Selected Poems of Henry Ames Blood

1901

Contents

Frontispiece 4
Title Page 4

Jeanette. **7**
L'Envoi. 8

The Rock in the Sea. **9**

The Chimney-Nook. **11**

The Last Visitor. **14**

The Avar of the Dryads. **15**

Yearnings. **18**

The Old Year. **21**

The Two Enchantments. **23**

Fantasie. **24**

The Masque in Fantasie. **27**

The Grand Orchestra. **30**

Sighs in the South. **33**

Thoreau. **36**

The Invisible Piper. **39**

Shakespeare. **41**

At the Grave. **44**

Pro Mortuis **45**

The Serene Message. **46**

Comrades. **47**

May Flowers. **48**

The Fairy Boat. **51**

A Midnight Chorus. **53**

The Song of the Savoyards. **56**

Webster. **58**
I. . . . 58
II. . . . 58
III. . . . 59

Old Friends. **60**
I. . . . 60
II. . . . 60
III. . . . 60
IV. . . . 60
V. . . . 61
VI. . . . 61
VII. . . . 61
VIII. . . . 61
IX. . . . 62
X. . . . 62

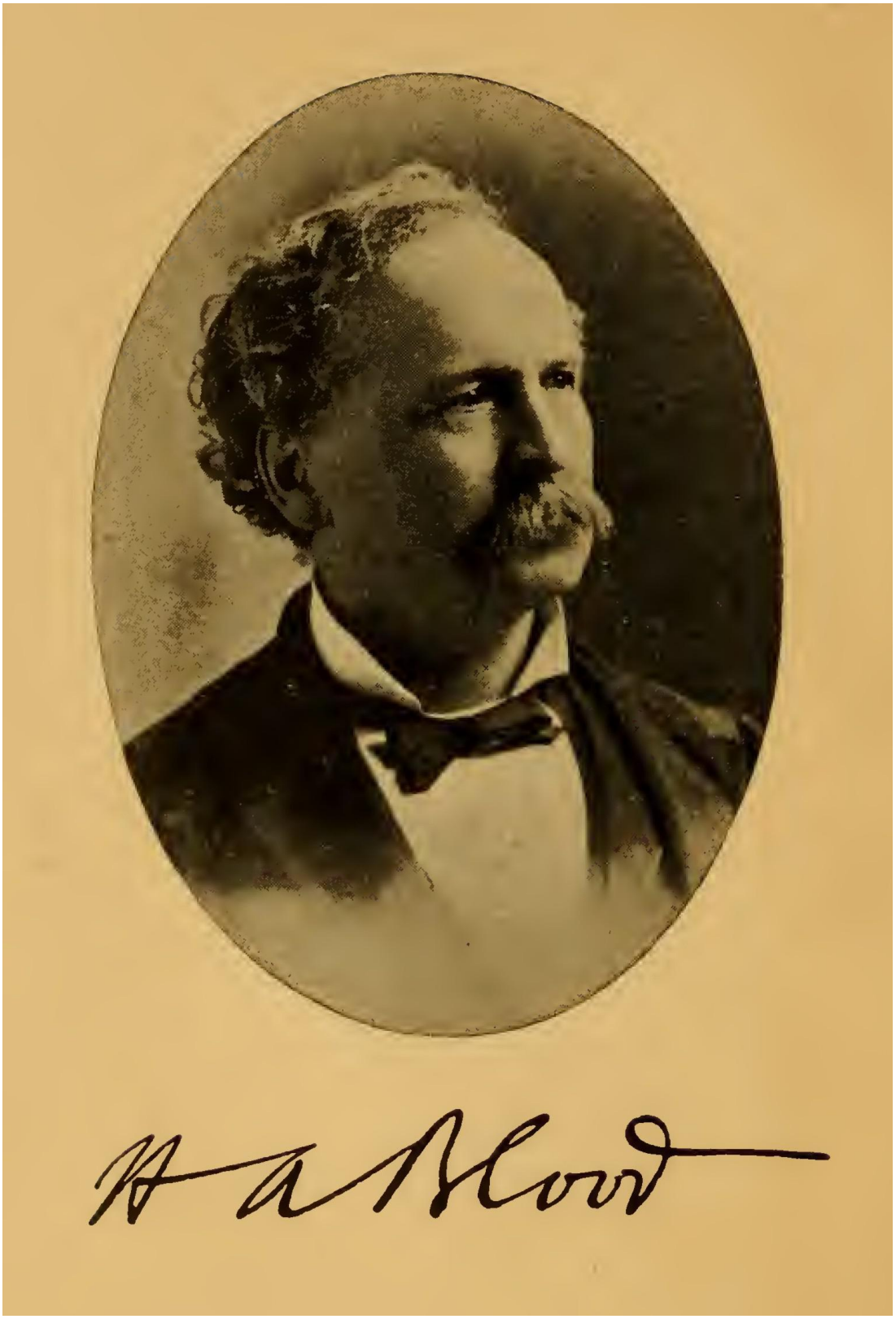
Margie. **63**

Saint Goethe's Night. **65**

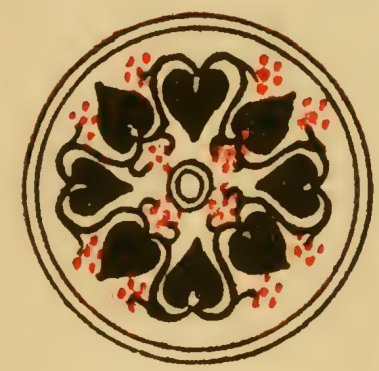
The Fighting Parson. **68**

The Drummer. **71**

Ad Astra. **75**



Selected Poems
of
Henry Ames Blood



33

Washington, D. C.
The Neale Publishing Company
431 Eleventh Street N. W.
M C M I

Jeanette.

It is no wonder I should be
  More sad in pleasant weather,
For on a young June day like this
  We strolled the fields together;
O, never lived a maid more dear
  In everybody's praises! —
Jeanette was picking buttercups
  And I was picking daisies.

Her beauty and her grace, it seemed,
  The saddest heart might rally,
But though she gently led my steps
  Through all the quiet valley,
The words of love I tried to speak
  Dissolved in empty phrases;
And so she pulled her buttercups,
  And so I picked my daisies.

But when she coyly raised my chin
  And with a charming flutter,
Held up her golden prize beneath
  And asked—if I loved butter!
O then, in words that blossomed forth
  Like flowers from heavenly vases,
I told her how the buttercups
  Were loved by all the daisies.

She often visits me in dreams,
  And then in sumptuous vision,
We walk through meadows full of light,
  We roam the Fields Elysian;
And side by side we loiter on
  Through all the starry mazes;
She picks immortal buttercups
  And I celestial daisies.

Where now so peacefully she lies,

Pale evening loves to linger,
And morning comes in tears, to touch
Her grave with rosy finger,
And every June that rambles by,
A moment turns and gazes;
Then lays his offering on the sod,
In buttercups and daisies.

L'Envoi.

Full well I know she loves me still,
For oft, through skyey portals,
She gives to me the sweetest smile
That angels have for mortals;
And evermore to guide my steps
Through all the world's mizmazes,
Wears on her breast the light of stars
In buttercups and daisies.

Harper's Weekly, May 19, 1879.

The Rock in the Sea.

They say that yonder rock once towered
  Upon a wide and grassy plain,
Lord of the land, until the sea
  Usurped his green domain:
Yet now remembering the fair scene
  Where once he reigned without endeavor,
The great rock in the ocean stands
  And battles with the waves forever.

How oft, O rock, must visit thee
  Sweet visions of the ancient calm
All amorous with birds and bees,
  And odorous with balm!
Ah me, the terrors of the time
  When the grim, wrinkled sea advances,
And winds and waves with direful cries
  Arouse thee from thy happy trances!

To no soft tryst they waken thee,
  No sunny scene of perfect rest,
But to the raging sea's vanguard
  Thundering against thy breast:
No singing birds are round thee, now,
  But the wild winds, the roaring surges,
And gladly would they hurl thee down
  And mock thee in eternal dirges.

But be it thine to conquer them;
  And may thy firm-enduring form
Still frown upon the hurricane,
  Still grandly front the storm:
And while the tall ships come and go,
  And come and go the generations,
May thy proud presence yet remain
  A wonder unto all the nations.

Sometime, perchance, O lonely rock,

Thou mayest regain thine ancient seat,
Mayest see once more the meadow shine,
And hear the pasture bleat:
But ah, methinks even then thy breast
Would stir and yearn with fond emotion,
To meet once more in glorious war
The roaring cohorts of the ocean.

Let me, like thee, thou noble rock,
Pluck honor from the seas of time;
Where Providence doth place my feet
There let me stand sublime:
O life, 't is very sweet to lie
Upon thy shores without endeavor,
But sweeter far to breast thy storms
And battle with thy waves forever.

