

T'ill from amid the waiting throng,  
A youthful warrior came,  
With stately step and bearing high,  
That told of martial fame.

He spoke, and thousands bent to hear,  
"Can nobler off'ring be,  
Than valor true and shining arms,  
My country's gods, to thee?"

"Rome's glory is her warrior youth,  
Her tried and trusty band  
Who ever wait with ready arms,  
To guard their native strand.

"No gems, nor wealth of conquered realms,  
Can fill the chasm vast,  
But I will leap within its depths,  
And it shall close at last."

He said, and while amazed they stand,  
Mounts on his war-horse proud,  
And in his shining arms arrayed,  
Rides from amid the crowd.

The courser nears the chasm's edge;  
Then burst a mighty cry,  
As if the heart of Rome were stirred,  
It thrilled so wild and high.

But in the cavern leapt the steed,  
While yet his rider cried,  
"Dark Pluto, to thy realms I bring  
Rome's glory and her pride."

Then o'er him closed the horrid gulf,  
While shouts of triumph rang,  
And with each pean's glorious note,  
His deathless fame they sang.

Thus ever honored be the brave,  
Who scorn the face of death,  
When in their country's sacred cause,  
They yield their dying breath.