

has calmly gone to its death rather than give quibbling critics of the service the slightest chance to question its spirit. One winter night the Barnegat life-savers launched their boat, and disappeared into the storm and the darkness, never again to be seen alive. The wiping out of the Point aux Barques crew has already been related. Such instances are not isolated. Hardly a season passes without adding its tribute of lives sacrificed to the honor-roll of the service.

Circumstances singularly pathetic surround the loss which befell the crew of the Peaked Hill station, near Provincetown, Cape Cod. Keeper Atkins of this station was one of the true and trusted veterans of the service. But one stormy day in winter, after twelve hours' exposure on the beach, exhausted by futile efforts to launch the surf-boat, he and his crew had the mortification of seeing the rescue they had attempted made by a crew of volunteers. It mattered not that these had made no previous exertions, that they had come fresh and unwearied upon the scene; Keeper Atkins and his crew had to take from the community what, in the staid, old-fashioned speech of the Cape, is known as the "goading slur."

The keeper made no attempt to answer his critics; but gradually, as that season and the following summer wore away, a settled look of determination became stamped on his face, and his bearing took on a dignity almost tragic. When, at the opening of the next season, his wife, as he left his home for the station, begged him not to expose himself to needless danger, he replied:

"Before this season is over I will have wiped out the 'goading slur.'"

Reaching the station, he called his crew about him, and informed them that, no matter at what peril, a rescue would be attempted at every wreck within the limits of the station.

That winter a storm of almost unprecedented fury burst over the coast, and a vessel was swept upon the Peaked Hill bars. A surf-boat, launched by seemingly superhuman power, put out from shore. But neither desperation, nor even madness, could keep a boat afloat in such a sea; and when, one after another, those who had braved it were cast upon the beach, three were dead. One of these was Keeper Atkins. He had wiped out the "goading slur."

Of such stuff are the heroes of the life-saving service.

## TIMROD THE POET.

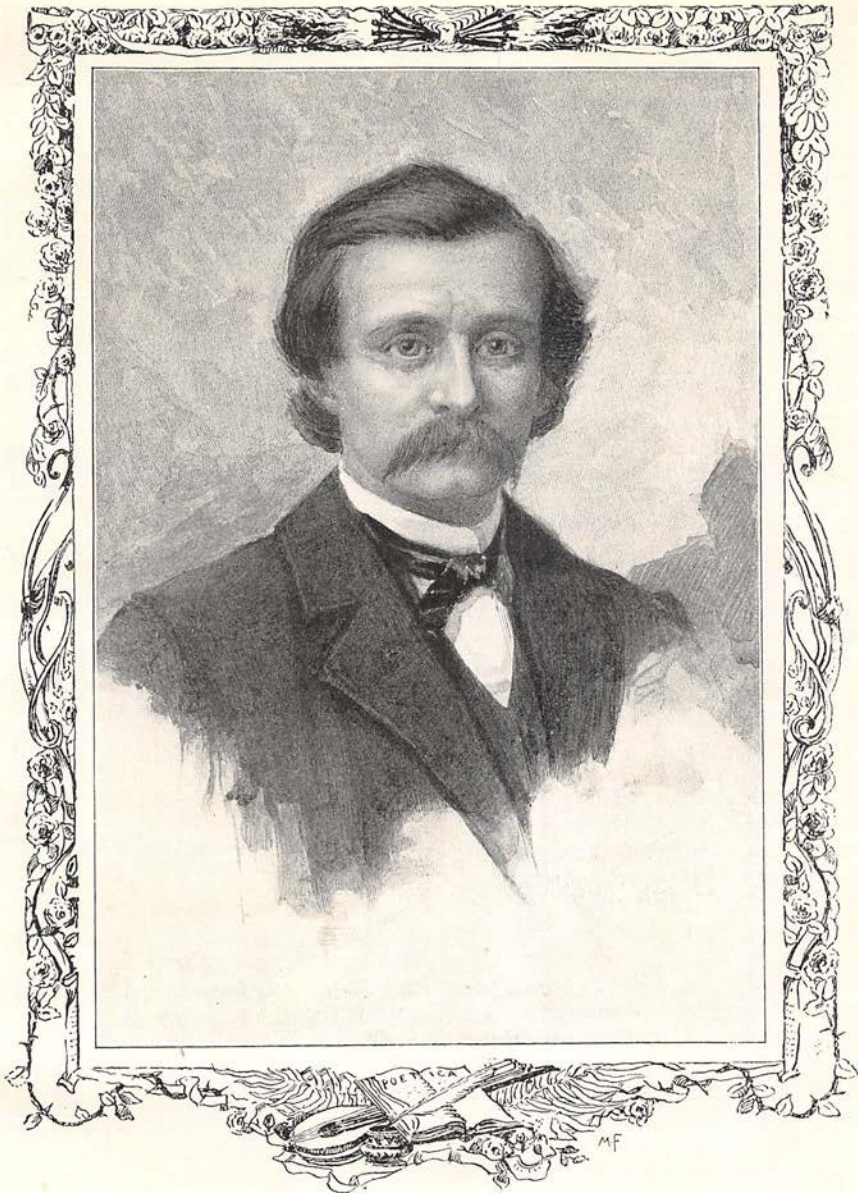
BY L. FRANK TOOKER.