The Century Magazine, August, 1883.

The Chimney-Nook.

O, how much comfort is there in the glow
  Of a rosy fire in winter,
  When each stem and stick and splinter
Burns all the brighter for the winds that blow!
Then high or low the walls, they wear a joyous look,
  Nor is anything more cheery,
  When the winter wind sounds dreary,
Than sitting by the fire, within the chimney-nook.

Bring Redheart Oak, the tyrant of the wood!
  Were his dry heart even dryer,
  It would better suit our fire
While burning in this high, ecstatic mood:
Bring Tail-Pine, whose old head long since the crow's forsook:
  Tail-Pine, he is in his dotage,
  But his head shall boil our pottage,
While we sit here and laugh beside our chimney-nook.

Old Tail-Pine, you were old when I was young,
  On your head the rains had drifted,
  Through your locks the snows had sifted
A hundred years ere my first song was sung;
Your foot was gouty grown, your head with palsy shook,
  But your heart possessed you lightly,
  And you stood your sentry nightly,
While I sat here and dozed beside my chimney-nook.

Do you remember, Tail-Pine, years ago,
  When I rambled in my childhood
  Through yon solitary wildwood,
And climbed your high top for the callow crow?
Hurrah for those old days when you and I partook
  Snow and rain and hail together,
  Little thinking this cold weather
Would bring us face to face beside my chimney-nook.

But now the wind is louder than before;

With a wild demoniac laughter
He is running down the rafter,
I will not talk nor dally with you more:
For that you were my friend, some pity had me strook;
But the night is growing colder,
And my spirit waxes bolder,
To have you keep me warm beside my chimney-nook.

Then lay his head down, crowned with all its cones;
It shall be a bed of roses
Where mine ancient friend reposes;
Peace to his ashes, rest unto his bones I
Now, bravo, Tail-Pine, for your aged pate ne'er took,
Since the spring-time of your story,
Such a lustre, such a glory,
As this I see it wear beside my chimney-nook.

Beneath this mansion is a cellar old,
"Where there bydeth," says tradition,
"A moste wondrous wyse magician,
Who hydeth hym in bottels grene with molde."
A candle's ray at night, this fellow can not brook;
We will go into the cellar
With our lights and blind the fellow,
Then bring him to his wits beside our chimney-nook.

Can you believe me? Shakespeare knew him well;
Jonson loved him as his brother,
So i' faith did many another
Most potent bard who felt "hys mightye spell":
Ere this magician come, hang potluck on the hook;
We will never close our lashes
Till old Tail-Pine burns to ashes;
But laugh here all night long beside our chimney-nook.

Then let the jolly, motley world wag on
To an age of baser metal;
So it upsets not our kettle,
Give thanks for this and ask for fatter brawn;
We shall get through our day, somehow, by hook or crook;
Be our purse however slender,
Only give us fire and fender,
We shall not lack for fun beside our chimney-nook.

O, how much comfort is there in the glow

Of a rosy fire in winter,
When each stem and stick and splinter
Burns all the brighter for the winds that blow.
Then high or low the walls, they wear a joyous look;
Nor is anything more cheery,
When the winter winds sound dreary,
Than sitting by the fire within our chimney-nook.

Willis' Home Journal, May 5, 1860.

The Last Visitor.

"Who is it knocks this stormy night?
Be very careful of the light!"
  The good-man said to his wife,
    And the good-wife went to the door;
  But never again in all his life
    Will the good-man see her more.

For he who knocked that night was Death;
And the light 'went out with a little breath.
  And the good-man will miss his wife,
    Till he, too, goes to the door,
  When Death will carry him up to Life,
    To behold her face once more.

The Avar of the Dryads.

Shapes of earth or sprites of air,
  Should you travel thither,
Ask the Dryads how they dare
  Quarrel thus together?
Live and love, or coo and woo,
  Men with axes banding,
They will have all they can do
  To keep their live-oak standing.

Long and loud the larum swells
  Rousing up the peoples;
Campaneros clang their bells
  High in leafy steeples.
Swiftly speed the eager hours,
  Fairy fellies rattle;
Bugle-weed and trumpet-flowers
  Heralding the battle.

Foremost march, in pale platoons,
  Barnacles and ganzas,
Quacking through the long lagoons
  Military stanzas.
Red-legged choughs and screeching daws
  File along the larches;
"Right!" and "Left!" the raven caws,
  "Blast your countermarches!"

Cheek by jowl with stately rooks
  Comes the perking swallows,
Putting on important looks,
  Strutting up the hollows;
Lank, long-legged fuglemen,
  Herons, cranes, and ganders,
Stride before the buglemen,
  Cock-a-hoop commanders.

Learned owls with wondrous eyes,

Apes with wild grimaces,
Shardy chafers, chattering pyes,
Bustle in their places.
"Forward!" cry the captains all,
Seeming hoarse with phthisis;
"Forward!" all the captains call,
Cocks and cockatrices.

Fiercely grapple now the foes,
Rain the bottle-grasses;
Hobble-bushes, bitter sloes,
Block the mountain passes.
Here and there and everywhere
Reinforcements rally,
Seeming sprung from earth and air,
From mountain top and valley.

Either gleaming bullets hum,
Or the bees are plying;
Either whizzing goes the bomb,
Or the pheasant flying.
'Tis the pheasant, 'tis the bee;
Never fiercer volley
Rang upon the birken tree,
Nor whirred along the holly.

Out from furze and prickly goss,
Fiery serpents jetting,
Over level roods of moss
Rabbits ricochetting;
Oh, the onset! Oh, the charge!
How the aspens quiver!
Fever-bushes on the marge
Chatter to the river.

Overhead by rod and rood,
More than man could number,
Spear-grass and arrow-wood
Turn the white air sombre.
Gentle, gentle Dryades,
You shall reap your sorrow;
More than rainy Hyades
You shall weep to-morrow.

Crows the cock and caws the crow,

Croaks the boding raven;
Pallid as the moon-beams go,
Three and three, the craven
Dryads, and the sun drops low.
Soon shall come strange faces,
Men with axes, to and fro,—
New peoples and new races.

Knickerbocker Magazine.

Yearnings.

How charming it would be if you and I
Could shake off every clog which Circumstance,
Our base old dungeon-keeper, has hung round
The natural freedom of our God-made limbs,
And so go wandering about the earth
At our own pleasure, till we chose to die!
I half believe that somewhere in the far
Tumultuous rush of the earth-wasting years,
I must have led a heavenly condor's life,
And so, full many a time, from the bright centre
Of the great dome that roofs the sea and land,
Have looked on this revolving pageantry:
For not a day goes by but my blood burns
To roam at will the vast and glorious rondure
Of this fine world; to saunter up and down
From end to end of all its gorgeous valleys,
Its rolling rivers, its majestic hills,
Its fiery deserts, its wide wastes of ocean.
But it should be with some dear bosom friend,
With whom I might be talking half the time;
Now in high strain about the unknown land,
Now marveling to find upon all things,
Whether in earth or air, upon the wave,
The tree, the rock, the sand, the blade of grass,
Still the great stamp of the Reliable;
And both of us so much at one with Nature,
We should admire the very heat and dust,
The very snow and hail, the wind and rain;
Fearing not even the hungry howls of beasts,
The horrible unreason of the brutes,
Nor any enterprise of desperate men:
Knowing full well that he who builds his life
On pain and sorrow, builds on adamant;
While from foundations deepest laid in earth,
Must spring the highest turrets into heaven.

So then it would be nothing but a pleasure
To toil and sweat along the dusty roads;
To drag our "weary limbs from cliff to cliff;
To poise ourselves upon some hair-breadth edge,
And breathless creep above the pits of danger;
For what should all the perils of the journey
Weigh in the balance with its hours of joy,
Its blissful commerce of two loving friends,
Its eagle views from every towering peak,
Its glorious intercourse with the great God,
Who made and lives in all.

O, I believe
Our fate will yet go wandering with us
All over the green earth in this great wise!
I only pray it may be before Death,
That kind, well-meaning chemist, shall drain off
From our dear souls our sweet infirmities,—
As we presume he will, since without them
How shall we know what highest pleasure is!
And yet why doubt that all will not be best?
And why suppose that even Death can bring us
Where toil and pain shall walk with us no more?

O, certainly, if we should live so long,
Till heaven has sprinkled our good heads with gray,
Why not give up this ignominious life,
Surrender these pale comforts which our age
And time now lavish most on meanest men,
Distribute all our goods among the poor,
And after, seek our fortunes through the earth?
Our costume should be suited to the clime,
And we would carry in our loving hearts
The flowers of all the creeds, scarce knowing which
Were loveliest! And all our walk by day
Should be in ever-changing atmospheres
Of speech and silence; while as night came down,
And the good stars drew near us, and unveiled
To tell us we might sleep since they would watch,
Then seeking out the best place we could find,
Our bodies unto cold insensible,
And unto fear our souls, we should lie down,
And the soft petals of our eyes would close,

And all the heavens would watch us while we slept

The Old Year.

