

LONGFELLOW

The lecture on Longfellow, on Monday evening at the Club, was the last of the course, and the last we shall have the pleasure of hearing from Professor Rolfe until he prepares another series.

It is with real regret that we say good-bye to him, as to one from whom we have received so much pleasure and instruction; one to whose fortnightly visits we have all looked forward with such pleasant anticipations which have never failed of abundant realization.

We understand that Prof. Rolfe is soon to go to California and Hawaii, and possibly to Japan, and that he will not return to his University Extension lectures until next October. May favoring gales and gentle airs waft him over summer seas, and follow him home to the friends he leaves behind him.

The Longfellow lecture had more of critical analysis and less of eulogy than the former lectures, but like the rest was just and appreciative. The lecturer first compared Longfellow with the poet beside whom he is commonly placed. Tennyson is the poet of the intellectual and cultivated, and by far the greater literary artist of the two. Longfellow makes his appeal to the great heart of the common people, the simple and unlearned the world over, and he does it by treating the simplest and most commonplace subjects in such a way as to give them freshness and interest, and to make them morally effective; as for instance in "The Psalm of Life" and "The Old Clock on the Stairs."

He also pointed out the fact that there is little in Longfellow's work that is distinctively American, but that in his translations, and in the tales and poems of foreign lands, such as "The Golden Legend" and "Tales of a Wayside Inn" he has gathered treasures out of the rich stores of the older and more complex European civilization and has brought them home to us and popularized them, and made them familiar and thereby greatly enriched our literature. Even "Hiawatha," the greatest of his poems, and the one upon

which his fame most surely rests, is American only because it treats of our aborigines of whom we know so little. In reality it is foreign and exotic, and far removed in thought and imagery from the common life of our people.

In conclusion Professor Rolfe said that while both Whittier and Lowell have moments when they rise to higher poetic levels than any to which Longfellow ever attained, yet it can scarcely be doubted that he is, all in all, the greatest, as without doubt he is the most popular of American poets and one whose place among the great ones is secure for all time.

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