

THE HUMAN-HEARTEDNESS
OF LONGFELLOW.

BY MISS LILLIE R. GRACEY.



LENNY Wadsworth Longfellow, the sweet poet, the gentle scholar, the genial gentleman, so revered, so beloved among us, held most dear in other lands as well as our own, a poet of marked excellence, the "people's" poet, has gone.

A simple life has uttered itself in song and men listened, rejoiced, and loved, and now they mourn. By reaching the highway to the human heart, coming in contact at all points with the great interests of humanity, humanizing everything he touched, Longfellow made himself controller of the high art of Poetry and the friend of his race.

"The most popular poet of the civilized world," Mr. Fields calls him, and says there must be a reason for this: some reason for this popularity among high and low, some sufficient cause for this lasting and firm regard for the man who, at a very early age, came "singing out from the borders of Maine into the world of song."

Longfellow breathes his whole spirit, his energy, his courage, and tenderness into others and touches the popular heart by expressing universal sentiments and feelings in simplest, most melodious verse; and in the heart's alternate moods of dejection and gladness, solaces and cheers, inspires and helps. He is the sweet singer who carols from the heart to the heart. A bond of sympathy exists between him and all his readers. He is pre-eminently the poet of the home.

He was a true philosopher who said: "Let me make the songs of a nation, and I care not who makes its laws." Longfellow approached nearer than any other to that standard.

"All the hearts of men were softened
By the pathos of his music;
For he sang of peace and freedom,
Sung of beauty, love, and longing,
Sung of death and life undying
In the land of the Hereafter."

Longfellow is never false, never unfeeling, but radiant in truth and hope, imparting strength and courage to endeavour and always singing in his own peculiar way that "life is real" and "earnest," and saying to us in the living present with a "heart within and God o'erhead," to be "still achieving, still pursuing." He touches alike the fountains of joy and tears. He has us wander with him through foreign lands; he takes us into his studies; we are admitted into the sacred joy of home; we feel the pains of sorrow and loss, and we hear the prayers of trust and thankfulness.

His simplicity and fondness for children make him largely a children's poet, for with the most genial music the purest and simplest expression is united. Old and young alike find occasion for his exhilarating words.

The London *Daily Telegraph* says: "As long as the English language lasts, Longfellow's works will be quoted as models of simplicity of style and purity of thought."

He is quoted and read on both continents, and in the isles of the sea. "In England he is cited in Parliament, Westminster Hall, in cathedrals and every pulpit admits him. The mottoes on thousands of title pages are from him."

To few men, indeed, is it given to see so complete a realization of ambition and hope. He lived to hear his name honoured among good men everywhere, to know he had done his best and that the world appreciated his endeavours. But life had its sorrows even for Longfellow, the bitterest that come, when days were "dark and dreary;" when, he says:

"My heart was hot and restless,
And my life was full of care,
And the burdens laid upon me
Seemed greater than I could bear."

Through Longfellow's poignant sorrows we have the quiet sympathy, the yielding spirit, the pensive thought, that are the alluring, abiding charms of his poems. In a world of solicitude and anxiety—

"Such songs have power to quiet
The restless pulse of care,
And come like the benediction
That follows after prayer."

He has so breathed himself into his songs that in them he is with us still. Wherever they go over the world he will be with them. He will be beside the youth giving courage; he will be with the wanderer in foreign lands; he will be with the mariner on the sea; he will be with the explorer of the woods; he will be in the quiet beauty of home; he will be by the side of the sorrowing heart pointing to a higher faith; and as old age gathers about the human soul he will whisper,

"For age is opportunity, no less than youth
Itself."

We leave him,

"Never here, forever there,
Where all parting, pain, and care,
And death and time shall disappear
Forever there, but never here."

And we go forward refreshed, strengthened, inspired with the light of a singer of songs immortal as love, pure as the dew of the morning and sweet as its breath: songs about the fleeting nature of life which comes and goes as the waves of the desert sand, as the tents of a caravan, as a flower that shoots up and dies away: songs with which the lover meets his bride, and the mother soothes her child, and the heart of a people beats with pride: songs that cheer human endeavour and console human sorrow and exalt human life.—*Northern Christian Advocate.*

BLESSED ARE THE DEAD WHO
DIE IN THE LORD.

HOW blest are ye whose toils are ended!
Who, through death, have unto God ascended!
Ye have arisen
From the cares which keep us still in prison.

Christ has wiped away your tears forever;
Ye have that for which we still endeavour,
To you are chanted
Songs which yet no mortal ear have haunted.

Ah! who would not, then, depart with gladness,
To inherit heaven for earthly sadness?
Who here would languish
Longer in bewailing and in anguish?

Come, O Christ, and loose the chains that bind us!
Lead us forth, and cast this world behind us!
With Thee, the Anointed,
Finds the soul its joy and rest appointed.

