

*** A Distributed Proofreaders Canada Ebook ***

This ebook is made available at no cost and with very few restrictions. These restrictions apply only if (1) you make a change in the ebook (other than alteration for different display devices), or (2) you are making commercial use of the ebook. If either of these conditions applies, please check with an FP administrator before proceeding.

This work is in the Canadian public domain, but may be under copyright in some countries. If you live outside Canada, check your country's copyright laws. **If the book is under copyright in your country, do not download or redistribute this file.**

Title: The Vagrant of Time

Author: Roberts, Charles George Douglas (1860-1943)

Photographer: Calder, Walter Hughes (1871-1953)

Date of first publication: 1927

Edition used as base for this ebook: Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1927 [first edition]

Date first posted: 8 January 2011

Date last updated: October 17, 2014

Faded Page ebook#201410F8

This ebook was produced by Al Haines



Charles G. D. Roberts. Photo by Walter H. Calder, Vancouver

The Vagrant *of Time*

CHARLES G. D. ROBERTS

**THE RYERSON PRESS
TORONTO**

This edition of "The Vagrant of Time," by Charles G. D. Roberts, five hundred copies have been printed, of which four hundred and eighty-five are for sale.

**Copyright, Canada, 1927, by
THE RYERSON PRESS**

To
CHARLES MAIR

CONTENTS

[The Vagrant of Time](#)
[In the Night Watches](#)
[Hath Hope Kept Vigil](#)
[An Epitaph](#)
[Spring Breaks in Foam](#)
[Sister to the Wild Rose](#)
[Sweet o' the Year](#)
[Asterope](#)
[To-day](#)
[On the Road](#)
[The Unknown City](#)
[In the Valley of Luchon](#)
[Hill Top Songs—I](#)
[Hill Top Songs—II](#)
[O Earth, Sufficing All Our Needs](#)
[Wayfarer of Earth](#)
[Under the Pillars of the Sky](#)
[The Good Earth](#)
[Eastward Bound](#)
[All Night the Lone Cicada](#)
[With April Here](#)
[When in the Rowan Tree](#)
[The Hour of Most Desire](#)
[From the High Window of Your Room](#)
[The Flower](#)
[To Shakespeare in 1916](#)
[When the Cloud comes down the Mountain](#)
[The Stream](#)
[The Summons](#)
[Monition](#)
[The Place of His Rest](#)
[Going Over](#)
[Cambrai and Marne](#)
[Beppo's Song](#)
[Philander's Song](#)
[A Blue Violet](#)
[Night on the Lagoon](#)
[New Year's Eve \(from the French\)](#)

The Vagrant of Time

I voyage north, I journey south,
I taste the life of many lands,
With ready wonder in my eyes
And strong adventure in my hands.

I join the young-eyed caravans
That storm the portals of the West;

And sometimes in their throng I catch
Hints of the secret of my quest.

The musks and attars of the East,
Expecting marvels, I explore.
I chase them down the dim bazaar,
I guess them through the close-shut door.

In the lone cabin, sheathed in snow,
I bide a season, well content,
Till forth again I needs must fare,
Called by an unknown continent.

I loiter down remembered shores
Where restless tide-flows lift and
In my wild heart their restlessness
And in my veins their tireless urge.

In old grey cities oft I dwell,
Down storied rivers drift and dream.
Sometimes in palaces I lose,
Sometimes in hovels catch, the gleam.

Great fortune in my wayfaring
I stumble on, more oft than not,—
Grip comrade hands in hall or camp,
Greet ardent lips in court or cot.

Down country lanes at noon I stray,
Loaf in the homely wayside heat,
And with bright flies and droning bees
Rifle the buckwheat of its sweet.

In solitudes of peak or plain,
When vaulted space my sense unbars,
I pitch my tent, and camp the night
Beyond the unfathomed gulfs of stars.

At times I thirst, at times I faint,
Sink mired in swamp, stray blind in storm,
See high hopes shattered, faiths betrayed,—
But stout heart keeps my courage warm.

And sometimes rock-ridged steeps I climb
In chill black hours before the dawn.
With battered shins and bleeding feet
And obstinate fists I blunder on.

And then, when sunrise floods my path,
I pause to build my dreams anew.
But, take the gipsying all in all,
I find a-many dreams come true.

