Baldwin's Biographical Booklets

THE STORY OF Henry W. Longfellow

FOR YOUNG READERS





SHERWIN CODY

WERNER SCHOOL BOOK COMPANY

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OF

HENRY W. LONGFELLOW

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WERNER SCHOOL BOOK COMPANY
NEW YORK CHICAGO BOSTON

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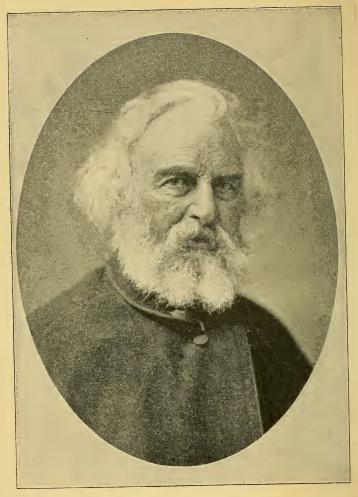
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HENRY W. LONGFELLOW.

LONGFELLOW

CHAPTER I

A GREAT POET

Lives of great men all remind us

We can make our lives sublime,

And, departing, leave behind us

Footprints on the sands of time;—

Footprints, that perhaps another,
Sailing o'er life's solemn main,
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,
Seeing, shall take heart again.

You doubtless remember how Robinson Crusoe one day found footprints in the sand on the shore of his desert island. "I am not alone!" said he to himself. "Another human being has been here before me." Soon afterward he had the good fortune to find his "man Friday."

In geology we learn of footprints in rocks. Living beings ages ago walked on the soft sand, and that sand, lying for a long time undisturbed, was at length hardened into rock.

The poet Longfellow has left "footprints on the sands of time" in the shape of his poems, and we may say those poems are like footprints hardened into rock, which will last for ages. Many an unhappy soul, after reading the sad, sweet, beautiful verses of the "Psalm of Life," has taken heart to go on fighting life's battle nobly, and doing good instead of yielding to the temptation to be weak and careless.

To realize what it is to be a great poet, think of the millions of boys and girls, old and young, in the United States, and in Great Britain and other foreign countries, who have learned by heart such famous poems as "The Village Blacksmith," "The Wreck of the Hesperus," and "The Building of the Ship." You, yourself, no doubt, dear reader, when you want something to memorize, turn to a volume of Longfellow's poems. You have learned tolove the poems: therefore let me introduce to you the man who first lived the poems in his own life, and you will certainly learn to love him, too.

The poet was born February 27, 1807, in Portland, Maine. At the time of his birth his parents were living in Captain Stephenson's house, Mrs. Stephenson being a sister of the elder Mr. Longfellow. But this was only temporarily, indeed only while the Stephenson family were visiting the West Indies. The Longfellows soon moved into the house of General Peleg Wadsworth, where Mrs. Longfellow had spent part of her girlhood. It is said to have been the first brick house ever built in Portland, and it was one of the finest. Here they lived until the baby grew into a man.

CHAPTER II

LONGFELLOW'S ANCESTORS

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow belonged to a good old New England family. His father was a lawyer in Portland, Maine; his grandfather had been a schoolmaster; and his great-grandfather had been a blacksmith.

The Longfellows were most of them tall, strong men, who had been soldiers, sailors and the like, and none of them had shown the slightest talent for poetry. But Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was small and delicate, though he always stood very erect and was a finely formed man.

His grandfather on his mother's side was General Peleg Wadsworth, who was once captured by the British and came near being shipped off to England; but he escaped and joined his wife and family as they were going to Boston. The poet also had an uncle Henry (for whom he was named), who had been a lieutenant with Commodore Preble and was killed at Tripoli a short time before his namesake was born. Another uncle was a second lieutenant on the frigate Constitution when it captured the British ship Guerrière in 1812.

On his mother's side, Longfellow could trace his origin straight back to John Alden and Priscilla Mullens, who came over in the *Mayflower*, and whom he has made immortal in his poem of "The Courtship of Miles Standish."

In short, Longfellow belonged to quite an aristocratic family, as New England aristocracy goes, and it was a fairly wealthy family also. His father was once a member of Congress, and afterward was chosen to make the speech welcoming Lafayette when he visited Portland in 1825.

The house where Longfellow was born is still standing and is well known to the children of Portland. In the old days it was in the fashionable part of the town, facing the ocean beach. But now land has been filled in for a long distance out into the ocean, and on this new land stand the engine-house and tracks of the Grand Trunk railway. So the house is now in a very poor neighborhood.

One day a teacher in a Portland school asked her pupils if they knew where Longfellow was born.

"I know," said a little girl. "In Patsey Connor's bedroom."

Many poor people lived in the house, and the room where Longfellow was born was now Patsey Connor's bedroom; but all the children of Portland knew where it was.

CHAPTER III

LONGFELLOW'S BOYHOOD

Our poet seems to have been a quiet, well behaved child, rather slight, but always standing up perfectly straight. He was careful of his clothes, and learned his lessons well. Some people seem to think that a very good little boy will never grow up to be worth anything. Certainly it is a good thing to have plenty of spirit and energy; but Longfellow is an example of a boy who was as good as George Washington is said to have been, and he grew up to be the greatest poet in America, just as Washington grew up to be the greatest president.

When he was three years old little Henry was sent to school. For a good many years a certain Ma'am Fellows had kept a school in a little brick schoolhouse not far from the Wadsworth mansion, and it was she who taught the poet his first lessons. Ma'am Fellows was a firm believer in the doctrine that "one should never smile in school hours." Years afterward Longfellow told what he

remembered of her. "My recollections of my first teacher," said the poet, "are not vivid: but I recall that she was bent on giving me a right start in life; that she thought that even very young children should be made to know the difference between right and wrong; and that severity of manner was more practical than gentleness of persuasion. She inspired me with one trait,—that is, a genuine respect for my elders."

