

the close, one of the sailors said to me, "Did you feel much of the Lord's presence on Sunday? My reason for asking is this: whilst at Hamburg on Sunday, a sailor came into this fore-castle and invited all us chaps on board of a Guernsey brig to a prayer-meeting. Two men with myself went on board, and entered into the brig's cabin, where there were about fourteen sailors collected together. The master of the brig (who was the preacher) said, 'Those of us who will, may offer up prayer. Let us earnestly beseech the Lord to abundantly bless the labours of that excellent Society the Thames Church Mission, for there are some of us here have to thank God that ever it was instituted.'"

We greatly value the help of prayer.

FRANCIS MAUDE (Capt. R.N.).

ART II.—LONGFELLOW.¹

WE lost in the early months of the present year one of the truest, and purest, and sweetest poets of this century. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow died on the 24th of March, "the roaring moon of daffodil and crocus," and his death cast a shadow on many a home on both sides of the Atlantic, and indeed in all countries where the English language is spoken. Wherever his poems had reached—and where had they not?—a sincere sorrow was felt by all who could estimate sincerity and dignity, simplicity and goodness; and even little ones mourned for the gentle poet who had given a voice to their hopes and fears, and who showed how much he loved them in his beautiful poem of "The Children's Hour." The inhabitants of Cambridge, near Boston, which had been his home for some years, were first apprised of the poet's death by the tolling of his age—seventy-five years—upon the fire-alarm bell; and long before the sun went down the tidings of a great loss had been carried far and wide. In a sonnet which appeared in the *Spectator* since his death, he is justly styled—

The bard
Whose sweet songs, more than aught beside,
Have bound two worlds together;

and England, equally with America, has sorrowed over the loss

¹"Ultima Thule." By Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. Second Edition. London: George Routledge & Sons. 1880.

"In the Harbour." By Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. London: George Routledge & Sons. 1882.

of a noble man and poet whose gracious presence has passed away from earth.

It is pleasant, when thinking on the high character and eminent gifts of Longfellow, to remember his descent from the Pilgrim Fathers of Plymouth, Massachusetts; five of his ancestors being among the passengers in the first memorable voyage of the *Mayflower*. The great-grandfather of the poet was Stephen Longfellow, who was born at Newbury, in 1685; and it is interesting to know, in view of the popular poem of "The Village Blacksmith," that he was the blacksmith of the village, and also an ensign in the militia of the town. On his mother's side the poet was a descendant of John Alden, who had also been a passenger in the *Mayflower*, and she was also connected with that Priscilla Mullen, whose significant answer: "Why don't you speak for yourself, John?" has been preserved in the well-known poem of "The Courtship of Miles Standish."

Longfellow entered Bowdoin College in his fourteenth year, and graduated in 1825. He early developed great literary taste, read all the great masters of song, of whatever age or nation, and had a cordial and catholic appreciation of their genius. Several of his poems were written during his college career, and among them "The Hymn of the Moravian Nuns," "The Spirit of Poetry," and "Sunrise on the Hills." From these we not only gather his love of Nature, but find that love expressed in language musical, simple and sincere. We give a few lines from "The Spirit of Poetry":—

And this is the sweet spirit, that doth fill
The world; and in these wayward days of youth,
My busy fancy oft embodies it,
As a bright image of the light and beauty
That dwells in Nature: of the heavenly forms
We worship in our dreams, and the soft hues
That stain the wild bird's wing, and flush the clouds
When the sun sets.

We discover a sentiment very similar in the closing verse of "Sunrise on the Hills":—

If thou art worn and hard beset
With sorrows, that thou wouldst forget;
If thou wouldst read a lesson, that will keep
Thy heart from fainting, and thy soul from sleep,
Go to the woods and hills! no tears
Dim the sweet look that Nature wears.

After taking his degree, Longfellow entered his father's office that he might study law; but being offered the Chair of Modern Languages in Bowdoin College, in 1828, with leave of absence for travel and study, he left America for the continent of Europe.

He visited France, Spain, Italy and Germany. Remaining some time at the University of Gottingen, and returning through England, he entered on the duties of his professorship in 1829. In 1831 he married Miss Mary Storer Potter, daughter of the Hon. Barrett Potter, of Portland, who died at Rotterdam, in 1835, during a tour with her husband in the northern countries of Europe. She was a woman of great beauty and accomplishments, lovely alike in person and character; and it is her memory that he has enshrined in the touching little poem called "The Footsteps of the Angels."