Alas! alas! the Old Year lies dead!
And I am the Wind, the harper hoary,
That chanted his requiem over his head,
And told to the hills his sorrowful story.
Everything comes at last to an end;
But to die on the moor, without pillow or litter,
The desolate moor, with never a friend,
Not one — my God! it is bitter! bitter!

Dead! dead! So! so! All over at last!
And he died of old age as he said he should die,
With the poor old harper alone to cast
One glance on the spot where his ashes lie.
I leant me down by his shadowy form,
And raised up his shaggy and grizzled head,
And felt if his grand old heart was warm;
But alas for my friend, he was dead! he was dead!

Oh, pity, pity! I am so blind,
So old and blind, that I scarcely know
What house this is, nor am able to find
A bit of a pathway here in the snow.
So blind, that although I anxiously peer
Full high and low through the shadows of night,
I can only just guess from the things that I hear,
Which of your windows is alight.

It is easy to see, it is easy to see
You do not love an old man like me;
It matters but little whom he implores,
On the poor old harper they shut their doors.
But I will not call you unkind in there,
For I know I am crabbed and old and wheezy;
And I carry in with me too much cold air,
My cloak is so large and my cape is so breezy.

I know not whether you loved the Old Year,

But I know a poor harper who loved him more
Than even his own sweet harp, I fear,
Which he strikes in vain at your openless door.
With the snow so white for his glistening shroud,
And the night so black for his funeral pall,
Ah me, that sorrow should not be loud;
Ah me, that sorrow is not for all!

How well I remember the good Old Year,
When he sat in his childhood under the pines,
This beautiful, antique harp to hear,
As I grandly chanted mine ancient lines.
For though I say it, this harp, I say,
Has more weird music about the strings
Than all the new-fangled things they play —
In convent halls or the courts of kings.

Your pardon, good folk, for I never came here
To chant my own praise; but I came to lament
The loss of my friend whom I held so dear,
And who carried my heart with him where he went.
Alas! alas! my old friend lies dead!
And I am the Wind, the harper hoary,
That chanted his requiem over his head,
And told to the hills his sorrowful story!

Gone! gone! forever and ever gone!
Would that I, too, might come to my rest!
But I can not die — I must ever go on,
Weary and wildered, a thing unblest.
Hark! hear you not the voice of the sea,
Now shrill and loud, now soft and low?
It is calling to me! It is calling to me!
It says I must go; it says I must go.

The Independent.

The Two Enchantments.

O, hear from yonder height
That glorious trumpet sounding!
How fierce my pulses beat!
But in the valley bright
The rebecs are resounding:
How sweet, how magic sweet!
Ah, whither shall I go?

See now upon the height
Those mighty shapes advancing,
So radiant, yet so far!
But in the valley bright
The youths and maidens dancing,
How beautiful they are!
O, whither shall I go?

How grand about the height
Fame's noble army winding
To pinnacles above!
But in the valley bright,
Her hair with roses binding,
Lingers the maid I love:
Ah, whither shall I go?

The Century Magazine, January, 1883.

Fantasie.

I had come from the distant land of Blee,
To the magical realm of Fantasie.
Brightest of kingdoms under the sun,
Fairer than empires of lilies and roses;
Wilder than half which the Dreams have done
For the wonderful land where Sleep reposes;
The loveliest region of all that be
Is the magical realm of Fantasie.

All on the borders grow those flowers,
Those crazy and — Oh, those crazy flowers,
Most known to immemorial story;
While down from above in all their glory.
Down from above dear Fantasie,
With a white and silent masonry,
Gloom and glimmer the moonshine towers;
And over those towers impalpable
The Whimsies flit, when the moon is full.

The slender Caprices, too, dwell here together
In the midst of a very uncertain weather,
Where it rains and it shines every hour of the day;
And some look so pensive and some look so gay,
And they smile or they frown, alway.
Fickle as wind they be,—
But over them with a wand rules he,
The jolly Monarch of Fantasie.

Once, I remember, in midsummer heats,
I saw the half-naked, dainty Conceits,
Trooping along like troops of Kisses,
Over and over those wildernesses
Of clambering and depending sweets,
Where the Ivy and Vine with each other vie
To be the coquette of the forestry;
And some on the cups of the flowers alit,—
But they perked at the odors and spilled their wine;

And some on the banks of a stream did sit
Complaining of all which they saw in it;
While some fashioned lutes of the vine,
And tunefully made repine.

Apart from the rest a heedless throng
Wandered there, empty of even a song,
Round an amphora's wealth of golden creams,
Like travelers in a land of dreams;
And some low sighed while they hardly ate
Tidbits of the rarest cate;
Others there were, but they stayed in the air,
Not deigning to alight down there;
An azure areole starred their bellies,
For they fed on the hues of jellies.
Fickle as wind they be,—
Yet over them with a wand rules he,
The jolly Monarch of Fantasie.

Nothing comes here but it comes by surprise
To quicken your ears, or to greaten your eyes;
And nothing you hear and naught you see
But is wrought by an alchemy.
Here an extravagant beam of the sun
Will turn the leaves into birds, every one;
And O, such a forest of chirping and chirring,
Peeping and cheeping, who ever heard!
When suddenly, some little breeze up-stirring,
Lo and behold, each beautiful bird
Is a musical bell: and the silvery tinkling
Startles the ouphe and the elfin fay,
Till they scamper, like mad, down the intervale, sprinkling
Old thefts of roses all over the way;
Then the mermen come out from their deep mossy wells,
Bespangled with dews and dripping with foam,
And lock up the music in rosy-lipped shells,
And hie them away to their sea-forest home.

Such are the sounds that you oftenest hear
When the days are calm and the nights are clear;
And such are the sights that you oftenest see
In the magical realm of Fantasie;
And if ever a country prosper me,
May Fantasie that dear country be.

Knickerbocker Mogtzine.

The Masque in Fantasie.

Once I went curtsying through and through
The magical realm of Fantasie,
Steeped in the self-same reverie
As the poets I met and curtsied to;
For ever they walked there dreamily,
Uplifting their eyes to those mystical skies,
While they lowly whispered to one another
How the king of the realm would shortly arise
To make some or other preposterous pother,
But they knew not as yet what the pother would be,
In the magical realm of Fantasie.

Had it not been to see those beautiful bards,
I should never have started down Fantasie-wards;
For a marvelous glamour in the air
Parodies things from what they were;
And a guilty man who could make his boast
That he saw those pallid, unearthly faces,
Unnatural eyes and horrid grimaces,
And still kept his right mind uppermost,
That man would be as brave as a lion,
With nerves of steel anti a heart of iron.
Had it not been to see those beautiful bards,
I should never have started down Fantasie-wards.

Have you ever awaked from silent sleep
To a sounding serenade under the moon,
When viol and flute perfect harmony keep,
And the gentle guitars eke out the tune?
Of the many sweet things I have heard elsewhere,
There is nothing other can hold compare
With the wild, the ethereal burst, which pealed
All of a sudden on Fantasie:
So startling those beautiful bards and me
With its wondrous melody that we reeled,—
Reeled to and fro, as much I dare say,

As those fountains do that are drunk all day,
While showered around us the musical spray.

But now we were hurling our loud acclaim
High up, where onward and onward came,
Borne on the swift white wings of a million
Carrier-breezes, the Royal Pavilion.
All round on its sides were elfin bowers,
And grottoes, and sweet sequestered places,
All fairly roofed with flaunting flowers,
And trailers of ivy pleached into laces:
There was the shining Naiad's home,
Fleckered with flakes of the fountain-foam;
The Dryad's green tree and the Sylph's couch of air,
And the Oread's mountain, all were there.
You saw no goer, you saw no comer,
Only the lingering spell of dreams;
Over all hung the spell of soothy summer,
And amorous silence and shady gleams.
The monarch sat on his throne,
Stern as the marble and cold as the stone;
Full strange then it seemed when he lifted his wand,
And sweetly and merrily gave his command,—
"To the masque! to the masque!"

Then fleetly out,
Bolted a merry, mad, rollicking rout
Of all the pet sprites which Fancy fair
Hath begot on the earth, in the sea or the air:
Faun follows Fairy and Fairy Faun,
And Sylphid the heels of the Satyr on;
The Men of the Seas and the Maids of the Seas
Run chasing the Dryads out of their trees,
And they skip and they gambol and airily fly,
And frisk and frolic so high,
They seem as if poised 'twixt the earth and the sky:
And the Elves and the Naiads trip it along,
Footing the turf and singing a song;
Some lead a morris across the pavilion,
Some weave the maze of the gentle cotillion,
Some tread a round and some tread a measure,
And marry their hands for the pleasure;
The glorious sunbeams, the while, are netting

Checkers of silver and gold and green,
The tall spumy fountains are laughingly jetting,
The dancers are jocundly dancing between;
And when the sport thickened, I would you had seen
Their fair rosy cheeks and their glistening eyes,
Taper arms and streamers of sea-green hair,
And the opaline jetteaus that mocked the skies,
And the arches of Iris that drove through the air.
The monarch sat on his throne,
Calm as the marble and still as the stone;
Full strange then it seemed when he lifted his wand,
And loudly and sternly gave out his command,—
"Unmasqe! unmasque!"