He afterward went to several other schools, including one in Love Lane. When he grew a little older he had to write compositions, and there is a story about the first one he ever wrote. His teacher told him to write a composition; but he thought he couldn't do it.

"But you can write words, can you not?" asked the teacher.

- "Yes," was the response.
- "Then you can put words together?"
- "Yes, sir."
- "Then," said the instructor, "you may take your slate and go out behind the schoolhouse, and there you can find something to write about; and

then you can tell what it is, what it is for, and what is to be done with it; and that will be a composition."

Henry took his slate and went out. He went behind Mr. Finney's barn, which chanced to be near; and, seeing a fine turnip growing, he thought he knew what it was, what it was for, and what would be done with it.

A half hour had been allowed young Henry for his first undertaking in writing compositions. Before that time had expired he carried in his work, very neatly written on his slate. It was so well done that his teacher was both surprised and pleased.

There has been published in the newspapers a very funny poem about a turnip, and some have said that it is the one which Longfellow wrote at this time. But the truth is, he never wrote it, for that first composition was rubbed off the slate and lost forever. This other poem was written years afterward by somebody for a joke. Here is the poem, however, for you to laugh about. You will clearly see that Longfellow could not have written it himself.

MR. FINNEY'S TURNIP

Mr. Finney had a turnip,
And it grew, and it grew;
And it grew behind the barn,
And the turnip did no harm.

And it grew and it grew,

Till it could grow no taller;

Then Mr. Finney took it up,

And put it in the cellar.

There it lay, there it lay,

Till it began to rot;

When his daughter Susie washed it,

And put it in the pot.

Then she boiled it, and she boiled it,
As long as she was able;
Then his daughter Lizzie took it,
And she put it on the table.

Mr. Finney and his wife
Both sat down to sup;
And they ate, and they ate,
Until they ate the turnip up.

When he was only thirteen years old Longfellow wrote a real poem, which, though it has never been

published, is said to have been preserved in manuscript. It was entitled "Venice, an Italian Song." The manuscript is dated "Portland Academy, March 17, 1820," and is signed with the full name of the writer.

It was not long after this that his first published poem appeared. It was entitled "The Battle of Lovell's Pond," and was printed in one of the newspapers of Portland.

There were only two papers in that city then. Having written the ballad very carefully and neatly, Henry thought he would like to see it in print; but he was afraid to take it to the editor. One of his school-mates persuaded him, however, and he stole up one night and dropped it into the editorial box.

He waited patiently for the next issue of the paper, and then scanned its columns for his poem, which he thought surely would be there. But it wasn't. Many weeks passed and it did not appear. At last he went and asked to have his manuscript returned.

It was given him and he took it over to the other

paper, the *Portland Gazette*, by whose editor it was accepted and immediately published over the signature "Henry." Here are the first two stanzas:

Cold, cold is the north wind and rude is the blast
That sweeps like a hurricane loudly and fast,
As it moans through the tall waving pines, lone and drear,
Sighs a requiem sad o'er the warrior's bier.

The war-whoop is still, and the savage's yell Has sunk into silence along the wild dell; The din of the battle, the tumult is o'er, And the war-clarion's voice is now heard no more.

After that the young poet could have his verses printed in that paper as often as he liked, and he wrote a number of pieces for this purpose.

He went to Portland Academy, and was ready to enter college at fourteen. One of his teachers at the academy, who, no doubt, did a great deal to impress his young mind, was Jacob Abbott, the author of the "Rollo Books." Some years ago these were the most popular books for boys and girls then known, and perhaps some of the young people of this generation have read them. If they have, they will know what fine books they are.

CHAPTER IV

SOMETHING ABOUT THE TIMES WHEN LONGFELLOW WAS YOUNG

In the days when Longfellow was a child, people were just changing from the old fashioned style of living to ways that were new and more modern. The older men wore knee breeches and silk stockings and shoes with big buckles, and had their long hair gathered in a knot or "club" behind.

Those were strict Puritan days, too. Everybody was very careful about going to church and keeping Sunday, and theaters were prohibited until a few years later. They do say, however, that the people drank a good deal of Jamaica rum and did other things that we should not approve of to-day.

Portland was quite a seaport, and had formerly enjoyed great business prosperity. But in the year that Longfellow was born, the embargo was put on shipping, and severe "hard times" came on. It is said "the grass literally grew upon the wharves."

Five years after his birth, came the war of 1812.

Fortifications were thrown up on Munjoy's Hill, and privateers were fitted out in the harbor. In his beautiful poem, "My Lost Youth," Longfellow refers to this.

This poem is very interesting when we think of the actual places to which Longfellow refers. Of course he is thinking of Portland when he writes:

Often I think of the beautiful town That is seated by the sea;

I can see the shadowy lines of its trees,
And catch, in sudden gleams,
The sheen of the far-surrounding seas,
And islands that were the Hesperides
Of all my boyish dreams.

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.

In the following lines he refers to the fortifications that were put up when he was five years old: I remember the bulwarks by the shore,
And the fort upon the hill;
The sunrise gun, with its hollow roar,
The drum-beat repeated o'er and o'er,
And the bugle wild and shrill.

On the 4th of September, 1813, the *Boxer*, British brig of war, was captured off the Maine coast by the American brig *Enterprise*, and a few days later was brought into Portland harbor. On the next day both commanders, who had been killed in the encounter, were buried in the cemetery at the foot of Munjoy's Hill. The poet thus records his recollections of that event:

I remember the sea-fight far away,
How it thundered o'er the tide!
And the dead captains, as they lay
In their graves, o'erlooking the tranquil bay,
Where they in battle died.

While referring to this poem, it may be noted that Longfellow was very fond of the country, as well as of the sea, and he never lived in a city larger than Cambridge, which is really no city at all, but merely a college town. Near his home in

Portland was a large piece of woodland where he was very fond of roaming about with some of his friends. He thus speaks of it in the poem:

I can see the breezy dome of groves,

The shadows of Deering's Woods;

And the friendships old and the early loves

Come back with a sabbath sound, as of doves

In quiet neighborhoods.

