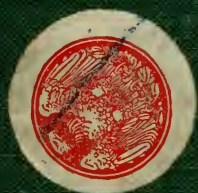


# Beyond the Requiems

Louis Alexander Robertson



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Beyond the Requiems  
*And Other Verses*





LOUIS ALEXANDER ROBERTSON



Beyond the Requiems  
*And Other Verses*

By  
Louis Alexander Robertson

AUTHOR OF  
"THE DEAD CALYPSO"  
AND OTHER VERSES

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*TO CHARLES JOSSELYN*





## CONTENTS

	PAGE
PROEM : THE SHRINE OF SONG . . . . .	9
BEYOND THE REQUIEMS . . . . .	11
VERSES TO GEORGE T. BROMLEY . . . . .	23
THE SUNBEAM . . . . .	29
A RHYME OF THE REDEEMED . . . . .	30
LET'S KISS A KISS . . . . .	40
DREAM SONG . . . . .	41
GIVE ME THY LIPS . . . . .	43
THE ROSE . . . . .	44
ABANDONED . . . . .	47
REPARATION . . . . .	49
THE DREAM . . . . .	52
AFTERGLOW . . . . .	53
STOLEN WATERS . . . . .	54
LOVE LAUGHING LOW . . . . .	55
THE TWILIGHT HOUR . . . . .	56
THE TELLTALE MARKS . . . . .	57
THE CRIMSONED GIFT . . . . .	58
LUST'S TIGER-TEETH . . . . .	59
THE PUNCH-BOWL . . . . .	60
TO MARIANA . . . . .	61
PROMETHEUS . . . . .	62
THE VANISHED VINTAGE . . . . .	63
A WITHERED SHEAF . . . . .	65



## PROEM

### THE SHRINE OF SONG

*In mute amazement oft I pause before  
The portals of Song's shrine and list to those  
Whose music from its classic cloisters flows  
Adown the tide of Time for evermore.*

*I see the place that no man may explore,  
Save him whose Art its life to Genius owes,  
On whose rapt lips the sacred cinder glows  
That teaches Song's sweet shibboleth and lore.*

*Ah, it were heaven to enter in and kneel  
In some dim aisle, unnoticed and apart,  
With thirsting soul to drink the sounds that  
shame*

*My songs to silence; then to rise and feel  
That my untutored lips had learnt the art  
That seats the singer in the House of Fame!*



## BEYOND THE REQUIEMS

Not in cataclysmal chaos, earthquake, fire, or  
flood, or blast,  
Waits the world to hear the summons calling her  
to death at last.

Oft she hears a muttered menace, sees the ghastly  
lightnings gleam,  
And the slumbering volcano vomit forth its lethal  
stream;

Oft she sees the wind-whipped waters leaping to  
the sullen skies,  
And the foaming tidal terror in its deadly might  
arise;

## BEYOND THE REQUIEMS

But still deaf to all the dirges that have rolled  
above her dead,

And the songs that stir the living, she has ever  
onward sped,

As when first a vagrant vapor thrown from off the  
glowing breast

Of her mighty parent planet, up the shining  
pathway pressed,

Lifeless, nebulous, and naked, save the vesture  
that was drawn

Round her like a misty mantle as she speeded to  
the dawn.

Who can guess the Force that flung her out upon  
the star-strown deep,

Clasped her cloudy cincture round her, taught her  
how her course to keep

## BEYOND THE REQUIEMS

Through the vast uncharted regions,—orbed her,  
shaped her, round her flung  
Icy bands and frozen fetters that for æons to her  
clung?

Long she drifted through the darkness, but at  
last the Word was heard,  
And the cold, insensate sleeper to the wakening  
message stirred;

Felt the quickening breath that melted frozen  
field and moor and main,  
Drank the draught of saving sunlight, lost the  
winter-woven chain;

Grew in grandeur and in beauty, soaring to the  
noonday height,  
Till the mighty Hand that hurled her out upon  
the cosmic night

## BEYOND THE REQUIEMS

Draws her back to death and darkness, shrouds  
her in her ice once more,  
Stripped of all her garnered glory, all her science,  
song, and lore.