And with them the Being Beauteous,
 Who unto my youth was given,
 More than all things else to love me,
 And is now a saint in heaven.

With a slow and noiseless footstep
 Comes that messenger divine,
 Takes the vacant chair beside me,
 Lays her gentle hand in mine.

And she sits and gazes at me
 With those deep and tender eyes,
 Like the stars, so still and saint-like,
 Looking downward from the skies.

O, though oft depressed and lonely,
 All my fears are laid aside,
 If I but remember only,
 Such as these have lived and died!

This is poetry of the heart, tender and peaceful; regretful, yet hopeful; yearning, yet resigned.

Longfellow's residence in Europe was devoted to work as well as to the pleasures of foreign travel; and he so mastered all the principal modern languages as to make himself familiar with the greatest works in all. In "Outre-Mer, a Pilgrimage beyond the Sea," he has left the records of a tour in Europe, and in it the reader finds a fresh and true description of the soil and scenery, the habits and feelings and modes of life of the places he visited, and the people whom he saw. The whole is imbued with the colours of the scenes which passed under his poet eye, and is redolent of the warm and romantic atmosphere of France, and Italy, and Spain. His records of Nature and Art, as seen in those historic countries of the Old World, alike charm and instruct, as he lingers over what is most characteristic in the traditions and genius, the literature and art of the country that for a season was his home.

In 1839 he published "Hyperion," a romance full of fancy and delicate humour, and charged throughout with poetical feeling;

and containing, moreover, some fine and appreciative criticism. The hero of the book, Paul Flemming, is an American traveller, who sets out on his tour under the dark shadow of a great sorrow. His wife and her infant lie in the churchyard, and the husband and father goes forth alone, with a heart torn with anguish, and seeking some consolation in change of scene. Composure comes with time; grief chastens the traveller, and resignation forbids despair. New duties call for exertion, new achievements demand fresh energy; and with these new hopes begin to dawn over the night of his sorrow. Love once more sheds a brightness on his path; and the beauty, and virtues, and accomplishments of Mary Ashburton win upon a heart keenly sensitive to excellence and grace. "Hyperion" is in some respects a revelation of the poet's inner life. The original of Miss Ashburton was Frances Elizabeth Appleton, daughter of Nathan Appleton, a distinguished citizen of Boston, and her remarkable graces of person and of mind could not fail to charm the young poet's heart. He wooed and won the beautiful girl. The rejection of Paul Flemming's suit in the romance was, happily, not realized by Longfellow in his more fortunate courtship, and he was married to Miss Appleton in 1843, when he was in his thirty-sixth year. This noble woman, beautiful as a bride, and, it is said, more beautiful still as a matron, was burnt to death before his eyes on the 4th of July, 1861. Her light muslin dress took fire from a lighted match; and though her husband attempted to extinguish the flames, it was all in vain: she never recovered from the injuries received. The sorrow was a cruel one, the memory terrible, the loss irreparable. But the poet did not question or complain. "He was dumb, and opened not his mouth." There does not appear to be a single reference to the agony of that terrible hour in any of his published poems; the grief was hidden away from sight in the inner recesses of the heart. And yet, however he may have schooled his mind to submission, and have disciplined his will, not doubting the goodness of God, were there not times when he too could cry, in the words of his brother poet:—

But oh for the touch of a vanished hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still.

The first volumes which Longfellow published were received with delight, became soon widely known and admired; and it was felt that a new poetic star had swam into men's ken. The "Voices of the Night" (1839) and "Ballads" (1841) at once became popular, and gave him a high place among contemporary poets. There is not one of them that is not familiar to the reader, and comment on their grace and rhythm, their sentiment and emotion, would be superfluous. "A Psalm of Life,"

“Footsteps of Angels,” “The Light of Stars,” “The Beleaguered City,” and “Flowers,” are all greatly and deservedly admired. Every one will recall the vigour and pictorial power, as well as the touching pathos, of “The Wreck of the Hesperus,” the fine imaginative beauty of “The Skeleton in Armour,” where every picture is a separate work of art, and where the sound of the north wind, and the roar of the rushing waves seem to form an appropriate accompaniment to the chant of the rude Viking.—

Then launched they to the blast,
 Bent like a reed each mast,
 Yet we were gaining fast,
 When the wind failed us;
 And with a sudden flaw
 Came round the gusty Skaw,
 So that our foe we saw
 Laugh as he hailed us.

