LONGFELLOW AND SPANISH AMERICA

by

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The relationship of the Spanish countries in his own hemisphere to the whole Spanish cultural experience that influenced Henry Wadsworth Longfellow has hardly been recognized. The explanation may lie, of course, in the scarcity of allusions to Spanish America in his published writings as opposed to the numerous Spanish references, in the fame of the numerous Spanish translations he made relating directly to the European setting, and in the well-known literary interpretations of Spain that came from his pen in contrast to the few lesser known ones associated with Cuba, Mexico, or South America. Factually, too, he spent eight months in Spain as a youth, whereas he never actually travelled to any of the Spanish American countries. Yet it was his country's emphasis on trade relations with Spanish America which caused him to be sent to Spain in the first place to become familiar with the language. Furthermore, in his later years Longfellow's interest in all that was Spanish, including the romance and adventure he remembered from his youthful visit in Spain, extended to the Spanish closer to home in Central and South America, Cuba, and Mexico.

Actually the total response Longfellow made to his experiences as a youth in Spain or as an adult using the

experiences later depended less on the reality which confronted him when he visited there than on his own basic temperament and the romantic attitude he assumed towards them. He saw what he wanted to see and treasured the memory of it. As Samuel Longfellow's biography points out, he even refused to visit Spain a second time for fear it might dull the illusion of its magic.¹ Though the immediate adventures and personal associations in Spain must have affected the young writer at the moment, they soon became a part of a somewhat idealized view of life and ultimately of an interest that included both the Spanish in the European setting and the related Mexican and Spanish American located nearer home. Longfellow reflected the common attitude of his countrymen in preferring Europe for travel and frequently as a setting for narratives. As he grew older, though, some of his works and many of his unfulfilled plans reveal that his imaginative interests extended to Spanish American topics as well.

Though the eight-month visit in Spain in 1827 made an impression on Longfellow that affected his art significantly, it was not the cause of his being a romantic. He was an idealist long before he went. Further, he developed even more in the years following his visit as he utilized

¹Life of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Vol. I (Boston: Ticknor and Company, 1886), p. 134.

his experiences imaginatively and fused them with other Spanish cultural influences. If one is to understand the relationship of the Spanish to what Longfellow accomplished as a writer, he must look not only at the Spanish experience itself but also at the young artist who was to be affected by it, at his lifelong interest in Spain and Spanish America, at his personal associations with both Spanish and Spanish American writers, and at his completed and his projected literary plans on Spanish and Spanish American topics. All of these considerations relate to the man and his art.

Few of the studies of the effect of the Spanish culture on Longfellow even mention Spanish America. Both Newton Arvin² and Lawrence Thompson³ deal with the impact of the Spanish on Longfellow's work, but neither makes any allusion to Spanish America. One chapter of John DeLancey Ferguson's 1916 book American Literature in Spain evaluates Longfellow's popularity in Spanish America as well as in Spain.⁴ The doctoral dissertation study published by Iris Whitman in 1927, Longfellow and Spain, mentions one work on a Spanish American subject and alludes to entries in Longfellow's Book of Suggestions, indicating his intention

²Longfellow His Life and Work, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1963).

³Young Longfellow, (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1938).

⁴(New York: Columbia University Press).

to write on further Spanish American themes.⁵ Stanley T. Williams' scholarly volume The Spanish Background of American Literature (1955) refers in one sentence to "Longfellow's rather mild interest in Spanish America,"⁶ though a lengthy footnote makes it clear that the statement relates only to published writings and not to manuscript materials and collections at Houghton Library and Longfellow House which reveal a different story.⁷ No study has included the Spanish American as a part of the Spanish interest or has even considered the whole Spanish American relationship at all. A brief paper published in 1942 discusses Longfellow's popularity in Spanish America,⁸ another in 1956 tells of Longfellow's acquaintance with Argentine President D. F. Sarmiento during a two-day visit to Boston and Cambridge,⁹ and a third, ten years later, tells of Longfellow's doing some translating as a result of the relationship with the president.¹⁰ None of them attempts to

⁵(New York: Instituto de las Españas en los Estados Unidos).

⁶(New Haven: Yale University Press), II, 152.

⁷Williams, II, 335-336.

⁸John E. Englekirk, "Notes on Longfellow in Spanish America," *Hispania*, XXV (October, 1942), 295-308.

⁹John M. Fein, "Longfellow, Sarmiento, and Two Unpublished Letters," *AmF*, XII, (1956), 299-302.

¹⁰Harvey L. Johnson, "Longfellow Translates Some Verses at Sarmiento's Request," *Hispania*, XLIX (March 1966), no. 1, 237-240.

deal with the whole Spanish American interest or with its importance overall in Longfellow's work.

No study of the Spanish influence on Longfellow's work, however, can be complete without attention to the closely related but less well-known alliances he had with the people and topics related to South America, to Cuba, and to Mexico. The same language which drew his interest toward the European country also drew his attention to the other countries which spoke Spanish or Portuguese, even though he never visited them. The role of these countries in the life and the writing of the poet warrants consideration. They were a part of the total cultural milieu that he knew. Succeeding chapters in this thesis will attempt an examination of that role. The purpose will be to trace Longfellow's interest in Spanish America from its inception during his romantic youth through his active years and into his later life, attempting to assess its relationship to the kind of person he was, to the activities in which he was engaged, and to the total Spanish experience and influence in his life. Both Longfellow's published and his unpublished writings are important in such a study since the consideration ultimately relates to both the dreams and the accomplishments. Historically, the interest was rooted in Longfellow's past as were the Spanish, the French, the German, the Italian, the medieval concerns, and much else that caught his attention. Therefore, the first

consideration must be of the poet's ancestry and early life.

The following chapter II will show how Longfellow's colorful background helped him to develop a romantic temperament which was only heightened by a study of languages and by circumstances which led him to faraway Spain, more idealized than real to the impressionable youth. What he remembered and what he wrote about later was the exciting, the glamorous, and occasionally the melancholy that caught his eye and brought him under its spell. Never caring to return to Spain for fear of breaking the spell, Longfellow cherished the memories which apparently became a part of the romantic inspirations and notions which permeated his life. Whether these were closer to the Spanish American interests than to any other because of similarity in languages is not particularly important. The point is that in spite of the months he spent in Spain, the Spanish experience itself, in the strictest sense, hardly served as a reality for Longfellow's art any more than did the real associations with people and the ideas and inspirations that came from the Spanish America he never saw. Both had an effect.

Chapter III will trace Longfellow's relationship with the Spanish American from its origin when he was a young boy through the various literary acquaintances and associations which affected it to its ultimate expression in his creative work and in the plans of his last years. This interest can be seen not only as a part of the

romantic poet's preoccupation with the exciting, but also as an outgrowth of his desire for a national literature with an international quality. Various experiences throughout Longfellow's life kept alive the influence of the Spanish American.

The last chapter will discuss the relation of the whole Spanish experience to Longfellow's accomplishments in his writing. Several questions will be considered: Of the total literary achievement of this prolific artist how much was apparently affected by a Spanish interest (whether study of language, reading of Spanish works, associations with individuals, interest in Mexico, South America, or Central America, the visit in Spain or an unidentifiable source or inspiration)? Did its impact compare to that of other international interests and influences? What is the importance of Longfellow's response?

Numerous editions of Longfellow's works exist, as shown by the 384 editions listed in the Library of Congress and in the first full Longfellow bibliography recently published in volume five of Jacob Blanck's Bibliography of American Literature. For this study an older edition, The Complete Poetical Works of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, 1922, is used for poems because the edition is complete. For the novel Kavanagh the 1965 New Haven, Connecticut, publication edited by Jean Downey is used. Background information comes from Samuel Longfellow's standard biography

Life of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and Andrew Hilen's Letters chiefly. In addition, the manuscript files of letters and journals, both in Houghton Library at Harvard University and at Hawthorne-Longfellow Memorial Library on the Bowdoin College campus, serve as invaluable sources for information relating to various facets of Longfellow's interests and accomplishments.

CHAPTER II

DEVELOPMENT OF A ROMANTIC SPIRIT

Longfellow's romantic spirit which caused him to respond artistically only to the exciting rather than to the whole reality in Spain was grounded in the picturesque and adventurous roots of his ancestry, in the colorful environment in which he grew up, and in the sheltered idealistic atmosphere in his home. The scholarly study at Bowdoin College only furthered his associations with the world of excitement, in this instance related to the arts and to ideas and inspirations that served to inspire his imagination. When the opportunity for travel to Spain came just as the year of study ended in 1825, he was still an impressionable youth, a full-fledged dreamer prepared to see the exciting and the beautiful.

One of the strongest influences on the development of Longfellow's interest in the romantic during his early years was his maternal grandfather, General Peleg Wadsworth, an eccentric man of wealth and extensive possessions. The general, an American Revolutionary War hero, clung stubbornly to old ways and modes of dress. While he was living in Portland, Maine, the old gentleman was often plagued by young boys following at a distance, sniggering at his three-cornered hat, a relic of his old Continental army uniform. In addition, he wore, according to his daughter Zilpah

Longfellow, "a bright scarlet coat, buff small-clothes and vest, full ruffled bosom, ruffles over the hands, shoes with silver buckles, white stockings, white cravat with bow in front, hair well powdered and tied behind in a club."¹ To escape the derision of the younger generation and to fulfill a life-long dream to "rough it," General Wadsworth moved to his Hiram estate in 1807, 7800 acres of land deeded to him by a grateful government for his services during the struggle for freedom in 1776. The romantic old man fancied himself as a true frontiersman, suffering all the privations of wilderness life. In reality, however, he was only forty miles from Portland. His home, which he referred to as a farmhouse,² was actually a fifteen-room mansion, a great colonial house, with five fireplaces and a hall large enough to allow the training of a squad of militia: a militia to protect the area around Hiram from Indian attacks, a danger which no longer existed.

The militant illusion in which he lived was probably an offshoot of an earlier day in which he distinguished himself as a leader in the Revolutionary War. The general, in charge of a company of minutemen, was captured and

¹Thomas Wentworth Higginson, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1902), p. 13.

²Herbert G. Jones, The Amazing Mr. Longfellow (Portland, Maine: The Longfellow Press, 1957), p. 65.

imprisoned, and he made a dramatic escape with no implements to aid him but a gimlet and a penknife.

Henry Wadsworth was only eight months old when his mother took him for his first visit to his grandfather's farm. When he was old enough to travel alone, however, the boy's greatest joy was to board the stage to make the journey to Hiram where he was assured of thrilling recitals of his Grandpa's war exploits and experiences. Herbert Jones tells us that the child would listen with rapt attention, never seeming to tire of them.³ The old war hero not only recounted his experiences during the war, but he also told him stories of the Baron of Castine, a young French nobleman who came to the New World and married an Indian princess, daughter of a chief; he told him stories of the Wadsworth ancestors, John Alden and Priscilla Mullins; he told the lad stories about the Indians; and he told him about the bravery of his uncle, Henry Wadsworth, his namesake, who perished voluntarily with his shipmates when they blew up their ship during the War of 1812 rather than surrender to the British.

