

# 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.