HENRY TIMROD'S life was so heartbreaking that one finds it hard to linger over it. The reader is constantly reminded of the cumulative sadness that was the lot of Keats, as he is reminded of the latter's excessive sensibility of temperament—his sensitiveness to outward influences. Indeed, in spirit the two poets were essentially kin, though in poetic insight and expression—in the true province of the poet—Timrod, of course, dwelt on a lower plane. He also dwelt in a different atmosphere; for while the influence of Keats may be traced in his work, the feeling, the local coloring, the habit of thought, are his own. Yet Timrod's unworldliness linked him in temperament still closer to his elder and greater brother, and the time and place in which his lot was cast deepened the same ineffectual struggle against a bitter fortune. For no poet could have found a more unpromising time for graceful love-songs, and

for lyrics in praise of spring and woodland,—to fit "a green thought in a green shade,"—than that in which the shy young poet began to sing. Repose had gone from the troubled South, and the ominous days were carrying it nearer and nearer to war. It was no time for music, and Timrod was not one to draw the gaze of busy men. Later, when the fever of war heated his verse, men carried his stirring songs in their hearts, but forgot the singer. Later still, when they came back crushed and heartbroken, yet ready to take up manfully the struggle of life anew, it was still less the fortunate hour for the poet.

Timrod was born in Charleston, South Carolina, on the eighth day of December, 1829. His father, a bookbinder by trade, but a man of wide reading and much natural force and eloquence, had died in the boy's early youth, leaving to his son an increased measure of his own poetic taste and ability,





DRAWN FROM A PAINTING BY P. P. CARTER. OWNED BY THE HON. WILLIAM A. COURTENAY.

HENRY TIMROD.

but little of the readiness of speech and thought that had made his shop the meeting-place for the intellectual men of the neighborhood.

The boy's intellectual training seems to have been gained mainly through his own well-selected reading of the English classics; for, though he entered the University of Georgia when about sixteen, his stay, owing partly to ill health, and partly to the sad stress of poverty, was brief. After his distasteful trial of the law in the office of James L. Petigru of Charleston, he went back to his classical studies, to prepare himself for a

college professorship or (the cruel alternative does not march with equal step) a tutorship in private families.