In later years Henry Wadsworth Longfellow immortalized, not only these stories, but the storytelling experience itself through his art. His long poem "The Courtship of Miles Standish" recording the romance of his Mayflower ancestors

³Jones, p. 66.

has become a legend in American literature. "The Baron of St Castine" dramatizes an element strange and new in America, the fraternization of nobility with "savages" in the New World. "Hiawatha" records for posterity the mythical legends of the Indians Longfellow first heard from his grandfather. Several works--"Decoration Day," "Paul Revere's Ride," and others--are based on the exciting tales his grandfather told him during his visits to Hiram.

Young Henry's paternal ancestry, too, offered nourishment for the young dreamer's romantic imagination. His great-great-grandfather was a "village blacksmith"; his grandfather was a schoolteacher, probably responsible for the young boy's preference for books and studies, rather than for the more rugged outdoor life which many boys his age preferred. Grandfather Longfellow, like Grandpa General Peleg Wadsworth, dressed in old-style apparel--"long skirted waistcoat, small-clothes, and white-topped boots, his hair tied behind in a club, with a black ribbon."⁴ Small wonder that Longfellow, as a young professor at Bowdoin, shocked his colleagues and delighted his students with his strange modes of dress: brightly colored waistcoats, coats, and neckties.⁵

⁴Higginson, p. 13.

⁵Samuel Longfellow, I, 256.

The imposing brick mansion on Congress Street in Portland, a gift from General Wadsworth to the poet's parents, served as a perfect environment in which the romantic imagination of the youth could flourish. From his upstairs room the young boy could look out across the Atlantic Ocean and watch "the tide rise, and the tide fall." His view of the ships disappearing over the horizon likely set the boy's mind to dreaming of faraway places and implanted a yearning to one day embark on some romantic voyage. Often with his friends he would scan the horizon for an approaching vessel, then when they sighted one, race to the docks to hear the strange talk of the "bearded sailors." Mr. Edward Henry Elwell's description of the wharves at unloading time lends credence to the idea that young Longfellow's imagination was fired by the activity he found there:

The discharging of a cargo of molasses set the town in an uproar. The wharves sounded with the songs of the negro stevedores hoisting the hogsheads from the hold without the aid of a winch; the long trucks, with the heavy loads, were tugged by steaming horses, under the whips and cries of the truckmen. Liquor was lavishly supplied to the laboring men, and it made them turbulent and uproarious.⁶

In writing of Longfellow's youth, George Thornton Edwards says that if Longfellow could have had the selection

⁶W. Sloane Kennedy, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Moses King Publishers, 1882), pp. 20-21.

of the place of his birth, he could not have found on either continent a town more delightful or one that was surrounded by a quieter atmosphere for his refining than Portland, Maine. He describes in detail the view from the western end of the city of quiet rivers running through green meadows and fertile fields with the white hills of New Hampshire in the distance; the eastern end of the city looking out on a beautiful bay studded with islands and dotted with the incoming and outgoing craft in the channel, stretching away eastward as far as the eye could reach.⁷

Another area of his environment which probably helped Longfellow to develop into a romantic was Deering Woods on the outskirts of Portland. It provided seclusion for young Longfellow and his friends--a place where they could roam and daydream. He describes his fascination with the spot in some lines in "My Lost Youth":

I can see the breezy domes of groves,
The shadows of Deering Woods;
And the friendships and the early loves
Come back with a Sabbath sound, as of doves
In quiet neighborhoods.⁸

The sea-fight which Longfellow watched from a hillside near Portland during the War of 1812 undoubtedly

⁷The Youthful Haunts of Longfellow (Portland, Maine: G. T. Edwards, 1907), pp. 3-4.

⁸Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, "My Lost Youth," The Complete Poetical Works of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, ed. Horace E. Scudder (Dallas: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1922), p. 194, lines 46-50. (Hereafter referred to as Poetical Works).

impressed the heroic exploits indelibly upon his mind. That battle, too, became a part of the mature poet's reminiscing about his childhood:

I remember the sea fights far away,
How it thundered o'er the tide!⁹

These and other scenes from Longfellow's home by the sea served as themes for many of his works.

The guidance of his mother during these early formative years was one of the most forceful influences on Longfellow. Both Zilpah and her husband, Stephen, were cultured, well-educated people, but Stephen was more practical and cautious. Zilpah was the dreamer; it was she who undertook the close, careful watch over her children while her husband, a shrewd, calculating Harvard graduate, was away discharging his legal and civic duties as a member of the Maine legislature. Samuel Longfellow, the poet's brother and biographer, describes his mother as "beautiful in her youth, a kind friend and neighbor, a helper of the poor." From her, he said, must have come Henry's imaginative and romantic side, since she was fond of poetry and music and, in her youth, of dancing and social gaiety.¹⁰

Longfellow was like his mother. An entry in his journal about an incident from everyday life demonstrates

⁹Poetical Works, p. 194, lines 37-38.

¹⁰Samuel Longfellow, I, 4.

his sympathetic and benevolent spirit:

Went to the Police Court to get off some poor German woman, accused of stealing apples. Got the case re-opened, as they had already paid the fine. But I think it will be remitted, as the apple tree was not in an enclosure.¹¹

Another time, his biographer records, he went to court in behalf of a converted Jew who had been rejected by his own people and not very kindly treated by the Christians.¹²

Samuel Longfellow also noted that his mother was fond of nature and was known to have sat by a window during a thunderstorm enjoying the excitement of its splendors.¹³ She enjoyed the seclusion and tranquillity of her father's Hiram retreat. She often roamed the woods with her children, teaching them to be aware of the splendor and wonder of creation and to know of the beauty and peace offered in its solitude. She wrote of these outings to her brother,

I think I should be fond of a country life. The retirement pleases me, the stillness of the scene--when, after rambling miles without meeting anyone, we seat ourselves by the side of the river which we find unruffled by a breath of air--has a wonderful effect in tranquilizing the spirit and calming every unpleasant emotion.¹⁴

Longfellow never lost the awareness of nature which his mother instilled in him during those early days. When

¹¹Samuel Longfellow, II, 313.

¹²Samuel Longfellow, II, 313.

¹³Samuel Longfellow, II, 313.

¹⁴Samuel Longfellow, I, 6.

he was thirty-two, he recorded in his journal in poetically descriptive terms a deep appreciation of the beautiful setting:

Golden autumnal mornings! Bright
shines the dewy sun; fresh and
bracing is the air; crickets chirp
in the grass; and caw-caw sings
the solitary distant crow.¹⁵

Exactly twenty years later as he observed the scene from the window of his Nahant summer home, he again expressed in his journal the joy he felt in the experience.

A delightful day. I look from this chamber window over the sea. The tide is low, and the purple dulse is lovely, lying in the shallow water like patches of heather.¹⁶

Continuing his lifelong habit at seventy-two he wrote to his sister Anne, enthusiastically describing his winter environment,

Today we have a fall of snow, but without wind,-- which makes the landscape beautiful. The trees are in full bloom with snowflakes.¹⁷

From the beginning, Longfellow's art showed his skill at utilizing the elements of nature in setting the tone of his verse or in portraying the theme. His first published poem, "The Battle of Lovell's Pond, written when he was thirteen, deals with the account of an Indian fight at

¹⁵Samuel Longfellow, I, 343.

¹⁶Samuel Longfellow, II, 387.

¹⁷Samuel Longfellow, III, 304.

"The Song of Hiawatha," tells us.

Should you ask where Nawadsha
 Found these songs so wild and wayward,
 Found these legends and traditions,
 I should answer, I should tell you,
 "In the bird's-nest of the forest,
 In the lodges of the beaver,
 In the hoof-prints of the bison,
 In the eyry of the eagle!
 "All the wild-fowl sang them to him,
 In the moorlands and the fen-lands,
 In the melancholy marshes; . . ."²⁰

While it may be said that Mrs. Longfellow instilled a near-reverence for nature in her children, it is also true that she trained them in religious awareness on a more sophisticated plane. The Longfellow children were taught a strict observance of Sunday. They could not play games on that day, nor could they read any profane books [those other than religious] on that day. The family "went to meeting" twice on Sunday. In the afternoons they had Bible-reading, generally conducted by Zilpah, and in the evenings the young people would gather in the Longfellow home to spend hours in song. Influence from his mother's guidance on these New England Sundays was likely partly responsible for the didactic quality of Longfellow's verse.

Mrs. Longfellow directed the academic, as well as the religious, studies of her family. Her oldest son Stephen was reading Shakespeare and Henry, Gay's Fables at very early ages. In fact, when Henry was only three years

²⁰Poetical Works, p. 113, lines 21-31.

old, he was enrolled in Ma'am Fellow's School, a private institution where well-to-do families sent their children. An attempt to send him to a public school when he was five ended in failure because the child, accustomed to a gentle, refined environment, could not cope with the rough and tumble boys whom he met there. When he returned home one day with his ears burning because the teacher had unjustly called him a liar, Henry was sent back to a private school. Later he was sent to the Portland Academy, a private institution, for the studies he would need before going on to college. Consequently, the boy was deprived of a "rough and tumble" boyhood and of getting to be friends with all levels of people. This early protection could well be the reason that Longfellow in many of his poems showed a fascination for kings, chiefs, emperors, wealthy farmers, or even blacksmiths, if they were noble as was Basil in Evangeline. It might also be the reason he chose to live in aristocratic semi-seclusion on the Craigie estate, keeping aloof from the more unpleasant aspects of life.

Be that as it may, however, Mrs. Longfellow can be credited with instilling in her children an appreciation of the arts--music, theater, and literature. While there were few occasions to take the children to a concert or to the theater, she had many opportunities to help her children become acquainted with classical literature. The shelves of the modest Longfellow library held copies of carefully

selected classical works from which the boys might choose.

Professor Packard, who was a member of the Bowdoin faculty in 1825, acknowledged this early training in a short account of Longfellow as a student:

I judge that his preferences were for classical studies, and whatever addressed the aesthetic element was²¹ largely developed in him at an earlier period.²¹

Apparently the recognition of Longfellow's response to the literary and to that which he recognized as artistic and aesthetic was well documented well before the time when he went to Spain.

One of the books that delighted Longfellow most was Don Quixote, not only during his childhood but throughout his life. He frequently alluded to Sancho's epigrams in his writings and even in his journal entries. He seemed to find great pleasure in the witty wisdom of that "sage." A journal entry January 30, 1860, reveals that his own children were entertained with tales of the "Knight of the Woeful Countenance":

In the evening F[anny] reads Don Quixote to the boys who are delighted with it. This has been our evening reading for some time.²²

Though by no means the only Spanish interest in Longfellow's

²¹Francis H. Underwood, The Life of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (Boston: B. B. Russell, 57 Cornhill, 1882), p. 51.

²²Samuel Longfellow, II, 398.

early life, the book is an early example of the adventure and romance which he came to associate with the Spanish.