There shall be no eye to see it,—life shall  
long have left the earth,  
When she reels a dying planet to the breast that  
gave her birth.

All our knowledge is as nothing; Reason reels  
and Science sneers,  
Faith before her falling altars lifts her fearless  
face and hears

Every cherished creed derided, but still mumbles  
to her beads,  
Dreaming that beyond the requiems deathless life  
to death succeeds.



BEYOND THE REQUIEMS

Hope's pale star still smiles above us, distant,  
    indistinct, and cold ;  
As the primal moth beheld it do we now its  
    beams behold.

Are we nearer than the nascent life that slum-  
    bered in the slime,  
When the protoplasmic moner scanned the steeps  
    that it must climb?

Or the microcosmic atom, ere its fetters left it  
    free?  
Or the blind bathybius sleeping at the bottom of  
    the sea?

Yea, the germ, primordial, potent, saw the goal  
    that it must gain,  
Found a hovel in man's body, built a palace in  
    his brain.

## BEYOND THE REQUIEMS

And the selfsame seeds that wakened with it in  
earth's virgin womb

Fill the fields with fragrant blossoms, or in  
poisoned petals bloom;

Make the wilderness grow vocal with the voice  
of bird and brute,

Send the great Sequoia skyward, gnaw in cankers  
at its root;

Never swerving from the settled purpose of the  
primal plan,

Save when planted in the passions and the burn-  
ing brain of man;

There, oft glorious, often ghastly, oft degraded,  
oft divine,

Sometimes soaring to the stars, and sometimes  
wallowing with the swine;

## BEYOND THE REQUIEMS

Always out of tune with Nature; is the human  
brute the best?

Fated to the thralling thirst that burns forever in  
his breast,

That hath ever urged us onward o'er life's sterile  
sands, till we —

Rich in knowledge, rich in wisdom, panting for-  
ward—ever see

Silent and untrodden regions over which the  
mirage beams,

But its tempting trees and waters murmur only  
in our dreams.

They have murmured unto myriads and beguiled  
them in the past;

They will call through coming ages long as life  
on earth shall last.

## BEYOND THE REQUIEMS

When she hurries through the spaces on to where  
the peril hides,

As some bark on her own bosom sails through  
tranquil tropic tides,

Freighted full with costly treasures, till at last a  
brisker breeze

Drives her from the summer ocean into dark and  
winter seas,

Where the icy currents clasp her, and the frozen  
mists o'erwhelm

With their adamantine shackles mast and sail and  
hull and helm,

And the bark becomes the coffin of her dying  
crew who gaze

On some spectre sail that mocks them as it passes  
in the haze.

## BEYOND THE REQUIEMS

So the life that lingers latest on this planet still  
will yearn

For the peace the world denies it, yea, though it  
again return

To the lowest type that sheltered in its breast  
Hope's latent spark,  
And then fanned it to the fatuous flame that lures  
us through the dark.

All our philosophic pedants, all our sons of  
Science know  
Not a whit more than that dullard knew a million  
years ago,

As to where the spirit wanders when the body  
sinks in death,  
For beyond the grave's black portals never man  
has breathed one breath.

## BEYOND THE REQUIEMS

We have probed the past and hunted in its deepest,  
darkest cells,  
But the secret still eludes us, never by one whisper tells

Whence Life drew its first faint tremor, for it  
was not born of naught;  
Never seed spontaneous blossoms till the quickening  
breath be brought.

As we know not the beginning, so we may not  
know the end,  
But as life from life first started, back through  
death to life 't will wend.

Now and then some guide arises who would turn  
us from our path  
With sweet promises that please us, or with  
threats of future wrath.

BEYOND THE REQUIEMS

We have listened to His lessons, heard the  
Nazarene's behest,—

“Follow me, my way-worn children; I alone can  
give ye rest.”

We have wondered, as we hearkened unto Bud-  
dha's pleading voice,  
If to find the peace men long for they could make  
a wiser choice.