But the professorship was not forthcoming, and for ten years or more the small gains of a private tutor in a sparsely settled region were his only means of subsistence. He went from household to household, faithfully instructing those placed in his care; and though he longed for a larger field of action, he was not ungrateful for the ample leisure that gave him opportunity for study and literary work. Loving nature, he found a large recompense for the wider



world he craved. It is not improbable that his lonely and cloistered life in the green fields and woods at this formative period fostered a childlike unworldliness of spirit, already great, at a fatal expense of more masculine qualities; for it is the testimony of his most intimate friends that he always remained a child. The poet's sensibility needs the tonic of the world to save it from a too ready vibration to every movement of the element in which it happens to lie.

Yet he was a child only in his inability to cope with the hard conditions that beset him. In his mental attitude toward life he was manliness itself. His letters and poems have no place for whining and complaint. If in his intimate communications to his nearest friends he sometimes speaks of his bitter poverty or wretched health, his words have always an arch humor and a playfulness of fancy that show the wholesomeness and sweetness of his nature.

Yet in his deepest solitude there had always been rich companionship. Spending all his rare holidays in Charleston as a member of the little company of intellectual men that William Gilmore Simms had drawn about him, he was one of the originators—in suggestion, at least—of «Russell's Magazine,» a monthly journal that for a few years furnished its sponsors with the facilities of publication. Much of Timrod's work found the light in its pages, and doubtless paved the way by which, shortly after the beginning of the year 1864, he was enabled to become part proprietor and associate editor of the «South Carolinian,» a daily paper published at Columbia. This was the happiest period of his life, as it was the period of his greatest activity; for, thus provided for, as he thought, he was enabled to marry the «Katie» of the graceful and admirably restrained poem that begins his volume of verse. But the prosperity was short-lived; for just a year and a day after his marriage the «South Carolinian» went up in the smoke that followed the entrance of Sherman and his army into Columbia. It was the beginning of the bitter end. For nearly a year he had no employment, and the editorial labor that followed this period of inactivity was done without pay. For a short period near the end of 1866 he was employed in the governor's office in Charleston; but his health had already begun to fail, and though he kept the genial playfulness of spirit that was his own, and the hopefulness that is the peculiar characteristic of the consumptive, he weakened rapidly, and in October, 1867, he died, the last of his name.

One finds in the verse of Timrod none of the exuberance of imagery or the impatience of restraint and technical form that is supposed to characterize Southern races. Instead, the verse is always sober and self-contained, the thought simple and straightforward. One sees this restrained propriety of expression and thought in his «Spring» in war-time, when

Out in the lonely woods the jasmine burns  
Its fragrant lamps, and turns  
Into a royal court with green festoons  
The banks of dark lagoons.

In gardens you may note amid the dearth  
The crocus breaking earth;  
And near the snowdrop's tender white and green,  
The violet in its screen.

At times a fragrant breeze comes floating by,  
And brings, you know not why,  
A feeling as when eager crowds await  
Before a palace gate.

Yet not more surely shall the spring awake  
The voice of wood and brake,  
Than she shall rouse, for all her tranquil charms,  
A million men to arms.

Then shall be deeper hues upon her plains  
Than all her sunlit rains,  
And every gladdening influence around,  
Can summon from the ground.

In spite of his impracticability, he is not an impractical poet; he is essentially a sane and masculine thinker. Approaching him, we suspect provincialism, but find a genial breadth that surprises us. His gamut of feeling is wide, and even in his war-songs, where one expects little restraint, we find this admirable self-control and breadth. Compare for this quality, with its directness and its sparing use of adjectives, this verse from his «Charleston,»

And down the dunes a thousand guns lie couched,  
Unseen, beside the flood—  
Like tigers in some Orient jungle crouched  
That wait and watch for blood,

with his hymn for the dead, with its

In seeds of laurel in the earth  
The blossom of your fame is blown,  
And somewhere, waiting for its birth,  
The shaft is in the stone!

Now that the people of the South are striving to raise a memorial to Timrod's fame, the suggestion seems a proper one to make, that the whole American people share in the honor; for he was a true American poet, and worthy to stand in the narrow space that belongs to our best.