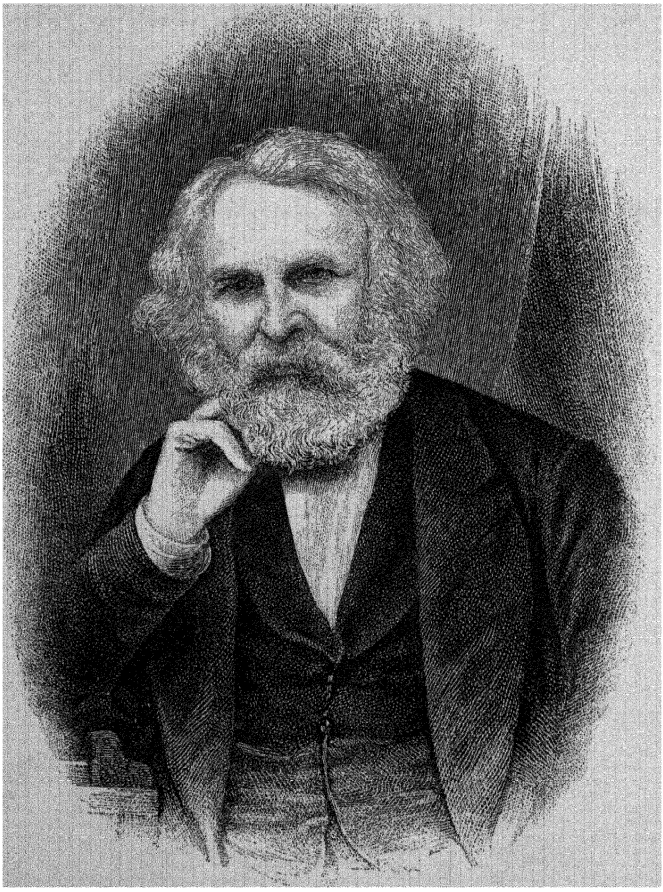
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A BOOK ABOUT LONGFELLOW.



HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW.

A BOOK ABOUT

LONGFELLOW

BY

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WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

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LONGFELLOW.

CHAPTER I.

BEFORE THE DAWN.

SLOW RISE OF AMERICAN LITERATURE—CAUSES—CONTEMPORARY EUROPEAN POETS—PURITANISM—THEOLOGIANS—POLITICIANS—PROVINCIALISM.

AMERICA was discovered in the fifteenth century; Virginia was colonized in the sixteenth; the Pilgrim Fathers set foot upon Plymouth Rock in the seventeenth; but America had no literature worthy of the name before the nineteenth century.

The early settlers were not barbarians. In crossing the Atlantic they did not descend to the level of the native races of that continent, nor could they plead the absence either of a worthy medium or of worthy models. They had not to struggle with a language in its transition stages, and could not com-

plain that it was necessary to coin words for the expression of their finer fancies.

Shakespeare had found the English language capable of interpreting the highest flights of imagination, as well as the profoundest reasoning of the human mind, and they had him for a model. There was Milton, too, an inspiration and an exemplar for those who frowned upon the theatre; while Dryden, Pope, and others of lesser note, kept up the steady-going stream of English literature into the eighteenth century, made memorable by Cowper and Burns.

During the hundred and fifty years that America was dumb, or mumbled inarticulately in tones drowned within a mile of her own shores, there were many cultivated voices sounding loud and clear in almost every country of Europe.

The poetical and dramatic influence of Lope de Vega departed not from Spain with the middle of the seventeenth century, and Calderon sustained the music till its close. The immortal French dramatists, Corneille, Molière, Racine, evidenced the form of literature in which the national genius chose to declare itself in their time; while later on, Diderot and D'Alembert, in advertising their "Encyclopédie," could exhibit a list of contributors that included the

most famous names of the eighteenth century. Frenchmen were heard from in every department of philosophy or natural science, poetry or fiction.

Nor was Italy silent. Alfieri's poetry means more to his countrymen than to foreigners; but it has qualities, other than patriotism, that will not let it die. Klopstock, Lessing, and Wieland played the German overture before Goethe and Schiller came upon the stage to crown the achievements of all Europe. The age was not an unproductive one in the world's history. To herself alone must we look for the causes of America's barrenness.

A time of leisure and prosperity, of peace in mind and rest in body, is necessary for the development of art in any form, in any country; and long years slipped over the heads of the American colonists before they could claim either the one or the other: they must seek the necessaries of life before the luxuries. The mind of man is a unit, and if its power be directed towards the solution of practical problems, there is no energy left for literature.

The style which those old settlers studied was the best manner of felling trees, of protecting their dwellings against the rigorous northern winter, of planting corn fields and orchards, and of defending

them when planted, for an Indian on the warpath would not defer the lifting of a scalp until its owner penned a sonnet.

New England could boast, from its first settlement, many men who had a love for the things of the mind; but the very turn of thought which had driven them forth from England was sufficient to keep them, even when they had the opportunity, from evolving anything that was designed simply to give pleasure. The Puritan, wherever found, strained his ear to catch harmonies divine; the earthly claims of beauty in form, colour, or rhythm were but snares of the Evil One.

Had Milton's youth not been passed in the universal awakening time of the earth which produced Shakespeare, had he been born but a few years later, he might have written nothing but strong argumentative prose. His Puritan principles made him choose a scriptural subject for his great work; but in dealing with it, he went back to the grand dreams of his youth, which later blindness had made more real to him than contemporary realities. The sternness of his creed could not entirely cripple his imagination.

The Puritans of New England were the most rigid of their kind, such as might have stepped out from

among Cromwell's Ironsides, who waged a godly warfare against cathedrals, statues, paintings, and stained-glass windows. Having exchanged home and country for a precarious existence in the wilderness, in order to live as conscience directed, that conscience was erelong turned from a guide into a tyrant. The Restoration in England, which gave the popular mind a swing in the direction opposite to Puritanism, had no effect in New England. The original imported rules of conduct became stricter and more narrow in the second generation of emigrants than they had been in the first.

These men were no weaklings in mind or in body; but the one class not entirely tied down to hard manual labour was the clergy, and the clergy therefore were the first Americans to make essays in writing. There were among them no Jeremy Taylors or John Bunyans, but they gave to their charges good measure both in the spoken and the written word. We read of one divine who occasionally preached for two hours, took a rest, reversed the hour-glass, and continued his discourse for another hour or two.

Twenty years after the landing of the Pilgrim Fathers they printed their first book. It was not

a description of the magnificent primeval forest, of the swift rivers or the expansive lakes, of the birds and animals observed in a strange new country, nor of their daily battles with an inclement climate and a barren soil, of their frequent fights with Indians. These matters would have formed interesting reading for their English contemporaries or their American descendants. But to have a delight in mere physical existence was sinful; the Puritan pen must be employed only for the glory of God. The oldest volume of America is the "Bay Psalm Book." Their ability to translate the psalms direct from the Hebrew bears witness to the learning of the New England theologians; and if their verses merited not the name of poetry, that defect would never be observed by those who used them in public worship.

The most voluminous of the clerical writers was Cotton Mather (1663–1728), who was famous also as a persecutor of so-called witches. Of a different stamp was Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758), whose spiritual nature, in a different environment, might have evolved a work of imagination. Being of the straitest sect of the Puritans, his genius exhausted itself in probing the mysteries of the stars, of the human will, of the life to come.

Among all the Americans of the colonial period, the most famous man was Benjamin Franklin (1706–1790), who, though born in Boston, lived in the middle ground of Pennsylvania, and was neither cramped by the Puritan point of view nor enervated by southern laxity. He was just the practical man of affairs, the patriot, political economist, preacher of common-sense, that the colonies needed; and though his services to literature were not so important as his services to science and to his country, even a little hill stands out clearly upon an extensive plain.

The struggle for existence was not so arduous in the southern as in the northern part of that strip along the sea coast which formed the British settlements in America, but the Virginia planters were not a literary class

Gentleman adventurers who came out for a few years sometimes wrote marvellous tales on their return. Captain John Smith, for example, has left a sensational narrative that can hardly be classed as American literature. The settlers who came to stay were content with the books they had brought with them. They were but transplanted Englishmen, and the "home" writings sufficed. When prosperity

brought leisure, they emulated the hospitable out-of-door life of the English country squire; and the slaves that did their drudgery could not write their poetry for them, so it remained unwritten.

Provincialism is undoubtedly a foe to independent thought, as it is to independent action. A feeling of nationality is akin to a feeling of individuality. Canadians, for instance, who are still in the position of colonists, feel that it is no more incumbent upon them to put forth an effort towards the enrichment of English literature than it is to contribute to the support of the English navy. It is their duty to advance civilization to the remoter regions of their territory; let the idle members of the family in the old country write the verses.

The young man who has grown up entirely dependent upon another is not likely to do great things for himself. He frequently prefers to be but one section of a large whole, rather than a small original entity. But if he sets up house for himself, he understands that he is responsible for every department of the same, and he rises to the occasion. Thus the entry of the United States into the production of original literature was not long delayed after her entrance upon political independence.

When Canada was taken by the British, and the dread of French invasion removed from the English colonies; when they no longer needed military aid from the mother country, and were reluctant to pay in taxes for that which they had received; when the revolution was imminent, politics took the place of theology in the writings of the time. There were many fine orations delivered, and many speeches were printed that are of but little present interest. They served the purpose for which they were designed, and now may rest in peace.

CHAPTER II.

THE RISE OF POETRY.

IMITATIVE AT FIRST — WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT — LONGFELLOW'S PARENTS AND SCHOOL DAYS IN PORTLAND — THE POET OF THE SEA.

IT was to be expected that the first poetry written in America would be an English imitation. The mother country continued to be the land of romance to the descendants of colonists, whose poets were, in the first place, more concerned with the manner than with the matter of verse-making. They must learn the use of their tools before it would occur to them to take at first-hand the inspiration to be derived from the life around them, instead of seeking for it in the books of other men.

An Indian is as likely a subject for romance as a feudal baron, if one has a sympathetic point of view; ivy is no more picturesque than the Virginia creeper; bobolinks, orioles, blue-birds are in themselves fully

as poetical as skylarks and nightingales; and if poetry be a "criticism of life," there is no reason why a weather-beaten farmhouse, dwarfed by the proximity of a huge barn, and surrounded by level wheat-fields, enclosed in snake-fences, may not be as suggestive as an old ruined castle. The one records

"Life's endless toil and endeavour;"

the other, the dark deeds of a dark age.

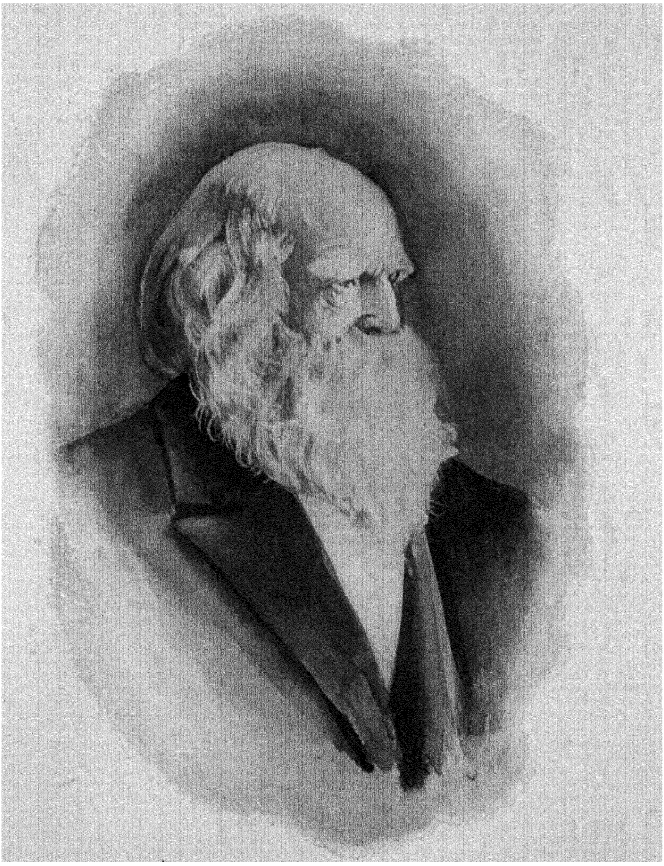
The life of to-day is no less interesting than the life of yesterday—the difference is in the perspective; and by the time the nineteenth century was fairly under way, the early days of the British settlement of America were far enough removed to have caught the appropriate light.

The spirit of nationality had also become strong in the land, though the poets leaned upon English traditions longer than the politicians did. The Unitarian movement had done much to loosen the Puritan grasp upon New England, but it worked slowly and quietly. There was no sudden upheaval of old beliefs, no spring freshet to drive the ice of the river before it, but at the same time endanger life and property by flooding the land with muddy water. Boston has always been dignified, even in her enthusiasms. The

new ideas in theology took the practical form of a vital interest in man, as man. Common life attained a new significance, and it was no longer a sin to seek to beautify it.

The earliest poet of note in America was William Cullen Bryant, who was born in 1794, and at the age of twenty-three produced his great poem "Thanatopsis," a solemn subject treated in a stately blank verse that became it well. These meditations upon death and the grave are somewhat unusual in so young a man, but Bryant was always seriously inclined. He reached his high-water mark in that early production, though he wrote many more poems in which he forsook the artificial school of Pope, that had claimed all of the so-called American poets, and returned to nature, walking reverently in the footsteps of her high priest, Wordsworth.

The age of specialism had not yet arrived. In this new country, any man who should proclaim himself a poet, and naught else, would have been considered insane. Verse-writing was a means of killing time in idle hours, not an occupation to be taken seriously. Bryant practised law in the first instance, then turned to newspaper work, and was all his life a hard-working New York editor, thoroughly respected for his sound



WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT.

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sense and those high principles which would not allow him to descend to any "tricks of the trade." The bulk of his writing consisted in prose editorials; but his blank verse, though limited in range and lacking warmth and colour, is of a quality for which no individual, and no nation, needs to apologize.

Longfellow, as a boy, read Shakespeare and Milton, Pope and Dryden, Thomson and Goldsmith; but he read Bryant's poems too, and learned to look through the American's spectacles at the life around him, to see the themes lying waiting for himself even in New England. He and Bryant had ancestors in common in the persons of John Alden and his wife Priscilla.

From this young couple, whose love story is so graphically told in *The Courtship of Miles Standish*, Longfellow's mother was directly descended. Her maiden name was Zilpah Wadsworth, and it was for her brother Henry, a young naval lieutenant who met his death gallantly in his country's cause, that she named her second son Henry Wadsworth. The elder boy was Stephen, fifth of that name in the Longfellow family. The original ancestor, who emigrated from Yorkshire in 1676, was called William, but after him all the paternal grandfathers of the poet were Stephen, the name also of his own father.

Stephen Longfellow the fourth, in 1808, took up his abode in a brick house in Congress Street, Portland, Maine, where he brought up a family of four boys and four girls. Henry Wadsworth, the second son, was about a year old when his parents came there to live, he having been born, February 27, 1807, while they were on a visit to Mrs. Stephenson, his father's sister. The birthplace is a three-story house at the corner of Hancock and Fore Streets, now a poor quarter of Portland, though the dwelling was imposing enough in its better days, when it was occupied by Captain and Mrs. Stephenson.

Besides the elder brother, Stephen, Henry had two younger brothers, Alexander and Samuel, and four younger sisters—Elizabeth, Anne, Mary, and Ellen. Large enough for them all was the three-story house in Congress Street that had been built by their grandfather, General Peleg Wadsworth, quite on the edge of the town as it was then, but around which Portland had since stretched her arms, catching it to her heart.

In this home of her childhood Longfellow's mother spent her married life—a gentle, romantic woman, fond of poetry, music, and nature. It may have been from her that her second son derived his artistic tendencies; and his conduct through life showed that he had been

well brought up—that to his inherited sweetness of disposition had been added the careful training only a refined and pious mother can give. Had Byron, Shelley, and Poe been as fortunate in their parents, they might have exhibited a better balance of character, and fewer eccentricities of genius.

Longfellow's father was a highly-respected lawyer, a graduate of Harvard College, and a congressman for one term—just the sort of man whose sons could not fall short of being upright and honourable gentlemen. The hardy northern land in which they were reared contributed its share to their solid qualities.

Henry had all of these qualities and more, was a bright and amiable lad, universally beloved both within the family circle and without. He hated rough sports or any pastime that involved cruelty to animals, and he shrank from rude noises; for at the age of thirteen there were already musical rhymes singing themselves through his brain. The first outlet into print were the verses *The Battle of Lovell's Pond*—crude and sing-song indeed, but showing the boy's desire to choose local themes.

The story is told how eagerly young Henry watched the Poets' Corner of the "Portland Gazette," to which, unknown to his parents, he had sent this pro-

duction, and how overjoyed he was to see it actually printed there. A damper was cast upon his delight by a severe criticism from the father of one of his school friends, at whose house Henry was spending the evening of that eventful day.

"Did you see the piece in to-day's paper?" was the remark that set the young poet's heart beating furiously. "Very stiff—remarkably stiff; moreover, it is all borrowed, every word of it."

To a sensitive spirit such condemnation was crushing, though unintentional. The critics did not spare Mr. Longfellow in his manhood, but perhaps none of the later censures hurt so much as this random shot at the boy of thirteen.

But his natural buoyancy speedily asserted itself, and he continued to send poetical effusions to the friendly "Gazette," signed simply with his Christian name.

Growing up as he did in a seaport town, the influence of the ocean is noticeable throughout his poetry. Many of his abundant similes are drawn from it. In a sonnet, *Milton*,

> "A ninth wave, superb and strong,
> Floods all the soul with its melodious seas;"

in *Evangeline*, the notary public is

"Bent like a labouring oar, that toils in the surf of the ocean;"

and *The Skeleton in Armour* could have been composed only by one practically acquainted with boats and sailing. That the skeleton in question has been resolved by scientific inquiry into the framework of an early Indian does not detract from the value of the poem and its stirring description of the "Viking bold." Longfellow wrote of the sea more spontaneously and intimately than ever he did of woods or mountains, lakes or cataracts. The impressions of youth, those that are traced upon the clean, fair page ere it is scribbled over with cross-lines, are the hardest to obliterate; and the poet's many summers by the seashore in later life kept him true to his first love.

Of the poems christened *The Seaside and the Fireside*, which he published in 1849, those with the ocean setting are by far the stronger. *The Building of the Ship* rings true from the pen of one who never knew what it meant to live far from the sea. There is a manly vigour in it, not so noticeable in many of his more graceful poems; and the concluding lines, to the ship of state, drew tears from the eyes even of President Lincoln, that grand helmsman of the Union in its darkest days.

The poem called *Seaweed*—

"When descends on the Atlantic
The gigantic
Storm-wind of the equinox"—

is often quoted as one of Longfellow's most happy blendings of sound and sense; while *The Secret of the Sea* and *The Fire of Driftwood* tell of the fancies, romantic and tender, with which the seaside never failed to inspire him. Among the most beautiful of the lovely sonnets that have placed their author in the front rank of sonneteers are *The Sound of the Sea, A Summer Day by the Sea, The Tides,* and *The Broken Oar. Chrysaor, Twilight, Sir Humphrey Gilbert, The Lighthouse, The Tide Rises the Tide Falls, The City and the Sea,* and the fragment beginning "O faithful, indefatigable tides," are filled with the sentiment and the adventurous spirit of sea-lovers and sea-rovers; but the poem which most vividly recalls Longfellow's boyish days in Portland is *My Lost Youth,* wherein he writes of "the pleasant streets of that dear old town," thirty years after he had left it.

