

Poetry.

A PSALM OF LIFE.

WHAT THE HEART OF THE YOUNG MAN SAID TO HIS PSALMIST.

BY H. W. LONGFELLOW.

Tell me not, in mournful numbers,  
Life is but an empty dream!  
For the soul is dead that slumbers,  
And things are not what they seem.  
Life is real! life is earnest!  
And the grave is not its goal;  
Dust thou art, to dust returnest,  
Was not spoken of the soul.  
Not enjoyment, and not sorrow,  
Is our destined end or way;  
But to act that each to-morrow  
Binds us farther than to-day.

Art is long, and time is fleeting,  
And our hearts, though stout and brave,  
Still, like muffled drums, are beating  
Funeral marches to the grave.

In the world's broad field of battle,  
In the bivouac of life,  
Be not like dumb, driven cattle!  
Be a hero in the strife!

Trust no Future, how'er pleasant!  
Let the dead Past bury its dead!  
Act—act in the living Present!  
Heart within, and God o'erhead!

Lives of great men all remind us  
We can make our lives sublime,  
And, departing, leave behind us  
Footprints on the sands of time;

Footprints, that perhaps another  
Sailing o'er life's solemn main,  
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother  
Seeing, shall take heart again.

Let us, then, be up and doing,  
With a heart for any fate;  
Still achieving, still pursuing,  
Learn to labour and to wait.

Select Tale.

ONE MORE DRESS.

BY OLIVER OPTIC.

CHAPTER I.

"To think of wearing the same dress to church Sunday after Sunday!" exclaimed Mrs. Bradley, a young married lady, to Mrs. Green, her mother.

"Why not, Sarah?"

"Folks will think it is the only one I have which is fit to wear to meeting."

"It is, isn't it?"

"I know it, but I don't care about all the world knowing it."

"You would not make all the world believe that which is not true, would you?"

"I don't care, I mean to have a new silk immediately."

"But Sarah, your husband cannot afford it."

"Yes, he can; at least we can curtail our expenses in something else."

"What?"

"Well, I don't know; we could make our provision bill less."

Mrs. Green shook her head.

"I don't think there is any need of our having beefsteaks and mutton-chops every morning for breakfast. We never had such things at home, you know. I would not give a straw to have meat for breakfast."

"But James depends upon it."

"I know it; yet for the sake of letting me appear a little better on Sunday, he would willingly dispense with it."

"Would you be willing to ask him the question?"

"Yes; why not?"

"You would ask him to go without his breakfast in order that you may have an extra silk dress?"

"Go without his breakfast, mother! I never thought of such a thing," said Mrs. Bradley, with a disturbed look.

"But you know it amounts to the same thing to him. He was brought up in the country where he had meat for breakfast, and he does not think he could make a meal without it."

"We will not say anything more about it then," replied the young wife, who, I beg the reader to believe, would not willingly have deprived her husband of any real comfort. "How do you suppose Mrs. Farmer gets so many dresses."

"I don't know."

She seemed to come out with a new one almost

every Sunday. She must have, at least, half-a-dozen silks and berages."

"I hope her husband can afford them," replied Mrs. Green, shaking her hand significantly.

"He is not any better off than James. They have the same salary, and in the same concern."

"A thousand dollars in these hard times will not go a great ways with a man who has a family to support, especially if his wife has a great many silk dresses."

"But James saves two or three hundred of his salary every year."

"Every young man ought to save something."

"Do you suppose John Farmer does?"

"I think not, at the rate his wife dresses."

"But it is too hard to wear the same dress every Sunday. If I had only one more, I could get along very well."

"You would want another still."

"No, I shouldn't, mother."

"There is no end to it when you undertake to follow all these absurdities. When I was a girl, I had only one dress to wear to meeting, and that was a calico."

"The times have changed."

"Changed for the worse. I'm sure no such vanity as flaunting out in a different dress every Sunday, ever entered a girl's head, especially girls whose fathers were not independently rich."

"Nobody thinks of wearing the same dress all the time. Only one more—"

"One is enough, Sarah. If you let such silly notions get into your head, you will never know where to stop. You could easily spend all your husband's salary in dress, and then not keep up with the demands of the times."

"I am sure James can afford me a new silk.—It will not cost much."

"Do not think of it, child. Be prudent, careful, and contented, and when James is rich, you may do different."

Mrs. Bradley was satisfied, after considerable more demonstration on the part of her mother, that she could get along without the new silk.—But it was hard to give up the idea of competing with Mrs. Farmer, whose husband was no better off than hers.

CHAPTER II.