I remember the gleams and glooms that dart
Across the schoolboy's brain;
The song and the silence in the heart,
That in part are prophecies, and in part
Are longings wild and vain.

At the end of each verse comes the beautiful refrain—

And the voice of that fitful song
Sings on, and is never still:

"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

Several other poems were suggested by the sights and sounds of the poet's boyhood. One was "The Ropewalk," describing a building that he

often passed. There was also a factory where crude pottery was made and where he went and watched the turning wheel that suggested to him many years later the beautiful poem entitled "Keramos."

CHAPTER V

COLLEGE DAYS

Longfellow went to college when he was very young, indeed only fourteen years old. In those days the requirements for entering college were not so severe as they are now; yet they were by no means easy, and only a bright scholar could pass the examinations. Longfellow was one of the bright boys. He stood second in his class. He had an elder brother, Stephen, who entered college at that same time.

His father and grandfather were graduates of Harvard College; but as his father was then a trustee of Bowdoin College, at Brunswick, Maine, he was sent there. It happened that in the class which he entered there were several other youths who became very famous men. One was Hawthorne, the greatest American novelist; and in the class just above was Franklin Pierce, who afterwards became President of the United States. Not quite so famous as these two was another classmate of Longfellow's, John S. C. Abbott, whose histories for young people have been only less popular than the "Rollo Books" written by his brother, Jacob Abbott, a somewhat older man.

In those days no one suspected that there were in that college men destined to become so great. Longfellow was merely an aristocratic young man who stood well in his classes and "wrote verses as a pastime." The poet of the class was a young man named Mellen. Hawthorne was very shy and never learned his lessons. He studied in his own way, and his professors had a very good opinion of him, but he was not a good scholar.

There were in college two different kinds of students, the country boys and the city fellows. The country boys were usually rough, brown, and not very well dressed. They would lumber along

the streets like farmers, as they were. It may easily be imagined that they were not rich. The lads from the seaports, on the other hand, the city fellows, had white hands and faces, were fashionably dressed, and were usually considered rich.

Longfellow was a city lad, and had plenty of money. Hawthorne was more of a country fellow. While in college the two were not intimate. Both were naturally modest and shy, and each had only a few friends with whom he associated. But some years after they left college, Hawthorne sent his first volume of stories, the "Twice-told Tales," to Longfellow, then a professor at Harvard College, and Longfellow wrote a very kind article about it, which was published in the North American Review. It was the first worthy recognition Hawthorne had received, and he was very grateful to Longfellow. This made them warm friends, and such they remained for the rest of their lives.

During his first year Longfellow did most of his studying at home. He was doubtless a little homesick at Brunswick, at first. That town is not very far from Portland, but it took some time to get there, for in those days there were no railroads. The two Longfellow boys went up the coast in a sailing boat to a town not far from Brunswick, and from there they went by stage.

While in college young Henry had no great adventures. He was a well behaved young man, never hazed anybody, and was generally thought rather a good fellow, but not remarkable in any way. He wrote a good deal of poetry, which was printed in the *United States Literary Gazette*, without his name; but his cousin John Owen, then at college with him, told him to his face one day that poetry was not his forte.

One other thing remains to be said of his college life. Though rich, he was generous toward his poorer classmates, and at the same time very modest and quiet about it. Here is one case, and there are a good many others.

There was a student who had worked hard to finish his college course; but one day he received word that owing to the death of his father he would have to leave college and earn his own living; the family could spare him no more money to help him through. This was sad news to him, for he had great ambitions and hopes concerning his future career.

A friend of his, belonging to the class below Longfellow's, went to the poet and asked him if he would not head a subscription, or do something of the kind. At this time the poet had been contributing pretty regularly to the *United States Literary Gazette*, and had never received any pay for it. Many of the poems had been copied in the daily and weekly papers.

He wrote a note to the editor saying that he thought he deserved in the future to be paid for his contributions. His intention was to give the money to his college mate. But the editor replied that poems were generally printed gratis, and made some vague promises.

This was a disappointment; but the classmate who tells the story, Longfellow, and his brother Stephen drew up a subscription paper, put down such sums as they could afford, and passed the document about among the college men. Enough money was raised to carry the poor fellow through his college course.

"For some reason or other," says his cousin John Owen, "the poet never liked to speak of this act of his earlier career. He and I have talked about it, to be sure; but one day he suggested that the subject be forever dropped. It was one of his peculiar habits—always to be doing some one a favor, and to wish that it be kept a profound secret."

CHAPTER VI

THE YOUNG PROFESSOR

When Longfellow graduated from college he was a young man of nineteen, slender, well built, and graceful. He had blue eyes and light-brown hair which he wore rather heavy about his head. In his dress he was somewhat fastidious, and afterward certain people were inclined to make fun of his variety of neckties and light vests. But he always showed the best of taste.

His father wished him to be a lawyer. But in the year that he graduated a new professorship was founded at Bowdoin, the professorship of modern languages, and he was chosen to fill it. Before that, Latin and Greek had been considered the only languages worth studying. But French, German Italian, and Spanish were demanding attention.

The story is that, while a student in college, Longfellow had written a metrical translation of one of Horace's odes, which he had read at a general examination. One of the examiners, the Hon. Benjamin Orr, a distinguished lawyer of Maine, was greatly struck with this translation, which seemed to him especially beautiful. He was one of the board of trustees, and when the new professorship was created he nominated the future poet, speaking of this translation as evidence of his ability to fill the position.

Longfellow was only nineteen years old, and the proposition came to him as a great surprise. As a preparation he was to be allowed to spend three years in Europe. By this time he was anxious to enter a literary career, and this seemed to be just the chance. His father consented and he pre-

pared to set out for Europe, though he did not start until the following spring.