So when, one night, I drop my pack
Behind the Last Inn's shadowy door.

To take my rest in that lone room
Where no guest ever lodged before,

In sleep too deep for dreams I'll lie,—
Till One shall knock, and bid me rise
To quest new ventures, fare new roads,
Essay new suns and vaster skies.

IN THE NIGHT WATCHES

When the little spent winds are at rest in the tamarack tree
In the still of the night,
And the moon in her waning is wan and misshapen,
And out on the lake
The loon floats in a glimmer of light,
And the solitude sleeps,—
Then I lie in my bunk wide awake.
And my long thoughts stab me with longing,
Alone in my shack by the marshes of lone Margaree.

Far, oh so far in the forests of silence they lie,
The lake and the marshes of lone Margaree,
And no man comes my way.
Of spruce logs my cabin is builded securely:
With slender spruce saplings its bark roof is
battened down surely;
In its rafters the mice are at play,
With rustlings furtive and shy,
In the still of the night.

Awake, wide-eyed I watch my window-square,
Pallid and grey.
(O Memory, pierce me not! O Longing, stab me not!
O ache of longing memory, pass me by, and spare,
And let me sleep!)
Once and again the loon cries from the lake.
Though no breath stirs
The ghostly tamaracks and the brooding firs.
Something as light as air leans on my door.

Is it an owl's wing brushes at my latch?
Are they of foxes, those light feet that creep
Outside, light as fall'n leaves
On the forest floor?
From the still lake I hear
A feeding trout rise to some small night fly.
The splash, how sharply clear!
Almost I see the wide, slow ripple circling to the shore.

The spent winds are at rest. But my heart, spent and faint, is unresting.
Long, long a stranger to peace...

O so Dear, O so Far, O so Unforgotten-in-dream,
Somewhere in the world, somewhere beyond reach of my questing.
Beyond seas, beyond years,
You will hear my heart in your sleep, and you will stir restlessly;
You will stir at the touch of my hand on your hair;
You will wake with a start,
With my voice in your ears
And an old, old ache at your heart,
(In the still of the night)
And your pillow wet with tears.

HATH HOPE KEPT VIGIL

Frail lilies that beneath the dust so long
Have lain in cerements of musk and slumber,
While over you hath fled the viewless throng
Of hours and winds and voices out of number.

Pulseless and dead in that enswathing dark
Hath hope kept vigil at your core of being?
Did the germ know what unextinguished spark
Held these white blooms within its heart unseeing?

Once more into the dark when I go down,
And deep and deaf the black clay seals my prison,
Will the numbed soul foreknow how light shall crown
With strong young ecstasy its life new risen?

EPITAPH

His fame the mock of shallow wits,
His name the jest of fool and child.
Remains the dream he fixed in form,
Remains the stone he hewed and piled.

Untouched by scorn that dogged his way
Ere the great task was well begun,
He drudged to give the vision life
And died content when it was done.

They pass, the mockers, and are dust,
While stars conspire to enscroll his name.
When roaring guns are fallen to rust
This granite shall attest his fame.

Eternal as the returning rose,
Impregnable as the perfect rhyme,

Through the long sequence of the suns
His dream in stone shall outwear Time.

SPRING BREAKS IN FOAM

Spring breaks in foam
 Along the blackthorn bough.
Whitethroat and goldenwing
 Are mating now.
With green buds in the copse
 And gold bloom in the sun
Earth is one ecstasy
 Of life begun.
And in my heart
 Spring breaks in glad surprise
As the long frosts of the long years melt
 At your dear eyes.

SISTER TO THE WILD ROSE

I know a maiden like a flower,
 (Flower-sweet, dainty sweet!)
Sister to the wild rose
 And the wild marguerite.

Petal-soft are the lips of her,
 (Flower-sweet, dainty-sweet!)
And blue her eyes as the misty blue
 Where the dew and the blue-bells meet.

Light her hands as the cherry blossom,
 (Flower-sweet, dainty-sweet!)
And never so light the wind on the grass
 As the lightness of her feet.

THE SWEET O' THE YEAR

The upland hills are green again;
The river runs serene again;
 All down the miles
 Of orchard aisles
The pink-lip blooms are seen again;

To garden close
And dooryard plot
Come back the rose
And bergamot.

