

THE VILLAGE BLACKSMITH.

UNDER a spreading chestnut tree
The village smithy stands;
The smith, a mighty man is he,
With large and sinewy hands;
And the muscles of his brawny arms
Are strong as iron bands.

His hair is crisp, and black, and long,
His face is like the tan;
His brow is wet with honest sweat,
He earns whate'er he can,
And looks the whole world in the face,
For he owes not any man.

Week in, week out, from morn till night,
You can hear his bellows blow;
You can hear him swing his heavy sledge,
With measured beat and slow,
Like a sexton ringing the village bell,
When the evening sun is low.

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.

He goes on Sunday to the church,
And sits among his boys;
He hears the parson pray and preach,
He hears his daughter's voice,
Singing in the village choir,
And makes his heart rejoice.

It sounds to him like her mother's voice,
Singing in Paradise!
He needs must think of her once more,
How in the grave she lies;
And with his hard, rough hand he wipes
A tear out of his eyes,

Toiling,—rejoicing,—sorrowing,
Onward through life he goes;
Each morning sees some task begin,
Each evening sees it close;
Something attempted, something done,
Has earned a night's repose.

Thanks, thanks to thee my worthy friend,
For the lesson thou hast taught!
Thus at the flaming forge of life
Our fortunes must be wrought;
Thus on its sounding anvil shaped
Each burning deed and thought!

MR. LONGFELLOW AT HOME.

BY A NEIGHBOUR.

WHILE all the English-speaking world mourns the departed poet, Cambridge, the community in which Mr. Longfellow lived, groans at the loss of the man, the friend, the neighbour, the most honoured and the most beloved.

Hundreds of men honoured him who knew nothing of him as a poet. The first notice I had of the impending calamity was from an Irish porter in an office in Boston, who rushed into my room with this exclamation: "It is on the bulletin-boards, that our dear, good friend, Mr. Longfellow, is dying. I have worked at his house, repairing his furnace, many a day. There was nobody like him in all Cambridge." On the way home in the horse-cars, the fatal end being then publicly known, men and women talked about it to their fellow-passengers, though strangers, as they are wont to do in some great public calamity. And in his own town, I believe, that on that night there was scarcely a home which was not pervaded by the common sorrow. On the next morning the sentiment, if not the words, was uttered from every lip: "The Sun of Cambridge is extinguished."

To the poorer classes Mr. Longfellow was endeared by his kindness. I happened to be often brought in contact with a very intelligent but cynical and discontented labouring man, who never lost an opportunity of railing against the rich. To such men wealth and poverty are the only distinctions in life. In one of his denunciations I heard him say: "I will make an exception of one rich man, and that is Mr. Longfellow. You have an idea how much the labouring men of Cambridge think of him. There is many and many a family that gets a load of coal from Mr. Longfellow, without anybody knowing where it comes from."

The crowds of strangers who visited him at this mansion, with letters or personal introductions through friends, would have been an annoyance to one of a less kindly nature. The poet was never more attractive than in those unexpected interviews with absolute strangers. He received them with gentle courtesy, glided readily into common topics, but carefully warded off all complimentary references to his works. This was his invariable custom in general conversation. I was present when a distinguished party from Canada was introduced, and remember, when a charming lady of the party gracefully repeated a message of high compliment from the Princess Louise, how courteously he received it and how instantly he turned the conversation in another direction. I remember at another of these introductions a stranger lady distrustfully asked Mr. Longfellow for his autograph. He assured her by at once assenting, while he remarked: "I know some persons object to giving their autographs; but, if so little a thing will give pleasure, how can one refuse?"

My first impression of his sweetness I gathered some years ago, when I accidentally overheard him in conversation with Mr. James Russell Lowell, as I walked behind them on Brattle Street. A sweet little girl came running by them, and I heard Mr. Longfellow say to Mr. Lowell "I like little girls the best," and he continued:

"What are little girls made of?
Sugar and spice
And all things nice,
That's what little girls are made of."

We can see how by a sort of instinct all the little girls in the land are repeating the verses of the poet who loved them so well.

CLIMBING THE HILL.

BY REV. JOHN KAY.

"I had a dream that was not all a dream."

II.