What his experiences were abroad, you may learn by reading "Outre-Mer." This book is partly a story, but in reality it describes Long-fellow's journeyings through Germany, France, Italy, and Spain. He went from New York on a slow sailing vessel; but his trip was a pleasant one, and he seemed always to be lucky, as he was through life.

At last, at twenty-two, he found himself a professor in Bowdoin College, and quite a distinguished young man. His "April Day" and "Woods in Winter," two short poems, had been copied in many newspapers, and had even got into the reading books of that day. His name was not attached to any of these, and no one thought of him as a great poet. It must be remembered that teaching was hereafter the business of his life; and a very faithful teacher he was. Up to this time, and for long afterward, he did not receive any money whatever for his poetry, though occasionally some was promised him.

He studied very hard. He knew German thoroughly well, and also French, Italian, Spanish, Swedish, Finnish, and even something of other modern languages. In those days people knew very little about these languages, and few supposed they had literature that was worth anything. Longfellow became a great scholar in them, however, and translated poetry from nearly all of them. If you look in his complete works you will find a great many poems marked as translations from German, or Spanish, or Swedish, or some other language. Many of these were printed in learned essays which he wrote and published in the North American Review.

He was very popular as a teacher. He seemed to the boys like one of themselves, and he was very sympathetic with them. Yet they all respected him, and treated him politely. They thought that he would some time be a famous man, and yet it seemed more as if he would be a great scholar, than a popular poet whom everybody, boys and girls as well as grown-up people, could understand and like.

CHAPTER VII

THE "BEING BEAUTEOUS"

When he had been a professor at Bowdoin College but little over a year, Longfellow married a young lady named Mary Storer Potter. She was the daughter of a well-known judge who lived in Portland, and was something of a scholar too. It is said she was especially fond of mathematics, and had been taught to calculate eclipses. In those days girls were sent to school very little, and none of them ever went to college. The old Puritan fathers thought girls were better off at home doing housework. But Longfellow's wife was more fortunate.

She was at the same time good-looking and very pleasant to every one; and so the young professor and his young wife were invited about a great deal, and everybody thought them a very happy pair.

They were very happy together for two or three years; then Longfellow was asked to go to Harvard College to be professor of modern languages there. To prepare for this new and more promi-

nent position he went to Europe again. Of course his wife went with him. They traveled about for some time; but she was not well, and finally she died.

Most of the poem entitled "Footsteps of Angels" is about her, and it shows just what he thought of her. It is worth remembering that this is the poet's own real wife who died when they were both quite young. Here is a part of the poem. The last stanzas refer to her.

When the hours of day are numbered,
And the voices of the Night
Wake the better soul, that slumbered,
To a holy, calm delight;

Ere the evening lamps are lighted,
And, like phantoms grim and tall,
Shadows from the fitful firelight
Dance upon the parlor wall;

Then the forms of the departed Enter at the open door; The beloved, the true-hearted, Come to visit me once more; And with them the Being Beauteous, Who unto my youth was given, More than all things else to love me, And is now a saint in heaven.

With a slow and noiseless footstep Comes that messenger divine, Takes the vacant chair beside me, Lays her gentle hand in mine.

And she sits and gazes at me,
With those deep and tender eyes,
Like the stars, so still and saint-like,
Looking downward from the skies.

Uttered not, yet comprehended,
Is the spirit's voiceless prayer,
Soft rebukes, in blessings ended,
Breathing from her lips of air.

Oh, though oft depressed and lonely,
All my fears are laid aside,
If I but remember only
Such as these have lived and died!

CHAPTER VIII

THE CRAIGIE HOUSE

Longfellow came back from Europe and was installed as professor of modern languages and belles-lettres at Harvard College, in the beautiful town of Cambridge, two miles from Boston. Soon after he began his life there he went to live at the Craigie House, which has become so famous as the home of Longfellow that it deserves a little description.

It will be remembered that Longfellow was now a widower without children, his wife having died during his second journey to Europe. When he came to settle in Cambridge he was attracted by the spacious rooms and the quiet and aristocratic air of the Craigie House, famous as the head-quarters of Washington when he was in Cambridge as commander-in-chief during the Revolutionary War. George William Curtis has told the story of Longfellow's first visit to this house and how he came to live there, and we give it here very nearly in Mr. Curtis's own words.

In the summer of 1837, a young man passed down the elm-shaded walk that separated the old Craigie House from the high road. Reaching the door he paused to observe the huge old-fashioned brass knocker and the quaint handle, relics, evidently, of an epoch of colonial state. To his mind, however, the house, and these signs of its age, were not interesting from the romance of antiquity alone, but from their association with the early days of our Revolution, when General Washington, after the battle of Bunker Hill, had his headquarters in the mansion. Had his hand, perhaps, lifted the same latch, lingering, as he pressed it, in a whirl of myriad emotions? Had he, too, paused in the calm summer afternoon, and watched the silver gleam of the broad river in the meadows, the dreamy blue of the Milton hills beyond? And had the tranquillity of that landscape penetrated his heart with "the sleep that is among the hills," and whose fairest dream to him was a hope now realized in the peaceful prosperity of his country?

He was ushered in and found himself face to face with Mrs. Craigie, a good old lady who had

seen better days. He asked if there was a room vacant in the house.

"I lodge no students," was her reply. Long-fellow was so young-looking she took him to be a student.

"I am not a student," answered the visitor, "but a professor in the university."

"A professor?" she inquired. She thought a professor ought to be dressed like a clergyman.

"Professor Longfellow," continued the guest, introducing himself.

"Ah! that is different," said the lady, her features slightly relaxing, as if professors were naturally harmless and she need no longer barricade herself behind a stern gravity of demeanor. "I will show you what there is."