The ardent blue leans near again;
The far-flown swallow is here again;
To his thorn-bush
Returns the thrush,
And the painted-wings appear again.
In young surprise
The meadows run
All starry eyes
To meet the sun.

Warm runs young blood in the veins again,
And warm loves flood in the rains again.
Earth, all aflush
With the fecund rush,
To her Heart's Desire attains again;
While stars outbeat
The exultant word—
"Death's in defeat,
And Love is Lord."

ASTEROPE

Whither down the ways of dream
Went my starry-eyed.
Tears and laughter at her lips
And longing by her side?

Went the joy of day with her
From the shining lands,—
All the wonder of the night
In her unheeding hands.

Wind of June hath gone with her
From the sighing tree,—
Dove-neck marvel from the mists
Of the morning sea.

Flowers she forgot to take
Smell no longer sweet.
Earth has no more pleasantness
Save where fell her feet.

So I seek that place of dream
Where waits my starry-eyed,
All the happy things of earth
A-crowding at her side.

TO-DAY

As once by Hybna's emerald flow
The goatboy saw in dream
The old gods to their hunting go,
And heard their eagles scream,
So I, by Nashwaak's amber stream,
See gods and heroes pass,
While these drab days and deeds but seem
Like shadows in a glass.

But when a thousand years are done
My eyes, unsealed, will know
Beauty and glory new begun
As in the long ago;
And then, astonished, I shall know
The splendor of To-day,
When men outdare the old gods, and grow
In reach more vast than they.

ON THE ROAD

Ever just over the top of the next brown rise
I expect some wonderful thing to flatter my eyes.
"What's yonder?" I ask of the first wayfarer I meet.
"Nothing!" he answers, and looks at my travel-worn feet.

"Only more hills and more hills, like the many you've passed.
With rough country between, and a poor enough inn at the last."
But already I am a-move, for I see he is blind,
And I hate that old grumble I've listened to time out of mind.

I've tramped it too long not to know there is truth in it still,
That lure of the turn of the road, of the crest of the hill.
So I breast me the rise with full hope, well assured I shall see
Some new prospect of joy, some brave venture a-tiptoe for me.

For I have come far, and confronted the calm and the strife.
I have fared wide, and bit deep in the apple of life.
It is sweet at the rind, but oh, sweeter still at the core;
And whatever be gained, yet the reach of the morrow is more.

At the crest of the hill I shall hail the new summits to climb.
The demand of my vision shall beggar the largess of time.
For I know that the higher I press, the wider I view.
The more's to be ventured and visioned, in worlds that are new.

So when my feet, failing, shall stumble in ultimate dark,
And faint eyes no more the high lift of the pathway shall mark,
There under the dew I'll lie down with my dreams, for I know
What bright hill-tops the morning will show me, all red in the glow.

THE UNKNOWN CITY

There lies a city inaccessible,
Where the dead dreamers dwell.

Abrupt and blue, with many a high ravine
And soaring bridge half seen,
With many an iris cloud that comes and goes
Over the ancient snows,
The imminent hills environ it, and hold
Its portals from of old,
That grief invade not, weariness, nor war.
Nor anguish evermore.

White-walled and jettied on the peacock tide,
With domes and towers enskied.
Its battlements and balconies one sheen
Of ever-living green,
It hears the happy dreamers turning home
Slow-oared across the foam.

Cool are its streets with waters musical
And fountains' shadowy fall.
With orange and anemone and rose,
And every flower that blows
Of magic scent or unimagined dye,
Its gardens shine and sigh.

Its chambers, memoried with old romance
And faëry circumstance,—
From any window love may lean some time
For love that dares to climb.

This is that city babe and seer divined
With pure, believing mind.
This is the home of unachieved emprise.
Here, here the visioned eyes
Of them that dream past any power to do,
Wake to the dream come true.
Here the high failure, not the level fame,
Attests the spirit's aim.
Here is fulfilled each hope that soared and sought
Beyond the bournes of thought.
The obdurate marble yields; the canvas glows;
Perfect the column grows;
The chorded cadence art could ne'er attain

Crowns the imperfect strain;
And the great song that seemed to die unsung
Triumphs upon the tongue.

IN THE VALLEY OF LUCHON

Day long, and night long.
From the soaring peaks and the snow,
Down through the valley villages
The cold white waters flow.