And as to catch the gale
 Round veered the flapping sail,
 Death! was the helmsman's hail,
 Death without quarter!
 Mid-ships with iron keel
 Struck we her ribs of steel;
 Down her black hulk did reel
 Through the black water!

As with his wings aslant,
 Sails the fierce cormorant
 Seeking some rocky haunt,
 With his prey laden,
 So toward the open main,
 Beating to sea again,
 Through the wild hurricane
 Bore I the maiden.

The late Mr. James T. Fields, so well known in the world of letters on both sides the Atlantic, and whose acquaintance with Longfellow was long and intimate, contributed an interesting reminiscence of the poet to the *Boston Daily Globe* of March 25 in this year:—

“The Psalm of Life” came into existence on a bright summer morning in July, 1838, in Cambridge, as the poet sat between two windows, at a small table in the corner of his chamber. It was a voice from his inmost heart, and he kept it unpublished for a long time; it expressed his own feelings at that time, when recovering from a deep affliction, and he hid it in his own heart for many months. The poem of “The Reaper and the Flowers” came without effort, crystallized into his mind. “The Light of Stars” was composed on a serene and beautiful summer evening, exactly suggestive of the poem. “The Wreck of the Hesperus” was written the night after a violent storm

had occurred, and as the poet sat smoking his pipe the *Hesperus* came sailing into his mind: he went to bed, but could not sleep, and rose and wrote the celebrated verses. The poem hardly caused him an effort, but flowed on without let or hindrance. On a summer afternoon in 1839, as he was riding on the beach, "The Skeleton in Armour" rose as out of the deep before him, and would not be laid. One of the best known of all Longfellow's shorter poems is "Excelsior." That one word happened to catch his eye one autumn evening in 1841, on a torn piece of newspaper, and straightway his imagination took fire at it. Taking up a piece of paper, which happened to be the back of a letter received that day from Charles Sumner, he crowded it with verses. As first written down, "Excelsior" differs from the perfected and published version, but it shows a rush and glow worthy of its author.

There is nothing in the above-mentioned poems which is beyond the conventional in subject, or the commonplace in sentiment, but they are full of grace and picturesqueness, harmonious in utterance, and simple in expression. It was the graceful form of the poems, and their perfect simplicity of thought, that at once caught the public ear and made them popular.

"The Spanish Student," which appeared in 1843, is an attractive story cast in a dramatic form, containing much that is poetical in emotion and powerful in diction, but is a play more fitted for the closet than the stage.

The poems on Slavery were published in the same year, and there can be no doubt that these pieces, full of indignant feeling, and charged with an intense sympathy with the oppressed, helped much to form public sentiment on a question which was then in its moral phase, and at a time when the Pulpit and the Press were both shamefully silent on the national disgrace and curse, and some twenty years before the country was plunged in a civil war. "The Slave Singing at Midnight," "The Quadroon Girl," "The Witnesses," "The Warning," all betray an enthusiasm for liberty, a faith in justice, and a confidence in the issues of the struggle, which do honour alike to the head and the heart of the man. When we think of the final appeal that was made to arms—as though the great national wrong could only be washed away in blood—how the poet becomes the seer, and utters what proved to be a prophecy? Read the last stanza of "The Warning":—

There is a poor, blind Samson in this land,
Shorn of his strength, and bound in bonds of steel,
Who may, in some grim revel, raise his hand,
And shake the pillars of this Commonweal,
Till the vast Temple of our liberties
A shapeless mass of wreck and rubbish lies.

During the war the poet retired into his study, took no part in the bitter strifes and terrible controversies of that sad time; his person was seen on no platform, his voice heard at no meeting; but all men knew that his fullest sympathies were with those who were on the side of charity and right. His friends were amongst the most eminent of the abolitionists—Ralph Waldo Emerson and Charles Sumner. On Sumner's lamented death, Longfellow wrote a beautiful and touching "In Memoriam," weaving a poetic chaplet for his grave:—

His was the troubled life,
The conflict and the pain,
The grief, the bitterness of strife,
The honour without stain.

Longfellow was a man of peace—gentle, simple, religious. "The fact is, I hate everything that is violent," said he to a friend who had been with him during a thunderstorm, and to whom he was apologizing for the care with which he was endeavouring to exclude from his house the tokens of the storm. And this love of peace, this longing for a time when the desolations of war should pass, and the world should be at rest for ever, comes out in a fine poem, "The Arsenal at Springfield":—

Down the dark future, through long generations
The echoing sounds grow fainter, and then cease,
And like a bell, with solemn sweet vibrations,
I hear once more the voice of Christ say, "Peace."
Peace! and no longer from its brazen portals
The blast of War's great organ shakes the skies!
But beautiful as songs of the immortals,
The holy melodies of love arise.

