

Beyond the Requiems

Louis Alexander Robertson



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Beyond the Requiems

And Other Verses

LOUIS ALEXANDER ROBERTSON



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Beyond the Requiems
And Other Verses

By
Louis Alexander Robertson

AUTHOR OF
"THE DEAD CALYPSO"
AND OTHER VERSES

A. M. ROBERTSON
SAN FRANCISCO
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MAR 21 1903

The Murdock Press
San Francisco

TO CHARLES JOSSELYN



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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

Ан, 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.]

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.

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.*

The melody of the verse is as notable as the warmth of its fancy.—*New York Times.*

The book has fire and grit in it. It has also much tenderness and sadness. It runs the gamut from the most spiritual aspiration to the rage of desire defeated in satiation. In the matter of form all the verses are exquisitely done. In the matter of feeling the intensity is poignant. Always the song has color to it, has blood and bone and flesh woven through it. Mr. Robertson is a lover of the sonnet, and his book contains a dozen poems in that form that are of exquisite workmanship.—*St. Louis Mirror.*

There are poems in this volume of noble range. Robertson is certainly a purist, and has a thorough knowledge of the technique of poetry. He is never guilty of a false quantity, nor does he ever lower the tone from its original setting. His work has received recognition in the East and in England, and there is an increasing demand there for the work of this extraordinary Californian poet.—*San Francisco Evening Post.*

Mr. Robertson's lines reveal the faculty of making the old mythology real. Like Keats, he fuses his thought into an imaginative glow that makes the fables of Greece and Rome live again for us of these prosaic days. Those who feel the sway of his passion will recognize the hand of a master.— *San Francisco Chronicle*.

His verses show the hand of a man of great literary attainments; a man whose mentality has been cultivated to the highest pitch, and yet whose soul is, and ever has been, the soul of a born poet. In expression and form Mr. Robertson's verses are in themselves perfect; yet this mechanical excellence, if we may so express it, attracts no attention to itself. The lines run so smoothly and the thoughts are so beautifully expressed, that it is the intent of the poetry, and not its form, that makes the lasting impression on the reader's mind.— *San Francisco Call*.

The personal note is dominant in Mr. Robertson's verse. The beauty of the lines is most often that of the polished and engraved gem, yet his thought moves freely and gives no hint of fetters.— *San Francisco Argonaut*.

In this book there are verses that thrill the senses and stir the blood and awake one's enthusiasm and cause one to read and re-read. There are lines that impress one with their beauty as a faultless piece of statuary would impress one, and there are some that cut the air like the swing of a flaming scimitar. His songs come to us in many strains, and through the sob of lascivious music and the flow of forbidden wine there steals the echo of the swelling choir and the impressive cadence of the cathedral hymn chanted in a key that harmonizes with the "dim religious lights."— *San Francisco News Letter*.

His lines oft glow in brilliant pictures. They unfold grand scenes; tableau after tableau presents itself in brilliant, pulsating coloring. This is particularly true of the poem "The Dead Calypso." There is a sonorous ring to this verse. The

scenes painted in it are the work of a master of the English language. Not a word that does not express full meaning; not a word that could be improved by a substitute, and for this, apart from the poetic qualities of Mr. Robertson's writings, admiration is his just due.— *San Francisco Bulletin*.

Last night before retiring, I read again, for the third or fourth time, that powerful poem "Ataxia." What imagination! What realism! It stirred every fibre of my nature, awakened every quality and every faculty, and mixed all night with all my thoughts and fancies. If a piece of self-revelation, it is awful; any way, it is a super-Byronic production — creation.— ADDISON P. RUSSELL, *Author of "A Club of One."*

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AND OTHER VERSES

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A. M. ROBERTSON, Publisher, San Francisco



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