

# Fountain of Youth

By

Oliver Wendell Holmes

The fount the Spaniard sought in vain  
Through all the land of flowers  
Leaps glittering from the sandy plain  
Our classic grove embowers;  
Here youth, unchanging, blooms and smiles,  
Here dwells eternal spring,  
And warm from Hope's elysian isles  
The winds their perfume bring.

Here every leaf is in the bud,  
Each singing throat in tune,  
And bright o'er evening's silver flood  
Shines the young crescent moon.  
What wonder Age forgets his staff  
And lays his glasses down,  
And gray-haired grandsires look and laugh  
As when their locks were brown!

With ears grown dull and eyes grown dim  
They greet the joyous day  
That calls them to the fountain's brim  
To wash their years away.  
What change has clothed the ancient sire

In sudden youth? For, to!  
The Judge, the Doctor, and the Squire  
Are Jack and Bill and Joe!

And be his titles what they will,  
In spite of manhood's claim  
The graybeard is a school-boy still  
And loves his school-boy name;  
It calms the ruler's stormy breast  
Whom hurrying care pursues,  
And brings a sense of peace and rest,  
Like slippers after shoes.-

And what are all the prizes won  
To youth's enchanted view?  
And what is all the man has done  
To what the boy may do?  
O blessed fount, whose waters flow  
Alike for sire and son,  
That melts our winter's frost and snow  
And makes all ages one!

I pledge the sparkling fountain's tide,  
That flings its golden shower  
With age to fill and youth to guide,  
Still fresh in morning flower  
Flow on with ever-widening stream,  
In ever-brightening morn,-  
Our story's pride, our future's dream,

The hope of times unborn!