"I remember the black wharves and the slips,
And the sea-tides tossing free;
And Spanish sailors with bearded lips,
And the beauty and mystery of the ships,
And the magic of the sea.
And the voice of that wayward song
Is singing and saying still:
'A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.'"

CHAPTER III.

MAINE TO SPAIN.

COLLEGE DAYS AT BOWDOIN—CHOICE OF PROFESSION—TRAVELS IN FRANCE, SPAIN, AND ITALY—*OUTRE-MER.*

LONGFELLOW was but fifteen years of age when he entered, as a sophomore, Bowdoin College, at Brunswick, in his native state. He and his elder brother, Stephen, had studied at home for a year after passing the entrance examination, so that neither experienced the doubtful joy of being a freshman.

Bowdoin, founded in 1801, had not the prestige of her older sister Harvard College, had not been the recipient of so many donations, and in consequence was but poorly equipped. The quarters of the Longfellow boys in the house of the Reverend Mr. Titcomb were by no means luxurious. Bare walls and floors were the order of the day; but an imaginative lad needs no external aids in the furnishing of his ideal world.

Henry loved to walk in the Brunswick woods, within easy reach of the village; but though fond of dreaming and of playing the flute, fond of reading and writing poetry, he never neglected his class recitations, was industrious and faithful to duty then, as he continued to be throughout his long life.

Nathaniel Hawthorne, the future romancer, was also a sophomore at Bowdoin, but he was more intimate with Stephen Longfellow, though he and Henry became very close friends in manhood.

Another classmate thus describes the budding poet:—

"He was genial, sociable, and agreeable, and always a gentleman in his deportment. He was uniformly cheerful. He had a happy temperament, free from envy and every corroding passion and vice. His figure was slight and erect, his complexion light and delicate as a maiden's, with a slight bloom upon the cheek; his nose was rather prominent, his eyes clear and blue, and his well-formed head covered with a profusion of brown hair waving loosely."

Athletics did not figure so largely in a college education as they do to-day, but Longfellow was always a great walker; and when the deep snows of the Maine winter deprived him of that form of

exercise, he invented another, which, in a letter to his father, he mentions as being an improvement upon sawing wood,—

"I have marked out an image upon my closet door about my own size, and whenever I feel the want of exercise I strip off my coat, and, considering this image as in a posture of defence, make my motions as though in actual combat. This is a very classic amusement, and I have already become quite skilful as a pugilist."

We are not told that the poet ever had occasion to use this accomplishment. He was not a fighter, physically or mentally, and even in his college days he took no interest in politics. The poems he wrote in his teens show the influence of Gray, Thomas Moore, and Bryant. They have not sufficient originality to claim attention, except as a preface to the more famous works that were to follow; and the poet himself considered but seven of these youthful pieces worthy of being included in his first volume of poems. He is also reported to have said,—

"When I recall my juvenile poems and prose sketches, I wish sometimes that they were forgotten entirely. They, however, cling to one's skirts with a terrible grasp. They remind me of the *plusieurs enfants* in 'M. de Pourceaugnac,' clinging to him in

the street and crying, 'Ah! mon papa! mon papa! mon papa!'"

During Henry's last year at college, the question naturally arose as to what was to be his profession. In a letter written when he was seventeen, he says:—

"I cannot make a lawyer of any eminence, because I have not a talent for argument; I am not good enough for a minister; and as to physic, I utterly and absolutely detest it."

To his father, during the same year, he writes:—

"The fact is, I most ardently aspire after future eminence in literature. My whole soul burns most ardently for it, and every earthly thought centres in it."

The father replies:—

"A literary life, to one who has the means of support, must be very pleasant; but there is not wealth enough in this country to afford encouragement and patronage to merely literary men."

Mr. Longfellow, senior, was willing to give way to his son's wish to study literature for a year at Cambridge, Massachusetts, but after that he judged it best for him to adopt his own profession—the law. This decision came to naught, however; for immediately after the young poet's graduation, at the age of

eighteen, when he ranked fourth in a class of thirty-eight, there came to him the offer of a professorship in his *alma mater*. Madame Bowdoin had given a thousand dollars towards the founding of a Chair in Modern Languages, and this it was that Henry W. Longfellow was asked to fill, with the proviso that he should further fit himself for it by spending a year or two in Europe. Nothing could have happened more opportunely in determining the destiny, not only of the young man himself, but of poetry in America.

There were no steamships crossing the Atlantic then, and a favourable season of the year was preferred for a long voyage in a sailing vessel. Therefore it was not until the spring of 1826 that Longfellow sailed from New York to Havre, the passage lasting from the middle of May till the middle of June.

His first impressions of the old world were vividly depicted in his letters home, but the cream of them was afterwards collected in his first prose work, *Outre-Mer*. The writing of this was probably suggested by Washington Irving's "Sketch Book," which he had eagerly read as a boy, though the style is quite different.

Irving is the humorous, genial man of the world; Longfellow is the youthful enthusiast. If the "Sketch

Book" made a better feeling prevail between England and the United States, *Outre-Mer* caused the latter to extend a friendly hand towards France, Spain, and Italy.

In gaining material for these travel sketches, Longfellow enjoyed a privilege not so common among his countrymen, still less among his countrywomen, as it is to-day. In the year 1826, there were no personally-conducted parties swarming over Europe and choice portions of Asia and Africa, taking snap-shots at the natives or other natural objects that met with their approval. America has advanced three quarters of a century in civilization since then, and Europe has gone back considerably in picturesqueness; but when we travel *outre-mer* with Longfellow, we are transported to the golden age, and everything is fresh to our eyes.

"I never desire to be led directly to an object worthy of a traveller's notice," he says, "but prefer a thousand times to find my own way, and come upon it by surprise." Hence the unexpectedness of his view of the cathedral at Rouen, the first European city of importance that he visits. "If it had suddenly risen from the earth, the effect could not have been more powerful and instantaneous."

He revels in new emotions, has a light heart and a nimble imagination. Everywhere he sees the sunny side, even of the inevitable discomforts of travelling, and rejoices in the odd people he meets and the national characteristics he observes *en route*. When he walks from Orléans to Tours, on the banks of the Loire, there is no companion with him to distract his attention from the land he has come to see and the tongue he has come to learn.

"In fact, with this study of languages I am completely enchanted," he writes home. It took him longer than he expected to master French, German, Spanish, and Italian; and his stay in Europe was extended to three years.

The description in *Outre-Mer* of the huge Norman diligence, and the account of the life at Auteuil, are forerunners of Du Maurier's vivid recollections of the same, given in "Peter Ibbetson," with this difference, that Longfellow at best is but an interested spectator, while Du Maurier finds again his childhood in Passy, the Pond Auteuil, as the American looks for his own in Portland.

The temperament of a traveller is revealed by the things that most attract him in the new lands he visits. Longfellow in Italy has little to say about its

architecture or its treasures of sculpture and painting. It is the scenery of the country and the life of its people that impress him most. He finds it "like going back two centuries" to travel in Spain, and that is the land for which he formed the most romantic attachment. It was at Madrid he met his exemplar, Washington Irving, who was at that time about forty years of age, and engaged upon his "Life of Columbus." Longfellow afterwards wrote about him:—

"I had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Irving in Spain, and found the author, whom I had loved, repeated in the man. The same playful humour; the same touches of sentiment; the same poetic atmosphere; and what I admired still more, the entire absence of all literary jealousy, of all that mean avarice of fame, which counts what is given to another as so much taken from oneself."

Our young poet had been brought up in an atmosphere Protestant, if not Puritan, and the picturesque side of the Roman Catholic Church lays hold of him powerfully upon this first tramp abroad. He translates the lively legend of Martin Franc, the man who murdered a monk of St. Antony and was pursued by the dead body; or re-tells the story told him of the notary Périgueux, who, from some idle words of an

apothecary, fancied he had been infected with a deadly disease, rode home to die, and then discovered that a pipe full of hot ashes in his pocket had produced the supposed fatal symptoms.

By way of contrast, he gives an account of the martyrdom of a Huguenot, under the title of *A Baptism of Fire;* anon he translates a bit of verse; but even in *Outre-Mer* he does not content himself with the entertainment of his reader. *The Trouvères,* an essay upon the earliest bards of France, and another upon *Ancient Spanish Ballads,* were invaluable to literary students at the time they were published, and are not to be despised even now.

CHAPTER IV.

YOUNG MANHOOD.

TWENTY-TWO TO THIRTY-TWO—RETURN HOME—PROFESSOR AT BOWDOIN—MARRIAGE—SECOND TRIP TO EUROPE—DEATH OF WIFE—SETTLED IN CAMBRIDGE AT CRAIGIE HOUSE.

SIX months Henry Longfellow spent in France, eight in Spain, twelve in Italy, six in Germany, and everywhere he went he made friends with English-speaking sojourners and foreigners alike. His handsome, youthful countenance, engaging manners, and buoyant disposition always attracted strangers; and he was no misanthrope, but ever a lover of his kind, in all places, under all guises. Assuredly there were seasons of home-sickness, especially when he had news of illness in his family. It was tidings of that nature which caused him to sail for America some months sooner than he intended, but his eldest sister, Elizabeth, was dead before he reached home.

The young professor of twenty-two entered upon

his duties in Bowdoin College with a zest for teaching that no difficulties could daunt. When the prescribed text-books did not satisfy him, he edited new ones, notably a book of French proverbs and a Spanish reader. Being the reverse of the dry-as-dust pedant so often found in such positions, he was immensely popular with the students. One of these writes in after-life:—

"We were fond of him from the start: his speech charmed us; his earnest and dignified demeanour inspired us. A better teacher, a more sympathetic friend, never addressed a class of young men."

Apart from his work as Professor of Modern Languages, Longfellow had charge of the college library, and one of the students who saw him only there has written:—

"He was always apparently pursuing some investigation or absorbed in some book, and yet nothing escaped his attention. The assistants were kept up to the mark, and no irregularity was allowed. He attended readily to any question about book or subject, and then resumed his reading, and always seemed so absorbed and yet so attentive that he seemed to have two personalities."

During these ten eventful years Longfellow wrote

almost no poetry. His ideals had been greatly raised and his views of life broadened by continental travel; he could no longer be content with the kind of verse he had written in his teens. Duty, as well as inclination, led him to the production of prose. Besides the text-books, he got up lectures on the literatures of France, Spain, and Italy for the benefit of his classes, and he never rested till he had published an account of his travels in these countries. This was *Outre-Mer*, which came first at different times in pamphlet form, and later as a book. Some of the sketches had been written while he was abroad, and the speedy popularity of the whole made their author so well known as a prose writer, that he was asked to contribute to that important quarterly "The North American Review," and he accepted the invitation.

Brunswick was near enough to Portland to allow Longfellow to make frequent visits home; and that he did not, while there, spend the whole of his time in his father's house, is evident from the fact that in September, 1831, he took unto himself a wife in the person of Mary Storer Potter. She was a young and lovely daughter of Judge Barrett Potter, who lived near the Longfellows in Portland; and

having a well-stored mind, as well as a charming disposition, she was a fitting mate for the young professor. They were very happy together in the home nest in Fedral Street, Brunswick, where the house they lived in may still be seen.

Henry was ambitious, however, and erelong began to sigh for a wider sphere of action. Mr. George Ticknor of Harvard College, wishing to resign his position as Smith Professor in Modern Languages, confidently recommended for the position his young friend H. W. Longfellow, of whom he wrote:—

"He passed some time in France, and still more in Italy and in Spain; and his knowledge of the language and literature of each of these countries has, for several years past, seemed to me extraordinary. He writes and speaks Spanish with a degree of fluency and exactness which I have known in no American born of parents speaking English as their vernacular. His knowledge of Spanish literature is extensive and to be relied upon; and several publications he has made on the subject have been accompanied with poetical translations of much spirit and fidelity. Besides this, he is, for his years, an accomplished general scholar, particularly in modern literature, and full of activity

and eagerness in the pursuit of knowledge. His address and manners are very prepossessing, his temper amiable, and his character without blemish from his earliest years."

Mr. Ticknor agreed to retain the position until Longfellow had spent another year in Europe, with the special object of bringing his German up to his standard in the other languages.

Upon this trip he was no longer the solitary wayfarer of *Outre-Mer;* his wife sailed with him, on a packet-ship, in the spring of 1835. Three weeks in London made the poet acquainted with some of England's celebrities, including a unique couple from Scotland, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Carlyle.

From England Mr. and Mrs. Longfellow went to Denmark, and thence to Sweden—new ground to a mind particularly susceptible to new impressions. An earnest student, he fell in with his own kind everywhere, and was fortunate both in his teachers and his acquaintances while studying Danish and Swedish.

Mrs. Longfellow became very ill at Amsterdam, and her husband stayed with her there for a month before she could resume her travels. They were destined to be of short duration; for at Rotterdam,

on the twenty-ninth of November, the happy young wife passed away, after but four years of married life. When four more years had fled, her poet-husband, writing *The Footsteps of the Angels*, speaks of her tenderly as

"The Being Beauteous
Who unto my youth was given."

Sad at heart as he was, a widower ere he was thirty, Longfellow must fulfil the purpose which had brought him abroad; but his stay in Germany was very different from his expectations. He had no longer with him the sympathetic companion who had cast a glamour over the Swedish and Danish experiences; but hard work of any kind is the surest antidote to sorrow, and Longfellow found abundance of it waiting for him at Heidelberg. To gain a grasp of the German language that will make possible an intimate acquaintance with German literature requires much time, and also close, incessant labour, which, however, is its own reward. Besides the distinguished German scholars Longfellow met, it was in Heidelberg that he first encountered William Cullen Bryant, whose verse had so largely influenced his own.

Before coming home he travelled in Switzerland, and there he became extremely friendly with Mr.

Nathan Appleton of Boston and his family, in whose company he spent much time at Interlachen. There was a certain Miss Appleton of the party, in whom the young professor became interested there and then, if we are to believe that she was the original of Mary Ashburton in *Hyperion*, though it was several years before he met her again. Of this period he writes in his journal, "I now for the first time enjoy Switzerland;" and it may be that the mountain Jungfrau—which, as seen from Interlachen, inspires sentiment in the least emotional of natures—was alone responsible, and not the *jungfrau* from Boston.

Besides the pastures new, the traveller revisited the charmed region of his earlier jaunts—Paris and Auteuil, for example—and sailed for home on the eighth of October. In December of that year (1836) Professor Longfellow began his work in Harvard College, Cambridge, Massachusetts, where he made his home for the rest of his life.

Nowadays, the three miles to Boston have been built over with streets of houses, but sixty years ago Cambridge was really a separate village, connected with the city only by an hourly omnibus. It had its own historical associations, its own standard of

excellence, in which mind ranked above money; it took all possible advantages from the proximity to Boston, and prided itself on having the benefits of country life also.

The new professor was just the sort of man to be eagerly welcomed into the society of the place, and though he was criticised by the more sober-minded for his lively taste in coloured neckties, in coats and waistcoats, the failing surely leaned to amiability, and it had been acquired abroad. Though he spent half of his evenings in social gatherings of one kind or another, he never neglected the thorough preparation of his lectures, being well equipped with the surest stimulus, a genuine enthusiasm for his subject.

During his first winter in Cambridge, Professor Longfellow lived in lodgings in Kirkland Street, but the following spring he secured two fine large rooms in the Craigie House, a broad, old-fashioned dwelling, colonial in style, fronting on Brattle Street. There it had stood since 1759, and could, if it would, relate many an anecdote of revolutionary days.

When the soldiers of the republic were besieging Boston, George Washington had his headquarters in the Craigie House for nine months after the battle of Bunker Hill. The room at the south-east corner of

the second story had been the general's study, and Longfellow took it for his own. His landlady, Mrs. Craigie, was a character in her way, a reader of Voltaire, and a believer in the motto "Live and let live," even as applied to the canker-worms that were busily destroying the grand old elms in front of her house.

Longfellow had many a battle with the pests, and he soon grew to love the place and its surroundings. In Harvard he found a college very different from Bowdoin—one with a past history that must be lived up to, a reputation that professors and students alike must strive to sustain.

CHAPTER V.

HARVARD COLLEGE.

ITS HISTORY—ITS DEMOCRACY—ITS GREAT INFLUENCE UPON AMERICAN LETTERS—A. H. CLOUGH AT CAMBRIDGE—LONGFELLOW AS PROFESSOR.

THE founders of New England, men of large mind and public spirit, had a solid respect for learning. Many of them were university graduates, and many who were not determined that their sons should be. Their zeal for education was second only to their zeal for religion, which by no means expended itself in the expulsion of heretics, and in the application of stocks and pillory for every sort of offence. In their endeavour to make godliness prevail, they accepted the axiom, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure," and set aside their creed disputes to form a unanimous resolve that there should be no lack of well-trained instructors to fill both pulpit and school-house.

Sixteen years after the landing of the Pilgrim Fathers they founded Harvard College. Boston had been settled but half a dozen years before, in 1630, and had not sprung, mushroom-like, from a village to a city, after the manner of modern American towns. Three miles farther inland, on the Charles River, was a still smaller settlement, called New Town, and there it was decided to build the college. Very plain and bare it was; for the Puritans put from them, in orthodox contempt, all remembrance of the architecture of Oxford and Cambridge, even as they regarded not the suggestions of arching bough and tapering stem in the primeval woods they cut down to make room for their building. It was designed for use, not ornament, and with the same ruling idea have most of the extensions been added.

We know but little of the Reverend John Harvard, after whom the institution was named, save that he was "a gentle and godly youth," who had graduated at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, and for that reason the New Town was christened "Cambridge." When he died, in New England, in 1638, Master Harvard bequeathed his library and eight hundred pounds to the infant seat of learning.

That was but the first of the long list of benefac-

tions Harvard has received. Even up to the time of Longfellow, it was the principal literary centre of America; and as the country grew populous, and fortunes were easily made, too much could not be done for the favourite college by former graduates, in memory of son or brother educated there, or in token merely of a desire which the self-made man often feels, to ensure to the next generation those early advantages denied to himself. In this way is asserted the national independence. The youth of the land must learn to lean on itself, and home industries must be protected. "In England rich men found families, in America they found universities."

There is something remarkable in the contemplation of that handful of emigrants, on the edge of a vast continent, raising an institution of this kind before even their foothold was secure. At their backs were the hostile native tribes, capable, if united, of driving the white man quite out of the country; and yet these same colonists deliberately included in their scheme of education the conversion and instruction of the savages. In fact, with a hospitality somewhat rare towards the red men, the Indian College, capable of accommodating twenty of them, was the very first of the brick buildings erected.

But Harvard has always been distinguished for being no respecter of colour. If a negro, at the present day, excels in the realm of sport, he will be treated as an equal there, though nowhere else in the United States. There were a number of Indians in attendance during the first years of the college, but we read of but one who remained to graduate.