Down rustled the night,
And closed like a pall on the dying light;
Yet no sooner had darkness out-blotted the day,
Than a million blue lights took the darkness away;
And we saw by the blaze that Satyr and Faun
And Merman and Mermaid all were gone:
But heavenly Jesu! what new shapes are there,
Where the blue-flaming sockets flash and flare?
Snaky-haired Furies, and Witches on brooms,
Warlocks indued from the Devil's own looms,
And all the curst litter of churchyards and tombs,—
Bogles and Lemures, Spectres and Ghouls,
That vex men's bodies and haunt men's souls: —
And a guilty man who could make his boast
That he saw those pallid, unearthly faces,
Unnatural eyes and horrid grimaces,
And still kept his right mind uppermost,—
That man would be as brave as a lion,
With nerves of steel and a heart of iron.
Had it not been to see those beautiful bards,
I should never have journeyed down Fantasie-wards.

Knickerbocker Magazine. 1860.

The Grand Orchestra.

O, listen to that solemn symphony!
These are the notes which to the heart interpret
The majesty of sorrow; and it is
By these the heavy progress of the dead,
The dead who died immortal, should be followed.

And this should be upon an afternoon
In rich October; and the grand cortege
Move down a mellow vista, where there hung
Floating aloft, as if upon the air,
And far as eye could see, most gorgeous boughs
Of leaves: and leaves should lie upon the ground
Quite thickly; and it would be strange, indeed,
If here and there, all trembling to the strains
Of this great score, still others did not fall,
Slow sailing their first journey to the earth;
And strange if now and then might not be seen
Some happy squirrel or wee thoughtless bird,
Scarce knowing any sorrow, even in death.
For it should be the month of yellow leaves,
And faint voluptuous odors in the grass
And in the golden haze; the only time
When to be happy is but to be sad,
And to be sad is to be like the leaves
When all the woods wear melancholy plumes.
Too early or too late the poet dies
Who dies not in the season of ripe leaves.
O, list the yearning of these cadences,
For they but breathe again what I now said!
I wonder if beyond the ancient stars,
Beyond this immaterial dome, this blue
Eternity of silence overarched,
Beneath the mighty rushing of the waves,
A hundred foamy leagues from any man,
Within those palaces where all for beauty

Mermaidens live, and mermen die for love,
Such melody is not heard!

Soft! Soft! Oh, hark!
Do you not hear them now? Do you not hear
The music of those deep sea-corridors,
Whose crystal pillars tremble with all-hail
To the majestic entrance of the gray,
Surf-bearded Ocean? These must be, indeed,
Almost as beautiful as were the strains
Which followed in the dim background of Time,
Upon the windy track of Eolus,
When mermaids have besought the mariner.
And those to hear again, who would not go
Seafaring now? Who would not brave black night,
The creeping, treacherous fog, the roaring breakers,
The crazed winds, the insatiable fire,
The unlashed waves that spring upon the decks
As swift as tigers, and remorselessly
Sinner and saint alike sweep — God knows where?
Only to hear such ravishing notes once more,
How gladly would we sail the infested seas,
Above the dull-eyed monsters! O, how quickly
Welcome the rushing and tumultuous bergs,
The thundering, league-long battlements of ice,
Which were the outposts of the Arctic night.

But listen, now! Is it not passing strange
These seeming ordinary whiskered men,
Who look no more than common entities,
Are really purveyors to the stars,
And lug us by the ears up into Heaven?
How worse than useless, now, are our good eyes!
I would not open them if I might see
The unimagined form of Beauty rise.
How softly unto dulcet sounds like these,
The current of our lives should glide away
Into an old age of sweet memories.
Now is the time to die and feel no pang,
The dreadful potion would be so disguised
In the bright sparkle of sweet music's wine.

Who knows not that beyond the amber air
The voice of music never will be hushed,

And silence would be sorrow? O, believe
When we have laid this mortal burden down,
Which gives us gravity, and the green earth
Spins off beneath us, we shall rise at once
Where spring immortal thunders, and where roll
Great globes of most celestial harmonies.

The Independent.

Sighs in the South.

O, far away the winds delay,
On purple hills the soft airs play
Which you and I would breathe to-day;
  And the waters we would quaff
  Have a wild and mountain laugh;
Through the meadows, through the fallows,
Past the willows, past the sallows,
Breaks the brook to shoals and shallows,
  In New England far away,
  Where my heart has gone to-day.

The sun is rolled on wheels of gold
By hazy summits gray and old,
Where all about from fold to fold,
  Like barges of an Eastern prince,
  The clouds ride in magnificence;
Yet not so much of regal splendor
Can the East its princes render,
As the heaven and earth engender
  In New England far away,
  At sunset every autumn day.

O'er painted roods of autumn woods
The twilight, soft as amber, broods
I' the dreamiest of its dreamy moods.
  The mill-wheels in the distance sound,
  The mill-wheels going round and round;

Tiny sheep-bells tinkle, tinkle;
Yellow leaves and red leaves sprinkle,
Through the leaves the waters twinkle,
  In New England far away,
  Where my fancy flies to-day.

From hill to hill, how clear and shrill
The cow-boy's calls reecho still:
How quickly now the air doth fill

With clamor of the home-bound herds,
The cow-bell's tones, the cow-boy's words,
Jingle, jingle, jingle, jingle,
In the copse and in the dingle;
Strange how many sounds commingle
In New England far away,
At sunset on an autumn day.

Toward stream and lake, through bush and brake,
The thirsty kine their courses take;
Nor do they less a clamor make
To see in every stream their looks,
And hear the songs o' the singing brooks.
Ah, how pleasant sounds the lowing
Of the cattle homeward going,
And the noise of waters flowing
In New England far away,
At sunset on an autumn day.

All overhead the leaves are dead —
The brown, the russet leaves and red;
But how more fully, richly fed
The eye is with their beauty now
Than when they greened the summer bough

Air-hung gardens, radiant, splendid,
O'er some fairy's home suspended,
Show not hues more sweetly blended:
Nowhere woodlands half so gay
As these are on an autumn day.

The lights that lie athwart the sky,
White, golden, crimson, far and nigh,
Gleam through the windowed forestry;
Less rich and soft the light that falls
From stained panes on frescoed walls.
Standing 'neath each leafy column,
Hear we not a grand and solemn
Anthem of majestic volume,
Chanted by that blind and gray
Old organist, the Wind, alway?

Each woodland scene, ah, how serene!
The boughs upon the trees, I ween,
Like arches upon pillars lean.

How wondrously these pendent piles
Look down upon the forest-aisles!
Never architect nor moulder
Hath conceived or planned a bolder,
Fairer temple, nor an older;
And my heart has gone away
To worship in those woods to-day.

New York Weekly Tribune, October 13,1862.

Thoreau.

IN MEMORIAM.

If I could find that little poem
With the daintiest sort of proem,
Which the poet squirrel made
On a leaf that would not fade,
And slyly hid one darksome night
By the wicked glow-worm's light! —
It was all about Thoreau;
How the squirrels loved him so,
Since whenever he went walking,
He would stop to hear their talking,
Often smiling when they chattered,
Or their brown nuts downward pattered.

Nay, could I but find that bird
Who told me once that she had heard
Robins, wrens, and others tell,
How he knew their language w'ell,
And how he turned, a thousand times,
Birdie into English rhymes!
In his native Walden wood
He was our good Robin Hood;
Had he not full many an arrow
Piercing to the very marrow,—
Satire, wit, philosophy,
And all the sciences that be?
He was skilled in every herb
Wherewith to temper well the barb;
And not a bird upon the heather
But had gladly lent his feather.
Then woe the *"proude sheryfe,"* alas,
If he in his way chanced to pass;
And woe, alas, the "*proude potter,"*
Should he drive near Walden water.

In New England, scarce a spot
Where his merry men were not;
They loved no better sound to hear,
Than when his bugle-horn rang clear
On "dale and downe," or "hilles hee,"
"All under the gude greenwood tree."
I heard it once on Marlborough road,
Where oft at morning-tide he wode.

