

**THE VAGABOND:  
LYRIC OPERA IN  
FOUR ACTS**

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The vagabond: lyric opera in four acts by Jean Richepin

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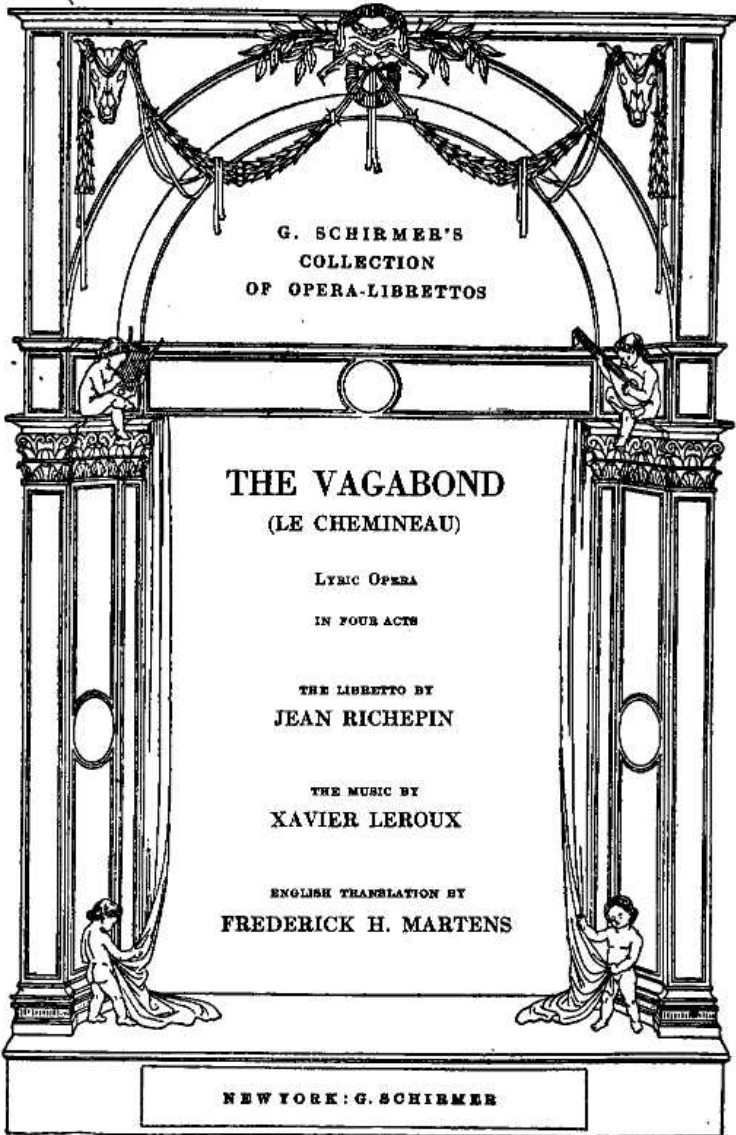
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**JEAN RICHPIN**

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LYRIC OPERA IN  
FOUR ACTS**





G. SCHIRMER'S  
COLLECTION  
OF OPERA-LIBRETTOS

**THE VAGABOND**  
(LE CHEMINEAU)

LYRIC OPERA  
IN FOUR ACTS

THE LIBRETTO BY  
JEAN RICHEPIN

THE MUSIC BY  
XAVIER LEROUX

ENGLISH TRANSLATION BY  
FREDERICK H. MARTENS

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## ARGUMENT

Act I shows a glade on the outskirts of a forest, with cornfields beyond, in provincial France. The voice of the Vagabond, a tramp who has hired himself out as a harvest hand, is heard off-stage. Toinette, a village girl, preparing the mid-day soup for the harvesters, admits that she loves him. After the reapers have eaten and while they sleep, François, no longer young, but deeply in love with Toinette, begs her to marry him and, refused, reproaches her with her preference for his younger rival. The latter appears, is waited on by Toinette, and then Pierre, the wealthy farmer, sending off the girl, asks the Vagabond to stay and take charge of his farm. The latter promises to consider the offer, and recalls Toinette to discuss it with her. During the ensuing love-scene, she tries to coax him to settle down and marry her, but the confirmed wanderer shies at the idea of "taking root in the earth like a beet." Even Toinette's offer to go a-roaming with him falls on deaf ears. Finally, Toinette, who cries out that she has sacrificed her good name for his sake, is forcibly prevented by François from following him as he is seen far afield, seeking the open road for which his soul yearns.