Harvard is no less famed for liberty than for equality and fraternity—liberty in the choice of a course of study, liberty in the use of the library, liberty to attend public worship anywhere or nowhere. Though strictly non-sectarian from the first, Harvard is generally considered Unitarian, that set of ideas having prevailed largely with her most famous students and professors, including Longfellow—a not unnatural reaction from the dogmatism of the Puritans, who would turn over in their graves could they learn the result of their unwonted tolerance at the founding of the college. The professors in the divinity school are of diverse creeds; for though Harvard encourages the search for truth, she frowns vigorously upon the notion that the whole of truth can be monopolized by one particular sect. At morning service the students can hear the best speakers of every denomination.

Phillips Brooks, Lyman Abbott, Edward Everett Hale have all preached there in their turn.

"Behold an American university, presenting herself, with her sons, before her European mothers for their blessing," wrote Cotton Mather in the introduction to his history of Harvard College; and truly her sons are well worthy of being presented. Before so many rivals sprang up to divide the laurels, she could boast that to her graduates was due the praise for almost every notable achievement of the country.

Increase and Cotton Mather, indeed all the foremost theologians of colonial times, were Harvard men; and so likewise was every signer of the Declaration of Independence who hailed from Massachusetts. Washington Allston, the first American painter of note, Longfellow's friend and neighbour in Cambridge, was a graduate, and so was the Reverend William Ellery Channing, of Unitarian repute, who left his mark upon Emerson and other live minds of the period.

When literature finally rose in America, it was from Harvard that the impetus came. Prescott, Bancroft, Motley, and Parkman, the historian contemporaries of Longfellow; Sumner and Phillips, Emerson, Holmes, and Thoreau, all graduated there during the thirty years that succeeded the first decade

of the nineteenth century; and well has the precedence been maintained. There is no university in Europe at the present day which can more thoroughly equip a student of English, and the variety of the courses presented is most remarkable. No wonder that the roll has lengthened at a rapid rate, and now nears four thousand.

His European travel did much for Longfellow in the improvement of his taste and the development of his imagination; but he could not have touched the many-sided American public at such diverse points had he not been associated for eighteen years with the brightest intellects the country had produced. When he came to Harvard, it had just celebrated the two-hundredth anniversary of its founding, and Josiah Quincy was president. The young professor unconsciously gained breadth of culture in the proximity of such men as Edward Everett, Dr. Palfrey, Jared Sparks, Caleb Cushing, Benjamin Pierce, Henry J. Bowditch, Robert C. Winthrop, James Russell Lowell, Charles Francis Adams, Jeffries Wyman, and Francis Bowen.

The William and Mary College of Virginia has outdone the Cambridge institution in the production of Presidents of the United States; but Harvard used to

be conspicuous for sharing in the disdain, common to most of the cultivated classes, for the national politics. Such affairs were beneath the notice of "Harvard gentlemen."

These "gentlemen" carried their conservatism so far as to sympathize at first with the southern slaveholders; but when it came to war, many Harvard students and graduates laid down their lives in defence of the Union. In the transept of Memorial Hall there are ninety-five names inscribed on the walls, and the living, who pass out and in to their meals, are daily reminded of the heroism of their dead predecessors.

Arthur Hugh Clough, who lived in Cambridge for a year while Longfellow was still a Harvard professor, thus describes the locality as it appeared in 1852:—

"It is a huge district, a parish (which here they call a town) of several square miles, with roads stretching away here and there and everywhere, and houses all along and off them. It is called a city, because it has a mayor and corporation; but it is more like a big suburban district, a sort of Clapham or Highgate. There is scarcely anything that is a street, properly speaking; but there are acres of roads with houses along them, and cross lanes with houses

too. The college at Cambridge consists of old, red-brick buildings, with a library of modern granite. There are some student rooms, much in our style, only humbler. The boys at college" (they are all *men* at Oxford) "live partly in lodgings, partly in halls, under some superintendence, much like college rooms; only they don't dine together, but all about, in families, etc. They learn French, and history, and German, and a great many more things than in England, but only imperfectly."

This defect in the Harvard training was one which Mr. George Ticknor strove strenuously to remedy. He, and Everett, and Bancroft were among the first American students to be found at a German university; and Ticknor came home from Göttingen fully primed with an ideal of what Harvard ought to be. In 1819, he was appointed Smith Professor there, teaching the French and Spanish languages, and upon his recommendation Longfellow succeeded him, in 1836.

The direction first given by those famous scholars has long remained unchanged. Americans have gone to Germany, rather than to Oxford or Cambridge, for graduate work, asserting that in the Fatherland only was to be obtained a serviceable training in the methods of scholarship.

The "case system" of studying law, which is now becoming prevalent everywhere, originated at Harvard; and her medical school, though less widely known, is thoroughly equipped.

Fifty years ago, students and professors seldom met out of the classes, and to this day there are no "common rooms" for social intercourse, which would be to many young men from the west not the least important part of their education.

American boys are not so thoroughly grounded in the classics before going to the university as they are in the famous public schools of England, and therefore more of them are inclined to specialize in other subjects. They expect and receive more help from their professors than is commonly given in Europe, and such a position as Longfellow held was no sinecure. Being among the most conscientious of a conscientious set of teachers, it is not surprising that he nearly wore himself out, that he was often weary of his work, and longed for the time when he could lay it aside for the literary labours in which his soul delighted.

Writing in "The Atlantic Monthly," Mr. O. B. Frothingham thus recalls Longfellow in his Harvard days:—"A clear-cut figure of middle size, handsome,

erect, the countenance cheerful, the step buoyant, the voice mellow and musical, a melodious voice, educated, with character and cultivation in it—the voice of a gentleman and a scholar."

The same writer describes the place in which he, as a student, listened to the lectures of Professor Longfellow; and one can imagine the grateful change it must have been to leave a bare classroom for that comfortably-furnished parlour with carpeted floor—a magic carpet upon which, through the influence of magnetic voice and poetic imagination, one was transported far afield to revel in the romance of foreign lands.

Longfellow never joked with his pupils. He had no need to throw a mantle of wit over the poverty of his wisdom, but was always gentle, sympathetic, and perfectly dignified. He speaks in his journal of the privilege it is to interpret Dante to young hearts, and yet he records also that his German classes passed better examinations than either the Spanish or Italian. In spite of his chivalrous respect for women, he was not a believer in co-education, and would probably approve of the girls being still kept by themselves in Radcliffe College, even though all the western state universities have

set Harvard an example in throwing open their doors to women.

The poet Clough said, "People in Cambridge don't despise one for being poor." How could they, when one may see any summer in the White Mountains a score of Harvard students acting as waiters? Some of them tend house furnaces or conduct street cars, and there is an employment bureau in the college itself to help students who wish for outside work.

It has been the privilege of Harvard University to hold up the Lamp of Beauty and the Lamp of Truth in a country and an age gone mad after material prosperity. She has raised American ideals, and one of her sons, Mr. J. R. Lowell, voiced her sincerest teaching in his speech on the occasion of her two hundred and fiftieth anniversary:—

"The measure of a nation's true success is the amount it has contributed to the thought, the moral energy, the intellectual happiness, the spiritual hope and consolation of mankind."

CHAPTER VI.

THE HARVEST OF THIRTY-NINE.

HYPERION—WHAT IT IS NOT AND WHAT IT IS—THE POET IN GERMANY—LONGFELLOW AS PREACHER—*VOICES OF THE NIGHT.*

IT was during his first and longest sojourn in Europe that Longfellow came to the conclusion that prose, and not poetry, was his natural medium. *Hyperion*, published in 1839, was the outcome of this decision; but in spite of its extreme popularity at that time, it has been completely overshadowed by the author's poetical performances. He explains the title in a letter to his friend, Mr. Greene:—

"*Hyperion* is the name of the book, not of the hero. It merely indicates that here is the life of one who in his feelings and purposes is 'a son of heaven and earth,' and who, though obscured by clouds, yet 'moves on high.'"

It is called a romance, and rightly so, in the sense that it is a record of romantic feelings inspired by

romantic scenery and associations; but there is a lack of incident, of the marvellous adventures and thrilling love scenes connected with the modern conception of a romance. The heroine does not appear upon the scene until Book the Third is more than half completed, when it is entirely necessary the author should explain that here is "that not impossible she." Her early disappearance from the stage, to be heard again only as a voice behind the scenes at the end, would discourage the bravest reader of romances, not already disheartened by the hero's indulgence in the luxury of woe, and his desire to embrace the few opportunities granted to him for the improvement of his lady-love's mind.

But why regard the book as a story? It is a veritable "tailor's drawer," defined in *Outre-Mer* to be a receptacle for "nedyls, threde, thymbell, shers, and all suche knackes." So the Spanish would christen "a desultory discourse, wherein various and discordant themes are touched upon, and which is crammed full of little shreds and patches of erudition."

Hyperion's principal interest for the reader of to-day is to be found in the picture it presents of Longfellow's life in Germany. The key is changed to a minor since the days of *Outre-Mer*. That was *l'allegro;* this is *il penseroso*. The poet is

no longer the gay, light-hearted lad in his teens, but a grave and saddened man; for it was immediately after the death of his wife that he went to Heidelberg.

He causes Paul Flemming, the hero of *Hyperion*, to say, "I am persuaded that, in order fully to understand and feel the popular poetry of Germany, one must be familiar with the German landscape." Longfellow so steeped himself in both, it was to be expected that, looking out of his study window in the upper room of Craigie House, he often saw, not the placid Charles and the quiet meadows around Cambridge, but the swift-flowing Rhine with its vine-clad hills and its store of castles legend-laden with "the dim traditions of those grey old times."

As in *Outre-Mer*, there are stories in *Hyperion;* but of a different flavour from the tale of Martin Franc is that of the Christ of Andernach, who came down from the cross placed in the little chapel in an angle formed by the outside wall of the church. No one knew who was the mysterious benefactor that helped the poor folk of Andernach by doing their work for them, until a hungry Magdalene, to whom he had given bread, actually saw him return to his cross and nail himself there.

Then there is the story of the two brothers of

Liebenstein who loved the same lady, but to her the one was faithless and the other true. After the way of women, Lady Geraldine loved the false one, and on losing him, became a holy nun; but by chance she issued from her convent with a company of the sisterhood in time to prevent a duel, on her account, between the two brothers, who lived thereafter together in peace.

The description of a wintry afternoon in Heidelberg, at the beginning of the sixth chapter, is a prose poem filled with the same kind of similes that abound in his poetry proper. There, as elsewhere, nature takes a strong hold upon Longfellow. He treats it subjectively—that is to say, he is more inclined to dwell upon the thoughts and emotions that certain of its aspects arouse in himself, than to describe a scene faithfully as it appears to the outward eye, and allow it to affect each reader according to his temperament.

Mr. Berkley, the eccentric Englishman, provides the humour of the piece, and it is into his mouth that Longfellow puts the four lines he made to commemorate exorbitant charges at the Hotel du Corbeau,—

> "Beware the Raven at Zurich;
> 'Tis a bird of omen ill,
> With a noisy and an unclean nest,
> And a very, very long bill."

Never has there been an American, among those who have followed in Longfellow's train, that has more thoroughly entered into the spirit of and enjoyed the life in a famous university town. He did not take so great an interest, perhaps, in the notorious custom of duelling among Heidelberg students as some foreigners have done, probably regarding it as a non-essential part of the curriculum to have one's face slashed into the semblance of a railway map.

From the conversations in *Hyperion* between Mr. Flemming and his friend the Baron, there might be written several essays upon literary topics—Scholars, Fame, or Goethe, for example.

Jean Paul Richter, fondly called by his countrymen "The Only One," is the German who most influenced Longfellow at this period. To apply his own aphorism, he "found himself in him." In the theory of the superiority of universality to nationality, as proclaimed in *Kavanagh*, he certainly agrees with Jean Paul; but in *Hyperion* neither hero nor author is carried off his feet by the German philosophy, much as he is interested therein. The poet had the saving, practical common-sense of the Yankee, and he makes Paul Flemming reply to a visionary,—

"There are many speculations in literature, philos-

ophy, and religion, which, though pleasant to walk in, and lying under the shadow of great names, yet lead to no important result. They resemble rather those roads in the western forests of my native land, which, though broad and pleasant at first, and lying beneath the shadow of great branches, finally dwindle to a squirrel-track and run up a tree."

In *Hyperion* we see Longfellow, though crushed by his first great sorrow, the death of his wife, gradually rousing himself to throw off his morbidness, to gather comfort and courage from the motto upon the old tombstone at St. Gilgen,—

"Look not mournfully into the Past. It comes not back again. Wisely improve the Present. It is thine. Go forth to meet the shadowy Future, without fear, and with a manly heart."

A Psalm of Life may be taken as a paraphrase of these same lines. That is the poem by which Longfellow is better known than by anything else he has written. Though far from being his best, it contains a plain lesson for plain people, many of whom are not given to reading poetry, but are given to fits of the blues. To such, and to young people of all nations, *A Psalm of Life* has a message of good cheer. It is the most popular of Longfellow's sermons, as he is

the most popular of preacher-poets. He does not obscure his thought with language ecclesiastical, nor talk above the heads of his congregation. His text is often upon the value of honest, manly endeavour, as opposed to idle dreaming,—

> "Something attempted, something done,
> Has earned a night's repose.

The habit of sermonizing, of bringing in a moral at the end of every poem, may be helpful to the young reader, but it detracts from the artistic value of the work. True art does not try to teach so directly. The greatest picture does not point a moral, but by fidelity to nature, by its own beauty and truth, elevates the soul and drives out mean emotions, low aims.

That Longfellow breaks this law of art in very many of his shorter poems is only too evident, but who would part with *The Ladder of St. Augustine*, for instance, on that account? Even in his handling of classic or heathen themes he feels bound to find a lesson. *Endymion* teaches that

> "No one is so accursed by fate,
> No one so utterly desolate,
> But some heart, though unknown,
> Responds unto his own."

A very pretty sentiment, whether it be true or not.

The poet-professor is no materialist. In *Footsteps*

of the Angels we realize his sense of the nearness of the unseen world; and in *L'Envoi* he shows that reverence for the departed further developed in the later poems, *Haunted Houses* and *God's-Acre*. He

> "Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
> Sermons in stones, and good in everything."

Flowers marks his return to poetry after his divergence along the path of prose, and he sees in them the revelation of God's love—

> "Emblems of our own great resurrection,
> Emblems of the bright and better land."

With Longfellow, the poet means "light-bearer" to a world lying in the darkness of ignorance; and how nobly he devoted himself to the fulfilment of this mission, his whole life testifies.

The little volume, *Voices of the Night*, is the chord containing the keynotes of the symphony that is to follow. In it he collected not only the poems he had recently written for "The Knickerbocker Magazine," but swelled the book to a respectable size by the admission of the best of his juvenile poems, and ten translations from the German, taken out of *Hyperion*, which had been published the same year. Both books became at once wonderfully popular.

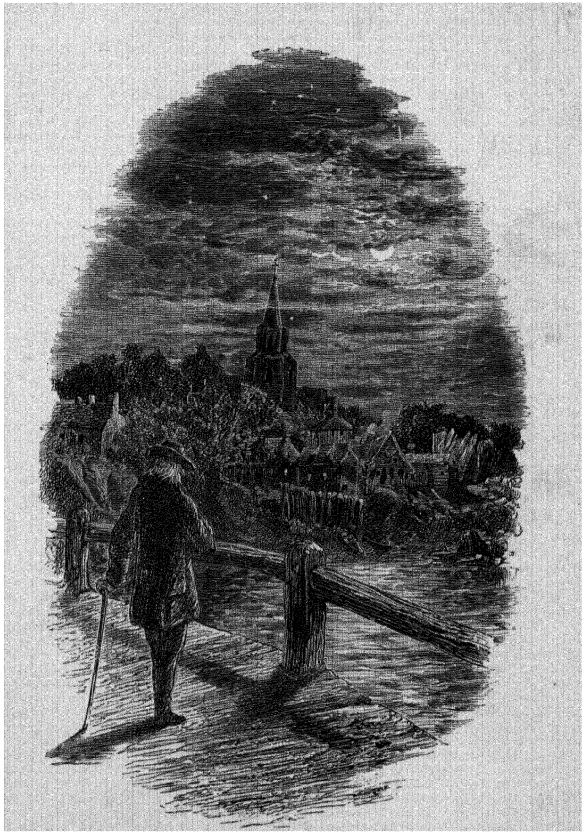
CHAPTER VII.

DRAMATIST AND NOVELIST.

THIRD VISIT TO EUROPE—*THE SPANISH STUDENT*—SONGS—*MASQUE OF PANDORA*—*KAVANAGH*—MARRIED AGAIN—THE POETS AND POETRY OF EUROPE.

LONGFELLOW made his third visit to Europe during the summer vacation of 1842. The trip was not undertaken in pursuit of knowledge, but in search of health, which was found in pleasant Marienberg on the Rhine. There he wrote nothing but the sonnet *Mezzo Cammin*, which betrays the mood of the moment,—

"Half of my life is gone, and I have let
The years slip from me, and have not fulfilled
The aspiration of my youth, to build
Some tower of song with lofty parapet.
Not indolence, nor pleasure, nor the fret
Of restless passions that would not be stilled,
But sorrow, and a care that almost killed,
Kept me from what I may accomplish yet;
Though, half-way up the hill, I see the Past
Lying beneath me, with its sounds and sights,



"I stood on the bridge at midnight."

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A city in the twilight dim and vast,
With smoking roofs, soft bells, and gleaming lights,
And hear above me on the autumnal blast
The cataract of Death far thundering from the heights."

While in England in October, before coming home, he was the guest of Charles Dickens, with whom he had become friendly when the Englishman was in America the preceding winter. He returned to his duties at Cambridge with renewed health and energy.

When the spring of genius bubbles up in a man, it often runs over in different directions ere it finds for itself the most desirable outlet. Longfellow tried his hand at almost every kind of literary expression, and his best play is *The Spanish Student*. It was written in 1840, and displays abundant instances of the poet's gifts, and also of his limitations. Therein are contained several of his most beautiful songs.

The serenade *Stars of the Summer Night*, for example, has been set to so fine a melody, and is so often sung, that it seems more the property of the musician than the poet. It recalls the other familiar songs of which the words are Longfellow's—*The Day is Done, I Shot an Arrow into the Air, The Bridge, The Rainy Day*, and so on. There is no other modern poet whose verses have so frequently been set to good music, and so frequently become widely popular. Sir Arthur Sulli-

van declares that Longfellow had a better ear than Tennyson, and that the poetry of the American is by far the more suitable for musical setting. Throughout his works one is pleased with both rhyme and rhythm, with the adaptation of sound to sense, with flowing phrases and singable words; but something more is demanded for the successful drama.

By entering the lists as a playwright, Longfellow calls forth comparisons with Shakespeare himself. The first scene between the Spanish student and the gipsy recalls Romeo and Juliet; his groundless suspicions of her suggest Othello, Posthumus, Claudio, and Leontes. Forced indeed is the turn which Preciosa gives to her interview with the Count when she reaches the point at which her lover becomes eavesdropper.

The poetry, as a whole, is simpler and more spontaneous than George Eliot's "Spanish Gipsy." Longfellow never tries to solve psychological problems, nor to analyze character, in the manner of the lady novelist, from which she cannot depart even in verse. He adheres more closely than she to the story he has to tell. The tale of *The Spanish Student* is made more effective by being told in dramatic form, but it is no more of an acting play than any other Long-

fellow has written. None of them have sufficient movement to carry them through a stage performance.