She preceded the professor upstairs, and going down the hall she stopped at each door, opened it, permitted him to perceive its delightful fitness for his purpose, then quietly closed the door, observing, "You cannot have that." The professorial eyes glanced restlessly around the fine old-fashioned points of the mansion, marked the wooden carvings,

the air of opulent respectability in the past, which corresponds in New England to the impression of ancient nobility in Old England, and wondered if he were not to be permitted to have a room at all. The old lady at length opened the door of the southeast corner room in the second story; and while the guest looked wistfully in and awaited the customary "You cannot have that," he was agreeably surprised by hearing that he might have it.

The room was upon the front of the house and overlooked the meadows to the river. It had an atmosphere of fascinating repose, in which the young man at once felt at home.

"This," said the lady, "was Washington's chamber."

Here Longfellow lived for the rest of his life. He was merely a lodger in one of the rooms until he married the second time, six years after first going there. On his marriage his wife's father, Mr. Nathan Appleton, who was a rich old gentleman, bought the house and gave it to him as a wedding present, and also gave him the lot opposite, so

that no one should ever build a house that would shut off his view of the river Charles.

It was the view from the front of this house that inspired the poet to write that beautiful poem, "To the River Charles." How sweet and suggestive the opening verses, which note that he wrote the poem four years after he moved into the Craigie House!

River! that in silence windest

Through the meadows, bright and free,
Till at length thy rest thou findest

In the bosom of the sea!

Four long years of mingled feeling, Half in rest, and half in strife, I have seen thy waters stealing Onward, like the stream of life.

Thou hast taught me, Silent River!

Many a lesson, deep and long;

Thou hast been a generous giver;

I can give thee but a song.

It may be said that Joseph Worcester, who wrote Worcester's Dictionary, had once lived in this house, and Miss Sally Lowell, an aunt of James Russell Lowell, as well as Jared Sparks, who wrote a great life of Washington and was president of Harvard College. Mr. Sparks and Edward Everett both brought their wives there when they were married.

It seemed that Longfellow was always getting into famous houses. When he was at Bowdoin College he lived in the house in which "Uncle Tom's Cabin" was afterward written. It is said that Talleyrand, the famous French diplomat, and the Duke of Kent, Queen Victoria's father, had been entertained at dinner at the Craigie House when it belonged to the original owner, Colonel John Vassal.

CHAPTER IX

THE FIVE OF CLUBS

Now began the finest years of Longfellow's life. It was in the early years at the Craigie House that he wrote the "Psalm of Life" and most of his other world-famous and world-loved poems, and it was here that he enjoyed his best friendships.

When he first came to Cambridge to see about accepting the professorship, he was introduced to Charles Sumner, the great lawyer, orator, and statesman, then a young man beginning to practice law in Boston. The introduction took place in Professor Felton's rooms, who was also about the same age, that is, under thirty, and who as a Greek scholar and the writer of Greek textbooks has become famous. Felton was a big, good-natured fellow; and he and Charles Sumner at once took a fancy to Longfellow. As soon as the poet was settled in his new home a club was formed, consisting of Longfellow, Sumner, Felton, George S. Hillard (Sumner's law partner), and Henry R. Cleveland, who was also a teacher. These five. who called themselves "The Five of Clubs," met usually every Saturday afternoon in Longfellow's room, sometimes in Felton's, and occasionally in the law offices of Sumner and Hillard in Boston. They were all ambitious, all good fellows who met for a "feast of reason," but who nevertheless knew how to have a royal good time. These meetings were kept up regularly for several years.

It was about this time that Longfellow's friendship for Hawthorne began.

There were many other famous people here, too, with whom Longfellow formed life-long friendships. Holmes was becoming known as a young poet as well as medical professor in Harvard College, and Lowell, then a boy, was soon to come upon the scene, and at last to take Longfellow's professorship when Longfellow should resign.

Charles Sumner was destined to be one of the great antislavery agitators, and it was chiefly to his influence that we owe Longfellow's poems on slavery. Longfellow was not of a very fiery nature. He did not get excited even in those hot times before the war, and Sumner had to urge him a long time before he composed the poems entitled "The Slave's Dream," "The Slave in the Dismal Swamp," and others on slavery.

Emerson was also one of his friends, and so were several others among those who started the Brook Farm experiment. These people had taken a farm, and all had gone to live together on it, each doing a little work, and all doing a great deal of

talking. Some of Emerson's friends rather disliked Longfellow because he took no interest in this scheme, which proved a terrible failure. While he was intimate with the Brook Farm people, and always friendly as far as listening to them was concerned, he kept on the even tenor of his ways quite unmoved by their arguments.

CHAPTER X

LONGFELLOW BECOMES A FAMOUS POET

When Longfellow went to live in Cambridge he was just thirty years old. He had not then written any of the poems that are famous to-day, but he began at once to produce most of those that we love best. A good many of them were sent to the Knickerbocker Magazine. One of them was the "Psalm of Life," for which he was promised five dollars, which, however, was never paid him. A poem then called "Floral Astrology," but now known as "Flowers," was the first to have his full

name attached—"Harvard College, H. W. Long-fellow." The "Psalm of Life" was signed simply "L." Both of these poems and "The Reaper and the Flowers" (published in the same magazine in the same way, at the same price, which was never paid) had been copied into hundreds of newspapers and were public favorites without the author's being in the least known. His friends knew Longfellow wrote the poems, but the public did not.

His cousin, John Owen, kept a bookstore in Cambridge. One day Owen went to him and told him he ought to have some of his poems printed in a little volume, and with his name. Longfellow objected to having his name appear, though he thought it might be a good idea to have the poems published if a publisher could be found. His cousin said he should like to publish them; to this Longfellow assented, but for some time refused to have his name appear. At last he said, "Well, bring them out in your own way!" That meant, with his name on the title page.

That little volume, entitled "Voices of the

Night," and including the poems still printed in Longfellow's collected works under that title, was published in 1839, when Longfellow was thirty-two years old. It contained the "Psalm of Life," "The Reaper and the Flowers," "The Light of Stars," "Footsteps of Angels," "Flowers," "The Beleaguered City," and "Midnight Mass to the Dying Year." There were also some translations, and a few of the poems he had published while in college.