Act II takes place in a peasant interior of the humblest kind. Toinette has been married to François for some twenty years; and Toinet, her child by the Vagabond, has been brought up by François, with full knowledge, as his own son. The couple have fallen on evil days. François, sick, old, broken, is no longer able to work. Toinette tries to cheer him, but cannot deny either her own preoccupation or Toinet's distress. The sudden arrival of Aline, rich Pierre's daughter, leads to the discovery of its cause. She and Toinet love each other. Toinet, now entering, repeats threats and insults Pierre has just uttered. François, indignant, bids Aline go tell her father to come and answer for his outrage, sending Toinet away at the same time. Pierre comes, abuses the honest couple, accusing them of scheming to give him a pauper son-in-law, and roundly declares him a bastard. François, staggering up to throttle Pierre, is felled by a stroke of paralysis.

In Act III, before a crossroads tavern, the Vagabond meets Thomas and Martin, with whom he had harvested so many years ago. From

them and from Catherine, Thomas's wife, he learns of the unhappy situation of Toinette and François. Their boy Toinet haunts the taverns, drowning his love's sorrow. He now appears on the scene, far from sober, and is induced by Catherine to go to sleep in the coach-house. The Vagabond, after agonized incredulity has turned to joy, is convinced that Toinet is his own child. He meets the lad's wretched mother, come in search of him, obtains her forgiveness for the past, and promises to earn it by making Pierre withdraw his objections to the match, and rendering Toinet and his mother happy. He meets his son as a friend of his mother's "before you were born."

Act IV, the interior of François's cottage, makes clear that he has been successful. François, gradually failing, is seated in his armchair as before. But Toinet, happily married to Aline, is about to take his young wife to midnight mass, for it is Christmas Eve. He bids his mother hurry, and friends and neighbors, crowding 'round the door, urge them to hasten. The Vagabond comes in, covered with snow, and the young folk go off; Toinette follows them, after telling the Vagabond she is sure that he will not run away to follow a wandering life again. After her departure, however, the Vagabond recalls with longing his years in the open, evoked by the distant song of the waits. Pierre enters, and telling him that once poor François has shuffled off his mortal coil, everyone hopes he will marry Toinette and settle down, hurries off to mass in his turn. The Vagabond is indignant at the implication that he would basely think of falling heir to François's wife while eating his bread. But now the sick man himself, in a lucid interval, thanks the Vagabond for all the kindness to his family, tells him he is an honest man, and begs him to marry Toinette once he is gone. The Vagabond soothes him and he drowns off again. The waits come, sing their song and are given food and small coins by the Vagabond; but he has grown more and more restless. The nostalgia of the open road is upon him. He loves all these dear ones in the cottage; but his love for the free life of the highway is stronger. They will return in time to bid François godspeed on his long journey; but the Vagabond will have gone. With a blessing and a Christmas wish for those whom he is leaving forever, he steps out into the night to take the chance of the road once more; while the chime of the Christmas bells, the chant of the choristers, and the distant singing of the waits, sound out over the snow.



## PERSONNAGES

TOINETTE	<i>Soprano dramatique ou Mezzo</i>
ALINE	<i>Soprano</i>
CATHERINE	<i>Mezzo</i>
LE CHEMINEAU	<i>Baryton</i>
TOINET	<i>Ténor</i>
FRANÇOIS	<i>Baryton</i>
MAÎTRE PIERRE	<i>Basse</i>
MARTIN	<i>Ténor</i>
THOMAS	<i>Baryton</i>

Moissonneurs, Moissonneuses, Paysans, Paysannes, Enfants

Au premier acte, une clairière à l'orée d'un bois; au troisième acte, un carrefour sur la grand'route. Au deuxième et quatrième actes, intérieur de paysan à la très humble aisance.

