

AUTUMN

BY H. W. LONGFELLOW.

WITH what a glory comes and goes this year!

The buds of spring, those beautiful harbingers
Of sunny skies and cloudless times enjoy
Life's newness, and earth's garniture spread
out.

And when the silver habit of the clouds
Comes down upon the autumn sun, and with
A sober gladness the old year takes up
His bright inheritance of golden fruits,
A pomp and pageant fill the splendid scene.

There is a beautiful spirit breathing now
Its mellow richness on the clustered trees,
And, from a beaker full of richest dyes,
Pouring new glory on the autumn woods,
And dipping in warm light the pillard clouds.

Morn on the mountain, like a summer bird,
Lifts up her purple wing, and in the vales
The gentle wind, a sweet and passionate wooer,
Kisses the blushing leaf, and stirs up life
Within the solemn woods of ash deep-crim-
soned.

And silver beech, and mapled yellow-leaved,
Where Autumn, like a faint old man, sits
dov'n

By the wayside a-weary. Through the trees
The golden robin moves. The purple finch,
That on wild cherry, and red cedar feeds,
A winter bird comes with its plaintive whistle,
And peeks by the witch-hazel, whilst aloud
From cottage roofs the warbling blue-bird
sings.

And merrily, with oft repeated stroke,
Sounds from the threshing-floor the busy flail.

Oh, what glory doth this world put on
For him w.e.o., with a fervent heart, goes forth
Under the bright and glorious sky, and looks
On duties well performed, and days well spent!
For him the wind, aye, and the yellow leaves,
Shall have a voice, and give him eloquent
teachings.

LINDY.

"Oh, daddy!" called a clear, girl-
ish voice.

"Yes, Lindy; what's wanted?"

"Ma wants to know how long it'll
be 'fore you're ready."

"Oh, tell her I'll be at the door by
the time she gets her things on. Be
sure you have the butter and eggs all
ready to put into the waggon. We're
making too late a start to town."

Butter and eggs, indeed! As if
Lindy needed a reminder other than
the new dress for which they were to
be exchanged.

"Elmer and I can go to town next
time, can't we, ma?" she asked, enter-
ing the house.

"Yes, Lindy; I hope so," was the
reply. "But don't bother me now;
your pa is coming already, and I
haven't my shawl on yet. Yes, Wil-
bur, I'm here. Just put this butter
in, Lindy; I'll carry the eggs in my
lap. Now, Lindy, don't let Elmer
play with the fire or run away."

And in a moment more the heavy
lumber waggon rattled away from the
door and the children stood gazing
after it for awhile in half-forlorn man-
ner. Then Lindy went in to do her
work, Elmer resumed his play, and
soon everything was moving along as
cheerfully as ever.

After dinner Elmer went to sleep,
and Lindy, feeling rather lonely again,
went out of doors for a change. It
was a warm autumnal day, almost the
perfect counterpart of a dozen or more
which had preceded it. The sun shone
brightly, and the hot winds that swept
through the tall grass made that and
all else it touched so dry that the
prairie seemed like a vast tinder box.
Though her parents had but lately
moved to the place, Lindy was accus-
tomed to the prairies. She had been
on them, and her eyes were familiar
with nothing else; yet, as she stood

to-day with that brown unbroken ex-
panse rolling away before her until it
reached the pale bluish-gray of the
sky, the indescribable feeling of awe
and terrible solitude which such a
scene often inspires in one not familiar
with it gradually stole over her. But
Lindy was far too practical to remain
long under such an influence. The
chickens were "peeping" loudly, and
she remembered that they were still
without their dinner.

As she passed around the corner of
the house with a dish of corn in her
hand, the wind almost lifted her from
the ground. It was certainly blowing
with greater violence than during the
morning.

Great tumble-weeds went flying by,
turning over and over with almost
lightning-like rapidity; then, pausing
for an instant's rest, were caught by
another gust and carried along mile
after mile till some fence or other
obstacle was reached, where they could
pile up in great drifts, and wait till a
brisk wind from an opposite direction
should send them rolling and tumbling
all the way back. But Lindy did not
notice the tumble-weeds. The dish of
corn had fallen from her hands and she
stood looking straight ahead with wide-
open, terrified eyes.

What was the sight that so fright-
ened her?

Only a line of fire below the horizon.
Only a line of fire, with forked flames
darting high into the air and a cloud
of smoke drifting away from them.
A beautiful relief, this bright, chang-
ing spectacle, from the brown monotony
of the prairie.

But the scene was without beauty
for Lindy. Her heart had given one
great bound when she first saw the
red line, and then it seemed to quit
beating. She had seen many prairie
fires; had seen her father and other
men fight them, and she knew at once
the danger her home was in. What
could she, a little girl, do to save it,
and perhaps herself and her little
brother, from the destroyer which the
south wind was bringing right toward
them?

Only for a moment Lindy stood,
white and motionless; then with a
bound she was at the well. Her course
was decided upon. If only time and
strength were given her! Drawing
two pails of water, she laid a large bag
in each, and then, getting some
matches hurried out beyond the stable.
She must fight the fire with fire.
That was her only hope; but a strong
experienced man would have shrunk
from starting a back fire in such a
wind.

She fully realized the danger, but it
was possible escape from otherwise in-
evitable destruction, and she hesitated
not an instant to attempt it. Cau-
tiously starting a blaze, she stood with
a wet bag ready to smother the first
unruly flame.

The great fire to the southward was
rapidly approaching. Prairie chickens
and other birds, driven from their
nests were flying over, uttering dis-
tressing cries. The air was full of
smoke and burnt grass, and the crack-
ling of the flames could plainly be
heard. It was a trying moment. The
increased roar of the advancing fire
warned Lindy that she had but little
time in which to complete the circle
around the house and barn, still, if she
hurried too much, she would lose con-
trol of the fire she had started, and
with it all hope of safety.