The Masque of Pandora, composed thirty-five years after *The Spanish Student,* shows no advance in dramatic power, although it is eminently singable, and has actually been performed in Boston as an operetta, with music by Alfred Cellier. *Pandora* is pagan in its sympathies, while *The Student* is Christian. Towards the end of his life Longfellow became less sure that he, or any modern, had found the correct solution of those problems which puzzled the ancients. Neither the age nor the country he lived in was dramatic; but he was no more successful as a novelist, though in his time the universal mind of man was finding adequate expression in prose fiction.

Kavanagh is the nearest approach to a novel that Longfellow has written, and, compared with the analytical variety, it is a very mild tale indeed. Neither human life nor the individual is dissected, but both are regarded from the point of view of a sympathetic observer. The village of the story has no features specially American, but some of the villagers have. The butcher, the profile-taker, the bath-house man, are humorously sketched, and so

is the magazine canvasser, who aims to found "a national literature commensurate with our mountains and rivers, commensurate with Niagara, and the Alleghanies, and the Great Lakes." The aim of the typical American is ever to produce the biggest thing on earth; he wants "a national epic that shall correspond to the size of the country."

Longfellow opposes this spirit through the mouth of his hero, condemns his countrymen's desire for quantity rather than quality, their disinclination to own their indebtedness to English literature, their haste to display attainments before they are thoroughly acquired.

The poet transcends the novelist in the description of the roaring brook, brown autumn, the first snowfall; and the whole of *Kavanagh* has a quaint and genial humour that reminds one of Jane Austen.

Neither in prose nor verse is Longfellow a delineator of passion. He does not deal in the variety of love which forms the bulk of the ordinary poet or novelist's stock-in-trade. Two maidens fall in love with Arthur Kavanagh, the young minister; he marries one, and the other dies of a broken heart. He is a bit of a prig, and the ladies are sketched so lightly that they are but shadows compared to

the realistic pictures in modern novels. Kavanagh is supposed to be the hero of the tale; but the quotation from "Macbeth," which indicates its motive—

> "The flighty purpose never is o'ertook
> Unless the deed go with it"—

applies not to him, but to the schoolmaster, Mr. Churchill, the most lovable of the characters, in whom we see a semblance of Longfellow himself. He is a sort of universal helper, who can refuse aid to none, though his progress in literature suffers in consequence.

"He freely used his good ideas in conversation and in letters; and they were straightway wrought into the texture of other men's books, and so lost to him for ever." Still he can say: "What matters it to the world whether I, or you, or another man did such a deed, or wrote such a book, so be it the deed and book were well done?"

The author himself was ever industrious, and therefore he condemns in Mr. Churchill the absence of "the all-controlling, all-subduing will." His great romance is never written, but surely a helpful life counts for more.

The world at large values Longfellow the poet, but his pupils, his family, and his friends valued

Longfellow the man. To them he was a living, benignant presence, and would have been a persuasive influence towards sweetness and light had he never penned a poem.

Mr. Churchill's family life; his arguments with his wife, in which her woman's wit often wins; his groanings over the conscienceless demands of outsiders upon his invaluable time; the old pulpit placed in the study to serve as a play-house for his children; the personality of the youngest scion of the house,—all this, joined to the musings of the Reverend Arthur Kavanagh in the church-tower study, suggests a rounded picture of Longfellow himself at the time of the publication of *Kavanagh*, when he was no longer a solitary widower.

His landlady, Mrs. Craigie, had died eight years before, and her house had been taken by Mr. Worcester, of dictionary fame, from whom the poet for a couple of years continued to rent his rooms; but on July 13, 1843, Longfellow married his second wife, Frances Elizabeth Appleton, of 39 Beacon Street, Boston. This young lady was the same he had met at Interlachen in 1836, when she was in her twentieth summer—the same he had used as a model for Mary Ashburton in *Hyperion*.



LONGFELLOW'S HOME, CAMBRIDGE.

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Her father, Mr. Nathan Appleton, purchased the Craigie House for the young couple, enlarged its grounds, and bought land also on the other side of Brattle Street to preserve an open prospect in that direction.

In this delightful home Longfellow and his bride began and ended their ideal life together. She is described by his brother Samuel as "a woman of stately presence, of cultivated intellect, and deep though reserved feeling. Her calm and quiet face wore habitually a look of seriousness, and then 'at times seemed to make the very air bright with her smile.'" The English poet, A. H. Clough, who met her about ten years after her marriage, in his remarks upon the early fading of American women, made an exception of Mrs. Longfellow, "who looks as young and fresh as possible."

Longfellow's solitary love poem, *The Evening Star*, is addressed to his wife; and a remark of hers suggested *The Arsenal at Springfield*, which was visited on the wedding journey. The same tour called forth *The Old Clock on the Stairs*, first seen at the house of the bride's grandfather. It has ticked its way into many another homestead.

Mrs. Longfellow had an opportunity during her

first year of wedded life to display her qualities as helpmeet, for her husband had trouble with his eyes, and she both read and wrote for him.

It was about that time (1845) that he published an anthology of European poetry, in which some of the translations are his own. His appreciation of the work of other men was always a strong point in Longfellow's character. He never tried to belittle his fellows in order to raise himself, but was more inclined to overpraise than to undervalue their performances. In this collection he has proved himself an ideal editor, with reliable judgment and refined taste; and he has opened not one but many doors through which the reader of English alone may enjoy a wide prospect of European landscapes and figure studies.

CHAPTER VIII.

"EVANGELINE."

POETRY VERSUS HISTORY—THE STORY AS LONGFELLOW TELLS IT—THE POEM'S GREAT DESCRIPTIVE MERITS—DIFFERENCES OF OPINION ABOUT THE HEXAMETER.

ON the twenty-seventh of October 1846, Hawthorne and his friend, the Reverend Mr. Conolly of Boston, dined with the Longfellows at Craigie House. There and then was related the episode upon which *Evangeline* is founded. The rector had already given it to the romancer as a suggestion for a story, but it had not appealed to the imagination of the latter. It touched that of his friend Longfellow so much that he asked permission to use it in a poem, and Hawthorne gladly agreed.

The poet begins his tale at the point when the peaceable inhabitants of the Acadian village, Grand Pré, are taken on board British ships and carried away from their beloved homes, which are set on fire

behind them. Had the novelist written the story he might have begun it farther back—have investigated the reasons for this undeniably harsh treatment. He might even have chosen for the villain of his plot not the English governor at Halifax, whose years of forbearance had failed to earn the gratitude or loyalty of the Acadians, but the Abbé le Loutre, a fanatical Jesuit, the most prominent of the numerous agents employed by the governor at Quebec to keep a simple people faithful to France. The notorious Abbé threatened them with the Micmac Indians, or with the still more dreaded excommunication from the mother church, should they dare to "render unto Cæsar the things that [were] Cæsar's."

The Acadians had been British subjects for forty-three years, and had been warned again and again what they might expect did they persist in covertly taking sides with the French against the English. Their final transportation and dispersion was no wanton piece of tyranny, as Longfellow makes it appear, but an act of judicial justice, according to the thinking of the time; and if poets be "the only truth-tellers left to God," they must beware how they belie their high calling.

As a matter of fact, the change of environment

was the best thing that could have happened to the Acadians. They were not like the Canadians, hardy and warlike, fitted for battle with a rigorous climate and an enterprising foe. For a slow-going people, Louisiana is a paradise compared to Nova Scotia, and there the numerous descendants of Longfellow's idealized exiles remain till the present day, but slightly changed from their ancestors either in mind or in manners, and happier by far than they possibly could be in a progressive northern land.

Scientific historical research, as applied to poetry and fiction, was not dreamt of when *Evangeline* was written, and in preparing his version of the story Longfellow relied upon the best authorities then known.

The picture he paints of the Arcadian bliss that prevailed at Grand Pré before the arrival of the British ships must have been drawn from some memory of his European travels. It has the marks of a long-settled country, and scarcely resembles Acadia, in spite of "the forest primeval" which forms so magnificent a background. The inhabitants, in reality, were wretchedly poor, ignorant, and priest-ridden. Not in the whole country, one might venture to say, was there a farm-steading so comfortable as

that which the poet bestows on Evangeline's father; but Longfellow is no realist. His aim is to tell the story in the manner best fitted to bring out its overpowering pathos, and in this he has eminently succeeded.

The Bay of Fundy, that arm of the sea which separates New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, divides at its head; and the southerly portion, rounding the picturesque Cape Split, that seems to check its farther advance, widens into the beautiful Basin of Minas, upon whose shores rests the village of Grand Pré, where

> "Benedict Bellefontaine, the wealthiest farmer of Grand Pré,
> Dwelt on his goodly acres; and with him, directing his household,
> Gentle Evangeline lived, his child, and the pride of the village."

The story begins upon a certain evening in September 1755, when Basil, the blacksmith, with his son, Gabriel Lajeunesse, comes to the home of his old friend Benedict, to be present at the signing of the marriage contract between Gabriel and Evangeline. The notary arrives with the necessary papers, and the betrothal being formally ratified, the lovers whisper together apart, while the three old men discuss the probable errand of the English ships that

> "Ride in the Gaspereau's mouth, with their cannon pointed towards us."



"Gentle Evangeline, the pride of the village"

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Alas! they are soon enlightened. On the morrow, obeying a mandate from the governor, all the able-bodied men of the village assemble in the church, and upon them is pronounced the sentence—

"Namely, that all your lands, and dwellings, and cattle of all kinds,
Forfeited be to the crown; and that you yourselves from this province
Be transported to other lands."

Even before the embarkation, Evangeline's father falls dead on the sands, and she is taken on board one of the ships, while Gabriel, her betrothed husband, is carried off on another. Thus were the Acadians scattered among the English colonies.

"Friendless, homeless, hopeless, they wandered from city to city."

And the object of Evangeline's wanderings was the chance of finding Gabriel. With other Acadian refugees bound for the French colony of Louisiana, she sailed in a rude boat down the Ohio River and thence into the broad Mississippi, floating on the bosom of the Father of Waters almost to his mouth.

In Louisiana, she and the old priest, her escort, found the father of Gabriel, once Basil the blacksmith, now a landed proprietor with "numberless herds of kine." He at least had no cause to regret his expulsion from Acadia.

"My son left here this very day," said Basil. "If you came by way of Atchafalaya you must have passed him."

Then Evangeline knew it was no dream that had made her wake from her sleep in the row-boat moored under the willows. Gabriel, sighing for her, as she for him, had indeed sailed close to her retreat without seeing her. She and his father prepared to follow him; and follow him they did, first to a neighbouring Spanish town whence he had just departed, and then northward into the broad western prairies by the gate of the Ozark Mountains.

"Sometimes they saw, or thought they saw, the smoke of his camp-fire
Rise in the morning air from the distant plain; but at nightfall,
When they had reached the place, they found only embers and ashes.'

They came at length to a Jesuit mission, one of those outposts of civilization whose keepers the boldest French adventurers could not surpass in daring and fortitude. Gabriel had been there, and there he would return in the fall, said the Black Robe. So

"Homeward Basil returned, and Evangeline stayed at the Mission."

But the summer came, autumn and winter followed, and still no Gabriel. Once more Evangeline resumed her search.



"Sometimes they saw, or thought they saw, the smoke of his camp-fire."

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"When over weary ways, by long and perilous marches,
She had attained at length the depths of the Michigan forests,
Found she the hunter's lodge deserted and fallen to ruin."

So it was always. She heard of Gabriel here and there, but saw him never.

"Fair was she and young when in hope began the long journey;
Faded was she and old when in disappointment it ended."

Giving up her quest at length, she became a sister of charity in Philadelphia—one of those who ministered to pestilence-stricken sufferers. Among these, brought to die in the almshouse, she sees and recognizes her long-lost betrothed, now an old man. He knows her, and dies in her arms, happy; and when she too passes away, she is buried beside him.

The poem forms a picture-gallery of American landscapes, in which the contrasts are well drawn between the backwoods of the north and the tropical forest of the south, between the prairies and mountains of the west and the stir and hum of an eastern city. It seems incredible that Longfellow had not visited one of the scenes he describes. Whence he derived part of his local colour is evident from a note in his journal dated December 19, 1846: "Went to see Banvard's moving diorama of the Mississippi. One seems to be sailing down the great stream, and sees the boats and the sandbanks crested with

cotton-wood, and the bayous by moonlight. Three miles of canvas and a great deal of merit."

The story forms a single-character study, that of Evangeline, and but a single trait of her character is enlarged upon,—

"Sorrow and silence are strong, and patient endurance is godlike."

Basil the priest and Gabriel are but shadowy figures; Evangeline alone comes out with any degree of clearness. She is no "new woman" proclaiming her theories of life from the house-tops, but a stronger nature than Gabriel, nevertheless. He mourned for her, his life was blighted, but he never thought of looking for her. The spirit of restlessness possessed him, and he sought relief from it in change of scene, but she was "sustained by a vision."

We hear no more of European cowslips and primroses, but of "hollyhocks heavy with blossoms;" and the birds of the poem, likewise, are of genuine American origin. There are the herons of the tropics, the owl that greets the moon with demoniac laughter, the whooping crane, the snow-white pelican, humming-birds, blue-birds, robins, and wild pigeons.

"Loud and sudden and near the note of a whip-poor-will sounded
Like a flute in the woods; and anon, through the neighbouring thickets,
Farther and farther away it floated and dropped into silence."

The critics have busied themselves with the question whether or not hexameter, the verse of Homer and Vergil, though unrhymed, is suitable for the English tongue; but that it is admirably adapted for the narrative poem, Longfellow has demonstrated beyond a doubt. He knew the secret of having for the first syllable of each line one that can be emphasized, but no one with less keen ear need attempt to produce a similar effect. Clough followed Longfellow's lead in trying the English hexameter, but his "Bothie" is rough and prosy in comparison with *Evangeline*. Felton, Holmes, and Whittier praised Longfellow's use of the hexameter, Motley and Forster condemned it, though all agreed that the Cambridge poet employed it better than any one else. Motley's objections are summed up in this fashion:—

"The hexameter I grant to be a gentleman of an ancient house (so is many an English beggar); yet this clime of ours he cannot thrive on; our speech is too craggy for him to set his plough in; he goes twitching and hopping, retaining no part of that stately, smooth gait of which he vaunts himself among the Greeks and Romans."

Evangeline had a rapturous welcome from the public when it made its appearance in 1847. For the first

six months it was called for at the rate of a thousand copies a month. Its length, beauty of description, and local subject made it the most important performance yet accomplished by an American. The poet did not forget to thank his friend Hawthorne. "This success I owe entirely to you, for being willing to forego the pleasure of writing a prose tale which many people would have taken for poetry, that I might write a poem which many people take for prose."

CHAPTER IX.

THE CHILDREN'S POET.

HIS OWN BOYS AND GIRLS—POEMS ON CHILD-LIFE—*TALES OF A WAYSIDE INN.*

IN the introduction to *Outre-Mer*, Longfellow makes this appeal: "Perchance the old and the wise may accuse me of frivolity; but I see in this fair company the bright eye and listening ear of youth—an age less rigid in its censure, and more willing to be pleased." He does not appeal in vain. Children all the world over love Longfellow. In many cases he is the first poet they read, the magician with the fairy wand that ushers them into a palace of delights undreamt of by those unfortunate children who know only the plain, workaday houses of ordinary grown-up people. Nothing that he has written needs to be withheld from the youngest. Of how many poets can that be said?

Most men are fond at least of their own children, but there are few fathers who have so intimate and personal a sympathy with them as Longfellow bore towards his little flock of five—Charles and Ernest, Alice, Edith, and Allegra. He takes his eldest son out to walk with him when he is but a tiny toddler, improvizes stories for him, plays at wheeling him in a hand-barrow, and drags him about the garden on his sled.

The poet's journal abounds in references to his share in childish sports: "Worked hard with the children, making snow-houses in the front yard, to their infinite delight;" "cast lead flat-irons for the children;" "coasted with my boys for two hours on the bright hillside behind the Catholic Church." He mentions taking the same little chaps to school for the first time; and when one of them is ill, he has "no heart for anything."

Of their walks with him he says: "The interest with which they invest common things is quite marvellous. Their young eyes are like the eyes of Apollo, seeing all things in a poetic light." That same interest in common things is one of the charms of Longfellow's poetry, and here we discover where he learned it. He discloses the secret, too, of that

inner light upon the childish character which he gained so pre-eminently: "Children are pleasant to see playing together. It is still pleasanter to have one alone. Then you become a confidant or father confessor."

One of his most beautiful poems, *Resignation*, was written when his first daughter, Fanny, died in infancy; and to the three who came afterwards he was always an ideal playmate and friend. Even while in the depths of the great sorrow of his life, he writes in his journal: "The little girls sending and receiving valentines. Well, it is something to busy oneself with their business and partake their joy." Some of the most delightful of his published letters are those to little girls: Emily A——, Bessie M——, and Florence A——. They are quite unlike his letters to grown people. He knows exactly what will please a child, and to one he describes the doings of his own small daughters—Alice, who loves poetry; Edith with the "nankeen hair," who wears grey boots; and Allegra, who deserves her merry name. This is how he writes of them to an older friend:—

"My little girls are flitting about my study, as blithe as two birds. They are preparing to celebrate the birthday of one of their dolls; and on the table I

find this programme, in E.'s handwriting, which I purloin and send to you, thinking it may amuse you. What a beautiful world this child's world is! So instinct with life, so illuminated with imagination! I take infinite delight in seeing it go on around me, and feel all the tenderness of the words that fell from the blessed lips—'Suffer little children to come unto me.' After that benediction how can any one dare to deal harshly with a child?

"E. occupies her leisure in a correspondence with me. Her post-office is under her pillow, where she expects to find a letter in the morning."

This is the man who wrote *The Children's Hour*, a poem unsurpassed for affection by anything in the English language. Mrs. J. T. Fields says of him in her Reminiscences: "His love for children is not confined to his poetic expressions or to his own family; he is uncommonly tender and beautiful with them always."

The Chamber over the Gate expresses his sympathy for a bereaved father. *The Reaper and the Flowers, To a Child, Children, Weariness, The Castle Builder, The Open Window, The Children's Crusade,* are for child-lovers of all ages; though the young folks themselves may prefer *Pegasus in Pound, The Wreck of*



"Standing with reluctant feet
Where the brook and river meet."

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the Schooner Hesperus, The Leap of Roushan Beg, or *The Three Kings.* All children feel that in Longfellow there is a heart ever open to them, a whole house in which

> "The atmosphere
> Breathes rest and comfort, and the many chambers
> Seem full of welcomes."

His lines to the maiden

> "Standing with reluctant feet
> Where the brook and river meet
> Womanhood and childhood fleet"

are among those so often quoted that we are apt to forget who said them first. *Excelsior,* too, has become so hackneyed that one loses even the echo of the inspiring note it sounded on its first appearance.

"I am rather busy with answering school-girls," writes the poet in 1881; and almost his last visitors, a few days before his death, were four schoolboys from Boston. "He received them with his wonted kindness and courtesy, showed them the objects of interest in his study, and the view of the Charles from its windows, and wrote his name in their albums."

