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*A CHORUS  
OF LEAVES*  
C. C. BLANDEN







A Chorus of Leaves









# A Chorus of Leaves

From a painting by

William Keith

Paul Elder and Company  
Publishers, San Francisco



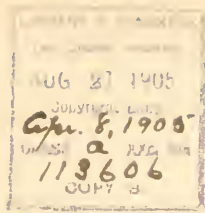
# A Chorus of Leaves

*by*

Charles G. Blanden



Paul Elder and Company  
Publishers, San Francisco



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San Francisco



The Tomoyé Press  
San Francisco

# Dedication.

A  
Chorus of  
Leaves.

*To Wallace Rice.*



*Thou jealous guarder of the Muse's realm,  
With ever-watchful eye unto her good,  
Strict altar-keeper in the sacred wood,  
That no rude comer may her overwhelm,  
I pray thee (since unto these shores my helm  
And urgent gales have brought me o'er the flood  
Of rampant seas) that I with many a bud  
Of fancy and with bow of fairy elm,  
May shoot a fragrant arrow in her sky,  
And herald so a heart has loved her long,  
That now would worship, ere in earth it lie  
And answer not to any spur of Song;—  
Therefore, I come, and on these sands of time  
Break at thy feet this little bale of rhyme.*

∴




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Chorus of  
Leaves.



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# Awake!

A  
Chorus of  
Leaves.



Awake, ye woods,  
    Ye fields, awake,  
Ye solitudes  
    Sweet music make;  
Come, birds, and sing,  
Bees, forth on wing,  
For soft the winds do blow;  
    Sing, sing, sing liberty—  
    Sing liberty and joy  
And freedom from the snow.

Awake, ye buds,  
    And, grass, arise,  
To welcome floods  
    From April skies.  
O brooks, forget  
Your chains and let  
Your merry music flow!  
    Sing, sing, sing liberty—  
    Sing liberty and joy  
And freedom from the snow.

Awake, my heart,  
    'Tis time you should  
With winter part  
    In time so good;  
Come, join the throng

A  
Chorus of  
Leaves.



And swell the song  
That all the world may know;  
Sing, sing, sing liberty—  
Sing liberty and joy  
And freedom from your woe.

# If I Were Love.

A  
Chorus of  
Leaves.

Would I were Love! my joy should be  
Ever to linger near to thee.  
Sleeping, on roses I would lie  
In the bright summer of thine eye;  
Waking, perchance I would go hide  
In the heart-chambers of thy side,  
And give thee, oh, such little frights,  
For love, thou couldst not sleep o' nights.





## March.

When March his lusty trumpet blows  
Throughout our valleys drear,  
The scattered, old, affrighted snows  
Like phantoms disappear.

Lo! now the watercourses shout,  
And soon their banners gay,  
The royal grasses shaking out,  
Shall glad the face of day.

Bold bugler of the sun's return,  
Whose note the heart inspires,  
In whose brave eyes such glories burn  
As dazzle mortal lyres,  
Blow up thy merry legions strong,  
And this sad realm invest  
With bud, with blossom and with song  
And all the laughing rest.

Sound, herald, sound thy breezy horn!  
The battle half is won  
When thou dost call from morn till morn  
The edict of the sun.  
More like a stately pomp shall be  
The coming of thy king,  
Since where thou goest, startled, flee  
The enemies of spring.

Hail! Hail, O March, that canst so scare  
The shadows of old earth  
That fields do bloom and bees forth fare  
And Hope renews her mirth!  
When thou dost lie at April's feet,  
Like some true warrior dead,  
May she with blossoms, fair as sweet,  
Adorn thy lowly bed.

And where thy sturdy form shall sleep,  
Let violets arise  
And many a vine of summer creep,  
And zephyr breathe his sighs.  
So shall thy warrior heart, content,  
Outslumber Time's despite,  
And in a calmer element  
Find more of peace and light.

A  
Chorus of  
Leaves.



A  
Chorus of  
Leaves.



## The Torch of Love.

She smiled on me, and in my heart  
I felt the flames of Troy;  
Full well I knew what Paris dreamed,  
And what was Helen's joy.



# The Awakening.

A  
Chorus of  
Leaves.

Lo! the grass has sprouted,  
And the buds are pouted  
    On my apple-tree ;  
All the hopes I doubted,  
All the dreams I flouted,  
    Stir like sap in me.

Go, call in the neighbors,  
Sound the horns and tabors  
    And the cymbals sound ;  
Shares are sprung from sabres!  
Crowned are all my labors,—  
    And may yours be crowned.



A  
Chorus of  
Leaves.