Sometimes I seem to see him stand
Between the rainbow and the land,
Surveying with his tranquil eye
The varied scenes which pass him by:
Anon, at autumn's highest noon,
Careering with the harvest-moon;

And when the Old Year, sick to death,
Scantly draws his frosty breath,
I see him wasted thin as air,
Keeping his lone vigil there;
But O, when early grass doth spring,
And fresh buds burst and green woods ring,
Grant me his eyes that I may see
All the beauty that shall be.

He could give the blessed reasons
Why the flowers came in their seasons;
Nay, he kenned the pedigree
O' the red rose and the white lily.
"Run," he said, "and you shall find
Just the stalk to suit your mind!
Yet another day and half
Go you where the brooklets laugh,
And seek the other in high grass,—
But do not crush it as you pass!
Ah, but stop, if you should see,
Under some old rock or tree,
A purple, wee thing, most like this
I' the book here—bring it — do not miss,
For this same flower, before to-morrow,
You can neither beg nor borrow."

Have I not beheld where stood
Between the water and the wood,

That famous cot, which he, the cotter,
Reared, one day, near Walden water?
Have I not beheld that boat
Which bore the noble seer afloat?

A common bark before he entered,
An argosy when him it ventured?
And now if out of Death's grim portal
Part of us doth step immortal,
Then why may not our blessed cotter
Still revisit Walden water,
And still conduct that wondrous boat
Which bore the gentle seer afloat?

The Invisible Piper.

Hark! the invisible piper plays!
You will scarcely go home,
I think, to-night,
For your horse will cast his shoes in the ways,
And you will follow a fire-fly light.
O, he is the piper that never was seen
Any two days or nights between;
But plenty there be w'ho declare he looks
Like the figure of Punch in the picture-books,
Or a wide-mouthed, red-nosed, rollicking clown,
With his face all laughter from chin to crown.

Puffing his cheeks and piping like mad,
He will march through autumn, the motley fellow,
And the leaves can not see him, though ever so glad,
But they all will follow him, red and yellow.
Not a farmer but misses his oaten straws
And calls on the piper, aloud, to stay;
But he scarcely will get the words out of his jaws
Ere the piper is up and off and away.

When the winter is come, and the nights grow late,
And the old crone leans at the kitchen grate,
In solemn wise, and mumbles her stories
Till the urchins make big eyes; then glories
The piper to blow and to blow, and his tone
Those urchins think is the desolate moan
Of the wounded knight in the legend old,
Which the skinny old crone has just now told;
And but half they believed her marvelous tale
Till the piper sounded his notes of bale;
And it is very queer how the piper and she
Will cheat little children two times out of three.

He comes up at night from the dreary wold
And plays round the chimneys and gables old,
And flits in and out through the haunted hall

Till the family portraits dance on the wall.
But most he loves in midsummer eves
To answer her plaint when Echo grieves;
Or chance on lovers who kiss and play
In the shade of an arbor hid away.

No better piper e'er piped on a straw
To the king of the forest, the bold outlaw;
And no better piper e'er piped on a reed
To the elves and the fairies that skip o'er the mead;
And no better piper e'er piped on a quill
To the shepherds that dance 'neath the loud-bleating hill.
O, he is the piper for all and for all;
For he pipes to Maggie and he pipes to Mall,
He pipes for the cottage and he pipes for the hall;
He pipes for merry and he pipes for sad,
He pipes for sorry and he pipes for glad,
And be you a mistress, or be you a lover,
Sour be the sorrel, or sweet be the clover,
There is no better music the wide world over.

Shakespeare.

I wish that I could have my wish to-night;
For all the fairies should assist my flight
  Back into the abyss of years;
Till I could see the streaming light,
  And hear the music of the spheres
That sang together at the joyous birth
  Of that immortal mind,
  The noblest of his kind —
The only Shakespeare that has graced our earth.

  O, that I might behold
Those gentle sprites, by others all unseen,
  Queen Mab and Puck the bold,
  With curtseys manifold
Glide round his cradle every morn and e'en;

That I might see the nimble shapes that ran
  And frisked and frolicked by his side,
When school hours ended or began,
  At morn or eventide;
That I might see the very shoes he w'ore
  Upon the dusty street,
His little gown and pinafore,
  His satchel and his schoolboy rig complete!

  If I could have the wish I rhyme,
Then should this night, and all it doth contain,
  Be set far back upon the rim of Time,
And I would wildered be upon a stormy plain:
The wanton waves of winter wind and storm
  Should beat upon my ruddy face,
And on my streaming hair;
And hags and witches multiform,
  And beldames past all saintly grace,
Should hover round me in the sleety air.

Then hungry, cold, and frightened by these imps of sin,

And breathless all with buffeting the storm,
Betimes I would arrive at some old English inn,
Wainscoted, high, and warm.
The fire should blaze in antique chimney-place;
And on the high-backed settles, here and there,
The village gossip and the merry laugh
Should follow brimming cups of half-an'-half;
Before the fire, in hospitable chair,
The landlord fat should bask his shining face,
And slowly twirl his pewter can;
And there in his consummate grace,
The perfect lord of wit,
The immortal man,
The only Shakespeare of this earth should sit.

There, too, that Spanish galleon of a hulk,
Ben Jonson, lying at full length,
Should so dispose his goodly bulk
That he might lie at ease upon his back,
To test the tone and strength
Of Boniface's sherris-sack.
And there should be some compeers of these two,
Rare wits and poets of the land,
Whom all good England knew,
And who are now her dear forget-me-nots;
And they should lounge on
Shakespeare's either hand,
And sip their punch from queer old cans and pots.
O, then, such drollery should begin,
Such wit flash out, such humor run
Around the fire in this old English inn,
The veriest clod would be convulsed with fun;
And Boniface's merry sides would ache,
And his round belly like a pudding shake.
Never since the world began
Has been such repartee;
And never till the next begins,
Will greater things be said by man,
Than this same company
Were wont to say so oft in those old English inns.
Dear artist if you paint this picture mine,
Do not forget the storm that roars

Above the merry din and laughter within doors;
But let some stroke divine
Make all within appear more rich and warm,
By contrast with the outer storm.

New York Tribune.

At the Grave.

IN MEMORY OF A. M.

It is a world of seeming:
The changeless moon seems changing ever,
The sun sets daily, but sets never;
So near the stars and yet so far;
So small they seem, so large they are!
It is a world of seeming.
And so it seems that she is dead;
Yet so seems only; for, instead,
Her life is just begun; and this —
Is but an empty chrysalis;
While she, unseen to mortal eyes,
Now wins her way in brighter skies —
Beyond this world of seeming.

The Century Magazine, February, 1887.

Pro Mortuis

For the dead and for the dying;
For the dead that once were living,
And the living that are dying,
Pray I to the All-forgiving.
For the dead who yester journeyed;
For the living who, to-morrow,
Through the Valley of the Shadow,
Must all bear the world's great sorrow;
For the immortal who in silence
Have already crossed the portal;
For the mortal who in sadness
Soon shall follow the immortal;
Keep thine arms around all, O Father! —
Round lamenting and lamented;
Round the living and repenting,
Round the dead who have repented.
Keep thine arms round all, O Father!
That are left or that are taken;
For they all are needy, whether
The forsaking or forsaken.

New York Post, July 15, 1862.

The Serene Message.

So thou hast lived with a sublime intent,—
Hast walked the earth with heaven-lifted eyes,—
And done no wrong, thy guardians well may be
The seas, the oceans in their majesty,
And the calm peaks that tower along the skies.
If to thine ear the patter of young feet
Has been like music, and thy heart is fain
To spare the roses and each living thing,
Then surely some time shall a sweet bird sing
Into thy grave, thou hast not lived in vain.
If thou hast said one only word to cheer
The spirits of thy fellows on the earth,
And done no wrong, then mayst thou find thy home
Content beneath the unutterable dome,
And thank the stars for thy majestic birth.
So runs the message that
I oftenest hear
In this dear spot, where
I could wish to lie
If I were dead, still listening to the breeze
Under the pines, the centenarian trees
That softly whisper of the days gone by.

The Century Magazine.

Comrades.

One steed I have of common clay,
And one no less than regal; By day
I jog on old Saddlebags,
By night I fly upon Eagle:
To store, to market, to field, to mill,
One plods with patient patter,
Nor hears along the far-off heights
The hoofs of his comrade clatter.
To field, to market, to mill he goes,
Nor sees his comrade gleaming
Where he flies along the purple hills,
Nor the flame from his bridle steaming;
Sees not his track, nor the sparks of fire
So terribly flashing from it,
As they flashed from the track of Alborak
When he bravely carried Mahomet.
One steed, in a few short years, will rest
Under the grasses yonder;
The other will come there centuries hence
To linger and dream and ponder:
And yet both steeds are mine to-day,
The immortal and the mortal;
One beats alone the clods of earth,
One stamps at heaven's portal.

The Century Magazine, December, 1887.

May Flowers.