We have seen the swarthy Arab step athwart our  
path and say,  
“Ye shall drink the living waters if my precepts  
ye obey.”

We have searched the stars above us for the  
secret, but no beam  
Lights our darkened path to guide us to the goal  
of which we dream.

## BEYOND THE REQUIEMS

Little help or hope we gather from the annals  
of the past,

All its poets, priests, and sages, all the wisdom  
which they massed,

All its fables, faiths, and fictions, all its temples,  
triumphs, tomes,

Tell us nothing of the region where the flesh-  
freed spirit roams.



## VERSES

READ AT A BANQUET GIVEN BY THE BOHEMIAN CLUB,  
SAN FRANCISCO, TO GEORGE T. BROMLEY, ON  
HIS EIGHTY-FIFTH BIRTHDAY

TIME's record shows, when closely conned,  
Fair women and brave men  
Who loved and laughed long years beyond  
The Psalmist's three-score-ten:  
With added age they seemed to thrive,  
And did their youth renew;  
The God who keeps the saint alive  
Preserves the sinner too.

VERSES

We bar the patriarchs who trod  
    The earth before the flood,  
And Mammon's selfish sons who plod  
    Through life with stagnant blood.  
Sainted or sordid never feel  
    The pulse with rapture rife,  
When Hebe's rich red lips reveal  
    The lore that lengthens life.

That secret murmured in the breeze  
    That kissed the crested tide  
When Cytherea trod the seas,  
    And it has never died;  
To Dionysus it was told,  
    And in his flagon flushed  
When from the purple grapes of old  
    Its meaning first was crushed.

## VERSES

It taught the Teian till he laughed  
At Chronos' dismal chime;  
It rippled from the cup he quaffed  
In many a glowing rhyme:  
Venus and Bacchus—at each shrine  
He worshiped oft and long,  
Saw Beauty blushing in the wine  
And crowned her with a song.

It makes the heart beat wild and warm  
In many a snowy breast;  
Ninon de Lenclos and Delorme  
Were courted and caressed  
When nigh a hundred years had passed  
In revel and romance;  
They held in homage till the last  
The royal rakes of France.

VERSES

Why ponder over pagan creed,  
Or Epicurus' cult,  
Or in Time's rusty roster read,  
Or Pleasure's page consult,  
When in the living flesh we see,  
Lusty and all alive,  
One who has climbed the years till he  
Sits throned on Eighty-five.

Bohemia's bards his triumphs sing,  
Her sons and sages raise  
Their voices till the rafters ring  
And echo back his praise;  
They love the Genius of their joys,  
The Master of their mirth,—  
Mirth that no malice e'er alloys,  
And Wit with Wisdom's worth,—

VERSES

Their King of revels who can drive  
    Their grief and gloom away,  
Their Priest of pleasure who can thrive  
    Their thirsting souls next day.  
Hesper may herald in the feast,  
    The glasses clink and foam  
Till Eos blushes in the east,  
    And all have wandered home ;

Then, fresh as one whose night has passed  
    In slumber till the dawn,  
He'll linger on until the last  
    Bold bacchanal has gone.  
He proves that Pleasure's cup may bring  
    A blessing, not a blight ;  
For him it holds no adder's sting,  
    But Life's elixir bright.

VERSES

And so he laughs at Time, who lays  
On him the lightest load;  
And when in Pleasure's path he strays,  
He finds few thorns to goad.  
His is the best philosophy,—  
The wisdom that outwears  
All other creeds,—and we shall see  
Him live a hundred years.

Now let the jest and laughter lull,  
The glasses cease to clink;  
The Owl who sits on Sorrow's skull  
Gives you this toast to drink:  
“We've seen him turn night into day,  
December into June,—  
May the Lord love him long, we say,  
Nor call for him too soon.”

## THE SUNBEAM

THROUGH skies all overcast  
The sun shone clear.  
When tears were falling fast,  
Through skies all overcast  
A beam broke through at last,  
Dispelling fear.  
Through skies all overcast  
The sun shone clear.

