

Mae Moon.
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In 1817, a child was born in Portland, Maine, whose name at home and abroad was to become a household word. It can be truly said that no name is more familiar or more dearly loved where the English language is known than the name of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

At the age of fourteen, Longfellow entered Bowdoin College, and graduated with honors in four years. After this, he studied for a time in the law office of his father, but he did not like this. He accepted a position to teach modern languages, and to prepare himself more fully for this position, he went to Europe.

In 1829, he came home and entered upon his duties. In 1835 his first great work "Elder Mearns" was published, this at once was popular, and gained him an enviable fame. Soon after this, he received a call to the professorship of modern languages and literature in Harvard University. Again he went abroad to study some of the northern nations of Europe. He returned in the following year to his

new position, which he held until 1854, when he resigned to devote himself to his literary work.

In 1846, a collection of his poems was published. Bryant said "These poems appear to me more beautiful than any I have ever read. The exquisite music of your verse dwells more agreeably than ever on my ear, and more than ever am I affected by their depth of feeling and their spirituality, and the creative power with which they set before us passages from the great drama of life."

America has no epic poem, no "Iliad" nor "Aeneid" — but "Evangeline", "Hiawatha" and "Miles Standish"; — these come near the heroic, and greatly help to supply the vacant place.

Long fellow's anti-slavery poems unlike Whitman's did not come from a fiery heart, nor were they full of humor; they recognized the existence of a great evil.

In his beautiful forest poems, "Hiawatha", we have before us the

beautiful woods and the fresh waters of the north. It deals with the Indians.

They were an untutored race, but this fact was not shown in his verse. He treats them with simplicity. Hiawatha is the one poem that leads the reader to see the birch, the ash, the eagle and deer, as they seem to the Red man himself. His use of the Indian names and dialect is beautiful.

He was not familiar with the wild wood life. He read some books relating to the Indians but the rest he drew from his imagination.

The true rise of our poetry may be dated from Longfellow's method of exciting an interest in it. He is said to be the least national of our poets. He was the first American to compose sustained narrative poems that gained and kept a place in literature.

He was a man of deep reserve. His intimate feelings he would not reveal nor his sacred experiences.

In poetry he found a form of expression which allowed great freedom of speech without referring to the personality of the author.

Long fellow's position and permanence in American literature are prominent and well established. His poetry does not possess the majesty of Milton's nor the wild and passionate inspiration of Byron's, nor the sure spirit of poetry which characterizes Bryant's, nor the philosophic depth of Emerson's, nor the patriotic fire of Whittier's; we are all charmed and entertained by the exquisite music of his verse. He sings to the heart of youth as in the "Children's Hour", and breathes forth cheer and comfort for the heart of age; his poetry is marked by grace and elegance, his artistic skill is shown by the way he chooses his words.

He shows to us a meditative and sympathetic nature and a wonderful purity, sweetness and refinement. He is an American poet, dear to every

heart, the poet for the home, the poet for the aged and young, the children's poet, who has breathed many a song into the air that has found lodgment into the heart of millions."

It is probable that his poetry is more read than that of any other poet of the nineteenth century. We may liken Longfellow to Goethe. He is to the English what Goethe is to the peasantry of Germany. In England our poet has been styled the poet of the middle classes, these classes, however, include the majority of intelligent readers. He is more widely read by foreigners than are his associates and seems to them the American laureate.

Longfellow is now beyond all question the most popular of the American poets, and has also a wide circle of admirers in Europe. He writes prose with as much success as poetry, though by his poetry he is better known and appreciated. In his writings are found purity of sentiment,

nobleness of thought and a deep sympathy with humanity.

His smaller pieces have gone into almost every intelligent household in our land and the influence has been for good. His poems have not the power of overmastering passion, they have an earnestness and a beauty of sentiment which is expressed in a finished and artistic form, which at once wins the ear and impresses the memory and heart.

It was not Longfellow's object to try to convey an idea which was not clear and intelligible to his own mind; he was an untiring and careful worker; he could converse in many languages, and was a polished scholar; but yet he wrote so simply that everybody could understand. Of how few can be said what was said of Longfellow, that, "he not only wrote no line which dying he would wish to blot, but not one, which living he had not a right to be proud of".

Every sentence that he penned is as clear as a crystal and as pure as snow.

He seldom gave thoughts absolutely new, but the thoughts he used he put in the best language. It is in Longfellow's shorter lyrical pieces, his ballads and his fine descriptions, that his powers are brought to the greatest advantage. In these he combines the skill of the artist with the simplicity of the poet. He was not a poet of nature but has often been called a poet of the sea. His regard of landscape and country life was less genuine than Lowell's or Whittier's.

He rarely went beyond the outlook of his mansion door. His imagination is greatest at the ocean, picturing the storms and calms.

The secret of his popularity as a poet is probably that of all similar popularity, namely, the fact that his poetry expresses a universal sentiment in the simplest and most musical manner. Each of his most noted poems is the song of a feeling

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common to every mind, in moods into which every mind is liable to fall.

He did not use that biting wit, but he had an abundance of playful humor that was full of kindness.

Of love poems, Longfellow wrote but few; none of these are full of longing or contained deep regrets, the reason for this may be that he was contented with his lot, he had gained the woman whom he idolized.

His life was written in his poems; a life not without sorrows, but a life in which the sunshine always had the better of the clouds with which it struggled. It is not in every case that the poet and the man accord. They did in this case, except that, finer and truer and greater as was the poet, the man was finer, truer, greater still.

He died in 1882, but he still lives and will live forever enshrined in the hearts of all people.