A lover of the young, Longfellow must be numbered also among their most faithful teachers. Who

has presented stronger pleas for the prevention of cruelty to animals? "I rank fox-hunting with bull-fighting," he writes, "and think them equally detestable." At the Wayside Inn the story is told of *The Bell of Atri*, which was accidentally rung by a poor old horse whose master had turned it adrift; and attention being called in this way to the steed's extremity, its master is punished. *The Birds of Killingworth, The Emperor's Bird's-Nest, The Falcon of Ser Federigo*, and *The Sermon of St. Francis* plead for

"The birds, God's poor, who cannot wait."

Longfellow's method is not the scientific one of making the children so much interested in natural history that they will take to collecting eggs and specimens. Rather would he question them, in the words of Emerson,—

"Hast thou named all the birds without a gun?
Loved the wood-rose, and left it on its stalk?"

The kind of grown person that a child adores above all others is the teller of stories, and there Longfellow stands supreme. His *Tales of a Wayside Inn* have been, and will ever continue to be, a source of delight to both young and old; for there is enough of variety in the three series to suit any taste, and they are so

simply told that all children can understand them. Longfellow was ever a foe to obscurity. He objects to that fault in his own reading of Browning, and he strives to make everything he himself has to say not only clearly beautiful, but beautifully clear.

The Wayside Inn itself and the company who assembled there are alike drawn from life, the meeting place being the Red Horse Tavern at Sudbury, about twenty miles from Cambridge, and the landlord being Squire Howe, descended from an English gentleman, and entitled to his coat-of-arms. The young Sicilian is Luigi Monti, who taught Italian at Harvard in Longfellow's latter days, and used to dine at Craigie House every Saturday. He was one of the last people who saw the poet alive. The student is Henry Ware Wales; the poet, T. W. Parsons, a translator of Dante; Ole Bull, a frequent visitor and great friend of Longfellow's, is the musician; Israel Edrehi is the Spanish Jew, and Professor Daniel Treadwell is the theologian.

The device of making an assembled company tell tales that differ in character even as the narrators differ, is older still than Chaucer, who employed it so victoriously in the "Canterbury Tales." Longfellow in his prelude introduces his spokesmen so tersely and

clearly that each stands out alive from the dead page. The twenty-two stories that are told during the three evenings which the storm-bound travellers spend together are principally translated legends; and by change of metre to suit the changing themes, Longfellow has contrived to preserve their individuality.

The Musician's Tale, on the first night, is the longest of the series. Its various sections are like the different movements of a symphony, and the whole is more suggestive and less pictorial than the other tales. It is a translation of *The Saga of King Olaf,* the famous Norseman who undertakes to preach the gospel with his sword, and must learn through defeat that

> "Stronger than steel
> Is the sword of the Spirit;
> Swifter than arrows
> The light of the truth is;
> Greater than anger
> Is love, and subdueth."

Young Americans, who love anecdotes of their country's history, rejoice in *Paul Revere's Ride*

> "Through every Middlesex village and farm"

to give warning of a British attack in 1775. Of course it is the landlord who tells that story—the son of the soil, whose inn had been the private dwelling of his ancestors in their prosperous days.



"Through every Middlesex village and farm."

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On the second evening it is the poet, who has the narrative of old colony times concerning the transformation of the serving-maid, Martha Hilton, into "Lady Wentworth of the Hall;" and on the third night the theologian contributes another old-time love story called *Elizabeth,* while the landlord winds up the whole with *The Rhyme of Sir Christopher,* an early visitor to old Boston—

> "The first who furnished this barren land
> With apples of Sodom and ropes of sand."

There is a moral drawn in almost every one of the whole collection; but specially suited for reading aloud to the children on Sunday afternoons are *King Robert of Sicily,* whose pride must be humbled; *Rabbi Ben Levi,* to whom was revealed the reason why the angel of death now walks the earth invisible to man; *Torquemada,* an incident of the Spanish Inquisition. *Kambalu* and *The Legend Beautiful* are sermons upon the texts, "The love of money is the root of all evil," and "Inasmuch as thou hast done it—"

The Cobbler of Hagenau and *The Monk of Casal-Maggiore* are not too humorously hard upon the Roman Catholic to be relished by one of that community. The weird *Carmilhan* and *The Mother's Ghost* (told by

the musician), the love stories of *The Baron of St. Castine* and *Emma and Eginhard,* the legends of *Scanderbeg, Azrael,* and *Charlemagne,* have a charm for all who like to hear a good story well told, either in plain prose or embellished by the melodious verse Longfellow always provides as a setting. His interludes are the most original part of the *Wayside Inn,* and ably do they fulfil their design of supplying unity to the piece, providing a thread upon which its brilliant beads may be strung.

CHAPTER X.

"HIAWATHA" AND "MILES STANDISH."

LAKE SUPERIOR — INDIAN PANTHEISM — SCHOOLCRAFT — THE POET'S UNCOMMON SYMPATHY FOR RED MEN—HIS RESIGNATION OF PROFESSORSHIP—THE PURITAN THEME—*MILES STANDISH* COMPARED WITH *EVANGELINE*—ANACHRONISMS IN *MILES STANDISH*.

IS there a child old enough to enjoy listening to its elders reading aloud who does not know and love *Hiawatha?* As soon would one grow up ignorant of "Alice in Wonderland" as of that other world of marvels upon the far-distant shores of Lake Superior. "Gitche Gumee," "Big-Sea-Water," "Brother to the Sea," as it is variously called by the Indians, supplies the poem with a scenic background of the grandest description—its cliffs and its colouring; the pale green of its shallows and the deep blue of its depths; the miracles of the mirage; the coldness of the water, that is said to preserve the bodies of the drowned for countless years; its transparency,

that reveals objects from twenty to forty feet below the surface.

As those who go down to the sea in ships and likewise those who live within the sound of its waves differ from inland folk, so the Indians, once the sole denizens of that country, were tinged with the mystical spirit of Superior. The perpendicular rocks—some of them going straight down into the deepest blue water, with never a cranny nor an ebbing tide to leave a foothold for man—the fogs and the snowstorms, which transform the lake into an emblem of relentless fate, had a sombre influence upon the dwellers on its margin. They could never be the laughing, light-hearted folk who live beside a running brook.

The portrayal of this type of Indian is one of the main features in *Hiawatha*, and another is the presentation of man in his relations to the lower forms of life. When the stern winter begins to relax its hold and give way to the swift return of spring, the Indian's joy is like unto the beaver's, the loon's, the pike's, or the sturgeon's. The sea-gulls are Hiawatha's brothers, the squirrel is his little friend; even the birch and the cedar, the tamarack, larch, and fir trees, are endowed with intelligent being.



"Hiawatha is one of the names given to this teacher."

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Such pantheistic beliefs are still prevalent among some Indian tribes, and many of their old legends resemble the Bible stories of the creation of the world. To account for the first pair of human beings is a problem that has presented itself to every race; and more than one Indian narrator describes a prophet sent in days of old by the Great Being to teach his ancestors the arts of war and peace.

Hiawatha is one of the names given to this teacher, and around his personality, his birth and parentage, his education, his friends, his marriage, his adventures, and his death, Longfellow has woven a score of these traditions, culled principally from Schoolcraft's "Algic Researches." Many of them, indeed, are simply paraphrases. Here is the prose description of the very strong man: "Kwasind was a listless, idle boy. He would not play when other boys played, and his parents could never get him to do any kind of labour. He was always making excuses. His parents noticed, however, that he fasted for days together, but they could not learn what spirit he supplicated. 'You neither hunt nor fish,' said his mother. 'I set my nets the coldest days of winter without your assistance, while you sit by the lodge fire. Go, wring out that net.' With an easy twist of his hands he

wrung it short off with as much ease as if every twine had been a thin brittle fibre."

A reading of the corresponding passage in canto sixth of *Hiawatha* reveals the poetic beauty contributed by Longfellow; but he has often done more than this, presenting the character of the mythical hero in a more favourable light than the legend allows him. Concerning his wooing, for example, Schoolcraft has it:—

"When Manabozho [Hiawatha] was preparing for the fight with Pearl-Feather, having no heads for his arrows, his grandmother, Noko, told him of an old man living at some distance who could make them, so he sent her for some. She did not bring enough, so he sent her again; and then thinking to himself, 'I must find out the way to make these heads,' pretended to want some *larger* heads, and sent her again. Then following her at a distance, he went, saw the old man at work, discovered his process, and at the same time beheld his beautiful daughter, and felt his breast beat with a new emotion. But he took care to get home before his grandmother, and commenced singing as if he had never left the lodge."

The Indian not only believes that "all is fair in

love and war"—he considers clever deception to be a virtue under any circumstances; but Longfellow will not permit his Hiawatha to act upon this principle. He changes the Schoolcraft legends wherever they cast an unfavourable light upon the character of his hero, and gives us in effect, not what the Indian really is, but what he might have been. There are no scalps hanging from the waist-belt of Hiawatha in the poem, and Minnehaha is not the hard-worked squaw of real life.

That Mr. Schoolcraft thoroughly approved of the poet's treatment of his prose appears in a letter from him dated Washington, December 19, 1855, in which he says that all the verse hitherto written on the red man has been "a half-breed class of poetry." "The Indian must be treated as he is. He is a warrior in war, a savage in revenge, a Stoic in endurance, a wolverine in suppleness and cunning. But he is also a father at the head of his lodge, a patriot in his love of his country, a devotee to noble sports in his adherence to the chase, a humanitarian in his kindness, and an object of noble grief at the grave of his friends or kindred. He is as simple as a child, yet with the dignity of a man in his wigwam. There has been no attempt, my dear sir, before *Hiawatha*, to show this."

Cooper, the novelist, certainly vied with Longfellow in showing the brighter side of the Indian character, and the attitude of both men towards an unfortunate, vanishing people stands out in eloquent contrast to that of the United States Government and its agents, civil and military.

"The Indian is capable of recognizing no controlling influence but that of stern, arbitrary power," writes General George A. Custer, the "White Chief" of Longfellow's poem, *The Revenge of Rain-in-the-Face.* That is not the only sign the poet made of his sympathy for the native tribes. Among his juvenile verses are *The Indian Hunter* and *Jeckoyva,* and later on he wrote *To the Driving Cloud,* "chief of the mighty Omahas."

Longfellow never visited the locality of *Hiawatha.* His travels extended no farther west than Niagara, and therefore he never saw the lovely Falls of Minnehaha, on the tiny tributary of the Mississippi, between Fort Snelling and the Falls of St. Anthony; but he numbered some Indians in his large and varied circle of personal acquaintances. An entry in his journal for 1850 reads:—

"To tea came Kah-ge-ga-gah'-bowh, the Ojibway chief, and we went together to hear Agassiz lecture



"*The traditional reply of Priscilla Mullins to John Alden*"

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on the 'Races of Men.' He thinks there were several Adams and Eves."

Hiawatha, when published in 1855, raised storms of praise and dispraise, which both helped to sell it at the rate of three hundred copies a day.

It was parodied, it was set to music, steamboats were named from it, and its author was accused of plagiarism on account of its likeness to the old Finnish poem "Kalevala," to which Longfellow had acknowledged his indebtedness for the peculiarly appropriate metre only. There is a family resemblance among the traditionary legends of all races of men.

In 1854, Longfellow carried out his often-made resolve to resign his position at Harvard University; and being thenceforward freed from duties which were becoming irksome, he was able to devote himself for the rest of his life to poetry alone.

The popularity which *Hiawatha* speedily won for itself among readers on both sides of the Atlantic encouraged its author to take up another American subject—to investigate the annals of his own ancestors, and build a narrative poem, in the metre of *Evangeline*, upon the traditional reply of Priscilla Molines to John Alden.

There never was a more charming love story in

verse than *The Courtship of Miles Standish.* It is not surcharged with melancholy, like the tale of the Acadian maiden, but has the sedateness befitting a Puritan theme. Though he had written sympathetically of the Roman Catholic system in *Evangeline* and many of his European poems, Longfellow shows us in this one that after all he is of Puritan stock, and that "blood is thicker than water."

The people of the poem stand out more clearly than those in *Evangeline,* are more fully rounded characters; and there are also delicate touches of humour in *Miles Standish,* a quality entirely lacking in the earlier and longer poem. The Puritan captain is more successful in making war than in making love, and he belies his own motto when he entrusts to another the important duty of presenting a marriage proposal for him. But to tell the story would spoil it for the few who have not read it, and tame it for those who have.

Longfellow is now writing about a part of America familiarly dear to him at every season of the year and every hour of the day. Always a great walker, it was at this time of his life he took a fancy for long tramps about sunrise. He writes in his journal of having been out walking one January

morning by half-past six, when the moon was still shining on the snow-drifts.

Though the local colour of New England is strong in *Miles Standish*, to the reader it appears no truer to life than the *locale* of *Evangeline* or *Hiawatha*, which the poet had never seen.

The carping critic tells us the poet has increased the size of the Plymouth of 1621 by several hundreds, and given it a church and a howitzer when it had neither; that he has made Priscilla spin when there was no wool in New England; that Captain Standish is seeking a second wife indecently soon after the death of his first; and that the same warrior is a trifle premature in his slaying of Indians. But these crimes may be forgiven the poet who has once more demonstrated his ability to use hexameter effectively in English. As in the trochaic dimeter of *Hiawatha*, he had chosen the instrument best adapted for the carrying out of his artistic purpose, though these same measures are like edged tools—dangerous in the hands of children or fools.

CHAPTER XI.

LONGFELLOW AS TRANSLATOR.

THE SHORTER POEMS—BENEFIT TO HIS COUNTRY AND TO HIMSELF—TRANSLATIONS OF HIS OWN POETRY—DEATH OF HIS WIFE—DANTE'S "DIVINE COMEDY."

THE first volume of poems that Longfellow published was a collection of translations, in 1833. It contained *Coplas de Manrique*, and several sonnets, also from the Spanish. They are all religious in tone, the *Coplas* being a poem composed by Jorge Manrique on the death of his father. The original belongs to the fifteenth century, but Longfellow has imbued it with his own modern spirit. In doing so he followed his own opinion, at that time, of what a translation ought to be, though he afterwards changed his views. In this first volume he has followed the rule of the artist in painting a picture—has suppressed certain features and accentuated others, to produce an effect similar to that of the original. Later, in

his translation of Dante, he allowed himself less licence, perhaps out of respect for the superior mind of the great Italian. To quote a lesser bard incorrectly is a fault; to misquote Shakespeare, a crime.

Spain and the Spanish language were Longfellow's earliest loves, and he never forsook them for the lands he visited later or the languages he afterwards learned. The essay on *Spanish Devotional and Moral Poetry* which opens the book shows the poet's well-known appreciation of the better part of Roman Catholicism. So also these translations from Manrique, Lope de Vega, Aldana, and Berceo demonstrate the unity of the human race; their faith is of the same character as the poet's own, however it may differ in outward manifestation.

Herein lies the great service that Longfellow's translations have done to his countrymen. Few of them would be likely to read "Frithiof's Saga" in the original; but by the translator they are introduced to its author, Bishop Tegnér, the most noted of Swedish poets, who professed himself better pleased with Longfellow's English version than with the attempts that had been made to translate his great poem into any other language. Tegnér's "Children of the Lord's Supper," after passing through

the hands of Longfellow, reads like a Puritan poem; for the subject is religious, and the hexameter is the forerunner of *Miles Standish*. He made several experiments in that novel kind of verse before he fixed upon it for his longest narrative, *Evangeline*.

When one considers the variety of nationalities that go to make up "these states," and the generations that must pass before they are fused into one people, surely the translator who helps to the understanding of the Dane, for example, by giving in English a national song of Denmark, and who writes a ballad on *Childhood* to rouse a feeling of kinship between the younger Danes and Americans, is making for the brotherhood of man. Longfellow knew seven or eight modern tongues, and was personally acquainted with as many foreign poets.

By translating choice poetical specimens from a dozen of the foremost German poets, he opened a skylight that might else have remained closed; and the reader with receptive soul may derive from these translations, no less than from Longfellow's original poetry, much of the benefit that he himself gained from his sojourn abroad. He had a fine, generous nature, and could only in part enjoy anything he had acquired until he had shared it with others.

Many a born teacher might have had the same desire, and yet have blundered seriously in the execution of it; but Longfellow was gifted with an unerring sense of the admirable in literature. No one less thoroughly equipped in modern languages could so skilfully have skimmed the cream of European poetry as he has done, both in his translations and his anthology. Most poets are content with the expression of their own ideas; Longfellow aimed to gain a hearing for the best of all countries, in order that culture might be advanced throughout his own.

His longest translation from the French is *The Blind Girl of Castèl-Cuillè*, by Jasmin; but he thought nothing of rendering into English verse any lines, either of French or Italian, that he thought might be useful to his classes in these languages. He was very fond of literary experiments of every kind, and amused himself with translating some Eastern verses, and also a few scraps of Vergil, which he rendered into its original hexameter.

Throughout the whole of his poetical career, which extended over a period of sixty years, Longfellow had a passion for translating, and the result is evident in his own poetry. There is nothing distinctively

American about it excepting a few of his subjects. A sensitive, artistic nature could not pass through so broad a reading of the poetry of other lands and remain provincial. He is cosmopolitan, and that others have recognized him to be so is evident from the number of languages into which his own works have been translated.

Evangeline, for example, has had seven separate German translators, and has also been made known in their own tongues to the Swedes, Danes, French, Italians, Portuguese, Spanish, and Polish. *Excelsior and Other Poems* has been put into Russian and Hebrew, as well as into other languages; there is a Latin translation of *Hiawatha;* and *A Psalm of Life* has gone through the European tongues into Marathi, Chinese, and Sanscrit. Attention of this kind has been paid to all of Longfellow's principal poems, and even some of his translations have been retranslated; for instance, the *Saga of King Olaf* and *King Robert of Sicily* have been rendered respectively in German and Portuguese.

One can understand how interesting the translation of *Hyperion* must be to the Germans, containing as it does impressions of the Fatherland by a fresh mind from a fresh country; but it is hard to conceive

of a Dutchman being sufficiently taken with *Outre-Mer* and *Kavanagh* to translate both.

Longfellow's most important translation—by some people considered also his most important service to literature—is his rendering into English of the whole of Dante's "Divine Comedy." So far back as the year 1839, when the *Voices of the Night* was published, there were included in that volume three pieces from the master-work of the immortal Italian. Longfellow gave a course of lectures upon him for his Harvard students, and in 1843 he speaks of translating a few lines of Dante every day before breakfast —"the morning prayer, the keynote of the day"— but he did not seriously undertake the completion of the whole poem until there came upon him the great calamity of his life.

Hitherto he had had a safe and sheltered existence. Truly the lines had fallen to him in pleasant places. He had congenial work, troops of friends who were also kindred spirits, a delightful home with five charming and beautiful children growing up around him, and a wife who was indeed a gem among womankind.

It was her death, under most distressing circumstances, that seemed to sap the very life-blood of the

poet and leave him never again the man that he had been. Mrs. Longfellow's face, as it looks forth from the pages of the published Letters and Journal, is calm and restful in its loveliness. Such a combination of sweetness and intellect is rarely portrayed. Her brother-in-law, the poet's biographer, tells of her sad end:—

"On the ninth of July his wife was sitting in the library, with her two little girls, engaged in sealing up some small packages of their curls which she had just cut off. From a match fallen upon the floor her light summer dress caught fire. The shock was too great, and she died the next morning. Three days later her burial took place at Mount Auburn. It was the anniversary of her marriage day; and on her beautiful head, lovely and unmarred in death, some hand had placed a wreath of orange blossoms. Her husband was not there—confined to his chamber by the severe burns which he had himself received."