That book made Longfellow famous as a poet. A few critics found fault with it, but not many, and hundreds of others liked it and praised it. Longfellow himself tells a pretty story of the "Psalm of Life." "I was once riding in London," said he, "when a laborer approached the carriage and asked, 'Are you the writer of the "Psalm of Life?" 'I am.' 'Will you allow me to shake hands with you?' We clasped hands warmly. The carriage passed on, and I saw him no more; but I remember that as one of the most gratifying compliments I ever received, because it was so sincere."

In a published letter from Charles Sumner, there is another touching story of the power this wonderful poem possesses over men.

A man who had been very unlucky, an old classmate of Sumner's, went to his office to prove some debts in bankruptcy. Sumner asked him what he read. He replied that he read very little; that he hardly found anything that was written from the heart and was really true. "Have you read Longfellow's Hyperion?" Sumner asked him. "Yes," he replied, "and I admire it very much; I think it a very great book." He then added in a very solemn manner, "I think I may say that Longfellow's 'Psalm of Life' saved me from suicide. I first found it on a scrap of newspaper, in the hands of two Irish women, soiled and worn; and I was at once touched by it."

The Chinese translator and noted scholar, Tung Tajen, a great admirer of Longfellow, sent the poet a Chinese fan, upon which was inscribed in Chinese characters a translation of the "Psalm of Life." The fan is one of the folding kind, and the characters are inscribed on it in vertical columns.

An Englishman serving on the staff of the American minister in China found this beautiful poem in Chinese and translated it back into English, not knowing that it had been written originally in English. Here is a verse of the translation he made. You will scarcely recognize the familiar—

Tell me not, in mournful numbers,
Life is but an empty dream!
For the soul is dead that slumbers,
And things are not what they seem.

AS TRANSLATED FROM THE CHINESE.

Do not manifest your discontent in a piece of verse:

A hundred years (of life) are, in truth, as one asleep (so soon are they gone);

The short dream (early death), the long dream (death after long life), alike are dreams (so little is the body concerned; after death)

There still remains the spirit (which is able to) fill the universe.

The words in parenthesis were not in the Chinese and the translator supplied them to complete the sense in English.

CHAPTER XI

HOW SOME OF THE GREAT POEMS WERE WRITTEN

We have already often spoken of the "Psalm of Life," perhaps the greatest poem Longfellow ever wrote. He composed it in his room at the Craigie House, which had been Washington's chamber. The death of his young wife had afflicted him deeply, and one day as he sat between two windows, looking sadly out, this poem came into his mind and he wrote it. For a long time no one knew of its existence, and it was not until many months later that he sent it to be published. "The Reaper and the Flowers" was written in much the same way, and "The Light of Stars" was composed on a serene and beautiful summer evening, exactly suggestive of the poem.

Longfellow himself tells how "The Wreck of the Hesperus" was written. Says he:

"This is one of the poems which I like to recall. It floats in my mind again and again, whenever I read of some of our frightful storms on the coast. Away back in the year when the 'Voices of the

Night' was published, in the closing month of the year, the New England coast was lashed by a terrible tempest: and there were numerous shipwrecks recorded. I remember reading in the newspapers one day of the loss of a schooner on the reef of Norman's Woe, called 'The Hesperus.' Norman's Woe is, as you are aware, a frowning mass of rocks, surrounded by the ocean, not far from Gloucester. It occurred to me to write a ballad, which I did some days afterwards, while I was sitting alone one night by the fire in the room above."

The fact is, after writing part of it he went to bed, and being unable to sleep, got up and wrote the remainder.

"Excelsior" probably stands next to the "Psalm of Life" as a popular favorite. One evening, also in that chamber of Washington's at the Craigie House, after he had been at a party, Longfellow caught sight of this word on a torn piece of newspaper. Lying near was a letter from Charles Sumner, and immediately he began to write on the back of this, crowding the stanzas in as best he

could. Later he carefully rewrote the poem, and changed it in many parts. The next time Sumner visited the Craigie House he was shown the letter, and he asked to have it back. Longfellow gave it him, and Sumner always kept it as a treasure. When he died he left it by will to Harvard College.

Once in answer to a letter Longfellow gave the following explanation of the meaning of the poem:

"My intention in writing it was no more than to display, in a series of pictures, the life of a man of genius, resisting all temptations, laying aside all fears, heedless of all warnings, and pressing right on to accomplish his purpose. His motto is 'Excelsior'—higher. He passes through the Alpine village, through the rough, cold paths of the world, where the peasants cannot understand him, and where his watchword is 'an unknown tongue.' He disregards the happiness of domestic peace, and sees the glaciers—his fate—before him. He disregards the warnings of the old man's wisdom and the fascinations of woman's love. He answers to all, 'Higher yet!' The monks of St. Bernard are

the representatives of religious forms and ceremonies; and with their oft-repeated prayer mingles the sound of his voice, telling them there is something higher than forms or ceremonies. Filled with these aspirations, he pushes forward; and the voice heard in the air is the promise of immortality and progress ever upward, without having reached the perfection he longed for."

"The Village Blacksmith" is another poem with a history. It will be remembered that we have already said that Longfellow's great-grandfather was a blacksmith. The "village smithy" "under a spreading chestnut tree"—the one about which Longfellow wrote the poem, though his grandfather was never there—stood on Brattle Street, in Cambridge. After a time it had to be removed. Some of the branches were cut off the chestnut tree, that a dwelling-house might be put up, and it then looked so ugly that the town authorities ordered it to be cut down.

This made Longfellow feel very sad. The year before he made a sketch of the shop and the tree, just as they stood, and this rough sketch has been published. On the morning the tree was cut down, every one crowded out to see the choppers at work, and gaze at the tree as it tumbled over.