Longfellow credited Robinson Crusoe as having influenced some of his earliest attempts at versification, turning his mind toward the exotic, the faraway. In an essay "My School Days," published in the "Brazen Nose College" series in the Portland Advertiser, November 15, 1825, he wrote,

Then came my romantic days . . . I began to write poetry. . . . The first attempt in which I put forth the vigour of my young mind was a paraphrase of the wild romance of Robinson Crusoe.²³

Sir Walter Scott also influenced Longfellow, as Lawrence Thompson points out in the biography entitled Young Longfellow. From the reading into which his mother guided him, Longfellow saw Scott's use of archaic words and phrases which over the years became a part of his own style. Likewise Longfellow absorbed from Scott a strong interest in the medieval era and in chivalry, in knights, monks, fair ladies, and heroic deeds.²⁴

Longfellow recognized the effect of another romantic publication and its author. Irving's Sketch Book, he said, was the most memorable one of his youth--"the one book among all others" which in early youth first fascinated

²³Quoted by Lawrence Thompson in Young Longfellow, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1938), p. 345.

²⁴Thompson, p. 345.

his imagination and excited and satisfied the desires of his mind.²⁵ Following his trip to Europe (1826-1829), Longfellow published a romantic account of his travels, a close imitation of the Sketch Book. This prose work, Outre-Mer, published in 1835, brought this comment in a notice in the London "Spectator":

Either the author of the 'Sketch Book' has received a warning, or there are two Richmonds in the field.²⁶

In referring to the similarities, Thomas Higginson points out, however, that Longfellow brought more picturesquely and vividly than Irving the charm exerted by the continent of Europe over the Americans who were exploring it.²⁷ A significant effect of the Irving book overall was the urge it gave Longfellow to travel. Furthermore, Irving's association with Spain and the years he spent there added great interest to the area as far as Longfellow was concerned. Later in 1827 when Longfellow was in Spain and discovered that Irving was there, he was delighted. No doubt it added to the adventure for him.

To credit Zilpah Longfellow with implanting in her son an early love for literature is to credit her with

²⁵Samuel Longfellow, I, 12.

²⁶Quoted by Higginson, p. 69.

²⁷Higginson, pp. 70-71.

drawing her son's interest away from the tedious boredom he saw in the law profession his father wanted him to enter to the more romantic course of a literary career. Even before he finished college, Longfellow professed a desire to become eminent in literature. In a letter to his father he wrote, "The fact is, I most eagerly aspire after future eminence in literature, my whole soul burns ardently for it."²⁸

Longfellow adapted readily to the quiet remoteness of the Bowdoin Campus in Brunswick, Maine, when he went there in 1821 while many students found its isolation boring. Longfellow was content to ramble through the quiet stillness of the pine forest, observing nature as his mother had taught him to do around Hiram and Portland. The lively literary discussions in the evenings with his "brothers" of the Peucinian Society stimulated the young man's interest in literature and turned his mind even farther away from the dry, unromantic law profession.

Longfellow's interest in literature was aroused even further while he was serving on the committee to compile a printed catalog for the new books received after the Peucinian Society's collection had been damaged in a fire. He began to take a new interest in reading and writing. He longed to know what lay between the pages of each of the

²⁸Andrew Hilen, I, 94.

books. He wrote to his mother that sometimes he was reading as many as four books at a time. He said he would begin a book and if he saw after a bit that it did not really interest him, he would place it back on the shelves and reach for another one. Why labor through one that did not suit his fancy when there were so many books he had not read! Perhaps it was this scholarship which prompted him to write to his father during his senior year, "nothing could induce me to relinquish the pleasures of literature--little as I have as yet tasted them."²⁹

By the time he was a senior at Bowdoin, Longfellow's interest in literature had aroused in him a desire to read works written in other languages. He admired Sir William Jones's knowledge of languages. In 1825 he wrote,

Eight languages he was critically versed in--eight more he read with a dictionary and there were still twelve more which he had studied less perfectly. . . . I have somewhere seen or heard the observation, that as many languages as a person acquired, so many times was he a man.³⁰

On December 5, 1824, Longfellow wrote asking his father's opinion of going to Cambridge [Harvard] for one year after finishing at Bowdoin where he could become familiar with the best authors in polite literature and at the same time acquire a knowledge of the Italian language,

²⁹Andrew Hilen, I, 104.

³⁰Andrew Hilen, I, 104.

"without an acquaintance with which, I shall be shut out from one of the most beautiful department of letters. The French I mean to understand pretty thoroughly before I leave College."³¹

Longfellow was pleased when his father agreed to the plan. In January of 1825 he wrote telling him that he was pleased and that he hoped to gain as perfect a knowledge of the French and Italian languages as he could.

Likely, this interest in a knowledge of the languages and literature of other cultures, along with the skill which Longfellow exhibited in translating one of Horace's odes, prompted the directors to offer the youth the professorship of modern languages in the newly endowed chair at Bowdoin College. Their only stipulation was that the youth must study in Europe to prepare himself for the appointment.

The temperament which had been developing in Longfellow had prepared the young man for a romantic response to what he saw abroad. Longfellow left Portland with the understanding that he would spend two years in Europe, mostly in France and Spain, concentrating on the language of those countries, and that if he accomplished his goal in time, he would spend some time traveling and studying in Italy and Germany. As things turned out, he spent three

³¹Andrew Hilen, I, 94.

years in Europe, and he spent more time in Italy than anywhere else. A brief review of his activities in Europe during those three years is important to this study, especially showing the effect of the experience in Spain as compared to the time spent in France and in Italy. Longfellow stayed around nine months in France. On leaving he wrote to his parents,

Thus you see me on my way to Spain: and I cannot say that I leave France with much regret. It may be, that my curiosity leaves no room for feelings of this kind, by painting the land to which I am going as fairer than that I am leaving--or it may be a secret disappointment lurking in my heart,--at having found more perplexities to escape--and more difficulties to encounter than I had anticipated:--but true it is that I look forward to a happier life in Spain . . .³²

Longfellow spent eight months in Spain, an enchanting eight months of reliving the idealized "days of yore" which his reading had caused him to associate with all of Europe. Near the end of his visit there he wrote to his sister Elizabeth,

I find much more frank and sincere feeling of kindness toward me as a stranger here in Spain--than I have ever found in France. In France, I found a good deal of the whited sepulchre: here all is generous sincerity.³³

For awhile Longfellow was homesick for Spain after he entered Italy. He wrote to his family, "the fact is, I

³²Andrew Hilen, I, 24.

³³Andrew Hilen, I, 234.

am homesick for Spain. Next to going home, let me go to Spain."³⁴

Circumstances soon changed, however, and Longfellow almost forgot his reason for going to Europe in the first place. His amorous involvement with a married woman, Madame Julia Persiani brought, not only the disfavor of his father, but it almost cost him the position with Bowdoin. In a letter in December, 1828, Longfellow referred to a letter in which his father had informed him that his appointment at Bowdoin had been refused.³⁵ Although he reacted indignantly, Longfellow soon departed from Italy, a more serious student. Somewhat concerned over the shadow of doubt which his year's stay in Italy had cast in the mind of his father, Longfellow wrote,

I have only to assure you that whatever suspicions my long stay in Italy may have occasioned you, they are wholly without foundation.³⁶

Possibly his father suggested that he come home at once because Longfellow, in panic, wrote back, reminding his father, and possibly himself, of the benefits of further studies and a longer stay in Germany:

I can hardly reconcile myself to the idea of relinquishing my studies at a German University. I become daily more and more impressed with the importance of it. My familiarity with the modern

³⁴Samuel Longfellow, I, 142.

³⁵Andrew Hilen, I, 286.

³⁶Andrew Hilen, I, 287.

languages will unlock to me all those springs of literature [sic], which formerly would have been as sealed books to me. I have often had to lament, that I was obliged to leave the different countries I have visited, at the critical moment when the knowledge I had attained in their languages rendered a longer residence peculiarly desirable. You see how it is with Washington Irving. He has remained in Spain upwards of three years--and see what he profits from it.³⁷

On December 27, 1828, he wrote more positively about going to Germany:

I intended to remain at Dresden until Spring. This however depends altogether on circumstances. I shall not unless I find it very cheap living there. Indeed I am not decided. I feel so very melancholy and down-hearted. . . .³⁸

Such was the note on which Longfellow entered Germany where he stayed about six months. While he was there, he at last enrolled in a university in Europe--the University of Göttingen. Living, he said, was cheap and the library the largest in Germany and filled with rare books.³⁹

Of his three years' sojourn in Europe it may be said that he spent nine, more or less, miserable months in France, eight months of romantic reverie in Spain, one year of passionate love in Italy, and approximately six months of study in Germany.

³⁷Andrew Hilen, II, 287.

³⁸Andrew Hilen, I, 291.

³⁹Andrew Hilen, I, 298.

The exciting and the exotic in his visit to Spain corresponded more nearly to Longfellow's romantic spirit than anything he found elsewhere, fulfilling his expectations more closely. For this reason the influence was more lasting on his life and art. Samuel Longfellow in describing the impact of the visit to Spain on Longfellow called it "a period of great delight, appealing with romantic charms to a young man in his most romantic years." So indelible were the romantic impressions of that visit that nearly fifty years later Longfellow wrote vividly of them in a poem called "Castles in Spain."

How much of my young heart, O Spain,
 Went out to thee in days of yore!
 What dreams romantic filled my brain,
 And summoned back to life again
 The Paladins of Charlemagne,
 The Cid Campeador!⁴⁰

Longfellow took these romantic impressions home with him at the end of his journey and, now and then, some particularly delightful moment would remind him of Spain. One such time was during the early days of his marriage to Mary Potter in January, 1831. He wrote in his journal,

I can almost fancy myself in Spain; the morning is so soft and beautiful. The tassellated shadow of the honeysuckle lies motionless upon my study floor, as if it were a figure in the carpet; and through the open window comes the fragrance of the wild brier and the mock orange, reminding me of that soft sunny clime where the very air is laden, like the bee, with sweetness. . . .⁴¹

⁴⁰Poetical Works, p. 335, lines 1-6.

⁴¹Samuel Longfellow, I, 102.

Another time he said there was something "Spanish" about Fanny's beauty, referring to her dark beauty.

Although Spain, like France, was recovering from a revolution, the devastation in Spain did not depress him as it had in France. Longfellow's visit to Spain was made during the aftermath of twenty years of invasion, revolt, and tyranny. These troubled years had brought Spain to the brink of ruin. Lawlessness and unrest prevailed. Heads of proud families turned to highway robbery as a means of sustaining themselves. Bold banditti lay in wait for unsuspecting travellers. Longfellow had heard of the dangers before he entered Spain, but the tales of atrocities only heightened his sense of excitement. He wrote to his father of his dramatically successful entry into Spain:

I have reached the very heart of the empire
without falling among thieves or becoming such a
melancholy illustration of blood guiltiness as
some of my friends anticipated.⁴²

Years later in a poem written to his children, "The Children's Hour," Longfellow alluded romantically to the banditti:

Do you think, o blue-eyed banditti,
Because you have scaled the wall,
Such an old mustache as I am
Is no match for you at all!