James Bradley and John Farmer were clerks in a large house in the city, and both resided in neat little cottages in the suburbs. Their fortunes had been thus far very much the same; and perhaps they might have continued the same through life, but for the different characters of their wives.

Mrs. Bradley had been brought up to live within her means. A careful mother, who realized the responsibility of her position, had rigidly inculcated the principles of a sound economy, and trained her up to habits of prudence and thrift; and all these practical qualities she brought with her into her domestic relations.

Mrs. Farmer, on the other hand, though her parents were no better off in the world, had been brought up to be a lady—to wear fine dresses, and play the piano in the parlor. Her knowledge and experience of household duties was very narrow and superficial, and her husband's thousand dollars a year would hardly support them. They were obliged, in order to dress her as her habits and wishes required, to "scrimp" in many of the real comforts of life. The provision bill was kept at the lowest possible figure. Mrs. Farmer thought beefsteaks were unhealthy in the morning, and John found it necessary to be of her opinion. Six dollars a season for ice would buy a new bonnet; hence ice was the cause of a great many complaints that prevailed in summer.

The comforts of living were sacrificed to the luxuries of dress. Beefsteak at twenty cents a pound was unhealthy; but new bonnets at ten dollars a piece were necessities of life. Mutton chops at fifteen cents a pound caused the dyspepsia, but silk dresses at a dollar and a half a yard, were not only healthy, but indispensable to the happiness of the lady.

All the salary was spent—was intended to be spent—and the only question was whether it should be put in the body or on the body. The habit of extravagance was there, and all the thrift and economy which Mrs. Farmer knew, was to save money to buy new dresses.

She and Mrs. Bradley were on intimate terms with each other, and, as may be readily supposed, the subject of dress was frequently discussed.

A few days after the conversation of Mrs. Bradley with her mother, her neighbour was making a "call." Mrs. Farmer could talk of nothing but dress. It was the study of her life—what she lived for—what she most hoped for in the future. As usual, the conversation immediately degenerated into dress—it was all Mrs. Farmer knew.

"How do you like my new raw silk?" asked

she, after several adroit passes, in order to introduce this matter.

"It is very pretty, indeed. You come out in a new dress almost every Sunday, Ellen," replied Mrs. Bradley.

"I wish I could."

"I wonder how many nice dresses you have in your wardrobe?"

"I have only one that is fit to wear," replied Mrs. Farmer, indifferently.

"Only one!"

"That is fit to wear anywhere."

"You have at least three silks."

"All old-fashioned—made last fall—and all out of date. I tried to make John give me a new berage, but he would not."

"I am sure if I had your dresses, I should think I were a princess."

"Pshaw! If my husband don't give me another next week, I shan't go to church but once a month."

"If I had your dresses, Ellen, I should not think of another, for a year at least."

"Why don't you dress better, Sarah?"

"I can't afford to do so."

"Pooh!"

"My mother thinks I dress well enough."

"Why you have worn the same dress to meeting every Sunday for a year."

"And probably shall wear it every Sunday for the next year."

"I wouldn't, if I were you."

"I can't afford a new dress every month. I was speaking the other day about having one more dress, but mother said so much against it, that I gave up the idea."

"Tied to your mother's apron string yet!" said Mrs. Farmer.

"I am too thankful to get my mother's advice, to reject it."

"But get the raw silk, do! It will become you so well; and then we shall have a little respite from that everlasting fawn color."

"No, I have made up my mind not to have it."

"Put the money in your stomach instead, and get the dyspepsia into the bargain!" said Mrs. Farmer, as she took her leave.

CHAPTER III.

The "long run," tells the story; so let us step forward a few years, and look into the counting-room of our clerks.

James and John are still there, and occupying the same relative positions. Their salaries have been gradually raised, and for three years they have been the recipient of the handsome sum of fourteen hundred a year.

The first of January is at hand. Harris & Co. are about to dissolve, and the senior who has made a princely fortune—and is a queer old fellow at that—is about to form a new co-partnership.

"Boys," says old Mr. Harris, "you have been with me a long while; I suppose you want to get ahead, and become merchants."

The "boys" of course acknowledged the *corn*, and John Farmer winked significantly at his associates.

"But," continued the patriarchal merchant, "to get ahead in business, requires certain qualities of mind and body. One must be industrious, economical, and wide awake, as well as shrewd.—Driving fast horses, eating champagne suppers, and sucking mint-juleps, do not furnish the necessary schooling for a merchant. I won't preach, however. In one word; the first of January is close upon us. Those of you who can put two thousand dollars into the concern, shall draw a sixth of the profits! That's all."