It was no doubt a spirit naturally restful, and "hating everything that is violent," that made him shrink from harshness as from a positive sin. It is the prerogative of the poet to give pleasure; but it is the critic's province to give pain. Speaking of criticism, he said: "I look at the first few lines, and if I find that the article has been written in a pleasant spirit, I read it through; but if I find that the intention is to wound, I drop the paper into my fire, and so dismiss it. In that way one escapes much annoyance."¹

"Evangeline," which was published in 1847, decided Longfellow's position among modern poets. The popularity of that beautiful idyl was great and immediate. Everybody who cared for poetry read the pathetic story of the Valley of Acadia, and followed with unceasing interest and moistened eyes, the adven-

¹ *New York Tribune*, March 30, 1882.

tures of the lovely heroine and her betrothed. The story is full of sweet pictures of innocence and peace—of pasture-lands, of orchards, and cornfields; the sounds from the farmyard; the whirr of the busy wheel, and the noise of the shuttle, and the song of the maidens as they spin the golden flax for the gossiping looms. An undefinable charm and grace of description runs through the poem, and the light of a gracious piety illuminates the whole. The greater part of the poem brings back the golden age with the colour of fruits, and the odour of flowers, radiant morns, and mellow moonlights, and the gladness of the villagers, and the feast of betrothal; and then comes the sad change—His Majesty's command that all their lands and possessions should be forfeited to the Crown, and that the people should leave their happy valley, and seek a home in another province. And then there is the departure from Grand-Pré; the separation of the lovers; the weary wandering for years in a fruitless search for one another, and their meeting at last only when the angel of death had set his cold seal on Gabriel's brow. The tale is one of touching sadness, but redeemed from hopelessness by the religious feeling throughout.

All was ended now, the hope, and the fear, and the sorrow,
 All the aching of heart, the restless unsatisfied longing,
 All the dull, deep pain, and constant anguish of patience!
 And, as she pressed once more the lifeless head to her bosom,
 Meekly she bowed her own, and murmured, "Father, I thank Thee!"

The hexameter has seldom been employed so happily as in this poem. The measure, unless used with great skill, and with a nice attention to the cæsural pause, glides into a sing-song, and becomes intolerable to the ear. Longfellow uses it with a rare felicity, which reconciles us to a metre more fitted to the language of Homer and of Virgil than to that of Shakespeare and Milton; but the movement of the verse in "Evangeline" is as musical as it is suited to the subject. We may apply the exquisite lines of Coleridge on "the Homeric Hexameter described and exemplified," to this poem:—

Strongly it bears us along in swelling and limitless billows,
 Nothing before, and nothing behind but the sky and the ocean.

Take, for example, some of the lines in the poem.

Softly the Angelus sounded, and over the roofs of the village
 Columns of pale blue smoke, like clouds of incense ascending,
 Rose from a hundred hearths, the homes of peace and contentment.
 Homeward serenely she walked with God's benediction upon her.
 When she had passed, it seemed like the ceasing of exquisite music.
 Silently one by one, in the infinite meadows of heaven,
 Blossomed the lovely stars, the forget-me-nots of the angels.

Down sank the great red sun, and in golden glimmering vapours,
Veiled the light of his face, like the prophet descending from Sinai.

And o'er their spirits there came a feeling of wonder and sadness,—
Strange forebodings of ill, unseen and that cannot be compassed.

As, at the tramp of a horse's hoof on the turf of the prairies,
Far in advance are closed the leaves of the shrinking mimosa,
So, at the hoof-beats of fate, with sad forebodings of evil,
Shrinks and closes the heart, ere the stroke of doom has attained it.

Other poems followed from Longfellow's fertile pen—those under the title of "The Seaside and the Fireside," comprising "The Building of the Ship," "The Ballad of Sir Humphry Gilbert," "The Fire of Drift-wood," and "The Sand of the Desert in an Hour-glass." All of these are distinguished by vigour and poetic associations; by touching tenderness, and by that purity of style and grace of sentiment in which Longfellow excelled.