On his seventy-second birthday the children of Cambridge presented Longfellow with an arm-chair made out of the wood of the old chestnut tree. It was a handsome chair, jet black and finely carved with horse chestnuts and leaves. Inscribed around it was a verse from the poem:

And children coming home from school
Look in at the open door;
They love to see the flaming forge,
And hear the bellows roar,
And catch the burning sparks that fly
Like chaff from a threshing-floor.

The chair was upholstered in green leather, and there was a brass plate under the cushion, on which was inscribed:

"To the author of 'The Village Blacksmith,' this chair, made from the wood of the spreading chestnut tree, is presented as an expression of grateful regard and veneration by the children of Cam-

bridge, who, with their friends, join in the best wishes and congratulations on this anniversary, Feb. 27, 1879."

Longfellow was very much pleased by this and wrote a poem to the children, entitled "From My Arm-chair." You may read it in any volume of his poems.

One more poem of which we must speak is "The Skeleton in Armor." Said Longfellow once, "This ballad was suggested to me while riding on the seashore at Newport. A year or two previous a skeleton had been dug up at Fall River, clad in broken and corroded armor; and the idea occurred to me of connecting it with the round tower at Newport, generally known, hitherto, as the Old Windmill, though now claimed by the Danes as a work of their early ancestors."

When the poem was written some of Longfellow's friends, probably the members of that "Five of Clubs," thought it was beneath his dignity; but others were so enthusiastic about it that when one of them read it aloud to him very appreciatively he sprang to his feet and embraced him, and paid no more attention to the criticisms. He was thinking about the subject, after his visit to the skeleton that had been dug up, for more than a year before the poem flashed into his mind.

CHAPTER XII

THE POET'S SECOND MARRIAGE

You will remember that at the time his first wife died Longfellow was in Holland. For a long time after that he kept very much secluded, and in the "Footsteps of Angels" we have seen how deeply the thought of his first wife was impressed on his memory. But while he was traveling in Switzerland the year after her death, he met Mr. Nathan Appleton, a rich man of Boston who was traveling with his family. His daughter Frances Elizabeth was very beautiful and had many admirers. Perhaps Longfellow fell in love with her then, but if he did, it was doubtless because she seemed very cold toward him.

When he got back to Cambridge and was settled in the Craigie House, he wrote a sort of novel entitled "Hyperion," which, like "Outre-Mer", described his journeyings in Europe, but which also had a romantic love story, in which most people thought that the hero, Paul Flemming, a young American man of letters, was Longfellow himself and the heroine, Mary Ashburton, was Miss Appleton. In the story, Mary Ashburton refused Paul Flemming's offer of marriage. It is not probable, however, that Longfellow said anything about love at that time; but when the novel was published and became popular it was whispered about that the young lady was very indignant.

Nevertheless, the Appletons and Longfellow had had a very pleasant time together in Europe. Once they stopped at the hotel called "The Raven." It was in the town of Zurich. First Mr. Appleton wrote his name in the register with some compliment to the house. Then the landlord presented a very long bill, which made Mr. Appleton angry and he was vexed because he had written something complimentary to the house.

"But I have not written my name," said Mr. Longfellow; "and, if you will allow me, I will treat the innkeeper as he deserves."

He took the register, and this is what he wrote in it:

Beware of the Raven of Zurich!
'Tis a bird of omen ill,
With a noisy and unclean nest,
And a very, very long bill.

Longfellow went home first, and for six or seven years lived, as we have seen, in Cambridge; but later he often visited Pittsfield, where the Appleton summer mansion was and where Miss Frances Elizabeth was staying, and there she finally consented to be his wife. They were married, and Mr. Appleton bought the Craigie House and presented it to them to keep house in.

Longfellow had five children, two sons and three daughters. When the Appletons lived at Lynn, one of the sons, Charles, was tipped over while in a sailboat and of course got soaking wet. In place of his shoes Mr. Appleton gave him a pair of old slippers. Longfellow returned them

later with this parody of his own "Psalm of Life":

Slippers that perhaps another,
Sailing o'er the Bay of Lynn,
A forlorn or shipwrecked nephew,
Seeing, may purloin again.

His daughters, who became the comfort of his old age, are beautifully referred to in the poem called "The Children's Hour":

I hear in the chamber above me
The patter of little feet,
The sound of a door that is opened,
And voices soft and sweet.

From my study I see in the lamp light,
Descending the broad hall stair,
Grave Alice, and laughing Allegra,
And Edith with golden hair.

In 1861, twenty years before the poet himself died, Mrs. Longfellow was burned to death. She was sitting at her library table amusing her two youngest children by making seals. A bit of the burning wax fell on her light gauze dress, which was in a moment all aflame. She cried out, and

Longfellow came running from the next room and threw a rug about her; but she was so burned that she soon died, though several doctors came almost immediately. Longfellow himself was also frightfully burned, but not dangerously.

This, and the death of his other wife, were the two great sorrows of his life. Except for these two misfortunes, it would seem as though he were always fortunate, living, as it were, in a bed of roses—always successful, never poor, never discontented with his lot. But after the death of his second wife he was very gloomy for a long time.

It may be said that the sadness of the deaths of both wives made him write some of his best poems.

Three years after the death of Mrs. Longfellow, Hawthorne died.

Longfellow wrote a beautiful poem called "Hawthorne," which closes with this stanza:

Ah! who shall lift that wand of magic power,
And the lost clew regain?
The unfinished window in Aladdin's tower,
Unfinished must remain!

CHAPTER XIII

EVANGELINE, HIAWATHA, AND THE COURTSHIP
OF MILES STANDISH

After his first marriage we have seen that Long-fellow wrote his most famous short poems. After his second marriage he wrote his most famous long poems. The first was "Evangeline." It was published in 1847, four years after his marriage; but he had been a long time writing it. He once wrote, "I had the fever burning a long time in my brain before I let my hero take it. "Evangeline" is so easy for you to read, because it was so hard for me to write."