It was acting upon the advice of friends that Longfellow turned to the "Divine Comedy," hoping that in the interpretation of the sorrows of others he might perchance forget his own. He wished to obliterate himself, and in that respect no other translator of Dante has succeeded so admirably.

Once in conversation "he advanced the idea that the English, from the insularity of their character, were incapable of making a perfect translation. Americans, French, and Germans, he said, have much larger adaptability to and sympathy in the thought of others."

Compared with Cary's, perhaps the best known translation, Longfellow's is remarkable for its word by word and line by line fidelity. He has given us the very metre of the original, though not the rhyme. Cary, on the other hand, puts his translation into high-sounding blank verse; attempts to reproduce the grand manner of Dante; crowds two or three lines into one, or enlarges one into two or three. His is a free translation; Longfellow's is literal, and therefore the more useful to the student, though the ordinary reader may prefer Cary's.

Dante is obscure. Even his own countrymen are largely dependent on the interpretation of the specialists for a clue to what he really means in many an instance; how much more then must a would-be student, who knows no Italian, rely upon the judgment and honesty of the translator. Upon Longfellow's version one may lean with absolute confidence, feeling that here we have the very words of Dante, as nearly as they can be put into English.

If he has not been able to imbue the three divisions of the poem with the grandeur peculiar to each; if, as Mr. Stedman says, he is too even for Dante's variety and power, he has at least spared us the vice of obscurity.

His experience as a teacher taught Longfellow to express himself clearly and simply. If he can grasp Dante at all—and who so well fitted to grasp him? —he never fails to make his meaning clear to the reader; and his method is not to embellish the translation with flourishes of his own, but to suppress his personality and let Dante speak for himself. Only a truly great soul can thus sink itself in a greater. Longfellow had arrived at the conclusion "that a translator, like a witness on the stand, should hold up his right hand and swear to 'tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.'"

He despised no help in his endeavour; and when the work was advanced so far as the printer's proofs, the two famous Italian scholars, J. R. Lowell and C. E. Norton, and occasionally also G. W. Greene, J. T. Fields, or W. D. Howells, met at Craigie House every Wednesday night, called themselves the Dante Club, and gave their critical opinion of the portion Longfellow would read aloud to them, comparing it with an original copy each held in his hand.

Of these meetings Mr. Fields wrote in his journal, January 1867: "They are revising the whole book with the minutest care. Lowell's accuracy is surprising, and of great value to the work; also Norton's criticisms. Longfellow sits at his desk taking notes and making corrections, though, of course, no one can know yet what he accepts."

Mr. Norton has given a longer account of the Dante Club. "They were delightful evenings," he says. "Now and then some other friend or acquaintance would join us for the hours of study. Almost always one or two guests would come in at ten o'clock, when the work ended, and sit down with us to a supper, with which the evening closed."

It took three years to publish the whole work; but when it was at length completed, in 1870, it met with unstinted praise both at home and abroad. The book contains not only copious explanations, in the manner of other translators, as to who the various people are that are mentioned in the "Divina Commedia," but to each part is added "footlights of the great comedy," what are called "illustrations." These consist of translations, by Longfellow and others, from Italian commentators and biographers of Dante —Boccaccio for one. Then there are pertinent

passages from Leigh Hunt's "Stories from the Italian Poets," including a letter of Dante's; Norton's essay on "The Portraits of Dante," and Lowell's on "The Posthumous Dante."

In short, Longfellow spared no pains to give the reader somewhat of the same rounded conception of the poet that he had himself acquired by the study of everything that related to him. He compares Dante's philosophy with that of the schoolmen, his "Inferno" with Homer's and Vergil's, and makes comprehensive quotations from ancient and modern writers on Dante's subjects and on the man himself.

The six original sonnets which Longfellow uses to preface each of the sections are pronounced by some critics the finest poetry he has written. The first of them reveals what he has gained through his labour,—

"Oft have I seen at some cathedral door
A labourer, pausing in the dust and heat,
Lay down his burden, and with reverent feet
Enter, and cross himself, and on the floor
Kneel to repeat his paternoster o'er;
Far off the noises of the world retreat;
The loud vociferations of the street
Become an undistinguishable roar.
So, as I enter here from day to day,
And leave my burden at this minster gate,
Kneeling in prayer, and not ashamed to pray,
The tumult of the time disconsolate
To inarticulate murmurs dies away,
While the eternal ages watch and wait."

CHAPTER XII.

"BIRDS OF PASSAGE."

HOME LIFE—LAST VISIT TO EUROPE—SHORT POEMS—PERSONAL AND POETICAL CHARACTERISTICS—SONNET ON THE DEATH OF HIS WIFE.

BESIDES the close and absorbing work on Dante, there is no doubt that the Civil War helped to rouse Longfellow from his crushing personal sorrow. He had a burning interest in the battles fought, for Charles, his elder boy, was engaged in them; and to him, as to many a father in that woeful time, there came a telegram that his son was wounded. This was the occasion of the poet's only journey southward so far as Washington. There he awaited with anxious heart the coming of the train that brought at length the sorely-hurt young officer, and three days afterwards he took him home.

After the death of his wife, Longfellow went into general society scarcely at all, though his hospitable

door was ever open, not only to his circle of intimate friends, but to the strangers, distinguished and undistinguished, who would not consider a trip to America complete without a glimpse of her best-known poet.

Charles Dickens, whom Longfellow had not seen for twenty-five years, was a welcome guest at Craigie House in 1868; and among the many other celebrities from abroad who called, or dined, or supped there, were Dean Stanley, "Tom Hughes of Rugby," William Black and George MacDonald the novelists, Lord and Lady Dufferin, Grand Duke Alexis of Russia, Dom Pedro, Emperor of Brazil, Reményi, Modjeska, Salvini, and Fechter. Longfellow seems to have been partial to singers, and his proximity to Boston gave him many opportunities both for hearing and entertaining them. In his journal he speaks of his delight in listening to Patti, a girl of sixteen; and later he opens his door to Mario, the famous tenor, Titiens, Minnie Hauk, and Christine Nilsson, of whom he says: "I like herself even better than her singing, delightful as it is."

He was very fond of the opera—not the modern Wagnerian variety, but of Lucia, Don Giovanni, and others of the Italian species. Artists of all professions found in Longfellow a kindred spirit, but even the most ignorant of his countrymen from the wilds of

the west met with a cordial reception. There are scores of anecdotes told of his tact and kindness in meeting the curious strangers who so ruthlessly intruded upon his privacy.

Still less considerate were the writers of requests—that army of Philistines who deem a noted poet to be a national institution, a sort of monumental cairn, to the burden of which every one so disposed is at liberty to add a stone. The poet in his diary often groans over the pile of letters he has to answer—obtrusive, impertinent letters many of them; but this penalty of greatness Longfellow paid to the full. "I have only written to my enemies," he says in a letter to a friend, "the worst of all enemies, the 'entire strangers,' who ask questions that it takes a day's research to answer." His stock of human fellow-feeling enabled him to put himself in the place of the petitioner, and he governed his conduct by the golden rule.

He made himself both father and mother to his sons and daughters, sympathizing in their joys and sorrows, even as he had done when they were children. He sat for his portrait to his son Ernest, who had become a painter; and in a letter to Mr. Greene he describes some of the diversions that come between him and his work:—

"The girls have a musical party to-night. The pianoforte is going on one side of me, and the venerable historic door-knocker on the other. Some bashful juvenile is even now timidly applying his hand to it. A confused murmur of voices comes from the library; and I sit here like a sphinx who has had a riddle proposed to her, instead of proposing one to other people. The door again!"

Apart from the coming and going of guests, his life was uneventful—summers at Nahant, winters at Cambridge—up to the time of his going to Europe for the fourth and last sojourn in 1868. He had cheerful *companions de voyage*—his two sisters and a brother, his lively brother-in-law Mr. T. G. Appleton, his son on his wedding tour, and his three daughters, pretty young girls in their teens.

The whole trip was a triumphal procession, particularly in England, where the American poet received private and public honours galore. The great ones of the land vied with one another in paying him attention — Mr. Gladstone, Sir Henry Holland, the Duke of Argyll, Lord John Russell, Aubrey de Vere, the Prince of Wales, Tennyson, Dickens, and others, including the Queen herself, who commanded Mr. Longfellow's presence at Windsor.

The tour included both the English and the Italian lakes, with a summer in Switzerland and a winter in Rome, where the poet lived over again, through his family, his own youthful experiences in the Eternal City. He loved Italy, even though his Protestant and Republican conscience had not allowed him to accept an Italian order of knighthood. They were away a year and a half altogether—the mystic number in months. In one of his letters to G. W. Greene, 1879, Longfellow makes these curious observations:—

"I was eighteen years old when I took my college degree; eighteen years afterwards I was married for the second time; I lived with my wife eighteen years, and it is eighteen years since she died. These four eighteens together make seventy-two—my age this year. And then, by way of parenthesis or epicycle, I was eighteen years professor in the college here, and have published eighteen separate volumes of poems."

Through certain of these eighteen books flit sixty-four *Birds of Passage*, varied in song and plumage, and divided into "Flights," according to the five different seasons of their appearance. Many of these poems have in them little that is new to one familiar with their author's customary methods. They display

his usual perfect workmanship, that genius for taking pains without which any other variety of genius goes for naught—the same love of a heroic legend, and the same desire to clinch it with a moral.

Longfellow uses the mythical story of *Prometheus* to symbolize the lofty aspirations with which the bard begins his life-work,—

> "All this toil for human culture;"

while in *Epimetheus* he voices the disappointment of the poet's after-thought, his

> "Disenchantment! disillusion!"

There are also in Flight the First a poem on the death of Wellington, called *The Warden of the Cinque Ports*, and *Sandalphon*, the modern interpretation of an old legend, both of which are worthy of note.

The second Flight is a short one of seven poems only; and in the third are to be found the poet's first acknowledgment in verse that he is growing old—*Aftermath*, written about the time of his sixty-sixth birthday; *The Meeting*, that is dedicated to friends no longer guests but ghosts; *Changed*, in which is the lament that sun and sea are

> "Not the sun that used to be,
> Not the tides that used to run."



SANDALPHON.

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Flight the Fourth has some delightful *Travels by the Fireside* to the Lake of Como and Terra di Lavoro that recall *Nuremberg* and *The Belfry of Bruges* of an earlier date. Longfellow was so partial to "poems of places" that, including those he made himself, he edited thirty-one volumes of this nature, forming a poetical guide-book of the world. What other poet capable of producing first-class original work would be willing to attempt such a task, and what other would have had the patience and command of languages necessary to accomplish it?

The fifth and last Flight is like a picture-book, with a Dutch interior for a frontispiece. *Castles in Spain* comes next, and then a portrait of *Vittoria Colonna.* The landscape of the river Yvette is followed by the figure-study, *The Emperor's Glove;* the picture of a sea-fight, called *A Ballad of the French Fleet;* and so on.

There was no falling off in the merit of his poetry as Longfellow grew old. He continued his search for the beautiful both in style and subject, and generally found it—in the *Flower-de-Luce,* for example; *Palingenesis,* his name for the coming of spring; *Christmas Bells;* or *The Bells of Lynn.*

He says in his journal, "I have often had great joy

in little things, and often little joy in great things," and to his reader he imparts the same. Verses like *A Gleam of Sunshine* linger long in the memory of any one who has ever been in a country church and seen how

> "Ever and anon the wind,
> Sweet-scented with the hay,
> Turned o'er the hymn-book's fluttering leaves
> That on the window lay."

It is not the great things of life that Longfellow treats the most successfully. The home touches that come into the experience of every one have made his poetry universally popular, and yet he seldom takes his themes from his immediate surroundings. Except for *Boston*, *The Bridge*, *Eliot's Oak*, *In the Churchyard at Cambridge*, *To the River Charles*, *St. John's (Cambridge)*, *The Village Blacksmith*, and one or two others, he might have been writing in any other place in America, or even in Cambridge, England.

In many of his characteristics, both personal and poetical, Longfellow was more feminine than masculine. He had womanly tenderness and adaptability; he was so much of a home-keeper, lived so much in his own library, that "the mark of the book" is on almost everything he has written. Fond of outward adornment, he sometimes made it conceal a poverty of thought;

and he was not enterprising, save in a literary sense. Very impressionable, he had the purity, refinement, and taste of a cultivated woman, besides the home graces that made him so delightful as a host. No lady could hate speaking in public more than he did; and neither in himself nor his poetry do we find the strong passion or the highest creative power of a man. His industry and conscientiousness may also be claimed as feminine qualities, as well as his sincere but inactive sympathy for the downtrodden. He shunned the disagreeable. "We lead but one life here on earth," he says. "We must make that beautiful. And to do this, health and elasticity of mind are needful; and whatever endangers or impedes these must be avoided."

He did not wrestle with his innermost doubts on the public arena, but fought his battle in private, and came forth, strong and cheerful, with a word of encouragement for those still in the ring.

The most notable instance of his reserve on the subject of his deepest feelings was the restraint he put upon the external utterance of his grief. He mourned in secret for his wife, and no word of the calamity appeared in his poems while he was living. After his death the following lines were found in his desk :—

"In the long, sleepless watches of the night,
A gentle face—the face of one long dead—
Looks at me from the wall, where round its head
The night-lamp casts a halo of pale light.
Here in this room she died; and soul more white
Never through martyrdom of fire was led
To its repose; nor can in books be read
The legend of a life more benedight.
There is a mountain in the distant west
That, sun-defying, in its deep ravines
Displays a cross of snow upon its side.
Such is the cross I wear upon my breast
These eighteen years, through all the changing scenes
And seasons, changeless since the day she died."

CHAPTER XIII.

"CHRISTUS: A MYSTERY."

THE CONCEPTION OF THE WHOLE—*THE DIVINE TRAGEDY*—*THE GOLDEN LEGEND*—*THE NEW ENGLAND TRAGEDIES*—*JUDAS MACCABÆUS.*

"NOVEMBER 8, 1841. This evening it has come into my mind to undertake a long and elaborate poem by the holy name of CHRIST, the theme of which would be the various aspects of Christendom in the Apostolic, Middle, and Modern Ages."

Longfellow made no other entry in his diary for that year. He was brooding over what he looked upon as the principal work of his life, and by the time of his sojourn at Marienberg in 1842 it had taken more definite shape in his mind:—

"Christus: a Dramatic Poem in Three Parts.
Part First. The Times of Christ (Hope).
Part Second. The Middle Ages (Faith).
Part Third. The Present (Charity)."

This was before *Evangeline* was written, or *Hiawatha*, or *Miles Standish*—before even the translation of Dante was begun. Between the ages of thirty-five and sixty-five, during the whole of his most productive period, when he was sending out poems of varying length on every variety of subject, the *Christus* was ever in the background, a *pièce de résistance.*

The centre section of the plan, *The Golden Legend*, came out by itself in 1851; and when, twenty years later, Part First of *The Divine Tragedy* made its appearance, Longfellow wrote in his journal: "I never had so many doubts and hesitations about any book as about this."

The New England Tragedies, the last division, had been published two or three years before, and in 1877 the three parts were brought forth together in one volume.

Although *Christus* did not meet with the remarkable success that fell to the lot of the majority of his works, it meant more to the poet himself than anything he had written. Here was the

"Tower of song with lofty parapet"

which it had been the aspiration of his youth to build. Now he could die happy.

The Divine Tragedy, the first part of the trilogy, may more appropriately be styled a mystery than either of the others, for in subject, at least, it recalls those old mysteries or stage-plays upon Bible themes that preceded the drama proper. There is the widest difference, however, between the unconsciously sacrilegious tone of a mystery planned to instruct mediaeval folk in divine things, and this serious poem by a reverent mind of the nineteenth century.

Longfellow never pictured his *Divine Tragedy* presented on the stage: it is a dramatic poem, not a play. It treats of the life of Christ as a whole. An introduction, dealing with the sublime vision of the prophet Habakkuk, prepares the way for *The First Passover*, a dialogue between John the Baptist and a priest of Jerusalem. The second scene is the temptation of Christ on the mountain; and the third, His appearance at the marriage in Cana. The titles of the numerous subdivisions—*In the Cornfields, Nazareth, The Sea of Galilee, The Demoniac of Gadara*, and so forth—indicate the thread of the story, which is carried on to Christ's death and resurrection, concluding with an epilogue that consists of the Apostles' Creed, repeated antithetically by Peter and John.

If Longfellow has done nothing else in this poem, he has impressed his readers with the sublimity and dignity of the New Testament. Not that he has presumed to attempt an improvement on the Scripture narrative; he has merely, by changing its form and adhering as closely as possible to its language, cast a fresh light upon the greatest of all books. We recognize its transcendent literary merits, which frequently escape notice, the gospel being usually placed on a pedestal above criticism of that nature.

Bayard Taylor writes to the author of *Christus* enthusiastically: "I know not who else before you has so wonderfully wedded poetry and the religious sentiment."

Longfellow had served a lengthy apprenticeship to the expression of noble thought in fitting form, and his work upon Dante had further elevated and widened his conceptions of life, death, and immortality.

The Divine Tragedy reads like the book of words for a grand oratorio, albeit there are few choruses. There is throughout a rhythmical melody that suggests a musical setting which might supply the dramatic variety lacking in the verse itself. The Samaritan woman, Gamaliel, Nicodemus—all have the Longfellowian felicity of expression, which amounts to

sameness, wherever they depart from the actual words of Holy Writ.

An interlude, in the form of a monologue by a literary abbot, links *The Divine Tragedy* with *The Golden Legend*, connects apostolic times with the Middle Ages. The Hope that was born with Christ has been smothered in ecclesiasticism, but the taper of Faith still burns, though dimly, in convent, monastery, and the outer world. Monks may roister in private and blaspheme in public; all is not lost.

Longfellow is on his favourite and most familiar ground in *The Golden Legend*. Being the easiest of the three parts for him to do, it is not surprising that he did it first. Through his command of modern languages, he had the legends of all Europe pigeonholed for material, and he was most happy in his selection of "Der Arme Heinrich" to illustrate the light and shade of mediaeval times. It is the story of a German prince stricken with "a strange, mysterious disease," who has been told,—

> "The only remedy that remains
> Is the blood that flows from a maiden's veins,
> Who of her own free-will shall die,
> And give her life as the price of yours!"

Lucifer proposes another cure—a drink that to the patient tastes like the water of life, but is in reality

the water of death; and, intoxicated for a time, the flame of his life burns up briskly—a candle soon to go out. He is excommunicated for his traffic with the Evil One, and becomes

> "Outcast, rejected,
> As one with pestilence infected."

A certain family among his tenants, godly people who love and pity him, take the banished prince into their home. These peasants have a daughter, Elsie, who, upon hearing in what manner the health of their guest may be restored, offers her life for his. From her veins shall be drawn the blood that shall resuscitate him. The parents naturally object, so does Prince Henry; but the maiden is so uplifted with the idea, that she convinces them it has come direct from God himself, and they finally yield.

The curative operation can be performed only in Salerno, many miles distant; so Elsie makes the long journey in company with the prince and his attendants, and has many novel experiences *en route*. In Strasburg she listens to marvellous street preaching by a friar, who punctuates his sentences by cracking a postillion's whip; till Prince Henry, by way of contrast, takes her into the adjoining cathedral to comment upon its wonderful beauty.