In addition to tales of bold robbers and banditti Longfellow encountered the colorful Basque girls who, he

⁴²Samuel Longfellow, I, 102.

said, made their living by conducting travellers on horse-back from Bayonne to Irun. At last he was able to see what he had dreamed of seeing in Europe! He said of them,

They have the most beautiful dark eyes, fine teeth, a sun-burnt complexion, and glossy black hair parted over the forehead, gathered behind the ears, and falling down to the knees in a large beautiful braid . . . one in particular . . .⁴³

From that point, Spain had the young man under a spell from which he never could escape and from which he never cared to escape. He saw romance in a land "outlined by mountains that lay black and barren and uninviting"⁴⁴ through eyes trained long ago in strolls in the forests around Hiram with his mother or in the pine groves surrounding the Bowdoin campus. He not only saw beauty in the somber mountains, but in a dashing little mountain brook trickling its way through the rocks.

It was in Spain that he could see the idealized days in the past which he had read about in literature. He said he could envision the Spain of a more glorious time. Coming into Spain, he wrote in a letter to his father, was exactly like rolling back two hundred years of time, where one could see the dresses and equipage of that earlier time, the same old leather doublet, trunk hose, and odd-looking little carriages that were represented in the old

⁴³Samuel Longfellow, I, 105.

⁴⁴Manuscript, Journal, Harvard's Houghton Library.

pictures of Gil Blas and Don Quixote.⁴⁵

In the same letter Longfellow demonstrated that he saw the reality, but that he was determined to view it romantically. In describing the road between Bordeaux and Bayonne he wrote,

. . . here and there a miserable looking hut--and a little patch of cultivated land blooming in the desert. . . like Stern [e]" I hate the man that can travel from Dan to Beersheba,--and say "tis all barren"--I must tell you that the way is occasionally diversified by towns and straggling villages, and one evening I was quite delighted to find the romantic little village of Roquefort--built upon the sides of the green valley of the river Douze--that has scooped out a hollow for it, in the midst of an immense sandy plain.⁴⁶

The young romantic even managed to glean a bit of humor out of the sight of the half-starved, naked children who ran pitifully about him and his fellow travellers as they passed through the villages in La Mancha.

. . . a troop of half-starved children some absolutely naked come shouting forth lifting up their hands and begging a mouthful of bread for the love of God! They follow you dancing and singing and tumbling about with such strange gambols, that it raises a smile upon your lips, at the same time it makes your heart ache within you.⁴⁷

Perhaps Longfellow could imagine that La Mancha's "champion of right" would eventually come in search of adventure again and right all of these wrongs.

⁴⁵Andrew Hilen, I, 222.

⁴⁶Andrew Hilen, I, 219.

⁴⁷Manuscript, Journal.

The pride and dignity of former days in the lives of these impoverished Spaniards Longfellow saw in the symbol of the traditional cloak:

Everybody in Spain wears a cloak; rich or poor, high or low, old or young. To be sure, this in the poorer classes sometimes dwindles down to a blanket, but it is always gracefully worn, and you see the muleteers sitting on their saddles with their cloaks wrapped round them and the corner thrown over the left shoulder, and riding along with all the dignity of dons and noblemen.⁴⁸

These people exemplified the "Spainness" Longfellow had expected to see. Spain had not disappointed him as had France. He saw the destitution of Spain, but his heart was young and gay. His attention did not linger for long on the unpleasant side of life.

Later he wrote what could be an interpretation of his response to Spain in his autobiographical novel, Kavanagh. He is describing Mr. Churchill's response to life near him:

. . . he [Mr. Churchill] was gazing at what was remote and strange and indistinct; the nearer incidents of aspiration, love, and death escaped him. They were too near to be clothed by the imagination with the golden vapors of romance; for the familiar seemed too trivial, and only the distant and unknown completely fill and satisfy the mind.⁴⁹

In a letter to his mother May 13, 1827, Longfellow described the desolation which he saw in Spain and told

⁴⁸Manuscript, Journal.

⁴⁹Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Kavanagh, ed. Jean Downey (New Haven, Connecticut: College and University Press, 1965), p. 114.

of his negative response to it:

You can hardly imagine how little there is in the province of Old and New Castille to interest the traveller. The country lies waste and open to the sun--you see traces of former tillage--and here and there a ruined village deserted by its inhabitants, presents the melancholy picture of falling roofs and mouldering walls. The country looks stripped and barren--and you can everywhere trace the steps of desolation passing over the vestiges of former prosperity. I was glad when the shades of evening hid these sad momentos from my sight.⁵⁰

After his return to Bowdoin, Longfellow, in a letter to Alexander Slidell, chided himself for his shallow perception of Spain during his visit there.

Your information on Spain is very much admired here. It makes me, however, very melancholy when I read it for open where I will, I find something unknown to me before. I was as long in Spain as you were--enjoyed the same advantages whilst there . . . I feel rather sad, that I have effected so little, where you have effected so much; for instead of a treasure of useful and valuable information, such as you have brought from Spain, I have only dreamy sensations, and vague recollections of a sunny land . . .⁵¹

Notwithstanding this later self-recrimination, young Longfellow had no such misgivings while he was in Spain. Instead, he indulged in activities which he had learned to enjoy in his youth, more delightful now that he was on foreign soil. His journal records some of the activities and places he enjoyed most:

⁵⁰Andrew Hilen, I, 224.

⁵¹Andrew Hilen, I, 323.

A walk to the canal with Florence [the land-lord's beautiful sixteen-year-old daughter]

The storm: take refuge in the chapel. Overtaken by rain on entering the city--The café.⁵²

Young Longfellow attended a bullfight--the best of the season--where a great number of horses were killed and where a great many picadores had hairbreadth escapes; he went to a village church and listened to the mass music; he went to a dance in the village--danced to the manchegas music of the guitars and voices with girls in the dress of the peasantry with castanets; he joined in the dance and knocked off the manager's hat twice with the fast motion of his hands.⁵³

Other journal entries show Longfellow's restructuring the adventures of the knight errant as he remembered them even from the days of his early childhood when he had first read Don Quixote:

No one can enter the province of La Mancha, without a reverie of faithfulness in love and chivalry in arms. The memory of Don Quixote has made it classic ground. The history of his achievements is written in everything that meets the eye: and one cannot get a view of a windmill perched on an eminence by the roadside, without fancying that he sees the figure of the wandering knight--tilting valiantly against the imaginary giant.⁵⁴

⁵²Manuscript, Journal.

⁵³Manuscript, Journal.

⁵⁴Manuscript, Journal.

Longfellow's love of nature, strong in him since his childhood, turned his attention toward the natural beauty of Spain. Of the wild beauty of Despeña-perros he wrote in his journal,

As the traveller advances into the wild pass of Despeña-perros, the scenery around him becomes wilder and wilder. The road winds along the summit of the mountains,--on one side sheltered by huge overhanging rocks--and on the other looking down a precipice of immense height, covered with rugged forest trees, with shrubbery and wild vines clinging in the crevices of the rocks. At the bottom of this deep ravine, winds the silver waters of a little stream.⁵⁵

Nor did the beauty of the Spanish women escape his attention. In a journal entry intended in part as a letter to his family, Longfellow described his fascination with the coquetry and charm of the Spanish women:

I wish you could see a Spanish lady:--her stately step--the toss of her head--the grace with which she manages her fan--her veil thrown back a moment with the glancing hand, while the overpowering eye that turns you pale flashes into the heart!⁵⁶

It may have been the beauty of the Spanish women that later prompted him to describe his beloved Fanny as "the stately dark Ladie."⁵⁷

Longfellow even allowed his characteristically romantic approach to life to direct his approach to the

⁵⁵Manuscript, Journal.

⁵⁶Manuscript, Journal.

⁵⁷Quoted by Edward Wagenknecht, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Portrait of an American Humanist (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 163.

study of the Spanish language for which he had come to Spain. He wrote to his father that under the attentions of the landlord's daughter, a young lady about eighteen who had already become quite a sister to him, he hoped to find the acquisition of the Spanish a delightful task.⁵⁸ Later he wrote to his sister Elizabeth that the daughter "a young lady of 'sweet sixteen' with the romantic name of Florence," supplied the place of a sister much better than he had anticipated could be possible.⁵⁹ At any rate, Longfellow's Spanish language study, rather than being scholarly and exacting, was associated with the idealized and exciting as was much of the total Spanish experience.

Longfellow saw in the religious ceremonies of the Catholic Church "all the pomp and circumstances of the darker ages." He felt that the Spaniards in their faith were the most obedient people in the world, believing everything the priest told them to, without asking why. Longfellow especially was impressed with the passage of the Host--or "consecrated wafer"--to the deathbed of some poor dying soul. The pageantry and drama he saw in the streets he described vividly in a letter to his father, telling of the procession of priests with wax candles and the tinkling of a little bell. As the procession passed through the

⁵⁸Andrew Hilen, I, 222.

⁵⁹Andrew Hilen, I, 234.

streets, he wrote, the people would remove their hats and fall on their knees.⁶⁰

The most remarkable of the ceremonies, he felt, was the religious festival "Corpus Christi" with its color and drama. The balconies on both sides of the streets were decorated with tapestry and yellow and crimson hangings and filled with ladies in fiesta dresses, he observed. Beneath, the procession passed slowly and solemnly along through a double file of soldiers. First came the children of the charity hospitals, then a music band, then the religious orders, then the Host with its tinkling bell, and finally a guard of soldiers.⁶¹

The melancholy effect of the Escorial harmonized with Longfellow's romantic spirit, too. He lingered among the gloomy arches of the magnificently grand old church, indulging in a pleasant kind of reverie. He wrote in his journal,

I heard Mass said in the twilight of its isles; and as the chant of the priests reached my ear at intervals, with the peal of the organ echoing amid the arches and dying away in indistinct murmurs along the roof, the effect was most powerful.⁶²

He saw in the ritual a colorful splendor that struck a powerful chord to which he responded. The superstitions

⁶⁰Andrew Hilen, I, 235-236.

⁶¹Andrew Hilen, I, 235-236.

⁶²Manuscript, Journal.

and legends of Spain also caught Longfellow's fancy and continued to fascinate him long after he left Spain. He heard the story about the towel with which Christ mopped the sweat from his brow on his way up the mountain to the cross, leaving the imprint of his features.⁶³ He also heard the story of the Christian who, while he was chained to the pillar of a mosque, scratched a cross on it with his fingernail.⁶⁴

Later in his career he used some of these legends in his poetry. "The Challenge," "The Emperor's Glove," and "The Secret of the Sea" are dramatizations of Spanish legends. Of his own attitude toward these superstitions and their effects he wrote,

When thus romance can cheat one of his cares,--I
am ready to believe in it. Indeed, I am most
thoroughly orthodox in my practical faith; and
confess that to beguile one tedious hour, I would
believe a fairy tale!⁶⁵

The truth is that Longfellow had been fascinated with legends and tales since his childhood when General Wadsworth filled his ears with fantastic stories.

Probably no experience in Spain excited Longfellow's romantic imagination more than his visits to Granada and to

⁶³Manuscript, Journal.

⁶⁴Manuscript, Journal.

⁶⁵Manuscript, Journal.

the Alhambra. He wrote in his journal after he visited the historical old Granada,

How my spirit is stirred within me!--how my thoughts
are rapt away in visions of other times! Is it not
a dream?⁶⁶

The Alhambra, too, took him back to earlier days in imagination. He described his fascination rapturously in a journal entry at the time he was in Spain.

