

Excelsior - song lyrics

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EXCELSIOR.

By H. W. Longfellow.

The shades of night were falling fast,
As through an Alpine village passed
A youth, who bore, 'mid snow and ice,
A banner with the strange device,
Excelsior

His brow was sad; his eye, beneath
Flashed like a falchion from its sheath;
And like a silver clarion rung
The accents of that unknown tongue,
Excelsior!

In happy homes he saw the light
Of household fires gleam warm and bright:
Above, the spectral glaciers shone;
And from his lips escaped a groan,
Excelsior!

"Try not the pass!" the old man said;
"Dark lowers the tempest overhead.
The roaring torrent deep and wide!" -
And loud that clarion voice replied,
Excelsior!

"Oh! stay," the maiden said, "and rest
The weary head upon this breast!"
A tear stood in his bright blue eye;
But still he answered, with a sigh,
Excelsior!

"Beware the pine-tree's withered branch!
Beware the awful avalanche!"
This was the peasant's last good-night;-
A voice replied, far up the height,
Excelsior!

At break of day, as heavenward
The pious monks of St. Bernard
Uttered the oft-repeated prayer,
A voice cried, through the startled air,
Excelsior!

A traveler, - by the faithful hound,
Half buried in the snow, was found,
Still grasping in his baud of ice,
That banner with the strange device,
Excelsior!
There, in the twilight, cold and gray,
Lifeless, but beautiful, he lay;
And from the sky, serene and far,
A voice fell, like a falling star, -
Excelsior!