## A RHYME OF THE REDEEMED

To the regions where the righteous dwell in ever-  
lasting peace,  
To the House of Many Mansions in the skies,  
Where the Halls of Heaven echo to the songs  
that never cease,  
And the dawnless day in darkness never dies ;  
Where the prophets, priests, and martyrs, and the  
saved and sainted stray  
Through the streets of gold that like to crystal  
gleam,  
Once my spirit in a slumber burst the shackles  
of the clay,  
And I passed the gates of heaven in a dream.



A RHYME OF THE REDEEMED

There I saw the shining city with its walls of  
precious stone,—

Jasper, jacinth, amethyst, and chrysolite,—

And the crystal river ever flowing forth beneath  
the throne,

And the trees whose leaves are balm for every  
blight;

Heard the clear celestial chorus and the never-  
ending hymn,

And the harps that never know a tuneless  
chord;

Saw the princely six-winged angels and the shining  
seraphim

Hide their faces as they bent before the Lord.

Like the sands upon the seashore, or the stars  
that gem the sky,

Did that multitude exceed all human count;

A RHYME OF THE REDEEMED

There the vilest who find mercy when the last  
dark hour is nigh,  
As the thief who hung beside Him on the  
mount,  
Stand with legions of the chosen, gleaned from  
every clime and creed,  
With a pardon purchased by the Paraclete:  
Some by faith oft find salvation, and some gain it  
by a deed,  
Like the woman of the town who kissed His  
feet.

There I saw her, and saw many who like her had  
loved and erred,  
And among them one who had from childhood  
grown  
Like a pure and peerless lily, till the serpent's  
hiss she heard  
In the flowers that along her path were strown.

A RHYME OF THE REDEEMED

Then she rose like her of Corinth,—for her fault-  
less form and face

Made sin seem a thing to worship and to  
bless;

She was wooed by Wit and Wisdom, Rank and  
Wealth sought her embrace,  
And men journeyed from afar for her caress.

Much I marveled as I saw her, and I bade her  
tell me how

She had washed her scarlet raiment into white;  
How she stood among the ransomed with a halo  
on her brow,

How her sinful soul had reached that realm of  
light.

As she turned and looked upon me, from her lips  
the story came

Of the sacred spark that sometimes smoulder-  
ing lies

A RHYME OF THE REDEEMED

Deep in sin, then like a phœnix through the  
    ashen heaps of shame  
    Bursts in beauty and on wings of mercy  
    flies.

“It was Christmas Eve,” she told me, “and the  
    night was wild and cold ;  
    I was speeding through the darkness unto  
    one  
Whom I loved,—not for his bounty, though he  
    gave me gems and gold ;  
    But there is no word in Love’s long lexicon  
That can tell the burning torture of the thirst  
    that often craves  
    In the hearts of hapless women who are  
    thrown  
Like to waifs upon the waters, but at last across  
    the waves  
    See the saving sail of rescue to them blown.

A RHYME OF THE REDEEMED

“ Thus my soul was thirsting for him, and my  
heart began to beat

With the hope that he would call me wife at  
last,

When I looked and saw a woman crouching in a  
darkened street,

And I heard her moan with anguish as I  
passed.

As I heard that wail of sorrow, quick from  
pleasure's path I turned

And soon bent above the sufferer where she lay;  
She was faint with pain and hunger, and I saw  
that she had learned

The dark lesson of the love that leads astray.

“ Little cared I for the Levites that passed on the  
other side,

Or for those who quickly gathered round me  
there:

A RHYME OF THE REDEEMED

I, a sinner, turned Samaritan and helped her  
when she cried,

As God heard, ere many days, my own last  
prayer.

Then I flung my robe around her, took her  
home, and she was laid

On my bed, by which I watched her until  
morn;

As the cold gray dawn of Christmas o'er her  
pallid features strayed,

On a sinner's couch a sinless soul was born.