## If Love Be There.

If love be there, all marriage feasts  
Are feasts of the Divine,  
And where but water flowed before,  
A plenitude of wine.

# Anacreon.

A  
Chorus of  
Leaves.



Unto sweet love and to the lyre  
The bard of Teos gave his days.  
Within his heart how warm the fire!  
Upon his brows how cool the bays!  
His was the music of desire,  
Played down a thousand happy ways;  
His was the soul, in star attire,  
Gave us Elysium in his lays.



## The Time O' Year.

Oh, what's the time o' year ?

Green,—green things are growing  
Far and near;

Violets are blowing  
Without fear;

Rivulets are flowing,  
Of icy thralldom clear.

Say, what's the time o' year ?

Oh, what's the time o' year ?

You, robin, singing so,

You, swallow, winging so,

You, grasses, springing so,

Say, what's the time o' year ?

Is April, April, merry April—

Is April really here ?

# Here and Hereafter.

A  
Chorus of  
Leaves.

If love with this short life doth end,  
Be thou my friend ;  
If love dies not,  
In love let friendship be forgot.



A  
Chorus of  
Leaves.

# Love Was Coming Down the Lane.



Love was coming down the lane,  
Wingèd, rosy, blind,  
In his hand his little bow,  
Quiver slung behind.

Now, thought I, he cannot see:  
If I stand aside,  
He must pass me, ignorant,  
Therefore satisfied.

Kept I silent in my place;  
Near, more near, he came,  
While the beating of my heart  
Fanned each cheek to flame.

And I, anxious, held my breath;  
He will pass me — no;  
He is crying, pretty dear,  
It should not be so.

Touched with pity, then quoth I:  
“Weep, oh, weep no more!”  
And he, laughing, sent his shaft  
To my bosom’s core.

# Lo! Now the Sun.

A  
Chorus of  
Leaves.

Lo! now the Sun, with golden-flashing eye,  
Doth fire his rosy altars in the east,  
And all the congregated clouds do blush  
Response, beholding them and their high-priest.





## Till Joy Goes By.

Tears are the waters of those springs  
Where Grief, with dark imaginings,  
Doth sit and conjure up the stream —  
Till Joy goes by with his bright dream;  
When, lo! her magic is forgot,  
And that sad tide which was, is not;  
While she herself melts to a shade  
That Joy doth banish from the glade,  
As down those channels dry he sends  
Laughter, with all his dimpled friends.



# The Storm.

A  
Chorus of  
Leaves.

This moaning storm, this crackling sky—  
Lear is abroad tonight;  
I would the filial Dawn were nigh,  
The sweet Cordelia, Light.



A  
Chorus of  
Leaves.



## Blow Gently, Soul of Winds.

Blow gently, Soul of Winds,  
That in the garden finds  
    The rose but newly blown;  
Blow faintly, or you slay  
And take fore'er away  
    A glory not your own.

Blow softly, more and more;  
Yet to the rose's core  
    Delve down, and if you see  
Therein a rude worm curled,  
Blow coldest in the world  
    And freeze him utterly.

# There Ever Is Time.

A  
Chorus of  
Leaves.



Oh, let the bird sing,  
And let the sun shine,  
This slumber is sweet  
As Lesbian wine!

Away! let me sleep;  
Away! let me lie;  
There ever is time  
To put our dreams by.



## The Song Maker.

He goes his way, alone, and no man knows  
How keen his pleasures or how vast his woes.  
His plummet sounds all seas, and from all heights  
Receives he first the tribute of all lights;  
The past, the future—they are his; the hour  
That's here he loves as he doth love a flower.  
The human heart he reads as 't were a book,  
And like a seer into the soul doth look,  
And from the world as from a mighty wood  
He gathers the sweet seeds of solitude  
(Which also are the seeds of Song), and deep  
Within his breast he sows them, whence they leap  
To such delightful blooms of melody  
That men do marvel, saying, "We are free!"  
Or, "Let us hope," or, "Let us greed forget,"  
Or, "Farther on let us our standard set;"  
For one before us all the mountain thrills:  
"The springs of life are higher up the hills."

# The Wings of Time.

A  
Chorus of  
Leaves.

Oh, that this golden hour with thee  
Had not the power to fly away!  
Oh, love, that ever there should be  
So sad a thing as yesterday!





## And When My Petals Fall.

Come, woo me like a butterfly;  
My heart is rose today,  
And lightly, lightly, lightly, I  
Would dream the hours away.

And when my petals fall?  
Oh, now, I have no care;  
So love demand them all,  
The heart may well be bare.

# The Lost Rose.

A  
Chorus of  
Leaves.