The story of the Acadians is a familiar one. Acadia was the French name for Nova Scotia. But after the French had settled there the English claimed the land as having been discovered by John Cabot. There was much fighting between the French and English over the disputed ground, and finally the English made a settlement of their own at Halifax; but the country villages were made up mostly of the French. At last the rights

of the English to the territory were acknowledged by the French government; but in the treaty that was made it was provided that the French settlers should not be obliged to pay taxes or take up arms against their fellow Frenchmen. Most of them also refused to take the customary oath of allegiance to the King of England.

To make up for the loss of this territory the French erected fortifications at Louisburg and Cape Breton, and they encouraged the Indians to keep up a raiding warfare on the English settlements. In this border warfare the English claimed that the French "neutrals" (as the Acadians were called) acted as spies and stirred up the Indians to revenge.

At last in 1755, a few years before the American Revolution, the colony of Massachusetts proposed an expedition against Acadia, and the British government fitted it out, They captured the neighboring French forts, and all the American people rejoiced at the easy victory. Then came the question, What should they do with those treacherous "neutrals," who were British subjects

though they would not swear allegiance to Great Britain, and in heart and act remained loyal to France after France had been beaten off the ground.

"Scatter them through all the British colonies!" ordered the governor.

Accordingly, eighteen thousand of them were shipped off wherever it happened to be convenient to send them, and in such haste that families were separated, mothers and children parted, lovers torn from each other, and all thrown into a new world without money or property of any kind; for their houses and barns were burned, their crops destroyed, their money and goods confiscated. It was a horrible retribution for a very natural and simple-mined loyalty to their own native land and government.

A friend of Hawthorne's heard a story of a young couple who were about to be married on the day the proclamation was made; but as the young men were separated from their friends and families to prevent their taking up arms for their defense, the two were sent to different colonies, and spent the rest of their lives in a vain search for each other. At last they meet in a hospital, where the hero is dying. The story was offered to Hawthorne for a novel, but he did not care for it. One day when the friend, Hawthorne, and Longfellow were dining together, the story was told again to Longfellow and he was very much touched by it, especially by the constancy of the heroine.

"If you are not going to use it for a novel, give it to me for a poem," said Longfellow; and Hawthorne gladly consented.

The heroine of the poem was at first called Gabrielle; and the poet located the scene of the climax at a poorhouse in Philadelphia, with the charming surroundings of which he had been fascinated years before. While waiting for the sailing of the packet for Europe at the time of his first voyage, he wandered up Spruce street, where his attention was attracted to a large building with trees about it, inside of a high enclosure. He walked along to the great gate and stepped inside. The charming picture of a lawn, flower beds, and shade which it presented made an impression

which never left him. When twenty-four years afterward he came to write "Evangeline," he located the final scene at this poorhouse, and the burial in an old Catholic graveyard not far away, which he had found by chance on another walk at the same period.

His next great poem was "Hiawatha." For ten years Longfellow had been thinking about writing an Indian poem. At last a young man who had been a pupil in one of his classes came back from the West, where he had been living among the Indians. One day while he was dining with the poet, he told many of his experiences among the red men. Longfellow was very much impressed, and looked about for a book where he might read old Indian legends. He found that a Mr. Schoolcraft had published such a book, entitled "Algic Researches." For three years, he says, he read and reread this volume. At last he began to write, and composed nearly five hundred lines, when he changed his mind and destroyed what he had written. He began again and continued writing to the end.

When "Hiawatha" was published, some critics claimed that it was stolen from a Finnish poem, and a great many people said unpleasant things about it. Already Poe had written very unkindly of "Evangeline," as he seemed to be jealous of Longfellow's success. But both "Evangeline" and "Hiawatha" soon became immensely popular, thousands of copies being sold and read.

Two 'years after "Hiawatha" appeared, the Atlantic Monthly was started. Longfellow, Holmes, Whittier, Emerson, Prescott and others, were called together at a dinner, and Lowell was chosen editor of the magazine. After the periodical was started and became so famous, the men who wrote for it met regularly once a month at a dinner. Longfellow was a contributor and an attendant at the dinners for a long time.

The year after the *Atlantic Monthly* was started, "The Courtship of Miles Standish" was published as a little volume. The poem professes to be a love poem, but the love is not so warm and sincere as that in the songs of Robert Burns.

CHAPTER XIV

THE GOOD OLD MAN

Longfellow was one of the best-natured men in the world. He was always pleasant and obliging to everybody who came to see him. He wrote his autograph for all the children who asked him. Once there was a school celebration in his honor. He was present and made a beautiful little speech, in which, among other things, he thanked the children of Cambridge for the arm-chair. When the exercises were over the children crowded about him and he wrote his name in their albums until he could write no more, his hand was so tired. But he told those who had not got his autograph that he would write it for them if they would come around to his house.

Many children went to see him on other occasions, and he was always very kind to them. Everybody loved him.

We have mentioned many of the men who were his friends. Another was Professor Agassiz, the great scientist and professor at Harvard College, who was a warm and intimate friend of Longfellow's.

After a time these friends began, one by one, to die. Agassiz died, Sumner died, and a number of others. Hawthorne had died some years before.

Longfellow lived a sad life after the terrible accident that killed his wife, and was getting to be a very old man. Every one tried to honor him. He knew that he was accounted the greatest poet America had produced. His sons and daughters were about him and took excellent care of him. Nevertheless, he began to weary of life a little, and longed to join the dear ones who had gone before.

It is autumn; not without,
But within me is the cold.
Youth and spring are all about;
It is I that have grown old.

He still wrote many beautiful poems, such as the "Tales of a Wayside Inn," "Keramos," and others. He even wrote a poem on the death of Garfield a short time before he himself died. But none of these poems became as famous as those he had written in earlier years in the prime of his manhood.

At last, on the 24th of March, 1882, he died, and the whole country went into mourning for him.

His soul to him who gave it rose;
God lead it to its long repose,
 Its glorious rest!
And though the poet's sun has set,
Its light shall linger round us yet,
 Bright, radiant, blest.

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