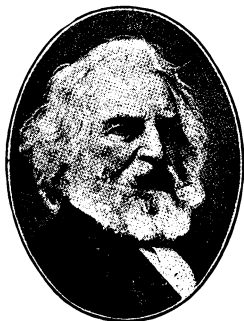


A Great Man Born In February



FEBRUARY 27 marks the birthday of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, a poet who has won a place in the hearts of those who have read his poems.

His verse blooms like a flower, night and day:
Bees cluster round his rhymes; and twitterings
Of lark and swallow, in an endless May,
Are mingling with the tender songs he sings.
Nor shall he cease to sing—in every lay
Of nature's voice he sings—and will always.

Longfellow understood better than any one else child nature. One writer says that the most wonderful traits of the poet were his accessibility and charity. Seldom did he refuse to see a caller. He received children as courteously as he did grown-ups. He moved with the children every afternoon at "the children's hour". His cheerfulness and gentleness have made such an appeal to the young folks that he is called "The Children's Poet".

On the poet's seventy-second birthday, the school children of Cambridge gave him an armchair made from the chestnut tree which the poet had made famous in his tale *The Village Blacksmith*. He was so very much pleased with the gift that he dedicated a poem to it. Those who came to see him were given a copy of the poem.

"The Children's Hour" is one of the most beautiful and best liked poems by Longfellow.

THE CHILDREN'S HOUR

Between the dark and the daylight,
When the night is beginning to lower,
Comes a pause in the day's occupations
That is known as the Children's Hour.

I hear in the chamber above me
The patter of little feet,
The sound of a door that is opened,
And voices soft and sweet.

From my study I see in the lamplight,
Descending the broad hall stair,
Grave Alice and laughing Allegra,
And Edith with golden hair.

A whisper, and then a silence;
Yet I know by their merry eyes,
They are plotting and planning together
To take me by surprise.

A sudden rush from the stairway,
A sudden raid from the hall!
By three doors left unguarded
They enter my castle wall!

They climb up into my turret,
O'er the arms and back of my chair;
If I try to escape, they surround me;
They seem to be everywhere.

They almost devour me with kisses,
Their arms about me entwine,
Till I think of the Bishop of Bingen
In his Mouse-Tower on the Rhine.

Do you think, O blue-eyed banditti,
Because you have scaled the wall,
Such an old mustache as I am
Is not a match for you all?

I have you fast in my fortress,
And will not let you depart,
But put you down into the dungeon
In the round tower of my heart.

And there will I keep you forever,
Yes, forever and a day,
Till the wall shall crumble to ruin,
And molder in dust away.

—Henry Wadsworth Longfellow