One time in hell there bloomed a rose,  
Dropped from high Heaven by a child;  
The Souls, remembering not their woes  
For one too-fleeting moment, smiled.

And up there went a cry to Heaven  
That made its firm foundations quake:  
“If roses three to us were given,  
This hell were heaven for their sake.”

Then was in Heaven a merry shout  
As all the little children there,  
With roses white, to blot hell out,  
Strewed all the regions of despair.

A  
Chorus of  
Leaves.



## Poverty.

Had I the heart to steal a kiss  
That Julia's lips would never miss,  
My soul a princely Dives were—  
And yet but Lazarus to her.



# A Turkish Love Song.

A  
Chorus of  
Leaves.



One knocked at his beloved's door,  
"And who is there?" a voice did say.  
"Tis I," he answered, "bowed before  
The gleaming star that is my day."

Then said the voice: "This house can hold  
Not thee and me." The lover rose;  
Where naught but Allah is, he told,—  
In the Saharan waste,—his woes.

A year in solitude he prayed,  
And fed his soul at Allah's shrine,  
Then knocked upon the door and made  
Upon his lips a holy sign.

"Now, who is there?" a soft voice said.  
"It is thyself — thyself!" he cried;  
And open flew the door, and wed  
Were they ere the sweet echo died.

A  
Chorus of  
Leaves.



## The Lover.

Lo! at the time appointed  
    Into thy presence I come,  
And like a prophet, anointed,  
    I stand in thy Brightness, dumb.

I lift mine eyes to thy beauty,  
    And, blinded, I turn away—  
To tread in the presses of duty  
    For ever and a day.

# Love and Poesy.

A  
Chorus of  
Leaves.



Cupid, once upon a time,  
Vowed that he would take to rhyme,  
Threw his bow and barbs away,  
Crowned his temples with some bay,  
Filled his quiver up with ink  
And so sat him down to think.  
You had laughed to see him then,  
Nibbling, nibbling at his pen,  
Frowning till his brow serene  
Was a furrowed dark demesne,  
All his curls so tossed and tangled  
As with Psyche he had wrangled.  
In his cheeks—no roses there ;  
On his lips the wan of care ;  
Years and years he older seemed  
Ere he had a bird's nap dreamed.  
Not one little line he wrote,  
Then with, oh, so sweet a note  
Said he, "Cupid cannot be  
Lord of Love and Poesy ;  
All his time to love must go.  
He forgets his metres so,  
Useless 't is for him to scan  
All the passions of a man ;  
Enough to bid him throb and thrill,  
Come what may and come what will :



Throb and thrill in Beauty's train  
Though he win him but disdain."  
Whereupon the tousled bay  
From his temples off he tore,  
Threw his ink and quill away:  
"Poet will I be no more,  
But with poets when they sing,  
Faith, I'll go a-journeying;  
Mount the airy heights they gain,  
Spur them on to lofty strain,  
Mix and mingle draughts divine  
That shall fire their every line  
With a music pure and high,  
Sweet as roses when day closes;  
Such is love and such am I,"  
Saying which he said "Good-bye."

# Fear Not.

A  
Chorus of  
Leaves.

O leaf that runnest fast  
    Along my garden path,  
Why fearest thou the blast  
    And the bald year's wrath?

Fear not; all things are old,  
    And all do seek repose;  
Drink deeply of the cold—  
    And dream of April's rose.





## Send Round the Cup.

Come, fill the golden loving-cup  
    With amber winking wine,  
And send it gayly on its round,  
    The hour—the hour's divine.  
Awake the harps to music sweet  
    And scatter roses deep,—  
A health to Beauty and her train,  
    Away, away with sleep.  
Abroad do sing the nightingales,  
    The moon is coming up,  
And twice a thousand stars have bloomed—  
    Send round the loving-cup!

'Tis summertime, the jewelled date  
    Of youth and joy and love,  
When cheeks do glow and eyes do shine  
    And lips a cherry prove.  
Another round! and let the song  
    Be merry that you sing,  
The hours are swift—let them be bright  
    And happiness be king;  
And let your hearts with rhythm beat  
    And let your souls be free,  
For life is hope and hope is bliss  
    And bliss is melody.

# In Season.

'Twas on a day full forty birds  
Did in my garden mate,  
That I, with just as flutter-words  
As theirs, sealed my sweet fate.

A  
Chorus of  
Leaves.





## Cupid, at Me Laughing.

Cupid, at me laughing  
As I happened by—  
Cupid, slyly chaffing  
As I chanced to sigh,  
Of his darts I stript him,  
Shut him in a cell;  
When he wept I whipt him,  
And I whipt him well.

