

opposite currents make up the warp and woof of our every day existence; if our literature weaves golden threads into this web the world is brighter and we are strengthened. A friend of Mr. Sumners once said "that Longfellow's 'Psalm of Life' saved him from suicide." We need more of such poems; they appeal to the heroic in man. Literature should be the real idealized but possible; something that lifts us up to a higher plain, something that gives us noble impulses, something that all must feel in their best moments. On a summer evening something over sixty years ago, in the town of Portland Maine a little boy went out cautiously from his father's door, to the letter box, of the newspaper office, on the corner. After looking around to see that no one was in sight, he dropped something into the box—a little poem. Between hope and fear he eagerly watched for the appearance of the newspaper; when it came he took it to a secluded spot—and there, looking Oh! so beautiful in print, was his little poem. That little boy held the key to human hearts, other poems followed and the world listened. That boy was Henry Wadsworth Longfellow—a then destined to become a household word, a name that all children love.

At an early age Mr. Longfellow had mastered the languages of northern Europe and traveled in Germany, France, Spain, and Italy. He had published "Outre Mer" and "Hyperion" and written essays on "Anglo Saxon Literature." Much of his time was spent in translating into English the works of foreign authors, he was careful, patient, exact; aside from the translation of Dante he made in all not less than forty-nine skillful versions of some of the finest German, Swedish, Spanish and Italian master poems; in this work he is unsurpassed if not unequalled. Yet notwithstanding his broad culture, his growing fame, he was a modest man: without affectations vanity: he was kind, appreciative, tender.

Unlike Tennyson, Motley or Holmes, he would rather be known as the man than the poet—he was simply Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. He was not only a modest man but he was also free from envy or jealousy. Irrespective of nationality, party or creed, he was a great admirer of other men's genius; and especially kind to those who had just mounted the first round of the ladder. Catholic in his sympathies, generous in his appreciation—he did not weigh men in the scales of the critic. We see this man who had "touched at all Adriatic and Mediterranean ports"—who "knew all Spanish and French coasts" this man so ripe in graceful learning and noble sentiment, sitting among the students at Harvard. We hear his voice, deep, melodious—the voice of a scholar and a gentleman. How eagerly the students listened to the words that fell like jewels from his lips; words that told of far brought learning, and large experience. Oh! how much they loved him, for with a patience that could never be exhausted, combined with simplicity, gentleness and sweet dignity he was more than the professor and teacher, he was an inspiration, to those who loved the true, the beautiful and the good.

The writings of our New England poets are all characterized by a moral purity. They reflect the stern religious spirit of the puritan. Self restraint was the first virtue. Grand characters were formed and moulded by those

influences, such men as Emerson, Longfellow, Bryant, Whittier, Holmes and Lowell, among them however there are none so pure, gentle, modest and universally loved, as our first poet. By birth and surroundings, as well as by convictions, he was a firm believer in republican institutions. Of a gentle retiring disposition, he was not an agitator, not a controversialist; but he was loyal. He saw much in Europe to admire; he was indebted to the old world for a great part of his culture—in the new he found the picturesque "Untarnished by the decay of error." In the prosaic bustling life of "those born under the setting sun" we are apt to feel that romance is lacking. Mr. Longfellow saw all the beauty that lay under the struggling life of our prairie world; he had faith in our western empire. Here he found the children of the forest, the simplicity, the loyal trust and the heroism. His best poems are based upon American themes; "Evangeline," "Heawatha," "The courtship of Miles Standish," "Building of the ship," and many others. All through his writings we find a tenderness for country, and for home. He was an American, pre-eminently an American. Of all the poets of our generation his poems have had the greatest popularity, at first they were read more in England than in America, thirty-thousand copies of "Evangeline" were sold in England in one year. Of his longest poems "Heawatha" is pronounced the best. Here we find a heart that thrills in sensitive response to the charms of nature—

"Ye who love the haunts of nature,  
Love the sunshine of the meadow,  
Love the shadow of the forest,  
Love the wind among the branches."

we find also kindly sympathy for the children of the forest.

Ye whose hearts are fresh and simple;  
Who have faith in God and nature,  
Who believe that in all ages  
Every human heart is human,  
That in every savage bosom  
There are longings, yearnings, strivings  
For the good they comprehend not,  
That the feeble hand and helpless,  
Groping blindly in the darkness,  
Touch God's right hand in the darkness  
And are lifted up and strengthened:—  
Listen to the simple story,  
Of the song of Heawatha."

Mr. Longfellow loved *Evangeline* the best, this poem is nearer akin to the poet's heart. While *Heawatha* may be the favorite of students and critic, *Evangeline* is the most popular; it voices best our common human sympathy.

The element that we find strongest in this poem and also in "The courtship of Miles Standish" is pathos, sometimes almost tragic—yet always tender. What a grand type of "heroic womanhood" we find in *Evangeline*, from a fair young girl, until she is faded and old we anxiously follow her until at last she finds her lover only to see him die.

"All was ended now, the hope, and the fear and the sorrow,  
All the aching of the heart, the restless unsatisfied longing.  
All the deep dull pain, and constant anguish of patience.  
And as she pressed once more the lifeless head to her bosom  
Meekly she bowed her own, and murmured "Father I  
thank thee.

No poet has had so many lovers among little people as Mr. Longfellow. On the occasion of his seventy second