

The Last Leaf

Oliver Wendell Holmes

I SAW him once before,
As he passed by the door,
 And again
The pavement stones resound
As he totters o'er the ground
 With his cane.
They say that in his prime,
Ere the pruning-knife of Time
 Cut him down,
Not a better man was found
By the crier on his round
 Through the town.
But now he walks the streets
And he looks at all he meets
 Sad and wan,
And he shakes his feeble head,
That it seems as if he said,
 "They are gone."
The mossy marbles rest
On the lips that he has pressed
 In their bloom,
And the names he loved to hear
Have been carved for many a year
 On the tomb.
My grandmamma has said --
Poor old lady, she is dead
 Long ago --
That he had a Roman nose,
And his cheek was like a rose
 In the snow.

But now his nose is thin,
And it rests upon his chin
 Like a staff,
And a crook is in his back,
And a melancholy crack
 Is in his laugh.
I know it is a sin
For me to sit and grin
 At him here;
But the old three-cornered hat,
And the breeches, and all that,
 Are so queer!
And if I should live to be
The last leaf upon the tree
 In the spring,
Let them smile, as I do now,
At the old forsaken bough
 Where I cling.