Woe is me! my passion  
Drove me from his grace;  
Hence, behold my ashen  
Pallor and sad face.  
Now, when by I wander,  
Cupid stares, alas!  
And I, fond and fonder  
Of him, weep and pass.



# The Woman Speaks.

A  
Chorus of  
Leaves.

Because you love me, sir, so much  
    You have no tongue to shout it?  
Pray, love me just a trifle less  
    And tell me all about it.





## Ashes of Dreams.

Hope, like a clown in motley dressed,  
Keeps up a chatter in my breast,  
Laughs at my sorrows, mocks my tears,  
Shakes a child-rattle at my fears,  
And, pointing to some happy stars,  
Bids me forget my flaming scars  
And pluck the thorns that pierce me still;  
And so my cup with nectar fill.  
No doubt this sage advice is good,  
And I would take it if I could.  
But what is hope when love is dead?  
When all the petals bright are shed,  
Whose hand so skilful as to stud  
The brow of Autumn with a bud?  
What happy star can light again  
The ashes of the dreams of men?

# Occupied.

A  
Chorus of  
Leaves.

A very minster is thy heart,  
Wherein so many dead loves be,  
I fancy that when I depart  
There'll be no corner, love, for me.



A  
Chorus of  
Leaves.



## Roses.

These are his roses ;  
    Where is his heart ?  
His gift discloses  
    Consummate art :  
Friendship exposes ; —  
    Is love his part ?  
These are his roses ;  
    Where is his heart ?

# Hyssop.

A  
Chorus of  
Leaves.

I cannot bear your load of grief,  
Nor you my joy lift up;  
The dew that gleams on my bright leaf  
Were hyssop in your cup.





## Immunity.

I am a sea nymph, and I dwell  
In the pearl palace of a shell.  
When pleasant is the sky, I sing,  
At my bright portal, to the king  
Of the great tides; but when the blast  
Piles up the waves to mountains vast,  
I keep my house in a safe cove  
And dream of the calm things I love.  
O mortal, when perchance you find  
My home up-driven by the wind  
And the over-angered, hard sea,  
I pray thee be not rough with me;  
Preserve my house, and so shall I  
Desert it not, but ever try  
(If thou wilt listen to my lay)  
To please with what sweet songs I may!  
But if thou lovest me full well,  
Give to its element the shell,  
And ever after, night and morn,  
For thee shall Triton blow his horn,  
And so proclaim thee rightly free  
From the huge perils of the sea.

# The House.

A  
Chorus of  
Leaves.

This I've found out, beyond a doubt:  
A house without a woman in it  
Is just a nest without the linnet;  
It turns to lumber in a minute.





## Violet.

O frail and unassuming flower,  
    How sleeps my love below?  
Thy virtues seem a part of her,  
    Thine were her eyes, I know.  
Her heart was kind, her manner sweet,  
    She had a timid air;  
I know that love made up her soul,  
    And she was heavenly fair.

I know that she is sleeping now  
    Beneath the mound you grace,  
And when I look into your eyes  
    I seem to see her face;  
Her spirit pure within you dwells,  
    And, silent, teaches me  
What loveliness to time belongs,  
    What to eternity.



# I Question Not.

A  
Chorus of  
Leaves.



Fate, I question not thy blows,  
    Fall when fall they may;  
I'm at peace with all my foes,  
    I am old and grey.

Fate, I thank thee for thy fare,  
    Years of ample cheer.  
Strike, and leave me cold and bare;  
    Strike—but find no fear.



## The Old Moon.

I wonder what the old Moon thinks  
As, gaunt and grey, she views  
The fresh young Morn that, blushing, drinks  
Cool cups of lucent dews.

As in the sun-drenched sky she pales,  
And ghostlike onward goes,  
Sighs she for her late-glamoured vales  
And the sweet-sleeping rose?

Or are her thoughts of sadder things—  
Of darkness and the tomb?  
Remembers she, or not, she springs  
From her dead self to bloom?

O Life, that buds and blooms and dies—  
How know we death is real,  
When we, not watchers in all skies,  
All truths can not unseal?

# The Wreath.

A  
Chorus of  
Leaves.

To Worth I flung a wreath of bay;  
He looked, he smiled; he did not bend;  
But Craft stooped down along the way,  
Picked up and wore it to the end.





