

*The Manchester Historical Society*

Robert N. Stanley (1847-1919) of the Highland Park section of South Manchester, Connecticut, subscribed to the *North America Review*, a literary magazine founded in 1815, as well as to Harpers and a “young folks” magazine. He apparently bought subscriptions for friends as well. Here’s a sample article by Robert J. Ingersoll, from the January 1886 issue. Subscription information is in the box to the right. Thanks to Susan Beach, Case family archivist, for the subscription information. The Case-Stanley connection: Robert N. Stanley worked as bookkeeper at the Case paper mill, and later postmaster of the Highland Park post office; his father, Edwin Samuel Stanley, served for two years as pastor of the Methodist church at the corner of Main Street and Hartford Road. Robert’s sister, Marietta Stanley, married A. Willard Case.

**THE IMAGINATION.**

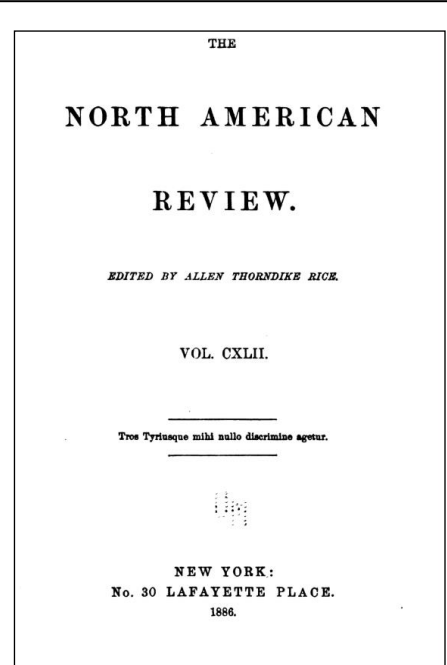
**THE** man of imagination—that is to say, of genius—having seen a leaf and a drop of water, can construct the forests, the rivers, and the seas. In his presence all the cataracts fall and foam, the mists rise, the clouds form and float.

To really know one fact is to know its kindred and its neighbors. Shakespeare looking at a coat of mail, instantly imagined the society, the conditions, that produced it, and what it produced. He saw the castle, the moat, the drawbridge, the lady in the tower, and the knightly lover spurring over the plain. He saw the bold baron and the rude retainer, the trampled serf, and all the glory and the grief of feudal life.

The man of imagination has lived the life of all people, of all races. He was a citizen of Athens in the days of Pericles; listened to the eager eloquence of the great orator, and sat upon the cliff, and with the tragic poet heard “the multitudinous laughter of the sea.” He saw Socrates thrust the spear of question through the shield and heart of falsehood; was present when the great man drank hemlock and met the night of death tranquil as a star meets morning. He has followed the peripatetic philosophers, and has been puzzled by the sophists. He has watched Phidias as he chiseled shapeless stone to forms of love and awe.

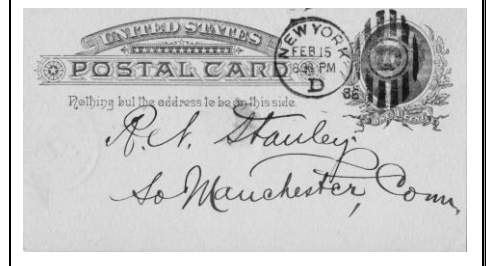
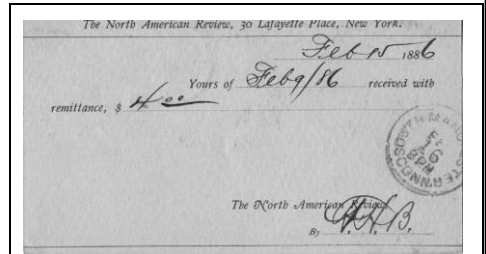
He has lived by the slow Nile amid the vast and monstrous. He knows the very thought that wrought the form and features of the Sphinx. He has heard great Memnon’s morning song—has lain him down with the embalmed and waiting dead and felt within their dust the expectation of another life mingled with cold and suffocating doubts—the children born of long delay.

He has walked the ways of mighty Rome, has seen great Cæsar with his legions in the field, has stood with vast and motley throngs and watched the triumphs given to victorious men,



*Above:* Title page of the January 1886 issue.

*Below:* Subscription information for Robert Stanley.



followed by uncrowned kings, the captured hosts, and all the spoils of ruthless war. He has heard the shout that shook the Coliseum's roofless walls when from the reeling gladiator's hand the short sword fell, while from his bosom gushed the stream of wasted life.

He has lived the life of savage men, has trod the forest's silent depths, and in the desperate game of life or death has matched his thought against the instinct of the beast.

He knows all crimes and all regrets, all virtues and their rich rewards. He has been victim and victor, pursuer and pursued, outcast and king—has heard the applause and curses of the world, and on his heart have fallen all the nights and noons of failure and success.

He knows the unspoken thoughts, the dumb desires, the wants and ways of beasts. He has felt the crouching tiger's thrill, the terror of the ambushed prey, and with the eagles he has shared the ecstasy of flight and poise and swoop, and he has lain with sluggish serpents on the barren rocks, uncoiling slowly in the heat of noon.

He has sat beneath the bo tree's contemplative shade, rapt in Buddha's mighty thought, and he has dreamed all dreams that Light, the alchemist, hath wrought from dust and dew and stored within the slumbrous poppy's subtle blood.

He has knelt with awe and dread at every shrine, has offered every sacrifice and every prayer, has felt the consolation and the shuddering fear, has seen all devils, has mocked and worshiped all the gods—enjoyed all heavens and felt the pangs of every hell.

He has lived all lives, and through his blood and brain have crept the shadow and the chill of every death, and his soul, Mazeppa-like, has been lashed naked to the wild horse of every fear and love and hate.

The imagination hath a stage within the brain, whereon he sets all scenes that lie between the morn of laughter and the night of tears, and where his players body forth the false and true, the joys and griefs, the careless shallows and the tragic deeps of every life.

ROBERT G. INGERSOLL.