There are moments in our lives to which we feel that
romance could add nothing--that poetry itself could
not beautify!--Such were those I passed in lingering
about the Alhambra--and dreaming over the warriors
and warlike deeds of other days.⁶⁷

Longfellow's experiences in Spain served as fulfillment of the dreams he had when he came to Europe. They "satisfied the mind," as he often expressed it. The "loving family" atmosphere, the strolls, the legends and myths, the colorful drama of the religious atmosphere, and the exotic scenes all corresponded to Longfellow's romantic spirit as no other experiences he had in Europe during the impressionable period of his youth. His former experience had prepared him more nearly for what he found there than anywhere else. Furthermore, from the whole of what was in Spain he was able to respond only to that which touched his spirit, that is, to the colorful and romantic with which he felt a kinship because of the kind of person he was. All

⁶⁶Manuscript, Journal.

⁶⁷Manuscript, Journal.

of it became a vital but indistinguishable part of Longfellow's developmental background, more idealized than real and far too precious to be repeated. Continuing to respond emotionally and imaginatively rather than intellectually or objectively to the experience, Longfellow refused ever to visit Spain again.⁶⁸ It is for this reason that, having examined the effect of the real visit to Spain, we must turn to the related Spanish American area which Longfellow never saw but which occupied his interest over a long period of his life. It figured more prominently than has been suspected in the overall picture of Longfellow's artistic accomplishments.

⁶⁸Samuel Longfellow, I, 40.

CHAPTER III

THE SPANISH NEARER LONGFELLOW'S DOOR

Longfellow's satisfying aesthetic experience in Spain served as a bond to draw him toward the Spanish under his own skies. Having removed the language barrier between himself and the Spanish world of literature, art, and music and having demonstrated a sympathetic attitude toward that culture, Longfellow found many Spanish Americans at his door. He himself never visited in Spanish America, possibly because at the time he could have travelled there, it was not "popular" to do so. By the time travel to Cuba, Mexico, and South America became the fashion, he had family responsibilities that prevented him from going. However, many of Longfellow's friends and some members of his family travelled there, and some of them wrote books of travel, history, and science on Spanish American themes. Longfellow's interest in what his friends did and in their writings persisted throughout his life. As he became better known as a poet, with the growth of his reputation came an enlarging of his circle of friends to include several nationalities. Journal entries and letters in manuscript files at Houghton Library reveal that he had numerous associations with distinguished leaders and literary figures of Spanish American countries. Furthermore, his own literary interests

as revealed by entries in his Book of Suggestions indicate that he aspired to write on several themes related to New Mexico, Cuba, and South America.

Longfellow's earliest contact with Spanish America is a part of his romantic development during his childhood. Little did he realize, as he raced to the docks in Portland to hear the "strange speech" of the bearded sailors who came into port from the West Indies, the relationship this experience would have to his later life and work. It was actually as a direct result of West Indian trade that Longfellow went to Spain.

As trade grew between the United States and the West Indies, the need for a knowledge of Spanish became urgent to facilitate business communications. From this need grew the demand to include Spanish in the curriculum of colleges and universities. Recognizing the necessity of language learning, Madam Bowdoin, widow of the school's namesake, gave \$1,000 to Bowdoin College in 1825 for the purpose of establishing a modern language chair. The endowment opened a professorship for which few men were qualified. For this reason the position was offered to young Longfellow who had expressed a desire to study languages and had shown an aptitude for it by his successful translation of one of Horace's odes. In this way Spanish America became one of the determining factors in Longfellow's pursuit of a literary career rather than a career in law.

In 1829 Longfellow returned from Spain and delved immediately into a study of Spanish literature. His knowledge of the language and the sympathy he showed for Spanish literature served as a magnet to draw Longfellow to the Spanish people of this hemisphere. As he said of the American and English, "we are very like the English,--are, in fact, English under a different sky," so he must have felt about Spanish and Spanish Americans. Many Spanish Americans, knowing his attitude toward their culture, turned their footsteps toward his door. People from many levels of life came, from a pesky Peruvian refugee to distinguished statesmen. Scholars, writing on Spanish American themes, shared the confidence of their aspirations and achievements with Longfellow. Friends gave him glowing accounts of their travels in Mexico, Cuba, and South America.

William Prescott, who, like Longfellow, never travelled in Spanish America, wrote two histories of those countries--Conquest of Peru and Conquest of Mexico. He shared his enthusiasm for his progress in these works with his friend. Longfellow first mentioned the history of the conquest of Mexico in a letter to George W. Greene July 23, 1839, "Prescott is writing a History of the Conquest of Mexico."¹ He again mentioned the works in a journal entry April 9, 1840:

¹Samuel Longfellow, I, 339.

Went to see Prescott. He says his History of the Conquest of Mexico will not be finished for three or four years, though the papers have announced it for next autumn. Showed me a letter from Gayangos² . . .

In a note, Samuel Longfellow told that Pascual de Gayangos was the Spanish scholar who gave important help to Mr. Prescott in the collection of materials for his histories.³ In another journal entry May 20, 1846, Longfellow mentioned that he dined at Prescott's at five and added,

He received us in his library, where I found Rev. Mr. Young, Rev. Mr. Ellis, and West the painter, looking at the two rival Mexican editions of the Conquest of Mexico.⁴

From this evidence we know that Longfellow watched closely the development of this work. Just the collection of the materials was an exciting drama in itself. First, Longfellow's literary idol Washington Irving, hearing that Prescott was researching the exploits of Cortéz in Mexico, a work he had planned for many years, relinquished his materials to the historian. Brooks tells in The Flowering of New England how Prescott began his work with eight thousand sheets of manuscript, beautifully copied from the Spanish archives, all the original documents, diaries, and letters, never yet published, never even seen, except by a

²Samuel Longfellow, I, 363.

³Samuel Longfellow, I, 363.

⁴Samuel Longfellow, II, 38.

few chroniclers. He had Navarette's manuscript collection, dealing with Peru and Mexico. He received help from the Spanish Academy. The old Spanish families opened their chests of papers. The Spanish minister in Mexico City sent him information about the Aztecs. Four copyists in Madrid gathered materials for him. For descriptions of the trees and the birds, the landscape and customs of the country, Madame Calderón de la Barca, who had lived as a governess in Concord and for whose Life in Mexico Prescott wrote a preface, sent him sketches of Mexican scenes and manners. There was enough diplomacy, Van Wyck Brooks says, involved in gathering the materials for his work to have founded a small republic.⁵

We may be reasonably sure that Longfellow was in on most of this excitement and from the experience made the acquaintance of Señora Calderón. In a letter to Sam Ward on February 6, 1839, he said, "Tonight there are Tableaux at Señora Calderón's, where I shall probably be."⁶ In a note Hilén says that Longfellow may have met Frances Erskine Inglis, wife of Don Ángel Calderón de la Barca, Spanish minister to the United States and then Mexico, through Prescott.⁷

⁵Van Wyck Brooks, The Flowering of New England, (New York: Dutton, 1952), p. 329.

⁶Andrew Hilén, II, 129.

⁷Andrew Hilén, II, 130.

Longfellow followed Prescott's Conquest of Peru with the same interest. On January 22, 1847, he wrote in his journal,

Went to town. After dinner, walked with Prescott, who is jovial, and in the best possible humor,-- having the Conquest of Peru now in progress.⁸

On March 18 of the same year Longfellow told of a celebration at Prescott's for the completion of that work,

Dined at Prescott's. Dr. Frothingham, Kent, Ticknor, Sparks, Gardiner, Choate, Sumner, Bowen, and myself. It was a pleasant affair, on occasion of closing Conquest of Peru.⁹

Other friends and members of Longfellow's family actually travelled to Cuba and Mexico, a trend that grew increasingly popular. In a letter to Charles Sumner February 13, 1859, Longfellow wrote, "Theodore Parker, a minister, and his wife have gone to Cuba for his health, his lungs being affected; and Dr. Howe and his wife have gone with them."¹⁰ In another letter to Sumner April 26 of that year he remarked, "The Howes have not yet returned from the Island of Cuba; but Dana has, and has written a book,-- To Cuba and Back [Richard Henry Dana Jr. who later married one of Longfellow's daughters]." In a journal entry October 18, 1866, Longfellow mentioned that his own son Charles had been to Cuba, "Gray, Charley's travelling companion in Cuba,

⁸Samuel Longfellow, II, 76.

⁹Samuel Longfellow, II, 84.

¹⁰Samuel Longfellow, II, 378.

and fellow law student dined with me. He is going to Madrid for the winter."¹¹ And on Sunday March 7, 1875, he wrote, "Charles leaves us for a trip to Mexico with Greely Curtis and Hunt, the painter."¹²

Another long-time friend whose presence in Cuba in 1840 must have added to Longfellow's romantic vision of that island was Alexander Everett, American minister to Spain during the time of Longfellow's visit there. In fact, the friendliness and hospitality of Everett and his wife in introducing the young student into sophisticated society in Madrid greatly enhanced his excitement for Spain. The friendship which began at that time lasted throughout their lives. Longfellow and Everett corresponded regularly and it is likely that Everett's mission to Cuba in the spring of 1840 for the United States government was of special interest to Longfellow. Some of Everett's activities in Havana brought Longfellow closer still to Spanish America. Everett translated some of José Zorilla's poems and helped Domingo Del Monte get two of his treatises on education published.¹³ It may well have been Everett who introduced

¹¹Manuscript, Journal.

¹²Manuscript, Journal.

¹³A. Owen Aldridge, "An Early Cuban of International Cultural Relations: Domingo Del Monte," Hispania, LIV, No. 2 (May 1971), pp. 348-352.

Longfellow to Cuban poetry for which he seemed to have a particular liking. Entries in a notebook labelled Memo-randum of Books show that between 1835 and 1867 Longfellow purchased two volumes of poetry by Cubans. Certainly it is safe to assume that Longfellow and Everett discussed the cultural affairs of Cuba.

Another of Longfellow's closest friends and a Harvard teaching associate who had an interest in Spanish America was Luis Agassiz, a Swiss naturalist who participated in a study of fishes from Brazil and published a book of his findings. Longfellow noted in his journal on November 29, 1867, that Agassiz came to his home "to read the closing chapter of his book on Brazil to me."¹⁴ A month before that entry was made, Longfellow had written of having attended a dinner at which he saw M. Vogéli--"a Frenchman living in Brazil, who had come to translate Agassiz' new book on Brazil."¹⁵ A note in Longfellow's journal shows that as early as 1864 he and Agassiz had visited with W. Lisboa, the Brazilian minister, who had come to Cambridge to visit the two of them. Many associations seem to have given Longfellow avenues of communication with those from the Spanish American scene.

¹⁴Manuscript, Journal.

¹⁵Manuscript, Journal.

this fashion that he ever wanted to repeat the experience of the 1827 trip to Spain that had become in his romantic imagination a complete magical fantasy.