“ With her child upon her bosom soon in sleep I  
saw her lie,

Then outworn I sank in slumber there by  
them;

Soon I heard an angel chorus rolling through  
the winter sky,—

'T was the herald hymn they heard in Bethle-  
hem;

A RHYME OF THE REDEEMED

Then my dreaming senses drifted through the  
years unto the time

Of my girlhood and the place where I was  
born,

And in my dreams I fancied that I heard again  
the chime

I had often listened to on Christmas morn.

“Once again within the little village church I  
seemed to kneel,

Once again the blessed anthem seemed to  
hear,

And a peace that passeth telling o’er my spirit  
then did steal,

And I woke and saw God’s saving purpose  
clear.

Though ’t was He who called my soul from sin  
unto salvation when

The young sufferer cried to me, I knew it not;

A RHYME OF THE REDEEMED

It was woman unto woman, sinner unto sinner  
then,—

'T was the sympathy by impulse oft begot.

“ But ere many days the icy darts, which first I  
did not feel

When I gave my cloak to shield her from the  
blast,

Were soon burning in my bosom, and I saw the  
Spoiler steal

Through the gloom and stand beside my couch  
at last.

Then the lips that Sin had silenced unto prayer  
began to plead

For forgiveness as life swiftly ebbed away ;

Then I cried aloud for mercy in my soul's  
extremest need,

And I heard a voice these words of comfort  
say :—



A RHYME OF THE REDEEMED

“ ‘ I was sick and I was hungry, I was naked, and  
ye came

In my misery and ministered to me ;  
Inasmuch as you have done it to this woman  
you may claim

The salvation that from sin shall set you free.’  
Then the gloom began to gather, but a Hand in  
mine I felt

As my spirit through the shades of darkness  
passed,  
But soon woke and saw the shadows in a death-  
less glory melt,  
And beheld my Saviour face to face at last.”

## LET 'S KISS A KISS

LET 's kiss a kiss and vow a vow  
And lightly laugh at far-off years ;  
Ere yet beneath their weight we bow,  
Let 's kiss a kiss and vow a vow  
That age shall find us then as now  
Linked by a love that never fears.  
Let 's kiss a kiss and vow a vow  
And lightly laugh at far-off years.

## DREAM SONG

THOUGH far away, my spirit wings  
    Its constant flight to thee;  
My eyelids close, the captive springs  
    Exulting to be free.  
Unstayed by mountain, stream, or plain,  
    Unheeding time or space,  
In dreams I hear thy voice again  
    And look upon thy face.

Far, far away where fields are green,  
    And flowers spring fresh and fair;  
Where in the distant heavens, unseen,  
    The lark sings loud and clear;  
Where murmuring streams in music glide  
    To some far summer sea,  
I wander happy at thy side,  
    In golden dreams of thee.

## DREAM SONG

I dreamt one night that heart to heart  
At last we stood confessed ;  
United, never more to part,  
I drew thee to my breast  
And kissed away the happy tears,  
For in thy love-lit eyes  
I saw an answer to my prayers,  
And heard it in thy sighs.

When heaven with rosy dawn is flushed,  
Then stars of midnight pale,  
As every other song is hushed  
When wakes the nightingale,  
So when I meet thee face to face,  
As night before the day,  
Forgotten in thy close embrace,  
The dream will fade away.

## GIVE ME THY LIPS

GIVE me thy lips, and let me feel  
That they forgiveness grant  
For much that these poor rhymes reveal.  
Give me thy lips, and let me feel  
The raptures that once made me reel,  
That through my verses pant.  
Give me thy lips, and let me feel  
That they forgiveness grant.

## THE ROSE

WHEN to my lips this rose I pressed  
    Life with new beauty seemed to glow.  
A love that slumbered in my breast,  
When to my lips this rose I pressed,  
Leaped back to life, and I confessed  
    The pledge I gave thee long ago.  
When to my lips this rose I pressed  
    Life with new beauty seemed to glow.

When first our fervid troth was told  
    I gave it to thee with a vow.  
Shall I forget that night of old,  
When first our fervid troth was told,  
And when I swore that it should hold  
    Me true to thee? It holds me now.  
When first our fervid troth was told  
    I gave it to thee with a vow.

