

A VISIT TO LONGFELLOW.

BY ARTHUR J. LOCKHART.

"I longed . . . to escape . . . from the commonplace realities of the present, and lose myself among the shadowy grandeurs of the past. I had, besides all this, an earnest desire to see the great men of the earth."

Irving's Sketch Book.

"I am inclined to the society
Of learned and excellent men; for it may be,
That, while I work no injury on them,
I may improve myself."

THE rain had not been content to come down, as Alexander Smith puts it, "in slanting lines;" but all the afternoon it had descended in vertical torrents, which gurgled through spout and gully, intersecting the street with mimic rivers. From my chamber I could hear and see the mammoth drops as they danced on the smooth pavement beneath, and plashed among the leaves of the horse-chestnut, the gradually encroaching boughs of which appeared to design a future entrance through my chamber window. During the afternoon services at the church, it seemed as though the shadow of an early evening had fallen, and before the monotone of the preacher had died away with the final "amen," the sexton was lighting the lamps. They were a delicious refreshment—those showers—on that sultry Sabbath day, and everybody and everything seemed to be thankful for the abundant rain. But dark and dense as were the clouds, the sun-flames at last burnt through them, leaving their ragged edges aglow; and the day rejoiced again in a new unspeakable splendor. The tramp of feet, and the rattle of street-cars were renewed again,—and the sound of music across the way, coming with wings of soft and delicate coolness to my ear, communicated to my mind a tone of unusual cheerfulness. My attire did not satisfy me that afternoon, as I regarded its threadbare scantiness,—for, albeit I am not greatly devoted to dress, neither proud of my personal charms, I did unfeignedly desire that my toilet might be complete, and that I might be well dressed for once in my life; and I had determined, with a limited wardrobe, to appear at the best advantage.

At last, giving my intractable cravat an irritable twist, without bringing it altogether into its place, or adding to my complacency, I relinquished further attempts at elegance, and descended to