They see a miracle play, relating to the birth and boyhood of Christ. Longfellow shows rare ability in this clever imitation of the early drama, and still more in his description of the monastic life of that day. Lucifer, at home everywhere, accompanies the party unseen, or joins it in disguise; but Elsie's pure spirit guards Prince Henry against him.

It is a little extraordinary that a humble peasant girl should talk so well as she does, and should show so much appreciation of nature, a quality rare in man or woman of that day; but this is not a realistic novel—it is a romance with a moral attached. When the crucial moment comes, Prince Henry refuses to let the maiden sacrifice herself for him; and this conquest of his own selfish heart becomes the germ of a new life within him. He marries Elsie, and lives to work out his own salvation.

The Lucifer of the legend will not bear comparison with Mephistopheles in "Faust," for Longfellow had not Goethe's intimate acquaintance with heights and depths.

Martin Luther's monologue intervenes between Parts Two and Three of the *Christus*, and by it the scene is changed to the Puritans in New England. A decaying Catholicism in Europe gives place to the

fierce fanaticism of seventeenth-century Protestantism in America.

> "'Why drag again into the light of day
> The errors of an age long passed away?'
> I answer: 'For the lesson that they teach:
> The tolerance of opinion and of speech.
> Hope, Faith, and Charity remain,—these three;
> And greatest of them all is Charity.'"

Longfellow imparts his lesson of tolerance and charity by drawing pictures of intolerance and uncharitableness. Neither of *The New England Tragedies* is agreeable reading, nor are they well adapted for stage production. *John Endicott* is founded upon the old-time persecution of Quakers in Boston; and *Giles Corey of the Salem Farms,* upon the historic belief in witchcraft. A picture needs both light and shade; these are all in shadow. The Reverend John Norton and Judge Hathorne of the *dramatis personæ* are doubtless the ancestors of two of the poet's friends.

The finale of the Mystery is delivered by "Saint John, wandering over the face of the earth," and its teaching is summed up in the stanza beginning,—

> "What, then? doth Charity fail?"

Longfellow missed the *Christus* so much when it was finished and gone from his desk, that he continued for a time in the same groove, running with the impetus

of the departed power into a shorter dramatic poem, *Judas Maccabæus*. It tells of the defeat of Antiochus, who had determined to model Jerusalem after Athens.

The poet casts his sympathy on the side of Hebraism, ignoring the fact that Hellenism has the same end in view—the perfecting of human nature—and that both strive against its lower tendencies. "Know thyself," say the old Greeks; "Know thy work and do it," say the Hebrews. Hellenism cultivates the whole of man except his moral qualities; Judaism cultivates nothing else. One wars against ignorance, the other against sin; both are necessary to a full development.

Longfellow upholds only the one in *Judas Maccabæus;* but elsewhere, though he often preaches like a Hebrew, he practises like a Greek—colours and enriches his poetic forms by seeking beauty for its own sake. He aimed at right acting, but also at the right thinking which should precede it, and left to the world some well-rounded models for imitation.

CHAPTER XIV.

"THE QUIET-COLOURED END OF EVENING."

AN IDEAL HOME—ATTITUDE TOWARDS CRITICS—SONNETS—*MORITURI SALUTAMUS*—*ULTIMA THULE*—*IN THE HARBOUR*—GIFT OF ARM-CHAIR—DEATH AND BURIAL—*MICHAEL ANGELO.*

"HAPPY the country that has no history;" and the same may be said of the individual, especially during the last ten years of his life, if he live to a good old age. Longfellow had learned in Europe how to live in America. There was no western rush nor hurry in his existence. He had imported his atmosphere, in books and in memories; he had made his own environment, and was satisfied therewith.

Between Boston culture and Cambridge calm he had an ideal life for a man of letters, and he was fortunate in his family, three devoted daughters being left to him after his two sons had made homes for

themselves. From most of the ills of life he escaped scot-free. He never knew what it meant to suffer for the want of money, and was always able to indulge in the luxury of giving. He was the prime mover and contributor towards the purchase of Brighton Meadows for Harvard College, and the sum of his kindly deeds done in secret to schoolmates and old friends has never been added up. To sit by the fireside musing, or "busy with the reading and the making of books," was his most congenial recreation, and his diary contains many interesting items concerning the details of his reading and book-making.

The most orderly of men in his habits, he had also a well-ordered mind, and in his own button-hole might have been placed the blossom he plucked from St. Bonaventura,—"The best perfection of a religious man is to do common things in a perfect manner. A constant fidelity in small things is a great and heroic virtue." But his character could not have been so nearly perfect as it was had he not passed through the furnace of suffering, mental and physical. He had seen his loved father stricken down in mid-life with an incurable disease from which it was twenty-eight years ere death released him, and two years later his mother died very suddenly. The loss of Mrs. Longfellow was

"the cross of snow" he constantly carried, and he speaks of years of sleepless nights for which his foes, neuralgia or rheumatism, may have been to blame. Certainly the critics were not.

Mr. William Winter tells us how he generally treated their remarks: "'I look at the first few lines,' he said, 'and if I find that the article has been written in a kindly spirit, I read it through; but if I find that the intention is to wound, I drop the paper into my fire, and so dismiss it. In that way one escapes much annoyance.'" Upon another occasion he said: "A young critic is like a boy with a gun; he fires at every living thing he sees. He thinks only of his own skill, not of the pain he is giving." He was too wise to take criticism seriously.

Margaret Fuller's furious onslaught upon him he calls "a bilious attack," and he considers an abusive article by Simms, the novelist, "the most original and inventive of all his fictions."

He writes in his diary: "A censorious critic is often like a boy sharpening a penknife. The blade suddenly closes and cuts his fingers." Again: "Forbearance brings a certain comfort with it. Anything like vengeance brings dissatisfaction."

Edgar Allan Poe—the first to object to teaching in

poetry—was Longfellow's most virulent assailant; but the latter never struck back, nor was he deterred from admiring his detractor's poetry and prose, and praising them to his Harvard pupils.

His appreciation of greater men is admirably stated in his sonnets. Chaucer is the "poet of the dawn;" Shakespeare, the

> "Poet paramount,
> Whom all the Muses loved, not one alone;"

Tennyson, the "sweet historian of the heart;" Keats,

> "The shepherd-boy whose tale was left half told;"

while the poem on Burns says,—

> "He haunts his native land
> As an immortal youth."

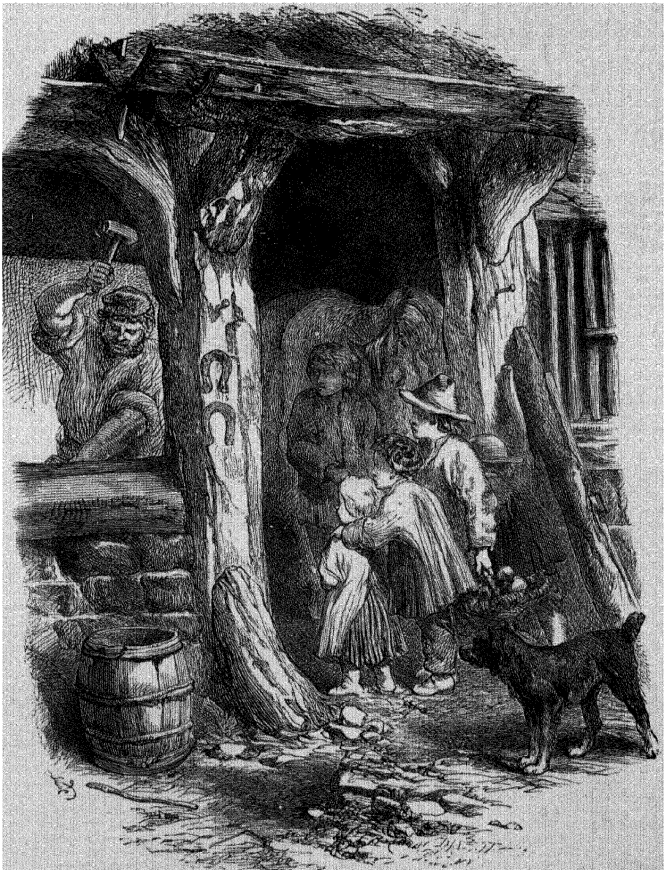
The sonnet, *The Burial of the Poet,* refers to Richard Henry Dana, a friend and contemporary of Bryant, whom Longfellow describes in his diary as belonging to "the Old Guard of literature."

It was Mr. Dana's only grandson who married Edith, the second daughter of Craigie House, and to her would apply that charming poem *The Hanging of the Crane,* corresponding to the French expression *pendre la crémaillère,* which means "house-warming." The "New York Ledger" paid three thousand dollars for

the poem, and it is one of those that will live so long as family life endures.

Of a very different character is the poetical oration Longfellow made, and actually read himself, for the fiftieth anniversary of his graduation at Bowdoin. *Morituri Salutamus* he calls it, with touching appropriateness—"We who are about to die salute you." When the gladiators of old thus addressed Cæsar, they aroused no such emotion as did the venerable American poet with the beautiful face, the long, silvery hair and beard, as he stood up to give his poetic address in Brunswick Church. For dignity and pathos the lines are unmatched, and it would be difficult to conjecture which were the most affected by them—the undergraduates of 1875, or the remnants of the class of 1825, and the sole remaining professor of those who had taught them half a century before. The essence of Longfellow's most inspiring teaching is to be found in the poem, though it is expressed less didactically than of yore.

Like old wine, the poet seemed to improve rather than to fail with years. His writing became more instead of less artistic as age crept on. *Kéramos*, "such music as comes from a potter's wheel," is at the opposite pole from the strains of Omar Khayám.



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The Persian treats the potter figuratively; the American deals with him literally. Longfellow's lines are on ceramic art, and he takes the reader off on a virtual china hunt, to Delft, Saintes, Majorca, Cairo, Cathay, and Japan, in these "poems of places," while the potter's wheel keeps up its whirring interludes.

When a man has lived for forty-three years in one house and one place, he is bound to be a well-known figure in the town, if it be not too large; but it falls to the lot of few to be so beloved and respected by his fellow-citizens as Longfellow was.

A young enthusiast exclaimed after seeing him: "All the vulgar and pretentious people in the world ought to be sent to see Mr. Longfellow, to learn how to behave."

The children of Cambridge adored him, and from public school boys and girls he received a unique present upon his seventy-second birthday. *The Village Blacksmith* had made interesting to them all "the spreading chestnut-tree" that overhung the smithy, and when it had to be cut down for the widening of Brattle Street, enough of the wood was secured to make a handsome chair for the poet, whom young and old delighted to honour. The seven

hundred children who subscribed their dimes to the presentation are men and women now, but will any of them ever forget their festival in the Sanders Theatre, when Mr. Longfellow sat on the platform till the poem was read that he had written for the occasion, and then rose to make a further little speech of thanks to them in person? It must have been the first and the last time that most of the large assembly ever heard his voice in public, for he abhorred a platform. In his published Table-Talk we find this:—

"The breath of an audience is very apt to blow one's thoughts quite away, as a gust through an open window does the loose papers on a table."

The school children had therefore every reason to be flattered by his short address to them, and to every subsequent child-visitor at his house he gave a printed copy of the poem *From my Arm-Chair*.

Long after his own were no longer children, his heart remained young for each succeeding generation, and from child-life he drew the illustration for his most perfect sonnet, *Nature*. That picture foretells the delight he was to find in his first grandson, a young Dana, born in Craigie House in 1879. The "living poem" made him grieve the less over his

inability to read as he had done, which he laments so pathetically in *My Books.*

Ultima Thule! (Utmost Isle!) When Longfellow published, in 1880, the collection of poems bearing that title, he thought he had given to the public his last work; but still another was issued a few months after his death, called, fittingly, *In the Harbour.*

To the latter belongs *Hermes Trismegistus,* which one critic calls his "swan-song," and another finds in it "the awe without fear, hope without form, great men feel near death." It was not, however, his very last poem. That distinction belongs to *The Bells of San Blas,* suggested by a passage in an article called "Typical Journeys and Country Life in Mexico," in "Harper's Magazine" for March 1882.

The last lines of the poem are,—

> "Out of the shadows of night
> The world rolls into light;
> It is daybreak everywhere!"

They blend with Clough's "Not by Eastern Windows only," Tennyson's "Crossing the Bar," or Browning's final resolve to "greet the unseen with a cheer."

Truly the days have gone by when the death of a great poet draws forth apologies for his life. J. R. Lowell pronounced the verdict of all who had ever

known the Cambridge bard when he said: "Never was a private character more answerable to public performance than that of Longfellow."

The last winter of his life saw him more or less of an invalid, although on his seventy-fifth birthday he had appeared well and in good spirits. He died of peritonitis, on March 24, 1882. The day that he was buried, in Mount Auburn Cemetery, a special service was held in the chapel of Harvard College, when the Rev. Professor C. C. Everett made an eloquent memorial address, saying among other things,—

"Here is no dazzling position; here is no startling circumstance; a simple life has uttered itself in song, and men have listened, rejoiced, and loved, and now they mourn."

About a year after the poet's death there was published a so-called fragment, found in his desk, of which the title might properly be changed from *Michael Angelo* to *Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*, for it is the latter speaking for himself. That may have been the reason why he kept the poem beside him for ten years without publishing it. "I want it for a long and delightful occupation," he writes in his diary; and we know that he very seldom revealed his inner self to the public gaze. The themes that are drawn

from his own experience are of the kind that are common to all men, and that is why all men love to listen to them.

Michael Angelo is interesting, not from its dramatic portrayal of the great sculptor, but from its revelation of Longfellow's attitude towards liberty, women, art, old age, work, Dante, and death. He rings the changes once more upon the poet's after-thought,—

> "I never am content,
> But always see the labour of my hand
> Fall short of my conception."

And again,—

> "Each one performs his life-work, and then leaves it.
> Those that come after him will estimate
> His influence on the age in which he lived."

CHAPTER XV.

FRIENDS AND CONTEMPORARIES.

SUMNER—FELTON—AGASSIZ—CLUBS—EMERSON—WHITTIER—SLAVERY POEMS—HAWTHORNE—BAYARD TAYLOR—FIELDS—BIOGRAPHER—GREENE—WARD—HOLMES—LOWELL.

SINCE a man is known by the company he keeps, our acquaintance with Longfellow will be much more intimate if we observe him in connection with his friends. The most distinguished of these was undoubtedly Charles Sumner, the famous senator, denouncer of slavery, and upholder of the right against a majority of wrong. If ever a man wore himself out in the service of his country, Sumner did. He was four years younger than Longfellow, who thus describes his personal appearance: "He stands over six feet two in his stockings—a colossus, holding his burning heart in his hand, to light up the sea of life.....He is a very lovely character.....full of talent; with a most keen enjoyment of life; simple,

energetic, hearty, good; with a great deal of poetry and no nonsense about him." Another writer says of him: "No man now living, either at home or abroad, more keenly enjoys music, painting, and poetry, and talks better about them, than Charles Sumner."

Longfellow made his acquaintance on first coming to Cambridge in 1836, when Sumner had a lectureship in the Law School, and neither young man dreamed of the renown each was to attain in his own field.

From that time until his sudden death in 1874, Sumner was about the most frequent guest at Craigie House.

"A Sunday without a Sumner is an odd thing," writes Longfellow in his journal, 1851; and throughout the great abolitionist's career, whether the mob crowned him or hooted him, his poet-friend felt for him and with him as only poets can. The poem *Charles Sumner* but feebly expresses the grief Longfellow felt at his death. More touching by far is the reference to him in *Three Friends of Mine*,—

> "Good night! good night! as we so oft have said
> Beneath this roof at midnight, in the days
> That are no more, and shall no more return.
> Thou hast but taken thy lamp and gone to bed;
> I stay a little longer, as one stays
> To cover up the embers that still burn."

The other two of the three friends mentioned are C. C. Felton, whom Dickens called the "heartiest of Greek professors," sometime president of Harvard, and Louis Agassiz, the famous naturalist. They also belonged to Longfellow's inner circle,

> "But they will come no more,
> Those friends of mine, whose presence satisfied
> The thirst and hunger of my heart. Ah me!
> They have forgotten the pathway to my door!
> Something is gone from nature since they died,
> And summer is not summer, nor can be."

Longfellow seems to have had a genius for friendship. With him it was a noble substitute for the kind of sentiment that sets another type of poet

> "Sighing like furnace, with a woeful ballad
> Made to his mistress' eyebrow."

He was always the centre of a literary group, beginning with "The Five of Clubs" of his early Harvard days. Sumner and Hillard, his law-partner, Felton, Cleveland, and Longfellow, were the famous five whom outsiders nicknamed "The Mutual Admiration Society," merely because they reviewed each other's books in a friendly fashion.

In Longfellow's diary, May 5, 1857, is the first mention of the Atlantic Club, composed of the publishers of and contributors to "The Atlantic



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Monthly," founded at that time, with J. R. Lowell for editor. Many of Longfellow's poems appeared first in that magazine, and at the club he would meet with Emerson, Motley, Holmes, Cabot, Underwood, Parkman, Whittier, Higginson, Hawthorne, Channing, President Quincy, or Henry James.

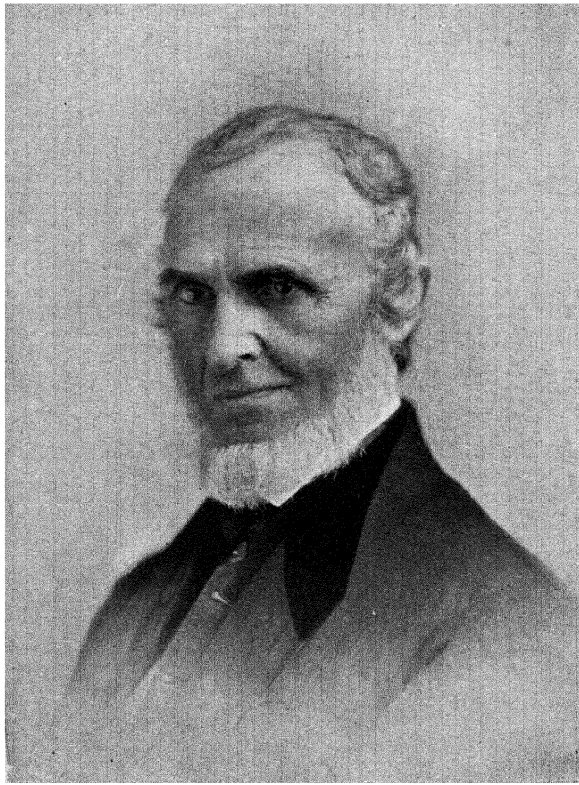
Several of these men also belonged to the Saturday Club, started about the same time, of which Felton and Agassiz were members. It met in Boston once a month, and rivalled the Atlantic Club in the entertainment of literary celebrities from a distance. The good a superior mind derives from contact with other superior minds is inestimable.

Longfellow belonged to what is generally known as the Cambridge group of literary men; Emerson was the centre of the Concord group. The two poets were well acquainted, but not exactly intimate friends; their natures were too diverse—Longfellow's simple, Emerson's complex. The transcendental theories of the Concord sage soared over Longfellow's head. They meant nothing to him, but he had ever a warm admiration for Emerson as a lecturer. He was four years older than Longfellow, but died the same year.