## THE ROSE

And now it comes in after years,  
    Its scent and color gone with age,  
Wet with Faith's timid, trustful tears.  
And now it comes in after years,  
And cries aloud to love that hears  
    And hastens to redeem the gage.  
And now it comes in after years,  
    Its scent and color gone with age.

And back to where I met thee first  
    This faded flower my memory bears;  
All doubts of thee it hath dispersed,  
And back to where I met thee first  
I speed with every sense athirst,—  
    My soul the sacred summons hears,  
And back to where I met thee first  
    This faded flower my memory bears.

## THE ROSE

I see the love-light in thine eyes,  
I listen to thy murmurs low,  
I drink the rapture of thy sighs;  
I see the love-light in thine eyes,  
And oh! I see the tears that rise,  
And curse the fate that made them flow.  
I see the love-light in thine eyes,  
And listen to thy murmurs low.

The lips I loved may now be pale,  
But what is that, dear one, to me?  
Time's touch will make the fairest fail.  
The lips I loved may now be pale,  
But through the gloom I hear them wail,  
And haste across the years to thee.  
The lips I loved may now be pale,  
But what is that, dear one, to me?



## ABANDONED

Ah, breaking, anxious heart  
And streaming eyes!  
Pale, quivering lips that part  
With weary sighs!  
Cheeks once like summer dawn,  
Rosy and fair,  
Where have the roses gone  
That once were there?

The wrecking winds that sweep  
Along the sea  
Are likelier far to weep  
Than he for thee;  
For when upon the shore  
Their victims lie,  
They rave and howl no more,  
But seem to sigh.

ABANDONED

But the soft, treacherous breeze  
That lured and fanned  
Thy bark o'er unknown seas  
And far from land  
Fled when the daylight died,  
And left thee there,  
A waif upon the tide  
Of dark despair.

No wind to fill thy sail  
With freshening breath;  
To drift without avail  
To silent death;  
To gaze across the main  
To Life's fair shore;  
To stretch thy hands in vain  
For evermore.

## REPARATION

DEAR ONE, hath the fate that flung thee to me,  
fair and young, and timid and untried,  
Brought thee back in after years to curse me for  
the love I then to thee denied?

Lo! the maiden who in love's first fervor gave  
me all her young impassioned trust  
From the ashes of the years arises, like a phœnix  
soaring from the dust.

Comes she through the Past's pale mists to mock  
me with the lips whose virgin sighs I  
drained?

Nay, her eyes have in them no reproaches, though  
for me their saddest floods have rained.

## REPARATION

Can it be that thou, Imperious Beauty, schooled  
and skilled in all the Lesbian lore,  
Art the timid and untutored novice who my  
truant troth did oft deplore,

When in morbid mood or thoughtless moment,  
I, perchance, too carelessly would chide  
Some sweet whispered undertone of passion, or  
with skeptic coldness turn aside,

Blighting in the blossom all the beauty of the  
flower of love that might have grown  
Through the years with Faith's unfading fra-  
grance, but with heedless hand away was  
thrown?

All that Fancy's fondest dreams can compass I  
would give could I again behold  
In thine eyes the nascent love-light beaming, as  
I've often seen it there of old.

## REPARATION

Ah, but Fate is full of rich reprisals, and at last  
I falter at thy feet,  
For the years have hoarded up a vengeance, and  
thy reparation is complete.

Ask the tremor that enthralled my pulses! It will  
tell thee how with joy they played  
When I clasped again thy glowing beauty and my  
hungering lips on thine were laid,

And I heard thee murmur, "Take me! take  
me!" as I pleaded in thy close caress  
That thy love might leap to life and crown me,  
and in one soul-yielding sigh confess:

Then I felt thee thrill with peerless passion, more  
than ever shook thy girlish frame,  
And Love's smouldering coals again were kin-  
dled, for my lips had fanned them to a  
flame.

