

THE INDIAN FIRE-WEED

(By M. E. Colman, Vancouver, B. C.)

Where all the land is desolate,
Where tortured trees lie black and dead,
In fields whence glory long has fled,
There Beauty reigns, unconquered yet.

For there the Indian Fire-Weed blooms,
Its petals wrought of amethyst,
All flushed with rosy morning mist,
And lightly poised as though for flight.

Thou Poet-flower—rapt, bemused,
I gaze into thy jewelled heart,
Thou Slave of Truth, here set apart
To conquer Death with Beauty's sword.

THE SPINNER

(By Bertha Lewis, Vancouver, B. C.)

Spinner of my fate am I
A silver bobbin in my hand.
Shall I heedless let it fall
And knot the threads about my feet,
Or shall I toss it up, and up,
Make the most of what's to be?
Each moment I'll unwind the thread,
Slowly when the day is sad
And little drops of water run
Grayly down the window pane,
Or swiftly when the sunbeams flare
I'll whirl the colored threads about
Until my heart is snared in joy,
And all my soul runs forth to glean
The shreds of happiness I missed
But yesterday.

A MODERN OENONE

(After a visit of Lord Renfrew to the shores of Lake Erie)

(By Virginia MacDonald Cummings, Fernie, B. C.)

(With Acknowledgments to Tennyson)

O mother Erie, many-caverned Erie,
Dear mother Erie hearken ere I die.
To thy surf-beaten shore one summer day
There came Britain's Ulysses. At his step,
I felt the whole earth vibrate, with a strange
New bliss. And golden-soft, from every side,
There glowed a brighter radiance on the world,
Gilding the noon-day sun. All nature then
Put on her gladdest garb of green and gold.
The blue waves danced with joy. It was as if,
Through all the countless aeons of her growth
Earth had but tended toward this perfect hour.

The young god stood full conscious of his power.
His locks clung on his brow like shawdowed woods
Curling against a crystal twilight sky.
Like stars of midnight glowed the eyes that viewed
Earth's broad expanse—his realm and heritage—
Bowing in adulation.

O sunny Erie, hear me, ere I die.
He took my hand in his, and as we passed,
The little birds perched timidly near him,
And sang as they had never sung before.
But when he noticed not and went his way,
I alone heard a low, dazed, plaintive cry.
As if the new joy that had come—and gone,
Had robbed them of their former sweet content,
And left nothing in life worth living for,
Save straining for an echo's faint "Good-bye."

Oh restless Erie, hearken ere I die.
The very flowers loved him. In his path
They opened in more full perfection,
And lifted their fond faces up to him,
And offered like incense, their sweet perfume.
But when he passed—it was as if the strong
Bright light to which they turned being withdrawn,
Their former day seemed only chilly dark.
I saw them sadly droop their heads and die.
He heeded not. And now a gentle breeze
Had come, and cooling in its tender voice
Twined filmy fingers round and round his neck,
And softly kissed his brow. From far behind,
I heard a shriek and wail in wild despair,
For he had laughed, and waved a gay "Good-bye."

Great patient Erie, hear me—for I die.
Ere for my little playmates I could grieve,

He looked into my eyes and smiled. My soul
Awoke as from long slumber. I could feel
It grow—in that brief moment, ages long—
Expand, leaping from point to higher point
Of consciousness, till it attained undreamed
And most divine fulfillment. I was filled
With purest ecstasy, I knew not why.
And then as if to show me all his power,
He stood upon thy verge. Thy broad breast heaved
With one convulsive quiver, and from out
The farthest horizon each little wave,
With maddened feet came scrambling past his fellow
And fought to be the first to kiss his feet.
He hung above the foamy, fawning wave,
He clung upon the sheer and white-faced cliff
Charming the very laws of nature, so
They would not function lest they do him harm.
Exulting in his power, the young god raised
His eyes to mine and smiled. My wavering soul
As had the birds, the flowers, the dotting pines
And mighty lake, in sweet submission bowed.

One tranced moment—then our prince was gone—
A sudden darkness sunk upon the land;
A moaning wail rose from the restless pines;
Heart broken sobbing grieved the fettered lake;
For every echoing cave clung to his words
"Farewell! We'll meet no more! No more! No more!"

Sad, lonely Erie, hearken, for I die.
My fate is fixed and there is no reprieve.
Nor would I ask it, for my span is o'er.
For some the complete life takes years and years,
Some see it worked out in one swift, sweet hour.
'Tis but for brief the ivy lives to pine
For its lost oak in whom was all its strength.
But for one moment, ere it droops in death,
The flower of a day, to whom the sun
Is life itself, yearns passionately toward
The parting rays, that kiss so tenderly,
The while they say "Farewell! We'll meet no more!"

Weak as the ivy, stricken as the flower,
Dear mother Erie, take my life to thee.
I long to seek the unknown horizon
Upon thy kindly breast. I yearn to sink—
Sink ever down in thy heaven-cradling blue,
And feel its formless form encompass me.
For, always do I hear the hills, the shore,
Re-echoing, "Farewell! We'll meet no more."