In 1851 appeared the "Golden Legend," a poem which takes us back to the Middle Ages, and which is remarkable for its dramatic force and power, and for the daring manner in which the poet introduces the evil spirit on the scene,—a daring more than justified by his treatment of his theme. It is a delightful poem, striking throughout, and well maintaining the character, and colours, and thoughts of the mediæval legend of the young maiden who willed to lay down her own life in order to save the life of her prince.

The poem we should place the foremost of all the poet's writings, "Hiawatha," was given to the world in 1855. Here he is at his best. It is his master-piece,—full of artless dignity and an inimitable grace. We remember how some critics condemned it at first because of the strangeness of the Indian names which so often recur throughout the poem; but even these were found to form an attraction to the reader, and to give it a local colouring; no one could help being charmed with the exuberance of fancy, the humour and the pathos, and the childlike spirit with which it is pervaded. The description of natural scenery: the rivers and the forests, the icebergs and snowdrifts, the simple customs and religious myths of the departing race—the wild life of the children of the woods, are all told with simplicity and yet dignity in the poet's melodious verse. The legends are full of a singular interest; and if the wooing of Hiawatha, and his wedding-feast, leave an impression as of sunshine on the mind, a tender joyous feeling—"The Ghosts" and "The Famine" are fraught with the most touching pathos, and we leave Minnehaha "underneath the moaning hemlocks," with eyes

Wet with most delicious tears.

Will the reader pardon an extract, somewhat lengthy—to make it shorter were to spoil it—from "The Famine?" "The

"Ghosts," with its intimations of a spiritual world as yet hidden from Hiawatha, but to be revealed to him by the coming of the pale-faced prophet, is too long for quotation:—

Wrapped in furs, and armed for hunting,
 With his mighty bow of ash-tree,
 With his quiver full of arrows,
 With his mittens, Minjekahwun,
 Into the vast and vacant forest
 On his snow-shoes strode he forward.

"Gitche Manito, the mighty!"
 Cried he with his face uplifted
 In that bitter hour of anguish,
 "Give your children food, O father!
 Give us food, or we must perish!
 Give me food for Minnehaha,
 For my dying Minnehaha!"

Through the far-resounding forest,
 Through the forest vast and vacant,
 Rang that cry of desolation,
 But there came no other answer
 Than the echo of his crying,
 Than the echo of the woodlands,
 "Minnehaha! Minnehaha!"

All day long roved Hiawatha
 In that melancholy forest,
 Through the shadow of whose thickets,
 In the pleasant days of summer,
 Of that ne'er-forgotten summer,
 He had brought his young wife homeward,
 From the land of the Dacotahs;
 When the birds sank in the thickets,
 And the streamlets laughed and glistened,
 And the air was full of fragrance,
 And the lovely Laughing Water
 Said, with voice that did not tremble,
 "I will follow you, my husband!"

In the wigwam with Nokomis,
 With those gloomy guests that watched her,
 With the Famine and the Fever,
 She was lying, the Beloved,
 She the dying Minnehaha.

"Hark!" she said, "I hear a rushing,
 Hear a roaring and a rushing,
 Hear the Falls of Minnehaha
 Calling to me from a distance!"
 "No, my child!" said old Nokomis,
 "'Tis the night-wind in the pine-trees!"
 "Look," she said, "I see my father
 Standing lonely at his doorway,
 Beckoning to me from his wigwam,

In the land of the Dacotahs !"
 "No, my child !" said old Nokomis,
 "'Tis the smoke that waves and beckons !"
 "Ah," she said, "the eyes of Pauguk
 Glare upon me in the darkness ;
 I can feel his icy fingers
 Clasp my mine amid the darkness !
 Hiawatha ! Hiawatha !"

And the desolate Hiawatha,
 Far away amid the forest,
 Miles away among the mountains,
 Heard that sudden cry of anguish,
 Heard the voice of Minnehaha
 Calling to him in the darkness,
 "Hiawatha ! Hiawatha !"

Over snowfields waste and pathless,
 Homeward hurried Hiawatha,
 Empty-handed, heavy-hearted,
 Heard Nokomis moaning, wailing,
 "Wahonowin ! Wahonowin !
 Would that I had perished for you,
 Would that I were dead as you are !
 Wahonowin ! Wahonowin !"
 And he rushed into the wigwam,
 Saw the old Nokomis slowly
 Rocking to and fro and moaning,
 Saw his lovely Minnehaha
 Lying dead and cold before him ;
 And his bursting heart within him
 Uttered such a cry of anguish,
 That the forest moaned and shuddered,
 That the very stars in heaven
 Shook and trembled with his anguish.