## THE DREAM

ON thy white breast that mocks the snow  
Once in a dreaming hour I leaned;  
I felt thy placid pulses glow  
As from thy melting mouth I gleaned  
The rosy raptures that eclipse  
The joys that waking wooers know,  
And then I laid my fervid lips  
On thy white breast that mocks the snow.

Oh, how thy heart responsive beat  
With new-born passion's blinding bliss  
That calmed the conscience that would cheat  
And chide thee from that glowing kiss!  
O clinging limbs! O yielding breast!  
O lips unlessoned, yet replete  
With passion, yearning to be pressed!  
Oh, how thy heart responsive beat!

## AFTERGLOW

LIKE the base Indian who threw a pearl  
Richer than all his tribe away, then moaned  
His folly when it could not be atoned,  
So long ago in blindness did I hurl  
The treasure of thy love into the whirl  
Of the wild waves of passion, and disowned  
The heart thou gavest to me as a girl,  
Where now 't were heaven to be again en-  
throned.

But Fate that flouts at Faith and laughs at Love,  
That made thee wing thy way above the vast  
Wild waters where thy first fond hopes were  
drowned,  
Hath brought thee back, like to the fabled dove,  
To linger for a little, if at last  
To spread thy wings and nevermore be  
found.

## STOLEN WATERS

I WONDER if the stolen waters, dear,  
That seem so sweet their sweetness will retain?  
May never tear fall in them to profane  
Or turn them into gall. As yet their clear  
And low melodious murmurings we hear,  
And never yet methinks was sweeter strain;  
Love's thirsting thieves are we who know no fear,  
The while with languished lips the fount we  
drain.

As well preach to the wanderer who sinks,  
Smit by the sun, upon the desert waste,  
Then wakes to find the cooling oasis,—  
As well tell him the saving draught he drinks  
Is stolen waters that he should not taste,  
As bid me, dear one, to forego thy kiss.



## LOVE LAUGHING LOW

LOVE laughing low, unmindful of its fate,  
And Sin that often sighs but sheds no tear.  
Sin ! Nay, the myrtle wreath Love offers, dear,  
Is better than the buds that desecrate  
The bride's fair brow when priest begins to prate  
The loveless links that gall from year to year.  
How fast the feeble fetters disappear  
When the lone heart leaps to its longed-for mate !

What bond can bind the blood at rest to keep  
Within a placid pool, and see one face  
Glassed ever on its surface night and day,  
When like a torrent it was wont to leap  
And on in unrestricted freedom race  
To clasp the waves that waited far away ?

L. of C. 1

## THE TWILIGHT HOUR

SOME say the flesh when freed from every stain  
And worn with fast, of carnal joys denied,  
Can loose the soul and leave it free to glide  
O'er countless leagues of land and miles of main,  
And sweet communion with some far one gain.

These fond fanatics I may not deride,  
Since, loaded heavy with love's fettering chain,  
Through space I swiftly sweep and reach thy  
side;

Or with the subtle skill and conjuring lore,  
Learnt of thy lips, my senses have the power  
To summon thee when day begins to fade.  
'Tis twilight; ere the lights are lit, once more  
Speed unto me! Yea, 'tis the very hour  
When last these lonely lips on thine were  
laid.

## THE TELLTALE MARKS

I DREAMT one night that I beheld thee dead ;  
The Spoiler scarce had stolen thy breath away  
When I bent over thy beloved clay  
Speechless and tearless with a nameless dread.  
Soon all thy pallid flesh from heel to head  
Passion's empurpled lip-prints did display ;  
Unnumbered ghosts of bygone loves were they.  
Thy pale lips moved, and this is what they said :

Thou didst believe me true, but my false heart  
Was traitor to thee, and I did conceal  
My shame for many years, but now my art  
Availeth not,—these telltale marks reveal  
Each one a guilty love— No more ! I cried,  
And woke to find thee sleeping at my side.