Première représentation au Théâtre de l'Opéra-Comique à Paris

Le 6 Novembre 1907

Direction de M. Albert Carré

Chef d'Orchestre : M. F. Ruhlmann

## DISTRIBUTION

TOINETTE	<i>Soprano dramatique ou Mezzo</i>	M <sup>mes</sup> Claire Friché-Chassevent
ALINE	<i>Soprano</i>	Mathieu-Lutz
CATHERINE	<i>Mezzo</i>	C. Thévenet et Sylva
LE CHEMINEAU	<i>Baryton</i>	MM. Dufrane
TOINET	<i>Ténor</i>	Salignac
FRANÇOIS	<i>Baryton</i>	J. Périer
MAÎTRE PIERRE	<i>Basse</i>	Veuille
MARTIN	<i>Ténor</i>	Cazeneuve
THOMAS	<i>Baryton</i>	Delvoye

## CHARACTERS

TOINETTE	<i>Dramatic Soprano or Mezzo</i>
ALINE	<i>Soprano</i>
CATHERINE	<i>Mezzo</i>
THE VAGABOND	<i>Baritone</i>
TOINET	<i>Tenor</i>
FRANÇOIS	<i>Baritone</i>
MASTER PIERRE	<i>Bass</i>
MARTIN	<i>Tenor</i>
THOMAS	<i>Baritone</i>

Reapers and Peasants of both sexes; Children

Act I. A glade on the outskirts of a wood.—Act III. A crossways on the highway.—  
Acts II and IV. A peasant interior of the most humble sort

# THE VAGABOND

(LE CHEMINEAU)

Lyric Opera in Four Acts

## ACTE PREMIER

*Une Clairière à l'orée d'un bois. A droite, au premier plan, un talus couronné d'une haie; au pied du talus, un feu de campagne en pierres sèches; sur ce feu, une marmite; auprès du feu, une grosse pierre moussue pouvant servir de siège. A droite, au deuxième plan, quelques arbustes, à l'ombre desquels s'étend un tapis d'herbes formant un lit naturel. A gauche, au premier plan, un gros tronc d'arbre renversé; au deuxième plan, un grand chêne dont les branches ombragent la clairière. Au fond, à plusieurs plans jusqu'à l'horizon, champs de blés, les uns debout, les autres coupés et en moyes. A l'horizon, coteaux plantés de vignes, et un village à tuiles rouges avec un clocher bourguignon. Ciel bleu incendié de soleil. Le plus chaud du jour de la moisson. Le rideau ne se lève qu'au milieu du second couplet. On voit TOINETTE occupée à soigner la soupe et à préparer les écuelles. On devine à gauche les moissonneurs dont le travail est rythmé par la chanson du CHEMINEAU.*

## SCÈNE PREMIÈRE

LE CHEMINEAU, TOINETTE

LE CHEMINEAU

La Jeannett' s'en va-t-aux champs,  
Coupe un' javell', coupe en marchant,  
Un beau monsieur par là s'amène,  
Lui dit : « J'voudrais ton étréne. »  
Coup' toujours et coupe encor !  
Chaqu' javell' l'ra son tas d'or.

La Jeannett' dit au monsieur :  
« Coupe un' javelle et coup's-en deux,  
Quand mêm' tu s'rais l'filleux d'la reine,  
(Rideau)

## ACT THE FIRST

*A glade on the outskirts of a wood. At the right front a slope crowned by a hedge; at the foot of the slope an open-air fire in a fireplace of field stones; on the fire a pot; near the fire a large mossy stone which serves as a seat. At the right, back, a few trees shadowing a carpet of verdure which forms a natural bed. At the left front, a great overturned tree-trunk; at the back, a large oak-tree whose branches shade the glade. At the back of the stage, on various drops extending to the horizon, fields of corn, in part standing, in part cut and bound in sheaves. On the skyline, hills planted with grapevines, and a village with red roofs and a Burgundian church-tower. A blue sky flooded with sunlight. It is the hottest part of the day at harvest time. The curtain does not rise until the middle of the second stanza. TOINETTE is seen watching the soup and getting ready the bowls. The presence of the harvesters at the left, their work rhythmized by the VAGABOND'S song, is divined.*

## SCENE I

THE VAGABOND, TOINETTE

THE VAGABOND

'Twas Jeanette who sought the fields,  
Cut a sheaf, cut it as you walk.  
A pretty gentleman going that way  
Said to her: "I want a gift from you!"  
Keep on cutting and cut again!  
Every sheaf has a tassel of gold.

Said Jeanette to the gentleman:  
"Cut a sheaf, cut two of them,  
And though you were the Queen's son himself,  
(Curtain rises)