THE DEATH OF LONGFELLOW.

IT is impossible that any other American should die whose death would come so close home to so many hearts as this which has just happened. It is felt well nigh universally. The death of a great man may be widely noted, but not correspondingly felt. But this brings with it sadness. Full years had come upon him, but the poet is never old. When by distant firesides we read his poems, we do not say "These are the words of an old man," we do not figure the white locks and trembling limbs of age; but rather, we see before us an immortal youth or an age that has the freshness and glory of youth. Besides, we none of us ever weary of those we love. When a nation has learned to love a great man, he sinks deeper and deeper into its affection—"as streams their channels deeper wear." It is but the simple truth that Longfellow is the most widely-known name in the country, if we except some political names that are known perforce, and the most widely read, without exception. I would not indulge in gross estimates; but I think it no exaggeration to say that half the population of the country have read some one or more of his poems. When we recollect that all the school-readers for nearly fifty years have contained his verses, we see that the estimate is not low. And no young person reads these poems—"The Psalm of Life," "The Wreck of the Hesperus," "The Hymn to Night," "The Reaper and the Flowers," "The Footsteps of Angels," "The Skeleton in Armor," "The Village Blacksmith," "The Old Clock on the Stairs," "Sandalphon," or, in riper years, the tender tale of "Evangeline," "The Courtship of Miles Standish," the "Tale of Hiawatha," redolent of woods and wild nature—no young person ever reads these, even in a lesson-book, without a peculiar drawing to the poet. The reader's touched sensibilities go out toward the man and rest there with sympathy. And so it has come about that this poet is held in an almost friendly esteem by a vast number of his countrymen, and by a nearly equal number of Englishmen, for he is the popular poet there, as here.

ELSIE'S PRAYER.

MY Redeemer and my Lord,
I beseech thee, I entreat thee,
Guide me in each act and word,
That hereafter I may meet thee,
Watching, waiting, hoping, yearning,
With my lamp well trimmed and burning!

Interceding.

With these bleeding
Wounds upon thy hands and side,
For all who have lived and erred
Thou hast suffered, thou hast died,
Scourged, and mocked, and crucified,
And in the grave hast thou been buried!

If my feeble prayer can reach thee,
O my Saviour, I beseech thee,
Even as thou hast died for me,
More sincerely
Let me follow where thou leadest,
Let me, bleeding as thou bleedest,
Die, if dying I may give
Life to one who asks to live,
And more nearly,
Dying thus, resemble thee!

A little that a righteous man hath,
Is better than the riches of many wicked.

MAIDENHOOD.

MAIDEN! with the meek brown eyes
In whose orbs a shadow lies
Like the dust in the evening skies!

Thou whose locks outshine the sun,
Golden tresses, wreathed in one,
As the braided streamlets run!

Standing with reluctant feet,
Where the brook and river meet,
Womanhood and childhood fleet;

Gazing, with a timid glance,
On the brooklet's swift advance,
On the river's broad expanse!

Deep and still that gliding stream,
Beautiful to thee must seem,
As the river of a dream.

Then why pause with indecision
While bright angels in thy vision
Beckon thee to fields Elysian?

Seest thou shadows sailing by,
As the dove, with startled eye,
Sees the falcon's shadow fly?

Hear'st thou voices on the shore,
That our ears perceive no more,
Deafened by the cataract's roar?

Oh, thou child of many prayers!
Life hath quicksands, Life hath snares!
Care and age come unawares!

Like the swell of some sweet tune,
Morning rises into noon,
May glides onward into June.

Childhood is the bough wherealumbered
Birds and blossoms many numbered;
Age that bough with snow encumbered.

Gather then each flower that grows,
When the young heart overflows
To embalm that tent of snow.

Bear a lily in thy hand;
Gates of brass cannot withstand
One touch of that magic wand.

Bear through sorrow, wrong, and ruth
In thy heart the dew of youth,
On thy lips the smile of truth.

Oh, that dew, like balm shall steal
Into wounds that cannot heal,
Even as sleep our eyes doth seal;

And that smile like sunshine, dart,
Into many a sunless heart,
For a smile of God thou art!

"AND ye who filled the places we once filled,
And follow in the furrows that we tilled,
Young men, whose generous hearts are
beating high,
We who are old, and are about to die,
Salute you; hail you; take your hands
in ours
And crown you with our welcome as with
flowers!"

A PRECIOUS reminiscence of Mr. Longfellow is related by Mr. G. W. Childs, who several years ago entertained the poet at dinner in Rome. "He was walking to the dining-room with Mr. Childs, and on their way through the corridor of the hotel they passed a series of lighted wax candles placed in candelabra, surrounded by flowers. Mr. Longfellow immediately shaded his face with his hand and begged his companion to hasten his footsteps. It was through the flame of a lighted candle, when in the act of melting some sealing wax, that Mrs. Longfellow was burned to death.