

is a series of pictures in the life of an Acadian maiden. It is a beautiful idyl. Here, as in his other poems, not the spontaneity of Longfellow, not some impelling purpose, not his intellect, but his imagination, art and love give this poem a high place in literature. The peculiar individuality of the man—for Longfellow was indeed a subjective poet—is stamped upon the poem, and it is his sympathy we feel as we read; we look on the cruel world as it is refracted through his individuality, and we admire with him "the affection that hopes and endures and is patient," "the beauty and strength of woman's devotion." If Longfellow's motive power had been stronger, if he had felt himself stirred by a mighty impulse to write on some theme, he would have dwelt more in the natural and sublime, and descended less to the fanciful.

Longfellow had excellent imagination. His description of the Acadian Settlement is excellent, although he never saw the place. "Hiawatha" was written without a personal acquaintance with Indian customs; yet it is very true, vivid, and life-like. His imagery is excellent. Whenever a thought came into his mind it called up some scene in nature. One critic says:—"Imagination was the ruling power of his mind. His thoughts were twin-born: the thought itself and its figurative semblance in the outer world. Thus through the quiet still waters of his soul each image floated double, swan and shadow." Here is an example, with also a tinge of genial humour: The old professor "loved solitude and silence and candle light and the deep midnight. 'For,' said he, 'if the morning hours are the wings of the day, I only fold them about me to sleep more sweetly, knowing that, at its other extremity, the day, like the fowls of the air, has an epicurean morsel—a parson's nose; and on this

oily midnight my spirit revels and is glad.'" The beautiful imagery which shines in Longfellow's verse, lends it a fascinating charm. It, however, partakes of Longfellow's nature. It seldom rises, and it sometimes falls. It sometimes rises to the sublime, and it sometimes descends to the fanciful. All Longfellow's writings are brilliant with imagery. He speaks of the music-book with its

"Rough-hewn, angular notes, like stones in the walls of a churchyard,
Darkened and over-hung by the running vine of the verses."

He tells us that

"Many a daylight dawned and darkened,
Many a night shook off the daylight
As the pine shakes off the snowflakes
From the midnight of its branches."

Again—

"To his ear there came a murmur
As of waves upon a sea shore,
As of far-off tumbling waters,
As of winds among the pine trees."

Here is another example, in which Longfellow rises above his usual level. He sees in vision the afflicted tribes of Indians driven westward:

"Then a darker, drearier vision
Passed before me, vague and cloud-like.
I beheld our nations scattered,
All forgetful of my counsels,
Weakened, warring with each other;
Saw the remnants of our people
Sweeping westward, wild and woeful,
Like the cloud-rack of a tempest,
Like the withered leaves of autumn!"

To digress a little, this element of imagery is a very important one in all composition. It is very valuable in the hands of a preacher or public orator. Many sermons are bald, gloomy and theological. Accepting the dictum of Matthew Arnold that there is in every person an innate craving after the beautiful and orderly, it is no wonder that there is a growing feeling of restlessness with this bald mode of presenting truth.