* * * *

"Farewell !" said he, "Minnehaha !
 Farewell, O my Laughing Water !
 All my heart is buried with you,
 All my thoughts go onward with you !
 Come not back again to labour,
 Come not back again to suffer,
 Where the Famine and the Fever
 Wear the heart and waste the body.
 Soon my task will be completed,
 Soon your footsteps I shall follow
 To the Islands of the Blessed,
 To the kingdom of Ponemah,
 To the Land of the Hereafter !"

It is not our intention to dwell at length on Longfellow's many poems : to mention one or two of the most striking is

enough to recall them to the mind—and to whom are they not familiar? “The Courtship of Miles Standish,” with the story of the old Colony days, and the noble and womanly love of the Puritan maiden; the “Tales of a Wayside Inn,” in which we find the vigorous poem, “Paul Revere’s Ride;” the pathetic tale of “Sir Federego and his Falcon;” and the fine ballad of “King Robert of Sicily;” with some impressive versions of Talmudic legends and the Sagas of the fierce and martial Scandinavian race.

Among the shorter poems, may we not recall the musical and pathetic song, “The Old Clock on the Stairs,” with its impressive refrain, “For ever, never;” “The Children’s Hour,” tender, almost sacred in its feeling; “The Rainy Day,” melancholy, yet hopeful; “Blind Bartimæus,” perfect in expression and treatment; “God’s Acre,” through which gleams the light of the Resurrection; and that very touching little poem of four stanzas, called “Weariness.” In this last, as well as in “The Children’s Hour,” we have his sympathy with the little ones, his love for the young. We shall, we are sure, be forgiven if we quote it in full:—

WEARINESS.

O little feet! that such long years
Must wander on through hopes and fears,
Must ache and bleed beneath your load;
I, nearer to the Wayside Inn
Where toil shall cease and rest begin,
Am weary, thinking of your road!

O little hands! that, weak or strong,
Have still to serve or rule so long,
Have still so long to give or ask;
I, who so much with book and pen
Have toiled among my fellow-men,
Am weary, thinking of your task.

O little hearts! that throb and beat
With such impatient, feverish heat,
Such limitless and strong desires;
Mine, that so long has glowed and burned,
With passions into ashes turned,
Now covers and conceals its fires.

O little souls! as pure and white
And crystalline as rays of light
Direct from heaven, their source divine;
Refracted through the mist of years,
How red my setting sun appears,
How lurid looks this soul of mine!

Besides being a national singer, Longfellow made, apart from his translation of Dante, as many as forty-nine or fifty versions

from nearly every European language, and from writers otherwise little known. He excelled in a work so difficult as translation. He caught the very spirit of the poem he wished to reproduce in English; and giving it all the needful value of accent and rhythm, made it in a sense his own. "The Bird and the Ship," "Whither," "King Christian," "Beware," "The Happiest Land," "The Castle by the Sea," all read like original inspirations more than mechanical or literal translations. His translation of Dante is considered by eminent critics to be

free alike from the reproach of pedantic literalness and of unfaithful license. His special sympathy and genius guide him with almost unerring truth, and display themselves constantly in the rare felicity of his rendering. In rendering the substance of Dante's poem, he has succeeded in giving also, so far as art and genius could give it, the spirit of Dante's poetry. Fitted for the work as few men ever were, by gifts of Nature, by sympathy, by an unrivalled faculty of poetic appreciation, and by long and thorough culture, he has brought his matured powers in their full vigour to its performance, and has produced an incomparable translation—a poem that will take rank among the greatest English poems.¹

It is said that

he spared no pains to make his work perfect. As it went on, friends were called in whose judgment as scholars, men of taste, poets, could be relied on, and to them the cantos were read in English; they comparing the version with the original, which they held in their hands, and making suggestions as the reading proceeded. Thus the utmost accuracy was obtained. In this way every line, every word, was tested by those most competent to pass judgment.²

Longfellow continued to compose and publish almost to the last. His "Ultima Thule" was published some two years before his death, and since that lamented event a volume called "In the Harbour," containing some short poems and translations, has appeared. His "spirit" and his pen were active up to the end. These volumes, if they do not increase, at least sustain the reputation of the honoured author, and add another flower to the garland that wreathes his brow. "The Bells of San Blas" was the last poem that he wrote. It was composed on March 15, 1882; but one of the finest things in "In the Harbour" is the sonnet, "Victor and Vanquished," which gives sonorous expression to exalted emotion and elevated thought. We shall conclude our extracts from the poet with quoting this sonnet, although another very fine one, and marked by the same qualities, is the sonnet entitled "Chimes":—

¹ Professor Charles Eliot Norton, in the *North American Review* for July, 1867.