The old fellow turned on his heel, picked up his hat, and left the counting room.

James Bradley was the only one of the number—four in all—who could "face the music."

The other three had perfected themselves in the art of driving 2.40 horses, drinking sherry cobbler, and eating good dinners; which Mr. Harris had hinted was not a necessary qualification for one of his partners.

John Farmer's surplus had been spent in giving his wife "one more dress." As his salary was increased from year to year, "one more dress," was the oftener required. Beefsteaks, mutton-chops, and ice, were as unhealthy and dyspeptic in their tendency as ever; and yet Mrs. Farmer, from the costliness of her apparel, might have been taken for the lady of a nabob.

Five years more. Old Harris is dead; and the firm is still Harris & Co., James Bradley is the senior partner. He has already made a competence, and does a very large business.

John Farmer left the concern three years ago.—It was supposed because he could not endure the thought of being a clerk under his former com-

panion. He left Boston and went to New York; but his unthrifty habits followed him. His wife wore the greater part of his salary on her back; and disheartened by his ill-success, he had increased the number of sherry-cobblers in his per diem allowance to such an extent, that he had been discharged from his place. Not being able to get another situation in New York, he reached Boston in straitened circumstances. He was equally unfortunate there. The toddy blossoms on his nose were against him; his coat was rusty, and his breath smelt like the fog of a three-cent grogshop. His last dollar was spent, and his wife was paying a *visit* to a friend who had repeatedly urged her to spend a week with her, and whom she would have been sorry to disappoint!

He was reduced to the last extremity. His old friend and associate, James Bradley, was now in affluence, and able to assist him. Mortifying as was the thought, there was scarcely any other alternative but to apply to him for a situation.

James was shocked when he recognized him.—Sherry-cobblers, a thriftless wife, "one more dress," and the want of encouragement, had done their work.

"Is there a vacancy in your counting-room, Mr. Bradley," asked he in humble tones.

"There is not, John, but I will create a place for you," replied the liberal merchant, as he realized the situation of his former associate.

"Thank you," replied John, a tear starting to his eyes at this unexpected kindness—the first he had experienced anywhere, not excepting his own house—for many and many a weary month. James took him home to dine with him, and John had an opportunity to contrast his own circumstances with those of his thrifty friend. He was sad at heart—in short, he was a ruined man.

He did very well for a few months in the counting-room of his friend, but his old habit soon obtained the mastery over him again, and he died suddenly of a disease induced by dissipation.

"One more dress," said Mrs. Green—the good old lady was now a cherished member of her daughter's family—"is the representative of the whole system of extravagance. 'One more dress,' as the type of a great bundle of bad habits, was the ruin of John Farmer. Don't you know it, Sarah?"

"I do mother; and I cannot be too grateful to you for your wholesome advice. I am sure that without it, I should have procured 'one dress more;' then wanted another and another, until I had spoiled all my husband's expectations. Poor Ellen Farmer! she is binding shoes for her daily bread now!"

Miscellaneous.

INVENTOR OF RAILROADS—Strange as it may now seem, not further back than 1820, there was not a railroad in existence. Now they form an iron net work over this country and Europe, and have almost annihilated space, in like manner as the magnetic telegraph has almost annihilated time. Doubtless most people, in these times of universal intelligence and universal travel, are well acquainted with the progress of Railroads; but how many there are who can tell us anything of the author and inventor of that wonder of the nineteenth century—the railway system. It is so, too, with the author of the great and useful inventions of the age. How little is generally known of Whitney, the inventor of the cotton gin, of Watt, of Fulton, and a hundred other ingenious men, whose inventions have made the age what it is; their works live after them, and are likely to live for centuries; but their names, by a seeming ungratefulness of the age, are suffered to sink into oblivion. Neither Whitney nor Fulton have even a statute among us to perpetrate their memories; and as for the author of railroads, there may not be twenty persons in the United States who ever heard his name, although he is still living.

About half a century ago, the exact year is not known, there was born at Leeds, England, a man named Thos. Gray; scarcely anything more than this is known of his early history. He was, we believe, a poor collier; and, being very ingenious, he conceived the idea of facilitating the transportation of coal from Middletown colliery to Leeds, a distance of three miles, by means of a sort of railway which he constructed of wood. Upon this the cars moved along at the rate of three miles and a half an hour, to the great merriment of a wise and discriminating public who laughed at the idea of a railway as something very visionary, and as the mere suggestion of laziness. Poor Gray tho't otherwise. Magnificent visions of future railroads such as are now stupendous realities, loomed up before him, and he began to talk in public of a general system of iron railroads. He was, of course