

The promise of his life was fulfilled a little in those earliest days. Ten miles from Portland is the old Longfellow homestead at Gorham, and thither the boy was wont to go. In later life he speaks of "my pleasant recollections of Gorham, the beautiful village, the elms, the farms, the pastures scented with pennyroyal, and the days of my boyhood, that have a perfume sweeter than field or flower." Here it was, perhaps, or in Deering Woods, that he had those early dreams to which he refers in the *Prelude* which opens his first published volume : —

"And dreams of that which cannot die,  
Bright visions, came to me,  
As lapped in thought I used to lie,  
And gaze into the summer sky,  
Where the sailing clouds went by,  
Like ships upon the sea ;

"Dreams that the soul of youth engage  
Ere Fancy has been quelled :  
Old legends of the monkish page,  
Traditions of the saint and sage,  
Tales that have the rime of age,  
And chronicles of eld."

While he was still a school-boy he had begun to write and to print his poems. His first published poem was on *Lovell's Fight*. His experience in the publication was recalled by him once, in a conversation with a younger poet, William Winter. He had dropped the manuscript with fear and trembling into the editor's box at the office of a weekly newspaper in Portland. When the next issue of the paper appeared the boy looked eagerly, but in vain, for his verses. "But I had another copy," he said, "and I immediately sent it to the rival weekly, and the next week it was published. I have never since had such a thrill of delight over any of my publications ;" and he told how he had bought a copy of the paper, still damp from the press, and walked with it into a by-street of the town, where he opened it, and found his poem actually printed.