Now falls the happy time of year
That brings to man and maid good cheer,
When May comes down in April showers
And sprinkles all the earth with flowers.
Full fair to see these early dawns
The gold mist rising from the lawns;
Sweet to see the dew-star shine
On cowslip or on columbine;
To feel the freshness of the air
Upon our cheeks and in our hair.
The long-imprisoned brooks leap out
With merry bound and rustic shout,
Eager on the grassy plain
To meet and talk and laugh again.
The wild-wood noisy is with glee;
There sings a bird on every tree;
They are holding social chat; —
Can you not imagine that? —
Sweetly calling to each other "Father," "Mother," "Sister," "Brother."
Lo, wherever we may tread
A magic carpet is outspread:
What flower is that for which you look
Along the margin of the brook?
The showers may not have brought it yet,
It is the modest violet.
Here is arbute and its kin;
Here the tall, slim Benjamin;
What is this beside the tree?
It is wood-anemone. The Sun along the River walks;
The River, to himself he talks;
Last night he saw the naked moon
Flying onward into June.
Apple-blossoms on the hills,
Laurel-blooms beside the rills,
Be not painted half so fair

As our bright
May mornings are.
Barefoot, hatless in the sun,
See the truant school-boys run;
Fun and Frolic tread them nigh,
And mischief with her beaming eye;
One thing only do they fear —
The man with quill behind his ear.
By the laughter and the shout
There must be
May-parties out:
Here is one;
I see their Queen
Is crowned with simple evergreen;
Just one year ago, to-day,
Edith wore this crown of May;
Just one year to-day has past
Since we saw our Edith last:
Know you what the poets tell
Of the crowns of asphodel?
Thus we may be right in saying "Edith has but gone a-Maying."
The forest trees outstretch their arms
And catch the birds upon their palms;
The poet more devoutly now
Walks beneath each hanging bough:
What a blessed office his!
He, the Priest of Nature is;
He in poesy distils
All the murmurings of rills;
He translates the songs of birds
And to their music sets his words.
The lover more than ever loves,
He sighs in fields, he weeps in groves:
On every tree he carves her name,
And tires the wind's ear with the same:
His mistress more than ever dreams,
Embracing what his image seems.
But the cuckoo calls the rain;
You and I must home again:
Meantime I shall not cease praying
We may go once more a-Maying.

New York Weekly Tribune, April 26, 1863.

The Fairy Boat.

Tell me what frail bark or dory
Is it, that with nightly glory
Saileth since all time and story
Through the heavens wide and airy?
Answer me,— oh, answer soon!
Is it sprite or is it fairy?
Nay, in sooth it is the moon!
No,— it is some heaven-haunting
Fairy, in her white canoe:
Yes, it is some wild, enchanting
Fairy faring with her crew,
In her bark along the blue.
Fairy, fairy, in that airy
Fragile bark, oh, let me carry
Forty friends, nor ever tarry
Till we reach the seas that never
Break in waves nor dash in foam,—
Till we reach the seas that ever
Round the purple islets roam!
Then, oh! then, with easier motion,
Where nor breeze nor whisper stirs,
Let me float upon that ocean,
With my dainty, dainty sirs,
With all my gentle passengers.
On that mere, gossamery,
I will steer, cheery, cheery,
Steer thy bark, nor ever weary
Though all pain or pallor seizes
Cheek or brow or head of mine;
Piloting through happy breezes,
I will rest that head on thine.
We will share all things together
With the friends that I shall bring;
All delights of starry weather;
And the crazy world shall ring

To the melody we sing.

A Midnight Chorus.

O St. Cecilia, how divine that choral!
O, it must be some burst from Heaven's voices,
From voices dwelling far beyond this poor
And misty region of the day and night!
And yet I must believe it is not so.
Since these are also they who sang before;
Only their chanting then was in the glare
And bustle of the day, and now't is night;
Still night, that shows fair
Music's form complete
As it betrays to light the hidden stars;
The only time when
Music is herself; —
Music, the lovely maid that loves the moon,
And the blest quiet of the brooding night; —
The sweetest wonder of the universe.
How all this common air which the low beasts
And meanest of mankind thus breathe, can speak
The language of the soul so angel-tongued,
To stir the bold assertion that even we,
The pale inheritors of narrow graves,
Can stand in spite of epitaphs, and are
No less than the most godlike of the gods,
Makes reverie indeed.
But this which now
We hear, is revelation! it is more
Than caroling and greater than mere song:
It is the rage and eloquence of passion,—
Now on the heights of exultation keyed,
Now on the deep, dark levels of despair!
Upon this strain a mighty host once hurled
A host far mightier down the steeps of battle,
Beneath a fiery sunset, on the marge
Of the resounding sea.
Long, long ago

The shades of those lost warriors wandered down
Into the underworld, chased everywhere
By that fierce-flying piean: long ago
Came clattering home to their sweethearts and wives
Those noble singers who so sang themselves
Into the bright and blinding gaze of Fame.
And I now hear the very lay they sang
When their sweethearts and wives rode out to meet them,
So rapturous and yet with love so tender: —
Do you not hear the chanson of the knights
Returning from that happy joust of battle?
This glorious symphony, if it could go
Where those lost warriors are, in that sad place,
Lamenting home and fate, would wreak delight
Upon the face of pain.
The outbursting notes
Like spirits of the air, sweep the wide plains
And dash with glee against the haughty breasts
Of the impassive hills.
But hear them now!
It is the mighty choral and the chant
Of a great nation, as if all the world
Stood on the table-land of
Time, and sang
Immortal anthem: and
I am so nerved
With this high ecstasy, that were it now
Confronted by a million chattering ghosts
Of those lost warriors, with a single sword
To dash through all and win great heights beyond,—
Armed "with such music,
I should not despair.
Nay, nay: the choristers have changed their notes:
It is no more the tune of exultation,—
It is a wailing from the underground,
So long and loud and dolorous, it seems
The hopeless *miserere* of the dead:
It is the lamentation of those lost
And hapless warriors, who let fall their sorrow
Forever without cease.
O, hear you not
Crying from out the centre, a great voice

Of agony, the voice of many ages?

The Song of the Savoyards.

Far poured past
Broadway's lamps alight,
The tumult of her motley throng,
When high and clear upon the night
Rose an inspiring song;
And rang above the city's din
To sound of harp and violin;
A simple but a manly strain,
And ending with the brave refrain —
Courage! courage, mon camarade!
And now where rose that song of cheer,
Both old and young stood still for joy;
Or from the windows hung to hear
The children of Savoy:
And many an eye with rapture glowed,
And saddest hearts forgot their load,
And feeble souls grew strong again,
So stirring was the brave refrain —
Courage! courage, mon camarade!
Alone, with only silence there,
Awaiting his life's welcome close,
A sick man lay, when on the air
That clarion arose;
So sweet the thrilling cadence rang,
It seemed to him an angel sang,
And sang to him; and he would fain
Have died upon that heavenly strain —
Courage! courage, mon camarade!
A sorrow-stricken man and wife,
With nothing left them but to pray,
Heard streaming over their sad life
That grand, heroic lay:
And through the mist of happy tears
They saw the promise-laden years;
And in their joy they sang again,

And caroled high the fond refrain —
Courage! courage, mon camarade!
Two artists, in the cloud of gloom
Which hung upon their hopes deferred,
Resounding through their garret-room
That noble chanson heard;
And as the night before the day
Their weak misgivings fled away;
And with the burden of the strain
They made their studio ring again —
Courage! courage, mon camarade!
Two poets, who in patience wrought
The glory of an aftertime,—
Lords of an age which knew them not,
Heard rise that lofty rhyme;
And on their hearts it fell, as falls
The sunshine upon prison-walls;
And one caught up the magic strain
And to the other sang again —
Courage! courage, mon camarade!
And unto one who, tired of breath,
And day and night and name and fame,
Held to his lips a glass of death,
That song a savior came;
Beseeching him from his despair,
As with the passion of a prayer;
And kindling in his heart and brain
The valor of its blest refrain —
Courage! courage, mon camarade!
O thou, with earthly ills beset,
Call to thy lips those words of joy,
And never in thy life forget
The brave song of Savoy!
For those dear words may have the power
To cheer thee in thy darkest hour;
The memory of that loved refrain
Bring gladness to thy heart again! —
Courage! courage, mon camarade!

Scribner's Magazine, June, 1875.

Webster.

Inscribed to Benjamin Pierce Cheney, of Boston, who, in the spirit of the ancient Greeks, erected a statue at Concord, N. H., on the 17th of June, 1886, to the memory of Webster.

I.

He trod no deck; he rode no horse; he bore
No truncheon and no sword. He only sate
A simple Senator within the gate;
But when he spoke, men listened: from every door
Surged round him like a sea without a shore—
This man of the majestic mien, who late
On his own shoulders had borne up the State;
Hearts beat; eyes glistened.
He would speak once more.
The thunders gathered on his awful brow;
He spoke. We know the story. He who shone
On all the summits of occasion, now
Shone upon this; and made the day his own:
He did but speak within the Senate Hall
Some pregnant hours, yet in that time saved all.