Whittier was born in the same year as Longfellow, but survived him ten. The travelled scholar of

Cambridge could have but little in common with the country-bred, hard-worked farmer's son, to whom an odd volume of Burns's poems had come like an inspiration, showing him how, through the gateway of song, one might pass from the most sordid surroundings into an ideal world. He never went to college, nor to Europe, but he found he had a message for his countrymen, and he delivered it with all his heart. He spent the best years of his manhood fighting against slavery, and was no impotent factor in its abolition.

Longfellow's sympathies were on the same side. He lived through the whole struggle with his friend Sumner, but there is a wide gap between his anti-slavery poems and those of Whittier. The latter have a force and intensity that make one understand why the slave-owners hated their fearless author. The birds of prey who were threatening Whittier's life would not have a feather ruffled by any of Longfellow's poems on the same theme. They were composed while he was at sea, returning from Europe—too remote from the scenes he describes to catch their burning vitality, though they have an artistic finish which Whittier could not have given them. The latter sacrificed his art to his enthusiasm of humanity,



JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

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but "Snow-bound," for example, has a genuine out-of-door flavour that is found in Longfellow's sea-pieces alone. Whittier studied nature at first hand, but he studied art less diligently than his great contemporary, and therefore his verses are not so smooth and musical as Longfellow's. The two poets were acquainted, but they seldom met.

Much more intimate with the Cambridge scholar than either Emerson or Whittier was Hawthorne, though he is generally placed in the Concord group. Longfellow was one of the first to recognize the genius of the romancer, and to praise it publicly. They corresponded irregularly, and met occasionally, for Hawthorne was too shy and too poor to return many of the hospitalities of Craigie House. His was the sort of sensitive soul that preys on itself—lacks confidence; and to such an one Longfellow's genuine kindness of heart, his cheering encouragement, would come like balm. The poet loved by all spread his mantle over the romancer worshipped by the few.

Bayard Taylor was another comrade in arms, who thanked Longfellow for "an influx of fresh hope and courage." To him, as to Hawthorne, Longfellow wrote a memorial poem, though that to Taylor is inspired more by respect than by heart-felt sorrow.

That he loved Hawthorne none can doubt who reads the pathetic description of his funeral.

When Longfellow mourned his friends in verse, he did not seek for classic similes to sound their praises, but chose the simplest measures and language, as best fitted to express sincere emotion. *Auf Wiedersehn*, in memory of his publisher and dear friend J. T. Fields, has the best of consolation for all bereaved ones. It weans us into

> "Believing, in the midst of our affliction,
> That death is a beginning, not an end."

Among the poet's friends and contemporaries must not be forgotten one very near to him, his brother Samuel, for whose ordination he wrote a beautiful hymn. To the Reverend Samuel Longfellow the world is indebted for an exhaustive biography of his brother. There will never be, as in the case of Shakespeare, any doubt about what manner of man Longfellow was, and what manner of life he led. We have it all here in his letters and journal, carefully arranged by an ideal editor, who suppresses anything that might hurt or offend the living—suppresses himself also, and merely mends breaks in the narrative.

The three volumes of the "Life" have been so carefully indexed that all students of Longfellow will



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thank his brother for the labour he has expended upon them.

Ultima Thule has a dedication to George Washington Greene, with whom, and also with his cousin, Mr. Samuel Ward, the poet began a lifelong intimacy while they were all young men together in Europe. Of those published in the "Life," there are more letters to Mr. Greene than to any other person. Very charming epistles many of them are—full of the playful humour that Longfellow displayed in private life, though he was too reserved to sparkle in a crowd.

In this respect he was the opposite of his friend Oliver Wendell Holmes, noted for his after-dinner speeches, and his ability to reel off witty verses upon any and every occasion. He was two years younger than Longfellow, and ten years older than Lowell, who succeeded Longfellow at Harvard. Both of these men excelled Longfellow in prose, but neither approached him in poetry, in range of subject, nor in execution. All three preached the gospel of culture, as opposed to the doctrines of materialists.

Dr. Holmes, the cheery prescriber of mirthfulness, lived in Boston, but Lowell lived at Elmwood, an old colonial mansion not far from Craigie House.

When Lowell was sent as Minister to Spain in 1877, Longfellow missed the friendly interchange of visits with his neighbour so much that he wrote a poem, designed to make him homesick, called *The Herons of Elmwood.* Twenty-two years before, the poet had written other verses that formed a bond of union between himself and Lowell—*The Two Angels*, commemorating the eventful night when a daughter came to Longfellow and a lovely young wife was lost to Lowell.

In 1884, when the five hundred or so of Longfellow's English admirers had attained their desire of having a memorial of him placed in the Poets' Corner of Westminster Abbey, Lowell, then Minister to England, was a principal speaker at the unveiling of the bust, and none could talk more feelingly than he of the departed. In poetry he ranked him beside the Englishman Thomas Gray; but in personal character he judged that there were few, of any nationality, worthy to be placed near Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.



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CHAPTER XVI.

FOLLOWING HIS FOOTPRINTS.

BIRTHPLACE, MANSION, AND STATUE IN PORTLAND—BOWDOIN COLLEGE, BRUNSWICK, MAINE—LANDMARKS IN BOSTON—NAHANT—CAMBRIDGE: HARVARD, MOUNT AUBURN.

THE terminus of the Grand Trunk Railway in Portland, Maine, is as noisy and smoky as others of its kind, and naturally its neighbourhood is undesirable for residences; but around one corner and up one street from the station there is still standing the house in which Longfellow was born, over ninety years ago. It is a high, three-story, wooden dwelling, painted fawn-colour, with a flight of steps leading up to the front door, and it looks cleaner and better kept than most of its neighbours. A placard at one corner of the house proclaims that this is the birthplace of the poet, and many tourists from many states gaze with reverence upon it annually, for the Americans are a nation of hero-worshippers.

More interesting, both without and within, is the Longfellow Mansion in Congress Street, the principal business thoroughfare of Portland. It also is of three stories, but its dingy red brick speaks of past greatness, for the custom of erecting wooden dwellings prevailed very early in the New England States.

Within the scrap of ground in front of the old house there are two or three tall elm-trees that tower far above it, but they can scarcely surmount the high buildings close on either side. These are shops and offices level with the street, so that the Longfellow Mansion seems to have withdrawn itself a few paces in a modest desire for an antiquated repose not easily attained in this stirring city of forty thousand souls. The buying and selling goes on to the right hand and the left, as well as over the way; the electric cars rush past with a whir like the wind in a ship's rigging; but the old house stands unmoved, keeping its own counsel concerning days of old.

The two public rooms downstairs are delightfully old-fashioned in their furnishings as in their low ceilings and wide fireplaces, while the ancient wall-paper that scrambles up to the second story in the hall-way would charm an eye that abhors modernity. There are more elm-trees in the back-yard, which

must have been a playground of no mean dimensions when Longfellow was a boy. His sister Anne (Mrs. Pierce), an old lady of eighty-six, still lives in the Mansion; his only surviving brother, Mr. Alexander Longfellow, is also a dweller in another part of Congress Street, Portland; and another sister, Mrs. Greenleaf, lives in Cambridge. These are all that remain of the family that once went out and in from this venerable red-brick dwelling.

The poet is held in remembrance in his native town by a bronze statue in State Street where four roads meet. He is represented sitting in an arm-chair with his cloak about him, and did he but rise to look over his shoulder, he could have a far-reaching view of the surrounding country, perchance even of

> "The sheen of the far-surrounding seas
> And islands that were the Hesperides
> Of all [his] boyish dreams,"

so high has he been placed, literally as well as figuratively, among the homes of his townsfolk.

Brunswick has not grown greatly since Longfellow was a student and professor there. It has now a population of six thousand, and lies north of Portland, an hour's ride on the Maine Central Railway. The

town was *en fête* on the day of our visit, stores closed, school and business alike suspended, bands playing, flags flying, processions marching—and all for what? The State Militia were going off to camp at Augusta, to be drilled into form for the Spanish-American contest. Could Henry W. Longfellow revisit this once-familiar town, would he join in the hurrahs, think you? Would not his deep, abiding horror of war be intensified by the recollection,—

> "How much of my young heart, O Spain,
> Went out to thee in days of yore!"

The students of Bowdoin College are not in evidence; they are helping the town to keep holiday. But the librarian and his assistant are at their posts, and we are shown the copy of Horace that Longfellow used as a student, a bookcase and some books that belonged to him, and the original manuscript of his inaugural address as professor, written in his regular, neat back-hand, and dated 1830.

Since that time Bowdoin has added to her plain four-storied structures of red brick, that were in accordance with the utilitarian ideas of her founders, the large and handsome Searles Science Building, Elizabethan in style, and the Walker Art Building, beautiful in

design, and stored with those treasures of which Bowdoin is justly proud. Original paintings of Corot, Millet, Daubigny, Troyon, Salvator Rosa, Wouvermans, and a dozen others; original drawings by Titian, Domenichino, Claude Lorraine, Poussin, and Rembrandt, are not to be found in every American college. To these have been added a sufficient number of native masterpieces to foster the artistic ambition of undergraduates.

Bowdoin has good cause to remember her sons, as they to remember her. Besides many politicians, doctors, lawyers, and theologians of renown, she has given one President to the United States, Franklin Pierce, who graduated the year before Hawthorne and Longfellow. The portraits of these three men are among those that line the walls of the audience-room in Memorial Hall, and there too is Professor A. S. Packard, a benevolent-looking old gentleman, who was connected with the college for sixty-five years, and to whom Longfellow refers in *Morituri Salutamus* as the only one left of his instructors.

To quote from the historical sketch written by Mr. George T. Little, the present librarian: "It is believed that under Professor Longfellow, Bowdoin was the first New England college to give that

prominence to modern languages as a part of the required course which has since become so general." The young poet, fresh from Europe, would no doubt have a supply of enthusiasm for his chosen subject sufficient to equip a dozen seats of learning. How he loved the locality he told in his famous anniversary poem,—

> "O ye familiar scenes,—ye groves of pine,
> That once were mine and are no longer mine,—
> Thou river, widening through the meadows green
> To the vast sea, so near and yet unseen,—
> Ye halls, in whose seclusion and repose
> Phantoms of fame, like exhalations, rose
> And vanished,—we who are about to die
> Salute you."

Even the casual visitor finds it hard to leave that home-like group of buildings fronting the grassy campus—Massachusetts Hall, that bears the impress of the last century; the twin-spired chapel to whose side the library clings; the church wherein *Morituri Salutamus* was delivered; the gymnasium, observatory, and Adams Hall. There are not so many that the mind is confused in an effort to remember which is which, and each has a distinct individuality.

Fedral Street runs nearly to the college campus; and a short distance from its beginning, the second house on the right-hand side after crossing the railway track, is a spacious wooden mansion, painted

white. It has been much enlarged and improved since it was built by the Reverend Mr. Titcomb, with whom Stephen and Henry Longfellow boarded as students. In the early fifties, when Mr. Calvin Ellis Stowe was a professor at Bowdoin, he lived in this same house, and it was here that his gifted wife wrote "Uncle Tom's Cabin."

Farther on, down the hill and down the street, is the three-storied, white, colonial mansion named from Governor Dunlap, and next to it stands the modest-looking two-story dwelling, painted brown, in which Professor Longfellow lived with his first wife, Mary Potter.

The most romantic way to reach Boston from Portland is to go by the steamer, which paddles gingerly over the supposed mines in the harbour, and keeps a respectful distance from the four-funnelled, armoured cruiser *Columbia* and a smaller gunboat lying at anchor. The air is full of wars and rumours of wars, but the sun sets in Portland and rises in Boston with bright unconcern.

Americans regard the capital of Massachusetts as a quaint and curious city, because its narrow streets are not laid out with the checker-board regularity of

western towns, but in Europe it would rank with the places of yesterday. Even Faneuil Hall, the Cradle of Liberty, would look modern in Edinburgh or London.

Longfellow has made a couple of eighteenth-century churches in Boston of interest to tourist readers of his poetry. There is the "Old North," from whose belfry arch the signal lights were swung that sent Paul Revere forth upon his historic ride; and the Old South Meeting House, for whose preservation a plea was presented in *A Ballad of the French Fleet.* Franklin was christened there, and the historic associations of revolutionary days cling to the "Old South" as closely as the ivy to its walls.

But one block away, at the junction of Washington and School Streets, stands the Old Corner Book-Store, a favourite haunt of Longfellow and his contemporaries on wintry afternoons, when the famous east wind of Boston was rampant in its streets.

The sunny summer days found the poet always at Nahant, an island in Boston Bay, turned into a peninsula by a long strip of sand called Lynn Beach. To Nahant by steamboat is a delightful trip, but scarcely less interesting is the voyage to it from Lynn by *barge*, the local name for brake, or omnibus. To

sit upon the shore and listen to the sound of the Bells of Lynn floating across the water is one way to draw nearer to the poet. His cottage at Nahant is roomy, but unpretentious. He could always accommodate a guest or two, but was himself the guest of old ocean, whose charms alone could woo him from "the sweet serenity of books."

Just how much of a bookman Longfellow was one realizes forcibly after seeing his study in the Craigie House. He did not share in Thoreau's contempt for possessions, as the most fleeting glance into his drawing-room, dining-room, and library will proclaim; but it is the study, once the business-room of General Washington, that contains the treasures of literary value.

There is Tom Moore's ink-stand, and one that belonged to Coleridge. The shreds of Dante's coffin, enclosed in a tiny glass box, look as if a breath of air would dissolve them into dust. Felton, Emerson, Hawthorne, and Longfellow himself, as a man of forty, look down upon us from the walls, out of oval gilt frames; and a bust of George Washington Greene, as a young man, stands upon the side-table. An orange-tree blocks the light of one window, and at the other is the high desk which the poet used when

standing to write. The well-filled bookcases are heavily carved, and on either side of the fireplace stands an arm-chair—that spoken of in *The Children's Hour*, and the one made from the remains of the Village Blacksmith's chestnut-tree.

The latter is black, upholstered in dark-green leather, and its inscription is below the cushion of the seat. The centre-table is not the office-like desk affected by literary men of to-day, but there is plenty of space for books and papers, and there are the quills which to the last the poet preferred to steel pens. The room looks as if its late owner might walk into it at any time. And why not? He lives there still in the person of Miss Alice Longfellow, his eldest daughter. The other two, Mrs. Dana and Mrs. Thorp, have handsome residences next to Craigie House; and his only surviving son, Mr. Ernest Longfellow the artist, also lives in Cambridge when not abroad.

Directly opposite the poet's old home is the Longfellow Park, purchased with the design of preserving the view from its upper windows; but since factory chimneys have sprung up in the valley of the Charles, the prospect is scarcely worth preserving.

Cambridge is a city of residences, charming villas,

most of them with fences next the street, but none between the well-kept lawns; and when the lilacs are in bloom the whole air is heavy with sweetness. The old elm, noted for having shaded George Washington when he first took command of the American troops, can no longer spread widely its arms, being crippled with age and rheumatism; but ordinary elm-trees of an early date flourish bravely, their branches meeting over the streets or lending a graceful dignity to the Harvard Yard.

That is not a place for loitering. No benches invite the weary wayfarer to sit down, and the broad walks that form a variety of angles on the green sward lead so distinctly somewhere that one is obliged to go. Shall it be to inspect Massachusetts Hall, built in 1720, the oldest college building now standing, where once were quartered the colonial troops; or to see the Hollis Dormitory, where Emerson, Prescott, Wendell Phillips, Sumner, Edward Everett, and Thoreau had rooms, and drank of the coldest, clearest water in Cambridge from the college pump, near its north entrance? The stained-glass windows in Memorial Hall must be admired, the Class Day Tree described by Howells in "April Hopes," the wonderful glass flowers in the Agassiz Museum, the Longfellow man-

uscripts and first editions in the library, as well as the shelves of poetry, by names unknown, presented to the poet, and by his heirs to the university.

There is no existing portrait of John Harvard, but D. C. French, the famous Concord sculptor, has made an ideal statue of him, and it was he also who designed the bust of Emerson and two or three others in Memorial Hall. The bust of Longfellow there is a replica of the one in Westminster Abbey.

There are more young men to be seen in Cambridge streets than are commonly observed in the wealthy suburb of a large city during the day, but caps and gowns being conspicuously absent, there is nothing to suggest the university town. Nor is there aught in the Harvard buildings, even where the hand of time upon dull red brick has been aided by creeping vines, that recalls the old grey stone walls of Oxford colleges, where the windows are gay with flower-boxes, and where the bequest of past centuries in the beauty of architecture, within and without, helps one to feel with Charles Lamb: "I seem to inhale learning, walking amid thy foliage, old Oxenford."

There is but one building in Cambridge, Massachusetts, which might not feel from home if suddenly transported to Cambridge, England, and that is the

Episcopal Theological School, and its Memorial Chapel of St. John, commemorated in Longfellow's sonnet.

T. W. Higginson lives in Buckingham Street, but Mrs. Ole Bull and most of the celebrities are in Brattle Street; though Elmwood, the home of James Russell Lowell, is on a side road from it, called Elmwood Avenue.

Longfellow and Lowell are neighbours in death as in life. Their graves lie close together in Mount Auburn Cemetery, on the outskirts of Cambridge. Longfellow's resting-place, at the top of Indian Ridge, is marked by a solid stone sarcophagus; while Lowell lies at the foot of the hill, his grey headstone an imitation of the old style common in the earliest graveyards. Motley is near Longfellow, and Holmes too is close at hand.

They are all gone, the brilliant group that did so much for American letters, excepting the genial old gentleman at "Shady Hill," Professor Charles Eliot Norton, who still keeps up his connection with Harvard to the extent of having a Dante class. Does he ever relate anecdotes of the distinguished Dante Club that once met weekly at Craigie House?

The leaders in literature at Concord are likewise no longer above ground, but at rest in Sleepy Hollow.

Emerson died the same year as Longfellow, but did not like him retain his faculties to the last. The Concord sage attended Longfellow's funeral, and after it was over he said to a friend: "The gentleman we have just been burying was a sweet and beautiful soul; but I forget his name."

How long will his countrymen remember his name? The Harvard men of to-day talk of Matthew Arnold and Walter Pater more than of Longfellow and Lowell; but Harvard, though sufficient unto itself, is not the world, nor even the United States. Longfellow was the first poet to gain the hearts of the American people as a whole, outside of the cultured classes, and by them he will be judged more by what went before him in literature than by what comes after him. He belongs to the nation's youth, and the youth of the nation will ever hold him in tender regard.

His poetry is good rather than great. Like Mendelssohn among musicians, he was too comfortably situated to produce the sort of work that can be born only through storm and stress. As one walks down the carefully-kept, elm-shaded Brattle Street, and thinks of the carefully-kept and shaded life that Longfellow lived in it, one can understand why

his verse is sweet and artistic, but not rugged nor soul-stirring. He never felt the pangs of poverty, the sting of unrequited love, the faithlessness of friends, nor the galling yoke of physical deformity. He and his friends lived to an honoured old age, thereby giving the lie to the theory that true poets have short and stormy lives. They have gone, and who are in their places? No one in Brattle Street, Cambridge, surely, nor in Harvard, nor Boston. Has American virility gone westward?

"Oh, never star
Was lost here but it rose afar!

THE END.

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