O. B. Frothingham, in the *Atlantic Monthly*.

VICTOR AND VANQUISHED.

As one who long hath fled with panting breath
 Before his foe, bleeding and near to fall,
 I turn and set my back against the wall
 And look thee in the face, triumphant Death.
 I call for aid, and no one answereth ;
 I am alone with thee who conquerest all ;
 Yet me thy threatening form doth not appal,
 For thou art but a phantom and a wraith.
 Wounded and weak, sword broken at the hilt,
 With armour shattered, and without a shield,
 I stand unmoved ; do with me what thou wilt :
 I can resist no more, but will not yield ;
 This is no tournament where cowards tilt ;
 The vanquished here is victor of the field.

The preface to the little volume, "In the Harbour," tells us that it "contains all of Mr. Longfellow's unprinted poems which will be given to the public, with the exception of two sonnets reserved for his biography, and 'Michael Angelo,' a dramatic poem, which will be published later."

In considering Longfellow's place among the poets, we cannot claim for him the position of a very great or original poet : he is surpassed by the greatest in splendour of diction, grandeur of imagery, and brilliancy of thought. Though entitled to a place in the foremost rank, no one would seat him beside Milton, or Byron, or Wordsworth, or Keats, or Tennyson. He may be as popular in the ordinary sense of the word as any of these ; but his popularity is due to the simplicity of his style, and to that clearness of thought which gives to his verse much of its charm. He is never obscure. No future generation will ever establish a society for the better understanding of his poetry : it is as clear in thought as it is in expression. And happily so. Poetry ceases to be poetry where it becomes a mathematical problem which needs to be worked out before it is understood. It was not given to Longfellow to throw any new light on Nature, or to reveal things which are hidden from the world at large ; it was rather his mission to clothe in tender and beautiful forms thoughts that lie very near the surface, and by a vivid fancy and a scholar-like touch to invest ordinary subjects with loveliness and grace. If his sentiments were at times commonplace, they were always elevated by an exquisitely simple and often stately expression. No poet has appealed to a wider variety of tastes. In whatever relationship he stands to the poets of the Old World, he was the most popular poet that America has produced, although she can justly boast of poets of such genius, as Bryant and Whittier, Wendell Holmes and Lowell. Had America a Poet Laureate,

there can be little doubt that Longfellow's brow would have worn the bays.

There is one meed of praise which he richly merits—a soul of moral purity inspires all his work. “Whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report,” formed the subject of his verse. His art was, in the truest sense, moral and religious. With him the sensuous never passed into the sensual. There is nothing in his poems, nothing in his love for the beautiful, to convey a taint to the imagination, or to degrade the soul. When in his company we always breathe a pure and healthy atmosphere far removed from the unwholesome sentiment which lies at the heart of too much of the poetry of the present day,—poetry which may be described as “earthly, sensual, devilish.” It is true of Longfellow, if of any poet, that “he left no line that dying he would wish to blot.” A spirit of religion breathes through all his poems; he really loves goodness, and therefore the highest moral beauty finds its expression in his words. There is no paganism or pantheism in his poems. He is intensely Christian. He ever sees behind the natural and moral universe not only a Divine Presence, but also a loving Redeemer. A friend of many years has beautifully said of him, “The man was more and better than the poet.” “He was such a man that London working-men thought it an honour to kiss his hand.”

The present writer had the great pleasure of seeing Longfellow in his home at Cambridge in the autumn of 1879. He was most cordially received, as indeed all visitors, and Englishmen very especially, were. The poet's home is well known as an historic mansion. It was built nearly a hundred and fifty years ago by Colonel John Vassal, whose family stone in the Cambridge Churchyard bears only the goblet and the sun, “*vas*”—“*sol*,” the family arms. The house passed to Colonel Vassal's son, who forfeited all in the Revolution; and after him it was occupied by Washington, and became for a time his headquarters. We found him in his library,—a picturesque figure among picturesque surroundings; and his face lighted up with benevolence and beauty as he showed us several objects of interest in the room, and took us round his garden, where many a bright flower adorned the beds, and the trees were in the splendour of their autumnal foliage. He pointed out to us his famous inkstand which belonged to Coleridge, and bears his name upon an ivory plate. He possessed another which belonged to Crabbe, and which was given to the poet, as was also Coleridge's, by Mr. S. C. Hall. On the walls were some crayon portraits, and a good bust of Professor G. W. Greene adorned the room. Here also was a fine carved bookcase containing a priceless literary treasure,—the various editions of his works; and, what was far more valuable,

