy.—Only—I felt it my duty to ask you."

Then at last May found her tongue.—"One would not like to marry anybody who asked her merely from a sense of duty," she said, bending still lower over her work.

The same flush tinged the professor's face that had been there the night before.

"When I said so, Miss May," he replied, half reproachfully, "I only expressed the motive that had led me to speak to you this morning. I said nothing of my own feelings. Surely you must know what they are and have long been. You must know that a man like myself, who has no youthful attractions of any kind, would, under ordinary circumstances, feel debarred from the right to ask what a younger and happier man might ask. Such a one as myself can only stand aside, glad to be your humble friend, and wish you all happiness to the end of your life."

There was something so pathetic of this gentle, learned professor addressing such words to the thoughtless girl whom others treated only as a companion in mischief, but whom his love elated to a pedestal above common womanhood, that May might well have been restrained by it. His gray hairs and simple kindness of life might have turned aside the jokes his credulity brought upon him. She wavered visibly for a moment; then the old mischievous sparkle came back to the eyes that were so demurely dropped.

"Yet you have altered your resolution this morning?" she said inquiringly.

"As I told you, Miss May, because I believed that it was right for me to do so."

"Well," said May, after a long pause, in which she was scarcely able to keep down the roguish quivering of her lips. "If it is your duty to marry me, it must be mine to marry you."

"Then you consent?"

"Yes."

The tall ungainly man stooped, with