Quiet are the villages;
And very quiet the cloud
At rest on the breast of the mountain;
But the falling waves are loud

Through the little, clustering cottages,
Through the little, climbing fields,
Where every sunburnt vineyard
Its patch of purple yields.

High hung, a steel-bright scimitar.
The crooked glacier gleams.
The white church dreams in the valley
Where the red oleander dreams.

And every wonder of beauty
Comes, as a dream comes, true,
Where the sun drips rose from the ledges
And the moon by the peak swims blue.

HILL TOP SONGS

I.

Here on the hill
At last the soul sees clear,
Desire being still,
The High Unseen appear.
The thin grass bends
One way, and hushed attends
Unknown and gracious ends.
Where the sheep's pasturing feet
Have cleft the sods
The mystic light lies sweet;
The very clods,

In purpling hues elate,
Thrill to their fate;
The high rock-hollows wait,
Expecting gods.

II.

When the lights come out in the cottages
Along the shores at eve,
And across the darkening water
The last pale shadows leave;

And up from the rock-ridged pasture slopes
The sheep-bell tinklings steal,
And the folds are shut, and the shepherds
Turn to their quiet meal;

And even here, on the unfenced height,
No journeying wind goes by,
But the earth-sweet smells, and the home-sweet sounds,
Mount, like prayer, to the sky;

Then from the door of my opened heart
Old blindness and pride are driven,
Till I know how high is the humble,
The dear earth how close to heaven.

O EARTH, SUFFICING ALL OUR NEEDS

O Earth, sufficing all our needs, O you
With room for body and for spirit too,
How patient while your children vex their souls
Devising alien heavens beyond your blue!

Dear dwelling of the immortal and unseen,
How obstinate in my blindness have I been.
Not comprehending what your tender calls,
Veiled promises and re-assurance, mean.

Not far and cold the way that they have gone
Who through your sundering darkness have withdrawn;
Almost within our hand-reach they remain
Who pass beyond the sequence of the dawn.

Not far and strange the Heaven, but very near,
Your children's hearts unknowingly hold dear.
At times we almost catch the door swung wide.
An unforgotten voice almost we hear.

I am the heir of Heaven—and you are just.
You, you alone I know—and you I trust.
I have sought God beyond His farthest star—
But here I find Him, in your quickening dust.

WAYFARER OF EARTH

Up, heart of mine,
Thou wayfarer of earth!
Of seed divine,
Be mindful of thy birth.
Though the flesh faint
Through long-endured constraint
Of nights and days,
Lift up thy praise
To life, that set thee in such strenuous ways.
And left thee not
To drowse and rot
In some thick-perfumed and luxurious plot.

Strong, strong is earth
With vigour for thy feet,
To make thy wayfaring
Tireless and fleet.
And good is earth,—
But earth not all thy good,
O thou with seed of suns
And star-fire in thy blood!

And though thou feel
The slow clog of the hours
Leaden upon thy heel,
Put forth thy powers.
Thine the deep sky,
The unpreempted blue,
The haste of storm,
The hush of dew.

Thine, thine the free
Exalt of star and tree,
The reinless run
Of wind and sun,
The vagrance of the sea.

UNDER THE PILLARS OF THE SKY

Under the pillars of the sky
I played at life, I knew not why.

The grave recurrence of the day
Was matter of my trivial play.

The solemn stars, the sacred night,
I took for toys of my delight,

Till now, with startled eyes, I see
The portents of Eternity.

THE GOOD EARTH

The smell of burning weeds
Upon the twilight air;
The piping of the frogs
From meadows wet and bare;

A presence in the wood,
And in my blood a stir;
In all the ardent earth
No failure or demur.

O spring wind, sweet with love
And tender with desire,
Pour into veins of mine
Your pure, impassioned fire.

O waters, running free
With full, exultant song,
Give me, for outworn dream,
Life that is clean and strong.

O good Earth, warm with youth,
My childhood heart renew.
Make me elate, sincere,
Simple and glad, as you.

O springing things of green,
O waiting things of bloom,
O winging things of air,
Your lordship now resume.

EASTWARD BOUND

We mount the arc of ocean's round

To meet the splendours of the sun;
Then downward rush into the dark
When the blue, spacious day is done.