The heat was intense, the smoke
suffocating, the rapid swinging of the
heavy bag most exhausting, but she
was unconscious of these things. The
extremity of the danger inspired her
with wonderful strength and endur-
ance. Instead of losing courage, she
increased her almost superhuman ex-
ertions, and in another brief interval
the task was completed. None too
soon, either, for the swiftly advancing
column had nearly reached the waver-
ing, struggling, slowly moving line
Lindy had sent out to meet it.

It was wild, fascinating, half-terrible,
half-beautiful scene. The tongues of
flame, leaping above each other with
airy, fantastic grace, seemed, cat-like,
to toy with their victims before devour-
ing them.

A sudden, violent gust of wind, and
then with a great crashing roar the
two fires met, the flames shooting high
into the air as they rushed together.

For one brief, glorious moment they
remained there, lapping their fierce
hot tongues; then suddenly dropping,
they died quickly out; and where an
instant before had been a wall of fire,
was nothing now but a cloud of blue
smoke rising from the blackened
ground, and here and there a sickly
flame finishing any obstinate tufts of
grass. The fire on each side, meeting
no obstacle, swept quickly by, and
Lindy stood gazing, spellbound, after
it as it darted and flashed in terrible
zigzag lines farther and farther away.

"Oh, Lindy!" called a shrill little
voice from the house. Elmer had just
awakened.

"Yes, I'm coming," Lindy answered
turning. But how very queer she
felt! There was a roaring in her ears
louder than the fire had made; every-
thing whirled before her eyes, and the
sun seemed suddenly to have ceased
shining, all was so dark. Reaching
the house by a great effort, she sank,
faint, dizzy, and trembling, upon the
bed by her brother's side.

Elmer, frightened and hardly awake,
began to cry, and, as he never did any-
thing in a half-way manner, the result
was quite wonderful. His frantic
shrieks and furious cries roused his
half fainting sister as effectually as if
he had poured a glass of brandy be-
tween her lips. She soon sat up, and
by and by colour began to return to
the white face, and strength to the ex-
hausted body. Her practical nature
and strong will again asserted them-
selves, and instead of yielding to a
feeling of weakness and prostration,
she tied on her sun-bonnet firmly, and
gave the chickens their long-delayed
dinner.

But when half an hour later her
father found her fast asleep, with the
glow from the sky reflected on her
weary little face, he looked out the
window for a moment, pictured to
himself the terrible scenes of the after-
noon, and then down at his daughter.
"A brave girl!" he murmured, smooth-
ing the yellow hair with his hard,
brown hand—"a brave girl."—*Char-
lotte A. Butts, in St. Nicholas.*

The *Sunday-school Times* is respon-
sible for this: "At the dress-parade of
a colored regiment, during the civil war,
the chaplain who had been accustomed
to conduct prayers at that time was
not in place. Thereupon the colonel
said that if there was a preacher in
the ranks he might step forward.
Promptly one hundred and sixteen
preachers advanced from the line."

THE OLD LOG CHURCH.

Olden walls, in memory's halls,
With roses 'round us clinging,
A picture rare, of antique air,
The old log church is swinging.

Of timbers rough, and gnarled and tough,
It stands in rustic beauty;
A monument to good intent
And loyal Christian duty.

The forest trees kissed by the breeze
Of early autumn weather,
Stand grimly by, and seem to sigh
And bend their boughs together.

Down by the mill and up by the hill,
And through the hazel thicket,
And o'er the mead brown pathway lead
Up to the rustic wicket.

And up by these ways on holy days,
The village folks collected,
And humbly heard the Sacred Word
And worshipped unaffected.

Sweet fancy's art and poet's heart
Can see the old time preacher
And village page now turn the page,
As minister or teacher.

For in the church, with dreaded birch,
On week days he presided,
In awful mien a tutor seen,
"Twixt lore and licks divided.

But where it stood in dappled wood,
A city sprung to life,
And jolly noise of barefoot boys
Is lost in business life.

With years now flown the children grown,
Are launched on life's mad billows,
The pretty maid is matron staid,
The master's 'neath the willows,

INTRODUCED BY A HORSE.

IN colonial times, before the
establishment of stage-coaches,
travellers between Boston and
Philadelphia usually performed the
journey on horseback. Benjamin Frank-
lin was fond of this mode of conveyance,
and while on his way to his native city,
bought a fine black horse, which had
once belonged to a Connecticut
minister.

He happened on his journey to pass
near the house of another clergyman, an
intimate friend of the former owner.
The house stood at the end of a long
lane. As the horse came to the lane,
he instantly wheeled into it. Franklin
sought in vain to turn him back into
the main road.

He then loosed the rein, and the
horse swiftly galloped to the house.
The family came out, the clergyman
leading, and bowing courteously. Frank-
lin raised his hat and said,—

"I am Benjamin Franklin, of Phila-
delphia. I am travelling to Boston,
and my horse seems to have some busi-
ness with you, as he insisted on
coming to your house."

"Oh," replied the clergyman, smiling,
"that horse has often been here before.
Pray alight and come in and lodge with
us to-night."

The invitation was frankly accepted,
and a delightful evening followed. A
friendship was formed for life; and
Franklin never passed that way
without a call, and a cordial welcome.
He often said he was the only man who
was introduced by his horse."

PROFESSOR Blackie once chalked on
his notice-board in college: "The Pro-
fessor is unable to meet his classes to-
morrow." A waggish student removed
the "c," leaving "lasses." When the
Professor returned he noticed the new
rendering. Equal to the occasion, the
Professor quietly rubbed out the "l,"
and joined in the hearty laughter of the
"asses."