Further evidence of Longfellow's romantic interest in Spanish America is found in a letter which he wrote to Professor A. S. Packard, Harvard professor of Greek. It regards a monument which the Maine Historical Society, of which both Packard and Longfellow were members, was erecting in memory of Columbus in Santo Domingo where that great explorer first landed in the New World. The letter shows a real link between the two countries in a manner which would afford a special appeal to Longfellow for whom the past was always dear. The complete communication follows:

Cambridge July 13
1879

Dear Mr. Packard,

Will you allow me to call your attention to a statement in regard to the remains of Columbus, in the following Resolution of our Maine Hist. Soc. as reported in the newspapers.

Resolved, That for this purpose a suitable monument should be erected in the city of San Domingo, where the remains of the great admiral still rest in the cathedral, and that it is eminently fitting that the United States should initiate a movement for this object.

These remains are no longer in San Domingo, but in Havana. Appleton's "American Cyclopedia," the authority nearest at hand, says:

"His remains . . . were taken in 1536 to St. Domingo, and deposited in the cathedral of that city: thence were conveyed with great pomp in 1796 to the Cathedral of Havana, where they now repose."

The same statement, is found in Prescott. "Ferd.. and Isabel," 111.242. though he fixes the date of the transfer to Havana one year earlier.

For the words "still rest," in the Resolution, might be substituted "rested for more than two centuries."

Always faithfully yours

Henry W. Longfellow.¹⁸

A matter of great concern during Longfellow's time still was the development of a national literature. Longfellow's idea of the character of a national literature for the United States opened another avenue of association with Spanish America, for he envisioned a national literature that would reflect the influence of all the cultures represented in the New World. In a journal entry dated January 6, 1847, he expressed this ideal:

Much is said now-a-days of a national literature. Does it mean anything? Such a literature is the expression of national character. We have, or shall have, a composite one, embracing French, Spanish, Irish, English, Scotch, and German peculiarities. Whoever has within himself most of these is our truly national writer. In other words, whoever is most universal is also most national.¹⁹

¹⁸Manuscript, Bowdoin College Library, permission to quote the letter granted by Arthur Monke, Librarian, Bowdoin College Library, March 13, 1972.

¹⁹Samuel Longfellow, II, 74.

In a dialogue in Kavanagh Longfellow demonstrated his actual plans to fulfill his dream of a literature that reflected an international flavor--in this case, the Spanish of this hemisphere. Two characters in Kavanagh, Mr. Hathaway and Mr. Churchill are talking. Mr. Hathaway voices Longfellow's philosophy when he tells Mr. Churchill of his plans to write a great national drama, the scene set in New Mexico:

It is entitled Don Serafin, or the Marquis of the Seven Churches. The principal characters are Don Serafin, an old Spanish hidalgo; his daughter, Deseada; and Fra Serapion, the curate. The play opens with Fra Serapion at breakfast; on the table a gamecock tied by the leg, sharing his master's meal. Then follows a scene at the cockpit, where the Marquis stakes the remnant of his fortune--his herds and his hacienda--on a favorite cock and loses.²⁰

An almost identical entry in Longfellow's Book of Suggestions proves that while he envisioned a national literature portraying all of the cultures represented in the New World, he actually made plans to write a play on a Spanish American theme. The entry reads,

A Mexican Drama: "Don Serafin or the Marquis of Seven Churches."

The heroine's name--Deseada

Scene: The Mexican town of San Luis de Potosí or Queretaro.

The cock pit. The Marquis ventures the remnant of his fortune, his herds and hacienda on

²⁰Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Kavanagh, p. 114.

a favorite cock and loses.

The circus: American riders.

Fray Cristóbel, breakfasting.

On the table a game cock tied by the leg.²¹

Longfellow's deliberate use of the typically American entertainment, the circus, in conjunction with a typically Mexican entertainment, the cock fight, must have been his way of manifesting a fusion of cultures in his drama.

Besides Longfellow's interest in the travel of his countrymen in Spanish American regions, his interest in their writing on Spanish American themes, his own interest in flavoring national literature with the Spanish elements of this hemisphere, and his reading, he had many Spanish American acquaintances of both high and low degree. One seemed to have imposed on Longfellow's good nature. In a journal entry June 10, 1853 Longfellow wrote,

Another call from the Peruvian refugee, who lays hold like a leech. If one could only be sure of people! One may entertain angels unaware; and also-----.²²

Another entry January 17, 1854, tells of a Cuban exile who appealed to his generous nature for help:

-----beseeching me to interest myself to get for him the place of Spanish teacher in the college. He is an exile from Cuba.²³

²¹Manuscript.

²²Samuel Longfellow, II, 250.

²³Samuel Longfellow, III, 258.

Two of Longfellow's Spanish American acquaintances were women. A journal entry February 8, 1876, reads,

At lunch Miss Mansfield and Mme. Teresa Careño Saviel (?); the pianist; a handsome woman from Caracas in Venezuela.²⁴

In another entry January 30, 1862, shortly after his wife was burned to death, he wrote,

In the twilight Miss C. comes and sings to the children, accompanying herself on her guitar; strange Spanish and Indian songs from New Mexico.²⁵

Several of Longfellow's Spanish American acquaintances were men of prestige. On June 18, 1867, he records the occasion of his dining with Senhor Azumbaja, the Brazilian minister. Agassiz and Sumner, he added, were also there.²⁶ Three other Spanish Americans, whose acquaintance with Longfellow was more involved, were men of distinction--Dom Pedro II, Emperor of Brazil; D. F. Sarmiento, Argentine president; and Rafael Pombo, Colombian poet.

An entry in Longfellow's journal October 12, 1865, makes the first mention of his acquaintance with Sarmiento and shows how his skill in the Spanish language served as a tie between the two:

We go in the evening to a supper at Dr. Gould's where we meet Señor Sarmiento, Minister of the Argentine Republic, and I have a chance to try my Spanish;--the first time for six years or more.²⁷

²⁴Samuel Longfellow, III, 258.

²⁵Samuel Longfellow, III, 2.

²⁶Manuscript, Journal.

²⁷Manuscript, Journal.

Domingo Faustino Sarmiento lived a colorful, exciting life as educator, diplomat, soldier, and president (1868-1874). He received the degree of Doctor of Laws honoris causa from the University of Michigan in 1868. He served as Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of Argentina to the United States between 1865-1867. During this time he exerted great effort to become acquainted with the people, the leaders, and the institutions of this country.²⁸ A note from his diary shows the esteem he had for Longfellow; especially he notes the poet's knowledge of Spanish:

From Mrs. Mann's house [Horace Mann's widow], they took me up to Cambridge, the famous university, where I spent two days of continual banqueting, to be presented to all of the eminent sages who were gathered there; Longfellow, ²⁹the great poet who speaks perfect Spanish . . .

About a year later Sarmiento asked Longfellow's opinion of some verses written by a friend, Juana Paula Manso de Noronha. He asked Longfellow to translate them so that he could include them at the end of his Vida de Lincoln. In reply to the first request Longfellow wrote: "Me gusta muchísimo . . . el poema de Mrs. Manso. Es simple, va directamente a su objeto y está lleno de fuerza. Temo

²⁸Harvey L. Johnson, "Longfellow Translates Some Verses at Sarmiento's Request," Symposium; XX (Fall 1966), p. 238.

²⁹Allison Williams Bunkley, A Sarmiento Anthology, trans. Stuart Edgar Grummon (Princeton, 1948), p. 275.

que pudiera estas cualidades, si lo tradujera.³⁰

He translated one of the stanzas, however:

Dejas libre una raza conculcada
De una guerra titánica la gloria,
La iniquidad de siglos extirpada,
Triunfante la moral, pura la historia.

Dejas a las naciones por ejemplo
Como alto funcionario tu carrera,
Tu secreto de mártir para templo,
Tu palabra de Apostol por lumbrera.

Thou leavest to the nation [s] for example
Thyne own career as champion of the right,
Thy martir--sepulchre to be a temple,
Thyne apostolic word to be a light.³¹

A letter from Sarmiento to Longfellow ten years later in 1876 indicates that their friendship, based on mutual romantic interests, had endured and that the Spanish American still admired the aging poet. In the letter Sarmiento introduced one of his friends, Dr. Don Pastor Obligado, who was planning a trip to the United States in the near future at which time he wished "among other celebrities to meet the poet laureate whose songs reach to us."³²

During his visit to Cambridge in 1866, Sarmiento promoted Spanish American literature to Longfellow and Ticknor. Shocked to learn that neither of them was familiar

³⁰ Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, Obras Completas, (Buenos Aires, 1952-1953), p. 243.

³¹ María Velasco y Arias, Juana Paula Manso: vida y accion (Buenos Aires, 1937), pp. 237-238.

³² Manuscript, Harvard's Houghton Library.

with any of the literature of either Chile or the Río de la Plata region, he gathered up copies of books he had on hand and promised to send others. Ticknor, embarrassed, asked Sarmiento to get a collection at any price. Sarmiento's letter to Longfellow in 1866 shows that he followed through with his promise: "I received information from my government that they will forward some poems and other compositions to me, that I will take care to send to you."³³

Sarmiento's attitude seems to be that Ticknor's and Longfellow's reading the literature of his country would automatically insure its being read by other Americans. We can be rather sure that Longfellow read of Quiroga, Uruguyan poet and author, from these works. Later he considered using an incident from the man's life as the basis for a poem to be called "La Ruban Rouge."³⁴

Another charming Spanish American dignitary with whom Longfellow was associated was Dom Pedro II, Emperor of Brazil. Williams says that Longfellow was the Emperor's favorite American poet and that he had unusually deep affection for him.³⁵ Dom Pedro once visited Longfellow in his Cambridge home, enjoying a dinner given in his honor. After

³³Manuscript, Letters.

³⁴D. F. Sarmiento, p. 372.

³⁵M. W. Williams, Dom Pedro II the Magnanimous (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1937), p. 207.

dinner, the two men paced up and down the veranda and talked, an experience long remembered. On June 10, 1876, Longfellow recorded in his journal an account of the visit, which reveals his opinion of the romantic rover:

Dom Pedro II, Emperor of Brazil, dined with us. The other guests were Emerson, Holmes, Agassiz, and Appleton. Dom Pedro is a modern Haroun al Raschid, and is wandering about to see the great world we live in, as a simple traveler, not as king. He is a hearty, genial, noble person, very liberal in his views.³⁶

It seems reasonable to suppose that Longfellow's poem "Haroun al Raschid" was inspired by his impression of this Brazilian king since Longfellow had referred to Dom Pedro as Haroun al Raschid in 1876 and wrote the poem in 1877.

Dom Pedro had long admired Longfellow's work and in 1857 sent a message by Mr. James C. Fletcher, American minister to Brazil, telling him so. He sent a Spanish translation of Longfellow's "King Robert of Sicily" of which Longfellow said,

The translation is very faithful and very successful. The double rhyme gives a new grace to the narrative, and the old legend seems very musical in the soft accents of the portuguese.³⁷

The friendship of the two men continued to the end of Longfellow's days. In 1880 Dom Pedro sent Longfellow a message by Salvador de Mendoza, Brazilian Consul General, inviting

³⁶Manuscript, Journal.