II.

He died. His living eyes were never bent
Upon the sun that lit his country's woes;
But in a decade that red sun arose —
And on his tomb its warning rays were sent:
And now, throughout the war, from tent to tent,
Great Webster walked in scorn of death's repose,
And sat by every camp-fire. Unto those
He showed what Chippewa, Buena Vista meant,
Fort Erie, Palo Alto, Lundy's Lane;

To these discoursed of Concord, Plymouth-shore
And Bunker Hill; and heard their loud huzza,
When — where he pointed — rose to sight again,
Fold over fold unfurling, star by star,
The old flag sweeping through the heavens once more.

III.

New Hampshire bore him; nurtured him; a stern,
Rough nurse, but still, still at his mother's hearth:
Ah, Heaven, that he should sleep in other earth,
Even though in Massachusetts! even though his urn
Stands by the sea, to make the white ships turn
Instinctively! For what is all this worth,
When I can hear her voice who gave him birth —
And know how strong her tender heart doth yearn —
Calling his mighty ashes? Attica
No less had sighed for her Demosthenes:
So in her granite hills New Hampshire stands —
More proud, yet more forlorn than even Greece,
Remembering such a son; and looking far
Where shines a tomb beside the ocean sands.

New York Observer, June 17, 1886.

Old Friends.

I.

Have you ever trod the height
Whence the lamps of faith and reason
Flash the vista into sight
Of that glorious future season
Prophesied through many ages
By the best of bards and sages?

II.

Have you from that shining height
Heard the beautiful descanting
Of the bards whose names I write,
That have never ceased their chanting
Though the winter's ice hath bound them,
And the fields are frozen round them?

III.

Still they sing; for winter's cold
Is but round them and not of them;
They are neither one grown old
In despite the snows above them;
Nay, if years can tell the story
Then the gods themselves were hoary.

IV.

Still they sing, so sweet, so sweet,
Songs of beauty past denying,
And the years may beat and beat

Thick as flakes of winter flying,—
Still we shall expect to hear them
And sometime to journey near them.

V.

Earth is but a stopping place; —
We are surely what our souls are,
Ready for a mighty race
Without knowing what our goals are,
Though by many signs divining
Welcome in yon heaven shining.

VI.

If the wing proclaims the air
And the air the wing proclaimeth,
It is no mere dreamland there
Which the soul its kingdom nameth;
But a glorious, high dominion
Worthy an immortal pinion.

VII.

So, perchance, Orion-wards
We may sometime sail together
With our very noble bards
Through the bright Empyrean weather;
Or at little distance follow
As the Muses did Apollo.

VIII.

Bard of Essex, though thy song
May be richer then and fuller,
As we sail the stars along,
We shall not forget "Maud Muller": —
For thy fame's eterne survival,
Autumn will be winter's rival.

IX.

Thou mayest louder sing to us,
Bard of Suffolk, but, O, never
Shall thy "chambered Nautilus"
Quite forgotten be forever!
That "Last Leaf," through all the ages,
Will yet rustle in thy pages.

X.

Bard of Surrey, though thy lay
  Trance afar the Jovian ridges,
Still thy brook will sing its way
  Past the all-enchanted bridges;
And thy Knights will keep their tourney
Though the earth forget her journey.

Boston Advertiser, November 15,1889.

Margie.

That lovely brook, I see it
Still flashing in the sun;
And she and I are children
Once more in Idlington;
And Margie on the bank there,
I see as she used to look,
Those summer days when she played with me,
On the borders of the brook.
What wonderful ships and shallops
I made for Margie then,
With leaves and grass for cargoes,
And sticks and straws for men: —
And what brave names we gave them —
"Orlando," "George-a-Green,"
Sir Galahad," "King Pellemore," "The
Cid" and "Sir Cauline!"
We cared not much for traffic,
Yet our captains and our mates
Brought often the honey of Hybla,
And Tunis figs and dates;
But when love called or honor,
We sent our vessels out
In aid of all who needed them,
With many a cheer and shout.
We wrote to Robinson Crusoe,
That we hoped, now Friday was gone,
He would come straight over and see us,
With all his goat-skins on;
And bring the poll-parrot with him,
So when they stepped on shore,
We should know them both and take them home,
Never to wander more.
As the seasons changed, so we did; —
In spring we dreamed of fame;
And in summer of autumn's riches;

And when October came,
We stripped the yellow gold-trees
And sent our ill-got gain
In caravels to Andaluce,
Across the Spanish Main.

That lovely brook,— I know not
Just where it comes from now,—
But in those days it wandered —
As Margie could avow—
Right out from far Cipango,
And merrily ran on
Till it came to the fairy fields this side
The valley of Avalon.

It heard in Sherwood Forest Brave
Robin's bugle-calls;
And carried off the music
To dash it on the walls
Of the city of Manoa;
And could be seen afar,
In clearest air from Samarcand,
And near to Candahar.

Sometimes I see the windings
Of that brook as in a dream,
While it flows away to the sunset;
And here and there the stream
Is touched with a light so tender
That it seems to my loving eyes,
The course of a beautiful human life
Ending in Paradise.

And plans and schemes are the vessels,
And hope is the wind that blows,
And all good aims are the harbors,
And time is the tide that flows; —
And then again all changes,
And I see ourselves once more —
Dear Margie and a little boy
Playing along the shore.

Youth's Companion, May 21, 1891.

Saint Goethe's Night.

Where calm in bronze great Goethe stood,
The old man dropped his load of wood,

And clasping his brown hands in prayer
Knelt like another statue there:

One only of the passers-by
On Gottlieb turned a kindly eye;

For never before, nor by any hap,
Did sweeter soul tip student's cap;

And when the old man raised his head,
"Your servant, Sir!" tall Martin said.

"I know not," the old man replied,
"What saint this is nor when he died;

"But in all my life I have not seen
So dear a saint in face and mien."

"Ay," said Martin; "Saint Goethe here
Is the saint for me of all saints in the year";

And a smile like a burst of sunshine broke
Over the young man's face while he spoke.

"O, then, I shall sell my bundle of pine,"
Old Gottlieb replied, "for bread and wine"!

"You look so tired," stout Martin said,
"I will carry the pack instead;

"And you and I will seek some hall
Where they hold the dear saint's festival."

Not slowly Gottlieb's heart now beat,
As they suddenly entered from the street,
Where, thick as trees in his mountain wood,
A hundred more like Martin stood,
Cap on head and glass in hand,
Chanting a song of the Fatherland;
And Gottlieb felt his heart grow young

To hear the song the Burschen sung.
And while all gazed with moistened eyes,
"O Jove," one cried, "what a prize! what a prize!
"This is the wood to make burn bright
The torches of Saint Goethe's night!
"You may call it pine if you like, but we
Know well the heart of the sandabtree;
"Perceive you not the rich perfume
It sheds already through the room?
"It is an odor that but for the smell
Of this cloud of smoke, you would know full well;
"Nay, nay, the saint would be shocked, indeed,
Should we take for nothing the wood we need!
"We must give you at least a bran-new suit
And a cap and boots and a warm surtout,
"And bread and wine and beer afoam,
And a donkey to carry you safely home."
Grand, at length, in his new corduroy,
And weeping still, though full of joy,
The woodman followed the setting sun,
On and on, till the day was done.
Long time had Gottlieb's wife to wait
The step of her goodman at the gate;
So sick at heart she could not spread
The noonday meal, but sat instead
At her spinning-wheel and watched the hour
On the dial of the distant tower,
While her frequent glance went up and down
The dusty highway to the town;
But all in vain; until at last
The sun set and she saw aghast
Near the gate in the dusk, a ghost or a witch,
Or a thief or a bear — she knew not which:
But when old Gottlieb's donkey brayed, Fraii
Barbara fell on her knees and prayed;
For she saw no longer a witch or an elf,
But believed it no less than the devil himself.
Now suddenly broke upon their ears
A distant sound, as of mighty cheers;
And turning, they saw far up and down,
Lights coming toward them from the town;
And gazed intent, while nearer drew

The long procession, two by two:
But when at last by his own gate
He saw the gleaming torches wait,
And the same chant rose, even more sublime,
Which he had heard in the morning-time,
Then Gottlieb murmured: “These must be
The lads who bought my wood of me.”
And while he marveled, the bright array
Formed into ranks and moved away:
Long time the woodman and his dame
Watched the bright but lessening flame
Of the torches burning clear;
And heard afar, or seemed to hear,
The burden of the song that still
Ran echoing from hill to hill;
But when the flooding moonlight made
The far-off stars and torches fade
They turned, surprised that now no more
They saw the white walk by the door;
But in its place a glittering show
Of heaped-up hampers all arow;
And Gottlieb, knowing well whence came
This treasure-trove, now told his dame,
In tones that trembled with delight,
Whose wood had made the torches bright;
And what good saint had just sent down
The lads that loved him from the town.

