

A back room occupied by each of the four Longfellow boys at various times contains the trundle bed, the school desk, with the marks of boyish jack-knives indelibly left upon it, and smaller articles, all once dear to their boyish hearts. The window looks down into the garden. Roofs and walls of neighboring buildings now shut away the view once so extended, and of which Samuel Longfellow wrote:

"In summer time it was pleasant enough to look from the upper windows; those of the boy's room looked out over the Cove, and the farms and woodlands towards Mount Washington, full in view in the western horizon."

In recalling the early days in this old home, Rev. Samuel Longfellow, in his life of the poet, has given us many suggestive pictures, none pleasanter, perhaps, than this, which takes us at once into the everyday life of the family:

"In the evenings there were lessons to be learned; and the children opened their satchels and gathered, with their books and slates, round the table in the family sitting-room. * * * Studies over, there would be games till bedtime. If these became too noisy, or the father had brought home his law papers from the office, enjoining strictest quiet, then there was flight to another room; perhaps in winter, to the kitchen. * * * * When bedtime came, it was hard to leave the warm fire to go up into the unwarmed bedrooms; still harder next morning to get up out of the comfortable feather-beds and break the ice in the pitchers for washing. But hardship made hardihood."

Though the home of the poet's later

years was elsewhere, and his love of travel carried him to many lands, yet he never lost his affection for this old home, or the fair city of his birth, as is shown by repeated references to both in letter and journal. Writing from Portland in August, 1879, he says:

"I am here on my annual visit to the old house, inhaling health with every breath of sea air. * * * I am as idle as a painted ship on a painted ocean.' I only sit here at this upper window and see the people go by, and commit to memory the signs on the opposite side of the street. The sea-side laziness overwhelms me like a tide. I close my letter and my eyes." A few days later he writes: "Church-bells ringing; clatter of church-going feet on the pavement; boys crying '*Boston Herald!*' voices of passing men and women—these are the sounds that come to me at this upper window, looking down into the street."

When so many old landmarks were obliterated by the fire which swept over the city on the 4th of July, 1866, this house was fortunate indeed to escape. The poet refers to the fact in a letter written to a friend on the 23d of July of that year:

"I have been in Portland since the fire," he writes. "Desolation, desolation, desolation. It reminded me of Pompeii, that 'sepult city.' The old family house was not burned, the track of the fire passing just below it."

A most interesting old house, and stepping out from it to the bustle of the street, we find ourselves half unconsciously repeating the lines:

"We may build more splendid habitations,
Fill our rooms with paintings and with
sculptures,
But we cannot
Buy with gold the old associations."

THE RIVER OF LIFE

BY W. H. PIERCE.

HIGH in the mountains of Somewhere Land
A little brooklet sprung,
And it danced along over golden sand
And brightest songs it sung ;
It rushed through gorges and leaped over stones,
And gurgled its glee in a thousand tones,
Till it came to a meadow, broad and fair,
Where daisies bloomed in the shimmering air ;
And at eventide from a far-off star
A glitter of light like a silver bar
On its tranquil breast was flung.

Away in the forest of Anywhere,
Fern-sheltered from the sun,
A tiny rivulet glides here and there,
Its pilgrimage just begun ;
Gently, silently, hither and yon,
Seeming each moment fresh beauty to don,
It dimpled and tinkled a lullaby tune
As weird as a rede from a Runic rune,
Till it came to the meadow where idled the brook,
Which it joined with a kiss in a shady nook,
And thenceforth these two were one.

Together they start on a journey far,
Knowing not what the end may be,
Seeing each day but the things that are,
And naught of futurity ;
There are roaring rapids and troublous shoals,
There are murky marshes and still, deep pools ;
There are days when the Ice King holds it fast,
But it bides its time and spring comes at last.

Soon tiny boats float on its yielding breast—
And of all things these are the dearest and best
In this journeying to the sea.

The stream widens fast and finds work to do,
And its current grows swift and strong;
It has nobler aims and a broader view
Of the world as it hurries along.
The boats become ships, and some bright, sunny day
Each spreads its white sails and goes speeding away,
Seeking the land where the love-bird sings;
And the river murmurs, and memory brings
The meadow, the daisies, the willow-lined nook
Where they were united—the rill and the brook—
When life and hope were young.

Deeper and broader, stronger and true,
From mists and darkness free,
Its calm waters shining with sunset's hue,
The river glides peacefully;
And longer and broader the shadows grow
That slant o'er its bosom in evening's glow,
The boom of the ocean, solemn and grand,
Sounds nearer and nearer—'tis close at hand—
The breakers are here—the bar is passed—
The weary river is safe at last
In the arms of the sheltering sea.

O rollicking brooklet of bright, happy youth.
How fair thy waters be!
O sweet rill of maidenhood! Purity, truth,
Are ever the symbols of thee.
O tiny boats launched on the river's breast
Why must thou grow ships and depart on thy quest?
O River of Life, with thy quicksands and shoals,
Thy course is but run to uplift mortal souls;
Each trial, each care is but means to an end,
And soon comes a day when thy waters shall blend
With the sea of Eternity.