³⁷Heitor Lyra, Historia de Dom Pedro II, (São Paulo, Companhia editora nacional, 1938-40), p. 183.

him to be his guest at Rio for a month so they might walk up and down his veranda and talk.³⁸

The invitation came only two years before Longfellow's death and his age caused Longfellow to decline, but the gesture from Dom Pedro illustrates the congeniality which prevailed between them and the high esteem which Spanish Americans had for the American poet. The nature of the friendship itself is evidence of the important role Spanish America played in the exercise of Longfellow's romantic spirit even during his declining years.

The literary exchange between Rafael Pombo and Longfellow was the Spanish American association of longest duration, if we start with Pombo's translation of some of Longfellow's poems in 1864. It was certainly the most extensive correspondence, consisting of an exchange of six letters. Pombo visited the New Englander on one occasion but did not find him at home.

In his first letter to Longfellow, dated January 1, 1868, Pombo mentioned the achievements of Longfellow that had generated his admiration. In introducing himself he wrote,

A South American, of New Granada, whose name the eminent author of "Hiawatha" and translator of Dante will read here for the first time, has the honor of sending him for a "New Year's gift" an unedited translation of the "Psalm of Life,"

³⁸Manuscript, Journal.

this diamond of poetry that ought to be set in the forehead of a statue of North American civilization. Please accept it as a pledge of recognition of my race for the beautiful translation that we owe to you of our "Coplas de Manrique."³⁹

This praise amplifies the theory that Longfellow's romantic spirit responded to and attracted the Spanish in his own hemisphere as it had that of the Peninsulà. In a tone of confidence in the same letter Pombo lamented to Longfellow that the literature of Colombia was not what it should be, prefacing his lament with another compliment:

More than once the thought has occurred to me that if the singer of "Evangeline" were Spanish, our metric today would not have anything to envy from Virgil; thus it frequently saddens me to consider what a magnificent language we possess and how weakly and lazily we use it . . .⁴⁰

In other letters Pombo carried on the same friendly discourse about translations and about his own and his friends' original poems which he wanted Longfellow to evaluate. He told about his visit to Cambridge during which he missed Longfellow, and about his having sent a poem to Mr. Emerson, who had not even honored him by telling him if he had received it. Pombo confided to Longfellow that he had translated some twenty-seven of Horace's odes and that he had begun translating Divine Comedy. He told Longfellow that Dr. Santiago Pérez, President of the Republic of Colombia,

³⁹Manuscript, Letters.

⁴⁰Manuscript, Letters.

had translated "The Village Blacksmith." In a letter July 8, 1880, Pombo sent Longfellow a copy of President Pérez' translation and four translations by M. A. Caro, whom he identified as "translator of Virgil and perhaps a relative of the Italian Caro and of Rodrigo Caro of Seville."

In a letter dated October 18, 1880, Pombo sent Longfellow a Latin translation of the "Village Blacksmith" by "my respectable friend Don Samuel Bond, interpreter of our Secretary of Exterior Relations." A detailed outline of a talk on Longfellow, which Pombo was planning to give at the opening meeting of the Colombian Academy, clearly shows that Longfellow's romantic spirit was the basis for the admiration which Pombo and many of his Spanish American compatriots had for the North American. The first point was a testimony of Spanish American approval of Longfellow's idealistic attitude toward universality.

First your cosmopolitan spirit and heart, without limitation to races, nations, language, times, sects. Your great vision of Art, Christian purpose, and preferably my own sentiments you expressed in "The Lighthouse"⁴¹

Pombo was referring to the last stanza of "The Lighthouse" written in 1849 in which Longfellow expressed the universal spirit:

"Sail on!" it says, "sail on ye state ships!
And with your floating bridge the ocean span;

⁴¹Manuscript, Letters.

Be mine to guard this light from all eclipse,
Be yours to bring man nearer unto man!"⁴²

The third point of the speech that Pombo outlined in his letter reinforces the premise that Longfellow's reflective spirit and concern with romance rather than reality served as a magnet between him and Spanish Americans. Pombo's letter to Longfellow describes the characteristics at length:

Your respect and love of tradition, to that which is old: sentiments that I have seen censured by the Saturday Review or the Times of London, that they criticize in American poets as a sign of being out of date, but which to me, on the contrary, seems generous, kind, and natural; Then I believe that one of the essential characteristics of poetry is the aspiration to give us life of the spirit, that which is lacking in real life; to perfect us in the past and in the future. In America, the present is excessive, it excites us too much, to the point of tiring us: a spirit of novelty and of destruction, lacking the past with its authority and its ruins; this matter of shaping that past or infusing in us wise reverence for it is a pious and noble end, offering in the bosom some distraction and repose to the souls, no less than in the peaceful and evangelical visions of the time to come. I believe that you expressed this sentiment in the 6th and 7th verses of "Voices in the Night--"
"And loving still the quaint old themes the holy land of song"⁴³

In another correspondence Pombo said, "I am in favor of mounting foreign diamonds in Castillian settings"⁴⁴--expressing a sentiment that might be interpreted as akin to

⁴²Poetical Works, p. 106.

⁴³Manuscript, Letters.

⁴⁴Manuscript, Letters.

Longfellow's desire for a national literature with an international flavor.

Entries in Longfellow's Book of Suggestions indicate that he had many plans to set Castillian diamonds in our national literature. An entry dated 1847 shows that Longfellow planned to write a poem "Noche Triste." Noche triste is a name commonly given to the infamous night of June 30, 1520, when Cortés sat against a tree and wept helplessly, listening to the shrieks and screams of terror of his companions as they were cast upon the Aztecan altar of sacrifice to their gods. Longfellow likely intended to write his poem on this theme. Just as his imagination had been excited by the legendary deeds of El Cid from the pages of ancient Spanish history, it was also attracted to the dramatic heroism from the pages of the distant past of Mexico. Longfellow indicated at the bottom of the same page in his suggestion book that he planned to write a volume of such poems to be called Vigils or Suspiria. In 1849 he actually wrote a poem called "Suspiria," two years after he recorded his intentions. The poem reflects the theme of the brevity and insignificance of life with which Manrique dealt in his Coplas.

Take them, O great Eternity!
 Our little life is but a gust
 That bends the branches of thy tree,
 And trails its blossoms in the dust!⁴⁵

⁴⁵Poetical Works, p. 112, lines 9-12.

The names of two lyric poems on a page of his Book of Suggestions dated 1849 show that Longfellow's interest in Spanish American themes, as always, concerned the romantic--"Dios dijo lo que será [God Said What Will Be]" and "Victor Galbraith." He actually wrote the latter, a dramatization of a bizarre incident that involved the son of a doctor from Galena, Illinois. The young man had gone to Saltillo, Mexico, with one of the Illinois regiments to fight in the Mexican War, a conflict Longfellow utterly deplored. Far away from his home in Illinois the youth was destined to die before a firing squad for threatening a superior officer, possibly for abusive treatment. Longfellow, ever sensitive of the suffering of others, wrote the poem as a possible solace to the anguished parents.

An entry in his Book of Suggestions in 1850 shows an even more characteristically romantic preoccupation of Longfellow's. It alludes to the charm of the isle of Cuba:

A Poetic Tale. Dolores; or the Village of Yumuré.
Scene in the island of Cuba . . .⁴⁶

Only nine days before his death Longfellow wrote the poem an entry for which we find on the last page of his Book of Suggestions. The entry reads, "The Bells of San Blas, Harper, Mche '82.552." Underneath is a newsclipping which reads,

⁴⁶Manuscript, Book of Suggestions, Harvard's Houghton Library.

San Blas, a pacific port of Mexico, hardly more than an extensive thatched village, has, on a bluff beside it, the ruins of a once more substantial San Blas. Old bronze bells brought down from it have been mounted in rude frames a few feet high to serve the purpose of the present poor church, which is without a belfry, and this is called in irony, "The Tower of San Blas."

This romantic theme aroused the soul of the old poet, inspiring him to write one last poem, his flame dying out on a note that had characterized his works from the beginning. The last stanza was written March 15, 1882. He died March 24. The same temperament which had attracted Longfellow to the Spanish, inspiring him to translate the Coplas in 1832, his first published work, attracted him to the Spanish American fifty years later, inspiring him to write "Bells of San Blas," his last published work. As a young man he translated the Coplas to help the people of the New World understand and appreciate their Spanish heritage through the literature of the mother country; in his last days his desire was to reflect the Spanish of his own hemisphere in a national literature. These lines from the poem demonstrate Longfellow's enduring tendency to dream, to reflect on the past, and to portray romance rather than reality.

What say the Bells of San Blas
To the ships that southward pass
From the harbor of Mazatlán?
To them it is nothing more
Than the sound of surf on shore,--
Nothing more to master or man.

. . .

But to me, a dreamer of dreams,
To whom what is and what seems
Are often one and the same,--
The Bells of San Blas to me
Have a strange wild melody,
And are something more than a name.

They are the voices of the Past
Of an age that is fading fast,
Of a power austere and grand;
When the flag of Spain unfurled.
Its folds o'er the western world,
And the priest was lord of the land.⁴⁷

One can only speculate as to why Longfellow never fulfilled more of his projected plans for writing on Spanish American themes. It was likely a case of procrastination--mañana--such as Longfellow expressed through Mr. Churchill in Kavanagh:

How often, ah, how often, between the desire of the heart and its fulfillment, lies only the briefest space of time and distance, and yet the desire remains forever unfilled.⁴⁸

When he was a young man, travel to Europe was far more popular than to any site under American skies. European themes were also the ones to write about. Because Everett, Irving, Ticknor, and others were writing on Spanish themes rather than Spanish American, Longfellow probably thought Spain was the more worthwhile as a subject. Spain may have seemed more romantic because it was faraway. Following the short

⁴⁷Poetical Works, p. 359.

⁴⁸Poetical Works, p. 114.

youthful visit he made there in 1827, the area took a fascinating hold on his imagination that it never let go afterwards. . The Spanish American with similar cultural background may have appealed to his creative spirit but may have lacked something of the final spur of inspiration needed to bring the work to fruition.

During the latter years of Longfellow's life when he was most attracted to the Spanish American, he was beset by a host of visitors who took up valuable time that might have been spent in meditation or writing. Numerous journal entries show that he was interrupted time and again. His courteous and hospitable nature prevented his ever turning anyone away or showing the least discourtesy. The older artist may have simply lacked the quietness and solitude necessary for creativity. Nevertheless, the influence of the Spanish American began in a material way very early for him and lasted all of his life, obviously affecting his romantic consciousness.

CHAPTER IV

SPANISH AND LONGFELLOW'S ART

The effect of the total Spanish experience on Longfellow's prolific literary output is impressive in its coloring of so many of his works. In all, he translated at least thirty Spanish poems, including the poems he translated for Pombo and Sarmiento. Some of these translations were made during his early years of professorship at Bowdoin, while others were made about three years before his death. This long span of time attests that his interest in Spanish literature was active from the time he first became acquainted with it throughout his life. Longfellow published thirteen poems on Spanish themes, some of them on reworked Spanish materials, some more nearly from his own inspiration. Two others which he designated not to be published are now in the manuscript files at Harvard's Houghton Library. In addition, he wrote two essays about Spanish literature, he built his most serious effort at drama on a Spanish plot, he included one Spanish tale in his collection Tales of a Wayside Inn, he devoted one chapter in his anthology Poets and Poetry of Europe to a discussion of Spanish language and poetry, and he treated aspects of his experiences in Spain in about one third of his travel book, Outre-Mer. His letters and his journal entries are filled with allusions to Spanish literature. Equally as important

as these directly traceable influences in his works is the reflection within them of a romantic tone which relates both to the kind of person he was and to the kind of response he made to Spain and to Spanish America.