The Fighting Parson.

It was brave young Parson Webster,
His father a parson before him,
And here in this town of Temple
The people used to adore him;
And the minute-men from all quarters
That morning had grounded their arms
Round the meeting-house on the hilltop,
Looking down on Temple farms.
Dear to the Puritan soldier
The food which his meeting-house offered,
And especially dear the fine manna
Which the young Temple minister proffered;
And believe as he might in his firelock,
His bayonet, or his sword,
The minute-man's heart was hopeless
If not filled with the strength of the Lord.
The minute-man ever and always
Waited the signal of warning,
And he never dreamed in the evening
Where his prayers would ascend the next morning;
And they even said that the parson
Undoubtedly preached his best
When his musket stood in the pulpit
Ready for use with the rest.
Sad was the minister's message,
And many a heart beat faster,
And many a soft eye glistened,
Whenever the voice of the pastor
Dwelt on the absent dear ones
Who had followed their country's call
To the distant camp, or the battle.
Or the frowning fortress-wall.
And now when near to "fifteenthly,"
And the urchins thought of their nuncheon,
And into the half-curtained windows

Hotter and hotter the sun shone,
And the redbreast dozed in the branches,
And the crow on the pine tree's top,
And the squirrel was lost in his musings,
The sermon came to a stop.
For sharp on the turnpike the clatter
Of galloping hoofs resounded,
And the granite ring of the roadway
Louder and louder sounded;
And now no longer the redbreast
Was inclined to be dull that day,
And now no longer the sexton
Slept in his usual way.
But all sprang up on the instant,
And the widest of eyes grew wider
While on towards the porch, like a tempest,
Came sweeping the horse and its rider;
And now from the din of the hoof-beats
A trumpet voice leapt out,
And, tingling to its rafters,
The church was alive with the shout,—
"Burgoyne's at Ticonderoga:
Would you have the old fort surrender?"
"No, no!" cried the parson; "New Hampshire
Will send the last man to defend her!"
But before he could shoulder his musket
A Tory sang up from below,
"I hear a great voice out of heaven, sir,
Warning us not to go."
Quick from the pulpit descending,
With the agile step of a lion,—
"The voice you hear is from hell, sir!"
Replied the young servant of Zion.
And out through the open doorway,
And on past the porch he strode,
And the congregation came after,
And gathered beside the road.
Sadly enough the colonel,
The minute-men all arraying,
From the dusty cocked hat of the rider
Drew the lots for going or staying.
Then waving his hat as he took it,

And putting his spurs to his mare,
The stranger rode off to New Ipswich
In a cheering that rent the air.
Worse than the shock of battle
Now came the sad leave-taking,
And to mothers and maids and matrons
The deepest of grief and heart-aching;
And far on the road through the mountains
Whence the rider had just come,
They followed the minute-men marching
To the sound of the fife and the drum.
Long dead have they been who sat there
At that feast of things eternal —
Long dead the laymen, the deacons,
The lawyer, the doctor, the colonel;
Long dead the youths and the maidens,
And long on the graves of all
Have the summers and the winters
Their leaves and their snows let fall.
But whenever I come to the churchyard,
Where, by the side of the pastor,
They afterwards laid the colonel,
His friend in success and disaster,
I see again on the common
The minute-men all in array,
And again I behold the departure,
The pastor leading the way.
And I think of the scene when his comrades
Brought back the young pastor, dying,
To his home in the house of the colonel;
And how, on his death-bed lying,
He took the hand that was offered,
And, gazing far into the night,
Whispered, "I die for my country —
I have fought — I have fought the good fight."

The Century Magazine, May, 1890.

The Drummer.

Away back in those happy times
When we had little left to vex us,
On sea or land, save poets' rhymes
And talk about annexing Texas;
While yet with all our men and boys
"Forward, march!" was quite the fashion,
And the liveliest of our joys —
The old military passion —
Was not yet grown cold and numb;
While still full many a household niche
Enshrined the old-time regimentals,
And town and country were yet rich
With relics of the Continentals;
While still in splendid motley dressed,
Wonderful to all beholders,
Men were glad to march abreast
With their muskets on their shoulders,
To the sound of fife and drum —
In one of those far distant years,
About the time of early tillage,
The proud Bandana Fusileers
Were forming just above the village,
Full fifty and two hundred strong,
For their usual march of glory
Down the turnpike wide and long,
Little dreaming the whole story
Would be told in days to come,
When suddenly the old snare-drum
Pealed out so sharp and rang so cheery
That every man was on the plumb,
However old, however weary;
And lo, as down the lines they gazed,
Wondering what could ail the drummer,
In his place they saw, amazed,
The most curious newcomer

Who had ever drummed a drum.
For all the world as big around
And jolly as a Punchinello,
His white hat with bright scarlet bound,
His old green jacket faced with yellow;
But who he was, or whence had fared
That most iridescent figure,
No one knew, and no one cared,
While with such immortal vigor
He discoursed upon the drum.
It was a beat that would have stirred
The pulses of the very coldest,
And such a stroke had not been heard
Within the memory of the oldest.
Down on the drum's defenseless head
Fell the sticks with such a clatter
As few men, alive or dead,
Ever dreamed of, for that matter —
Drum, drum, drum, der-um, drum, drum!
And now from every side uprose,
Responsive to that roll and rattle,
Great rounds of cheers resembling those
Which rang along the Concord battle,
When, pale as death with patriot ire,
The undaunted But trick shouted,
"Soldiers, fire! For God's sake, fire!"
And the British troops were routed,
And at last the war was come.
And so the glorious march began
With here an opening, there a wheeling,
As if it were a living fan,
In part concealing, part revealing,
The secret of those fine deploys
So bewildering to the senses
Of the truant village boys
Who now lined the walls and fences,
Thinking of the day to come.
Ah, nevermore along that street
Will martial music more ecstatic
Sweethearts and wives and children greet
In parlor, oriel, or attic;

Ah, nevermore to cheer and shout
Down that turnpike long and sandy
Will such wizard notes ring out
Of our "Yankee Doodle Dandy,"
From that old colonial drum.
Ah me! ah me! to hear again
That ruddy and gray-headed scorner
Of all the woes that time can rain
As down he swept round Tanyard Corner
Or when he drummed his very best
Near the elm tree by the Prestons',
Or with very special zest
At the halt in front of Weston's,
Known so well in times to come!
For here it was upon that day
The drummer gave his final touches;
And here it was that, strange to say,
While creeping by upon his crutches,
The oldest man the country round
Suddenly before the drummer
Stopped and gazed as one spellbound.
"No man," sighed he, "but young Plummer
Could so play upon a drum."
"But he is dead, no doubt, no doubt."
And while he stood there marveling greatly,
The other in his turn spoke out,
"It's Boynton, whom we called ' The
Stately.'"

Ah, what a meeting! Gracious heaven!
While in tears they kept repeating
"Bennington" and "seventy-seven."
"What a meeting! what a meeting!"
Till it seemed no end would come.

Of all that saw no eye was dry;
And nothing then would do but straightway
To seize a carriage that stood by,
Magnificent, in Barret's gateway,
And carry both to Boynton's door.
"Piny Farm," from that same summer,
Was the hospitable shore
Where the old and world-tossed drummer

Lived for many years to come.

The Century Magazine, July, 1891.

Ad Astra.

If thou hast drained to the lees
The cup of inglorious ease,
Think now on the mighty men;
Dream thou dost hear again
The voice of Miltiades
And the rustle of his laurels.

See the stern purpose rise
To Cortes' glittering eyes —
To cut off all retreat
See him sink every ship in his fleet,
Then sweep to his golden prize
With not one plank behind him.

Dost believe all is over and done
And no hope is under the sun?
Then think on the mighty men;
Dream thou canst hear again
The great shouts of Timoleon
That rallied the flying army.

And yet not alone for the past
Was the mold of heroes cast:
Let the Alps and the Andes say
What breed there is to-day;
And the poles, and the oceans rest,
And the burning waste of Sabai

Think of the soul that needs
No background for its deed
Of him who bravely bears
A mountain of lifelong cares
Of the heart that aches and bleeds
And dies, but never surrenders.

O, true man, bear thy pains
And count thy losses gains;
Believe in the brave whom alone

Heaven's eye hath seen and known;
For as surely as justice reigns,
Their reward will shine like their valor.

The Century Magazine, December, 1888.
LoFC.

The Ted K Archive

Selected Poems of Henry Ames Blood
1901

The Neale Publishing Company
Copyrighted in 1901 by Mary M. Blood, now in the public domain.
Some paragraphs and indenting could do with adding.

www.thetedkarchive.com