The slow, eternal drift of stars
Draws over us until the dawn,
Then the grey steep we mount once more,
And night is down the void withdrawn.

Space, and interminable hours,
And moons that rise, and sweep, and fall,—
On-swinging earth, and orbèd sea,—
And voyaging souls more vast than all!

ALL NIGHT THE LONE CICADA

All night the lone cicada
Kept shrilling through the rain,
A voice of joy undaunted
By unforgotten pain.

Down from the tossing branches
Rang out the high refrain,
By tumult undisheartened.
By storm assailed in vain.

To looming vasts of mountain.
To shadowy deeps of plain
The ephemeral, brave defiance
Adventured not in vain,—

Till to my faltering spirit,
And to my weary brain.
From loss and fear and failure
My joy returned again.

WITH APRIL HERE

With April here,
And first thin green on the awakening bough.
What wonderful things and dear,
My tired heart to cheer.
At last appear!
Colours of dream afloat on cloud and tree.
So far, so clear,
A spell, a mystery;
And joys that thrill and sing,

New come on mating wing,
The wistfulness and ardour of the Spring,—
And Thou!

WHEN IN THE ROWAN TREE

When in the rowan tree
The coloured light fades slowly,
And the quiet dusk,
All liliated, breathes of you,
Then, Heart's Content,
I feel your hair enfolding me,
And tender comes the dark,
Bringing me—you.

And when across the sea
The rose-dawn opens slowly,
And the gold breaks, and the blue,
All glad of you,
Then, Heart's Reward,
Red, red is your mouth for me,
And life to me means love,
And love means—you.

THE HOUR OF MOST DESIRE

It is not in the day
That I desire you most,
Turning to seek your smile
For solace or for joy.

Nor is it in the dark,
When I toss restlessly,
Groping to find your face,
Half waking, half in dream.

It is not while I work—
When, to endear success,
Or rob defeat of pain,
I weary for your hands.

Nor while from work I rest,
And rest is all unrest
For lack of your dear voice,
Your laughter, and your lips.

But every hour it is

That I desire you most—
Need you in all my life
And every breath I breathe.

FROM THE HIGH WINDOW OF YOUR ROOM

From the high window of your room,
Above the roofs, and streets, and cries,
Lying awake and still, I watch
The wonder of the dawn arise.

Slow tips the world's deliberate rim,
Descending to the baths of day:
Up floats the pure, ethereal tide
And floods the outworn dark away.

The city's sprawled, uneasy bulk
Illumines slowly in my sight.
The crowded roofs, the common walls,
The grey streets, melt in mystic light.

It passes. Then, with longing sore
For that veiled light of paradise,
I turn my face,—and find it in
The wonder of your waking eyes.

THE FLOWER

I am the man who found a flower,
A blossom blown upon the wind,
More radiant than the sunrise rose,
More sweet than lotus-air of Ind.

I clutched the flower, and on my heart
I crushed its petals, red and burning.
O ecstasy of life new-born!
O youth returned, the unreturning!

I am the man who dared the Gods
And under their thunderbolts lay blest,
Because I found the flower, and wore it
One wild hour upon my breast.

TO SHAKESPEARE IN 1916

With what white wrath must turn thy bones,
What stern amazement flame thy dust,
To feel so near this England's heart
The outrage of the assassin's thrust!

How must thou burn to have endured
The acclaim of these whose fame unclean
Reeks from the *Lusitania's* slain,
Stinks from the orgies of Malines!

But surely, too, thou art consoled
(Who knew'st thy stalwart breed so well)
To see us rise from sloth, and go,
Plain and unbragging, through this hell.

And surely, too, thou art assured.
Hark how that grim and gathering beat
Draws upwards from the ends of earth,—
The tramp, tramp, of thy kinsmen's feet.

WHEN THE CLOUD COMES DOWN THE MOUNTAIN

When the cloud comes down the mountain,
And the rain is loud on the leaves,
And the slim flies gather for shelter
Under my cabin eaves,—

Then my heart goes out to earth,
With the swollen brook runs free,
Drinks life with the drenched brown roots,
And climbs with the sap in the tree.

THE STREAM

I know a stream
Than which no lovelier flows.
Its banks a-gleam
With yarrow and wild rose,
Singing it goes
And shining through my dream.