## A Fairy Song.

Welcome! welcome! fairies all.  
Welcome! welcome! to this hall—  
To this still and moonlit glade.  
Here shall all your troubles fade;  
Here, in mead, shall drown your cares,  
And ye breathe ambrosial airs.  
Ho, you players, music sweet!  
Come, you dancers, flash your feet!  
Scatter blossoms! and to each,  
Wine of our best vintage reach.  
Welcome one and welcome all  
To the fairies' festal hall!  
Ho! you warders of this land,  
On our leafy borders stand;  
Keep us guard till morning-star  
That no imp our revels mar;  
Let no slight intruder pass;  
Pierce him with a spear of grass,  
Bind him with a chain of thistle—  
Till the first red robin whistle.

# Wingless.

This house was once the home of Youth,  
'Tis now the home of Age—  
Or has the butterfly, forsooth,  
Grown wingless in his cage?

A  
Chorus of  
Leaves.





I would not try thee as was tried  
The patient wife Griseld;  
I know that thou couldst do her tasks  
As sweetly and as well.

And if I knew that thou in all  
Her trials hard shouldst fail,  
Too much I love thee, dearest one,  
To see thee pine and pale.

Yea, more, methinks, I'd love thee, sweet,  
If thou her lot shouldst flout,  
And say: "He loves but ill the rose  
Who plucks one petal out."

# To Pygmalion.

A  
Chorus of  
Leaves.

Oh, foolish one to bring to life  
The dream of thy poetic skill;  
A million women were thy wife  
To one that could thy dream fulfill!





## Where Sleep the Leaves.

An unseen shepherd is the wind,  
And singing as he goes  
He drives, wherever he may find,  
The petals of the rose.

All huddling on into the fold  
Of the cold night, they run—  
To where, when winter's lean and old,  
The crocus finds the sun.



# Little Lives.

A  
Chorus of  
Leaves.



How many little lives, alas!  
Die with sad summer, in the grass;  
How many little songs grow still,  
Because no more the blossoms spill  
Sweet nectars for them, morn and eve —  
Because the chill winds round them grieve!  
Yet I live on into the cold,  
Deep snow — till that I wander, old,  
Till I am Winter's brother, white,  
And longing for the warm spring light.

Not long, not long, O little friends,  
The triumph that our Mother lends  
To me,—an hour, a day, a year,  
And I shall sleep upon my bier  
As full of peace as there is need,  
With that same rest ye do possess,  
Hid in the bosom of the mead  
And sealed in dim forgetfulness!



## Delusion.

'Tis ever the moth and the flame, my dear,  
'Tis ever delusive things  
That, yearning, we follow until, my dear,  
We lose our golden wings.

And like the rash Icarian youth,  
We fall in a sorry sea,  
Thereafter to wander, a lonesome ghost  
Of that which we longed to be.

# To Be Immortal.

A  
Chorus of  
Leaves.



To be immortal—it were dross,  
Aye, it were immortal loss  
To live for ever, if we might  
Not climb (not soar) from vale to height.  
To be immortal—just to dwell  
In heaven were not heaven but hell.  
And so with love. Progression is  
The very essence of its bliss;  
If it grow not, then must it fade—  
Be not Love's self but just Love's shade.



## Bring Hither Your Roses.

Bring hither your roses  
And hither your rue,  
And twine me two garlands  
All wet with the dew;  
The roses for Beauty,  
O'ergiven to doom,  
Shall form a bright chaplet  
To lie on her tomb.

The rue round our temples  
We'll bind for our grief,  
To gently remind us  
That beauty is brief,  
That still we adore it,  
And long shall adore,  
Though its splendor is faded,  
Its glory no more.

Whose heart is so hollow,  
Whose soul is so bare  
That never the spirit  
Of beauty breathes there?  
Oh, none is so lonely  
And none is so poor,  
If only her shadow  
May brighten his door!

So pluck the bright roses  
And gather the rue,  
And weave me two garlands  
All wet with the dew;  
The roses for Beauty  
That lies on her bier,  
The rue for the ransom  
Of many a tear.

A  
Chorus of  
Leaves.





## Love Knows.

Love knows, Love knows his unseen dart  
    Shall wound us when his bow he bends.  
Unto the strength of every heart  
    To every heart some grief he sends,  
For unto him is given the task  
To tear from the white soul the mask  
That shrouds it; his to measure, sound  
Its depths and learn just how profound  
Or shallow 'tis. For till he know  
Our full capacity for woe,  
He cannot tell how great — or small —  
The joy must be to quench it all.

# Finis.

A  
Chorus of  
Leaves.

Dance your last dance, you little leaves,  
Shake your red sandals in the sun,  
For even now the cold air weaves  
A snowy shroud for every one.

Fast fall the flakes that soon shall hide;  
Dance your last dance, you happy fays,  
And so let me, what e'er betide,  
Go to life's end down mirthful ways.









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