Related to a much broader area of interest, Longfellow's attention to Spain and its language came rather early, almost accidentally. Although he had never studied Spanish nor expressed any desire to study it before the Board of Trustees considered him for the appointment at Bowdoin, he had expressed an interest in language study. In fact, he had extracted an agreement from his father in January of 1825, the year of his graduation, to allow him to attend Harvard one year to study general literature. His grand object in doing so, he said, would be "to gain as perfect a knowledge of the French and Italian languages as can be gained, by study."¹ Longfellow added that he had purchased a beautiful pocket edition of the letters of the famous philologist Sir William Jones. He expressed an admiration for Jones's being versed in eight languages, for his being able to read eight more with a dictionary, and for his having studied twelve more less perfectly. He noted that the complete or partial knowledge of these twenty-eight languages gave the man access to the literature of twenty-eight cultures.²

¹Andrew Hilen, I, 103.

²Andrew Hilen, I, 104.

Though Longfellow himself learned ten languages during his lifetime, including French, German, Italian, and Scandinavian, none had a stronger or a longer lasting effect on his art than did the Spanish. During the mid-1820's when America's growing trade relations with the West Indies had made a knowledge of Spanish urgent in this country, Longfellow's interest in languages made him a likely candidate for the language chair at Bowdoin.

In Spain, Longfellow's unorthodox approach to language study may account for his keen perception of the Spanish romantic character which so nearly corresponded to his own. He took lodging in Madrid with Señor Don Valentín Gonzales, his wife, and his daughter Florencia at the foot of the Calle de la Montera. He described the family and told of his manner of language study in a letter to his father in 1827:

The family with whom I reside, is a very kind and attentive one. It consists of an elderly gentleman and lady, with their daughter--a young lady about eighteen--who has already become quite a sister to me. Under her attentions I hope to find the acquisition of the Spanish a delightful task.³

More than that, however, he associated with many people during his tour of Spain. He recorded his keen observations of the driver of the covered wagon drawn by six mules that carried him and Lieutenant Slidell on a tour

³Andrew Hilen, I, 222.

of Segovia in 1827, of his host at the inn, a little, round, fat, oily pot-bellied man in black breeches, and of the weary muleteer patiently waiting for his supper from the hand of the cook-maid. He told of the hungry peasant who would pause in his eating when a newcomer entered the room and lift up his voice to ask, "Does it please your grace to eat with me?" His notes describe the woe-begone visage of the guide who looked like a New England scarecrow with his odds and ends of clothing, and the imagined "bold highwaymen" lurking behind every bush. Longfellow's acquaintances in Spain ranged all the way from these humble folk to the sophisticated society in Madrid where the man said in saluting a lady, "Señora, I throw myself at your grace's feet!"⁴ As he noted in his journal at that time, "I like to study men--not books."⁵ Apparently he came to know the Spanish character.

His father was more conventional, however, and urged a serious program of study, emphasizing the significance of Spanish. He wrote an admonition in 1828:

Your ulterior object cannot be accomplished unless you obtain an accurate knowledge of the French and Spanish languages. Such are the relations now existing between this country and South America that a knowledge of the Spanish is quite as important as of the French. If you neglect either of these, your whole object will be defeated.⁶

⁴Andrew Hilen, I, 224-234.

⁵Manuscript, Journal.

⁶Samuel Longfellow, I, 95.

Nevertheless, Longfellow seemed pleased with his progress and wrote reassuringly to his father from Venice in 1828:

I know you cannot be dissatisfied with the progress I have made in my studies. I speak honestly, not boastingly. With the French and Spanish languages I am fairly conversant, so as to speak them correctly, and write them with as much ease and fluency as I do the English.⁷

His success in the latter language is further substantiated by a letter written in 1834 by George Ticknor. Then Head of the Department of Modern Languages at Harvard, Ticknor wrote in a letter recommending Longfellow for a professorship in Spanish at New York University,

He writes and speaks Spanish with a degree of fluency and exactness which I have known in no American born of parents speaking English as their vernacular.⁸

By this time he must have known both the people and their language.

Longfellow's skill in the Spanish language opened a new world of literature for him. He anticipated this great avenue of scholarship even while he was in Trieste in 1828. He wrote to his father,

My familiarity with the modern languages will unlock to me all those springs of literature [sic], which formerly would have been as sealed as books to me.⁹

The serious study of Spanish literature began in Dresden in

⁷Samuel Longfellow, I, 155-56.

⁸Quoted by H. S. Gorman, A Victorian American: Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (Port Washington, New York: Kennikat Press, Inc., 1926), p. 363.

⁹Andrew Hilen, I, 287.

the library of Karl August Böttiger, the archaeologist, to whom Washington Irving had written a letter recommending Longfellow. As soon as he returned to Brunswick and began the preparation for his classes, Longfellow started a voracious reading program of Spanish works. He read Mayan and Siscar's Origenes de la Lengua Española from which he drew material for his chapter on the Spanish in Poets and Poetry of Europe. He read Jorge Manrique's Coplas which he translated and released as his first published work in 1832. He included in this little volume translations of some sonnets of Lope de Vega, Aldana, and Mendrano and an essay entitled "Moral and Devotional Poetry of Spain."

Shortly after reading Lope's Estrella de Sevilla, El mejor alcalde el rey, and La moza de cantaro, Calderón's La dama duenda and El galan fantasma, and Moratín's collection of old plays for his lectures, Longfellow began to write The Spanish Student. He modeled the form of his drama on Lope and Calderón, but he borrowed the plot from Cervantes' La Gitanilla and a subplot from Cervantes' La fuerza de la sangre. He also borrowed the name of the heroine, Preciosa, from Cervantes' La Gitanilla and the personality of his humorous servant Chispa from Cervantes' Sancho. Longfellow named the hero of The Spanish Student Count of Lara which is the name of the hero of a Spanish ballad he translated, "Don Nuño, Count of Lara." Most fascinating of the characters in the play is Preciosa, the heroine.

Although Longfellow borrowed her name from Cervantes, he modelled her personality on the Austrian dancer, Fanny Elesler, famed for her beauty and sensuous dancing, particularly of the Spanish Cachuca. In a letter to Sam Ward May 7, 1843, Longfellow wrote of meeting Medora Grymes whom he referred to as Preciosa. He said, "I sat on an ottoman by Preciosa's side. . . . We first spoke Spanish which she had almost forgotten."¹⁰ Longfellow's keen perception of the Spanish personality and his romantic imagination help give his drama an authentic quality.

Not only did Longfellow find themes from Spanish literature for his own works, he also suggested materials that he thought would interest his friends. In a letter to Epes Sargent January 2, 1840, he wrote, "I have fished up a plot for you, out of a Spanish play "Life Is a Dream" (Calderón), which I think is capable of great effects."¹¹

Longfellow acknowledged the poetic power that could be derived from delving into foreign literature in a letter to his German friend Ferdinand Freiligrath in 1843:

I agree with you entirely in what you say about translations. It is like running a plough-share through the soil of one's mind; a thousand germs of thought start up . . . , which otherwise might have lain and rotted in the ground.¹²

¹⁰Andrew Hilen, II, 534-35.

¹¹Andrew Hilen, II, 205.

¹²Samuel Longfellow, III, 15.

Besides his interest in Spanish literature, Longfellow's continued association with Spaniards, both through correspondence and personal associations, kept the romantic consciousness which related to the Spanish character flourishing throughout his life. In the manuscript files at Houghton Library are thirty-five letters Longfellow received from Spaniards. His knowledge of the Spanish language and the sympathy he showed toward the Spanish literature, customs, and people attracted Spaniards from all walks of life to his door. A note in his journal June 21, 1872, records the visit of Rear Admiral Palo de Bernabé, the Spanish minister, and Antonio Flores, Minister of Ecuador, who paid him a visit and stayed for dinner and a "great deal of pleasant chat."¹³ José Cortés y Sesti, whom Longfellow met in Madrid in 1827, became his most important Spanish correspondent. He later came to the United States to seek his fortune, taught Spanish in Portland and Boston, and frequently visited the Longfellows in Brunswick.¹⁴ Longfellow's fondness for the Spanish people and his love for the memory of Spain is manifested in a journal entry June 16, 1846:

I slaked my thirst for foreign travel by driving to town . . . I then got into the omnibus, and found there some Spanish people,--men and girls; and heard that sweet tongue again and saw the well-known Spanish beauty of face and form, and imagined

¹³Samuel Longfellow, III, 202.

¹⁴Andrew Hilen, I, 269.

myself in Andalusia.¹⁵

Longfellow seemed to have a special liking for Spanish music and several times mentioned, in letters and journal entries, attending social functions where he was able to enjoy it. In a letter to a family friend Catherine Eliot Norton March 21, 1843, he wrote, "I went to Shady Hill with Felton. The Apthorps [close friends of Fanny Appleton's] were there. A. sang Spanish songs to his guitar."¹⁶ He wrote in his journal September 17, 1847, "A musical party. They sing Spanish songs,--and English, which always put me in a fever."¹⁷ Through his association with Spanish literature, people, and customs Longfellow kept his romantic notions about Spain alive.

Although he read more extensively in the literature of Spain, he associated more through letters and personal acquaintances with Spanish Americans. Records do not show that he exchanged correspondence with Spaniards to the extent that he did with Spanish Americans, especially with Sarmiento and Pombo. Five letters which he wrote to Pombo are reproduced in Rafael Pombo's Traducciones poeticas. He wrote two letters to Sarmiento and he probably wrote a letter of regret to Dom Pedro's invitation to visit Rio.

¹⁵ Samuel Longfellow, II, 45.

¹⁶ Andrew Hilen, II, 521.

¹⁷ Samuel Longfellow, III, 94.

Only two letters to José Cortés show his interest in writing to Spaniards. Many of Longfellow's friends were traveling in Spanish America and writing on Spanish American themes after 1860, so the Spanish American was possibly the strongest force in keeping the romantic associations of Spanish alive in Longfellow from 1850 to the end of his life. Certainly the Spanish American was the Spanish element that Longfellow wished to portray in his idealized version of national literature reflecting an international spirit.

After 1840 his interest in the other languages and cultures with which he had become enamoured in Europe--French, Italian, German, and Scandanavian--gradually diminished. The translation of Dante in the 1860's after his wife's death and his warm friendship with Freiligrath are the only significant links with these cultures that continued over a period of time. On the other hand, Spanish translations continued, and his interest in the Spanish through his Spanish American interests actually increased. Spanish Americans praised his art and paid him homage; he responded in a way that promoted favorable international relations between the United States and Spanish American countries. They were flattered to gain the interest of the most popular poet in North America in their art and culture. Thousands of dollars in foreign aid would not have achieved so much good feeling. His interest as reflected in his work came as a natural response.

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