the successive manuscripts of each carefully preserved and bound under his direction, and often extending to three separate copies: the original MS., the MS. as revised for the printer, and the corrected proofs. He showed us the armchair made from the wood of "The Village Blacksmith's" Chestnut Tree, and presented to him by the children of Cambridge on his seventy-second birthday. It was this gift that called forth the poem published in "Ultima Thule," beginning:—

Am I a king, that I should call my own
 This splendid ebon throne?
 Or by what reason, or what right divine
 Can I proclaim it mine?
 Only, perhaps, by right divine of song
 It may to me belong;
 Only because the spreading Chestnut Tree
 Of old was sung by me.

His conversation, it is needless to say, was full of interest. He talked of England and America, literature and art, the poets, our impressions of the New World, and the beautiful scenery of "the White Mountains." It may be permissible to say that he had seen a small volume of the writer's, and had requested permission to insert some of the poems in a book he was then editing, called "Poems of Places." He spoke on composition and publication. It was a good way, he said, to publish short poems in magazines and periodicals, and then collect them into a volume. After the poems had appeared in print, he deprecated any alteration, as he thought by over-elaboration strength was often sacrificed for the sake of smoothness, and the verse, robbed of its vigour, suffered in consequence. So he talked, now in words of kindly encouragement, and now in kindly advice, his beautiful face beaming the while, and the simplicity and sincerity of his manner exercising a sort of fascination on those privileged to listen to his conversation, and to come within the reach of his sympathies.

But it is time that I bring these words upon this most gracious singer to an end. His reputation is world-wide; his memory has this peculiar fragrance, that, when he died, all felt—and the children, to whose hopes and fears he gave a voice, felt it not the least—that a friend had gone from earth. The merit of his works, their high moral sense, their deep religious beauty, their affinity with all that is noble in manhood and pure in womanhood, is attested by their immense circulation, and by the common verdict of men of letters and taste in every land where literature is cultivated and understood.

We cannot end this paper better than by quoting a few lines,

which the poet has put into the mouth of Walter, the Minnesinger of "The Golden Legend:"—

His gracious presence upon earth
Was as a fire-upon a hearth.
As pleasant songs, at morning sung,
The words that dropped from his sweet tongue
Strengthened our hearts; or, heard at night,
Made all our slumbers soft and light.

CHARLES D. BELL.

ART. III.—THE SILENT SISTER.

"SPEECH is silvern and silence is golden," has only a partial and occasional application. It would be almost as true, and only a few shades more inaccurate, to reverse the proverb, and to declare, amid the applause of Irish obstructives, and with the tacit approval of even Mr. Gladstone, that silence is silvern and speech is golden. Proverbs seldom, after all, tell more than half the truth, or paint more than one side of the shield.

The term "Silent Sister," as applied to the time-honoured College University across the Irish Channel—applied, I believe, in the first instance by the two great English Universities of Cambridge and Oxford—is a term not so much of reproach as of good-humoured badinage. Dublin was not always as famous for her literature as for her learning, if "literature" is a correct term to apply to the publication of books and tractates, as distinguished from the study and knowledge of books and tractates. The income of her Senior Fellows, and even of her Junior Fellows, increased as it is by the tutorial payments of undergraduates, and exceeding, as it so considerably does, the income of the Cambridge and Oxford Fellows and Tutors, may have had something to do with the quondam literary "silence" of the "Sister" University of Dublin. That reproach, if reproach it ever was, has now passed away entirely, as not only the scholarship but the scholarly literature of the Irish Sister has come to the front; but the not ungracefully descriptive title remains. The writer remembers having been asked many years ago, by the head of one of our great public schools of the second rank, whether "they 'do' Greek in Dublin," an inelegant question inelegantly put, by a gentleman who probably would have been offended if the head of one of our great public schools, of the first rank, had asked him whether "they" are able to "do" Greek in, let us say St. Nemo's School. That