## THE CRIMSONED GIFT

IF I thy naked spirit could behold,  
As oft thy classic comeliness I've seen  
Garbed only in its beauty,—and I ween  
That Fate to few e'er gave a fairer mould,—  
I wonder what the vision would unfold!  
Thy flesh, though fair, enshrines a soul whose  
sheen  
Is radiant too, and though by love controlled,  
Love is forgiven,—remember Magdalene.

Or if thy heart within my hand were laid,  
Brought bleeding to me from thy white, wan  
breast,  
And every ruddy drop were voluble  
To answer me; with faith and unafraid,  
I'd kiss the crimsoned gift, though it confessed  
That which in life it lacked the strength to  
tell.

## LUST'S TIGER - TEETH

BUT till thy heart is mine and mine is thine,  
All passion will be pale 'twixt thee and me.  
Compare it now with what it then would be?  
That were to liken water unto wine!  
Though thou art fair as she who from the brine  
Of that enchanted Cytherean sea  
In beauty rose, yet till our souls combine  
Our passion-prompted vows are perjury.

The brute within the blood may ramp and rave,  
Or fawn and fondle till the trembling tone  
Of love's soft sigh is counterfeited well;  
But 't is the flesh that for the flesh doth crave —  
Lust's tiger-teeth that tear us to the bone,  
To leave us at the last in living hell.

## THE PUNCH - BOWL

YE jovial wassailers who drink

To Hebe in this brimming bowl,

To-night her beauty makes ye blink,

Ye jovial wassailers who drink.

To-morrow, maybe, ye will think

That midnight mirth means morning dole,

Ye jovial wassailers who drink

To Hebe in this brimming bowl.

## TO MARIANA

THOU knowest well that these poor lays  
Will be forgot in after days.

For me there waits no wreath of Fame,  
No false ambition bids me claim  
One leaf of Art's enduring bays.

And yet if haply Time should praise  
What now Indifference lightly weighs,  
Then with my lines I'd link thy name,  
Thou knowest well.

Far fairer work than this decays,  
Or sinks into Oblivion's haze.  
Yea, often doth the star-flashed flame  
Of Genius glow on lips that frame  
Lines that are lost. Fate oft betrays,  
Thou knowest well.

## PROMETHEUS.

BETTER to battle with these birds of pain,  
As I have done through many a day and night,  
Than let them wing their way into my brain  
And with their pinions beat out Reason's light;  
For in the darkness of that hour I might  
Shake from my soul the links in which I've lain  
These many years; yea, better to remain  
Bound to my rock and let these vultures bite  
Each nerve to numbness. Better that the clay  
Should wait for death on this hard, rocky bed,  
Than that a madman's hand should send  
the soul  
Soiled with a suicidal stain to stray  
Ever in outer darkness, for 't is said  
Such hapless spirits never find a goal.



## THE VANISHED VINTAGE

WHEN the hopes that we cherish, the dreams that  
we dream,

And the joys that defraud us are dead;

When the Past only mocks us, and never a beam  
From the close-curtained Future is shed;

When we falter and fall as we grope in the gloom,  
And our feet with the thistles are torn,

When the cankers of Conscience begin to con-  
sume,

Do we over our misery mourn?

Yea, we weep as we think of the vintage we  
crushed

From the rich, ruddy grapes of the Past;

And we dream in the dark of the faces that  
flushed

With a beauty that mocked at the blast:

THE VANISHED VINTAGE

Through the long lonely night and the desolate  
day,

When our folly and fate we deplore,  
Oft the ghosts of dead pleasures stalk by us and  
say,

If you could you would do as before.

## A WITHERED SHEAF

POOR anguished heart and soul, in sadness dressed,  
Reaping with Sorrow's sickle happier years,  
Thy grief-gleaned memories are at the best  
A withered sheaf—an aftermath of tears.



*Some Press Notices of*  
*The Dead Calypso, and Other Verses.*

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The work opens with a challenging call to that once fascinating goddess, and in a metre almost as seductive as the smiles of the siren it taunts. The book is full of good verse. Mr. Robertson is a poet, and the West is the better for him.—*Chicago Record-Herald.*

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# THE DEAD CALYPSO

## AND OTHER VERSES

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