NOT very far from this I observed other young men. They, too, were drinking from the same stream, but a little higher up, and nearer the fountain. They were beautiful in appearance and very healthy; and I heard them enquire for the best way up the hill. Not far from the place where they were drinking they found a narrow passage. Two large perpendicular rocks walled this way on either side, and the top was arched with evergreens and wild hanging vines. An old man at the spring told them this

was the best, in fact, the only way up. The young men looked at the narrow passage and some of them said we cannot go in there. But he replied this reminds me of the passage of Scripture "narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." So, after much thought and careful weighing of the matter, some of them resolved to go through. But when they came very near the entrance they saw that the rocks on either side were full of sharp edges, almost as keen as a knife; and the evergreens overhanging were full of thorns, while the path at the bottom was covered with sharp loose stones, and it was a forbidding sight. Some of the young men looked at this small and difficult entrance, and then at their fine clothes, and one after another said, "I will not go in there." They would not stoop so low, nor run the risk of appearing with their garments, and, perhaps, their flesh, torn with the brambles and thorns. So they first glanced at the beautiful light at the top of the hill, then stood for a moment and with a sigh turned away. And I thought "how hardly shall they that have riches" and pride "enter into the kingdom of heaven."

But some of the company spoke and said that often the true way was the most difficult, and they resolved to try. So they went down on their knees and began the struggle. One of them being smaller than the rest with some difficulty managed to get through, and oh, how he shouted to the others to follow. He tried to describe the appearance of the way inside, but he could not, and all he could say was, "It is better than I thought." "I am more than repaid for my torn coat and lacerated hands and knees." So, hearing the sound of their companion's voice, and noticing that it was so cheerful they took heart and one by one the most of them passed through this narrow gate. One of the largest I heard cry out in terrible pain when he was only partly through. He tried at one time to go back and fairly roared with pain; but being encouraged by the friendly words of those within, and the manly shouts of some of the more determined and courageous outside he pushed forward. One man cried, "Make a clean breast of it, brother." "I see where the trouble is;" and I looked and saw a package of playing cards sticking out of his pocket, and a purse of stolen money swelled another, and some letters of invitation to a dancing party, and odd-looking books filled another; and the man could not get through.

For some time it was not clear what he would do, but it was impossible to get through with the kind of stuff he was carrying. His companions cried shame at him and said, "Make a clean breast of it, man." "You must leave all behind." "If you get through with your life you will be more than repaid." And being a candid sort of man withal he decided to confess all and to go in with the evidences of his meanness and sin left behind. And as soon as he decided so to do those with him helped him, and the cards were soon in the flames, and the stolen money was speedily returned with a confession and a request for forgiveness, and all the other papers and books of folly and sin, which he tried to drag through, were piled together outside the gate and burned. Then he tried again, and he was soon on the

other side of this difficult pass, one of the most light-hearted and happy men you ever saw. His shouting and singing made those outside feel all the more eager when they knew they too must go through that way in order to get to the top of the hill. So one by one they resolved to go that way also.

Once inside they were very much surprised, and greatly delighted to find the way so straight and well made. It inclined upward, in some places more steeply than at others, but the road had an up-grade all the way. It was withal quite narrow, and yet plenty wide enough to give ease and freedom to all the climbers. Here and there close beside the road was a deep ravine, and in one or two places there were roads leading away from the "old path," and some of the party wandered on these for awhile, but came back only to speak of the dark passages and dangerous rocks to which those ways led. But when they came back they were sorry to find that their wandering had consumed time which the others had used in climbing up the "good way," and so the poor wanderers were quite a way behind, and they regretted it very much. However, they ran fast, and worked hard, and again joined the company. I saw one poor fellow, who would persist in walking dangerously near the edge, fall into a deep and dark pit, and all that was heard of him were his screams as he fell over.

As I looked I noticed that the climbers became more beautiful in appearance, for their climbing gave colour to their cheeks and strength to their whole frame, and they were in cheerful spirits.

Now and again there were obstacles placed in the way, but this was generally the result of the carelessness of some of the climbers, or they were put there by an enemy, for there were many enemies lurking beside the way. And sometimes one of the company would become disheartened and fearful, but, keeping with the rest, they cheered him up, and soon the danger was passed.

I looked after these climbers with great interest, and would have been glad to be with them. I saw them near the top of the hill. It seemed in my dream that years had rolled by while those happy climbers were getting near to the celestial sunlight. They were bathed in its refracted rays. I never knew a more light-hearted and cheerful company. You could not make them look behind. They looked upward and were bound to reach the beautiful summit.

In a little while there was a commotion as if they were excited to great joy, and, as I looked, I saw the shadowy outlines of beautiful angels moving to and fro. The climbers seemed to leave the roadway and fairly to fly. I looked till I saw their forms lost in the golden light. The echo of voices came to me from above. They were echoes of singing and shoutings of great joy and now and then I heard the words "salvation" and "home" and "Jesus," and I awoke to find that it was not all a dream.

He prayeth well who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast;
He prayeth best who loveth best
All things, both great and small,
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all.

—Coleridge.