Its waters glide
Beneath the basking noon,
A magic tide
That keeps perpetual June.

There the light sleeps
Unstirred by any storm;
The wild mouse creeps
Through tall weeds hushed and warm;
And the shy snipe,
Alighting unafraid,
With sudden pipe
Awakes the dreaming shade.

So long ago!
Still, still my memory hears
Its silver flow
Across the sundering years—
Its roses glow.
Ah, through what longing tears!

THE SUMMONS

Deeps of the wind-torn west,
Flaming and desolate,
Upsprings my soul from his rest
With your banners at the gate.

'Neath this o'er-mastering sky
How could the heart lie still.
Or the sluggish will
Content in the old chains lie,
When over the lonely hill
Your torn wild scarlets cry?

Up, Soul, and out
Into the deeps alone,
To the long peal and the shout
Of those trumpets blown and blown!

MONITION

A faint wind, blowing from World's End,
Made strange the city street.
A strange sound mingled in the fall
Of the familiar feet.

Something unseen whirled with the leaves
To tap on door and sill.
Something unknown went whispering by
Even when the wind was still.

And men looked up with startled eyes
And hurried on their way,
As if they had been called, and told
How brief their day.

THE PLACE OF HIS REST

The green marsh-mallows
Are over him.
Along the shallows
The pale lights swim.

Wide air, washed grasses,
And waveless stream;
And over him passes
The drift of dream;—

The pearl-hue down
Of the poplar seed;
The elm-flower brown;
And the sway of the reed;

The blue moth, winged
With a flake of sky;
The bee, gold ringed;
And the dragon fly.

Lightly the rushes
Lean to his breast;
A bird's wing brushes
The place of his rest.

The far-flown swallow,
The gold-finch flame,—
They come, they follow
The paths he came.

'Tis the land of No Care
Where now he lies,
Fulfilled the prayer
Of his weary eyes:

And while around him
The kind grass creeps.
Where peace hath found him
How sound he sleeps.

Well to his slumber
Attends the year:
Soft rains without number
Soft noons, blue clear.

With nights of balm,
And the dark, sweet hours
Brooding with calm,
Pregnant with flowers.

See how she speeds them,
Each childlike bloom,
And softly leads them
To tend his tomb!—

The white-thorn nears
As the cowslip goes;
Then the iris appears;
And then, the rose.

GOING OVER

A girl's voice in the night troubled my heart.
Across the roar of the guns, the crash of the shells,
Low and soft as a sigh, clearly I heard it.

Where was the broken parapet, crumbling about me?
Where my shadowy comrades, crouching expectant?
A girl's voice in the dark troubled my heart.

A dream was the ooze of the trench, the wet clay slipping.
A dream the sudden out-flare of the wide-flung Verys.
I saw but a garden of lilacs, a-flower in the dusk.

What was the sergeant saying?—I passed it along.—
Did *I* pass it along? I was breathing the breath of the lilacs.
For a girl's voice in the night troubled my heart.

Over! How the mud sucks! Vomits red the barrage.
But I am far off in the hush of a garden of lilacs.
For a girl's voice in the night troubled my heart.
Tender and soft as a sigh, clearly I heard it.

CAMBRAI AND MARNE

Before our trenches at Cambrai
We saw their columns cringe away.
We saw their masses melt and reel
Before our line of leaping steel.

A handful to their storming hordes
We scourged them with the scourge of swords,

And still, the more we slew, the more
Came up for every slain a score.

Between the hedges and the town
Their cursing squadrons we rode down.
To stay them we outpoured our blood
Between the beetfields and the wood.

In that red hell of shrieking shell
Unfaltering our gunners fell.
They fell, or e'er that day was done,
Beside the last unshattered gun.

But still we held them, like a wall
On which the breakers vainly fall—
Till came the word, and we obeyed,
Reluctant, bleeding, undismayed.

Our feet, astonished, learned retreat,
Our souls rejected still defeat.
Unbroken still, a lion at bay,
We drew back grimly from Cambrai.

In blood and sweat, with slaughter spent,
They thought us beaten as we went;
Till suddenly we turned and smote
The shout of triumph in their throat.

At last, at last we turned and stood—
And Marne's fair water ran with blood.
We stood by trench and steel and gun,
For now the indignant flight was done.

We ploughed their shaken ranks with fire.
We trod their masses into mire.
Our sabres drove through their retreat,
As drives the whirlwind through young wheat.

At last, at last we flung them back
Along their drenched and smoking track.
We hurled them back, in blood and flame.
The reeking ways by which they came.

By cumbered road and desperate ford.
How fled their shamed and harassed horde!
Shout, Sons of Freemen, for the day
When Marne so well avenged Cambrai!

BEPPO'S SONG

(From "The Sprightly Pilgrim")

Oh some are for the cities of men,
And some are for the sea,
And some for a book in a musty nook,—
But the lips of a maid for me!

And some are for the forest and field,
For their whim is to be free.
But the lips of a maid in the chestnut shade
Are freedom enough for me!

PHILANDER'S SONG

(From "The Sprightly Pilgrim")

I sat and read Anacreon.
Moved by the gay, delicious measure
I mused that lips were made for love,
And love to charm a poet's leisure.

And as I mused a maid came by
With something in her look that caught me.
Forgotten was Anacreon's line,
But not the lesson he had taught me.

A BLUE VIOLET

Blossom that spread'st, ere spring brings in
Her sudden flights of swallows.
Thy nets of blue, cool-meshed and thin,
In rain-wet pasture hollows,

Thronging the dim grass everywhere
Amid thy heart-leaves tender,
Thy temperate fairness seems more fair
Even than August's splendour!

Yet do I hear complaints of thee,
Men doubting of thy fragrance!
Ah, Dear, thou hast revealed to me
That shyest of perfume vagrants!

Do ever so, my Flower discreet,
And all the world be fair to,
While men but guess that rarest sweet
Which one alone can swear to.

ON THE LAGOON

Soothe, soothe
The day-fall, soothe,
Till wrinkling winds and seas are smooth.
Till yon low band
Of purpling strand
Breathe seaward dreams from the inner land,
Till lapped in mild half-lights our dream-blown boat
Is felt to float.
To fall, to float.

The sundown rose
Delays and glows
O'er yon spired peak's remoter snows.
Uprolling soon
The red-ripe moon
Lolls in the pines in drowsed half swoon;
Till thin moon shades entangle us, and shift
Our visions as we drift
And drift.

From musk-rose blooms
In the coppice glooms
Glide argosies of spice perfumes.
The slow-pulsed seas,
The shadowy trees,
The night spell holds us one with these,
Till, Dear, we scarce know life from sleep, but seem
Dissolved together
In sweet half dream.

NEW YEAR'S EVE

(After the French of Frechette)

Ye night winds, shaking the weighted boughs
Of snow-blanced hemlock and frosted fir,
While crackles sharply the thin crust under
The passing feet of the wayfarer;

Ye night cries, pulsing in long-drawn waves
Where beats the bitter tide to its flood,—
A tumult of pain, a rumour of sorrow.
Troubling the starred night's tranquil mood;

Ye shudderings where, like a great beast bound,
The forest strains to its depths remote;
Be still and hark! From the high gray tower
The great bell sobs in its brazen throat.

A strange voice out of the pallid heaven,
Twelve sobs it utters and stops. Midnight!
'Tis the ominous *Hail!* and the stern *Farewell!*
Of Past and Present in passing flight.

This moment, herald of hope and doom,
That cries in our ears and then is gone,
Has marked for us in the awful volume
One step toward the infinite dark—or dawn!

A year is gone, and a year begins.
Ye wise ones, knowing in Nature's scheme,
Oh tell us whither they go, the years
That drop in the gulfs of time and dream!

They go to the goal of all things mortal.
Where fade our destinies, scarce perceived,
To the dim abyss wherein time confounds them—
The hours we laughed and the days we grieved.

They go where the bubbles of rainbow break—
We breathed in our youth of love and fame,
Where great and small are as one together
And oak and windflower counted the same.

They go where follow our smiles and tears,
The gold of youth and the gray of age,
Where falls the storm and falls the stillness,
The laughter of spring and winter's rage.

What hand shall gauge the depth of time
Or a little measure eternity?
God only, as they unroll before Him,
Conceives and orders the mystery.

[End of *The Vagrant of Time*, by Charles G. D. Roberts]