

The Poet's Page.

FIVE DOLLARS

Will be given each Week for the Best Piece of Poetry Suitable for Publication in This Page.

In order that we may secure for our Poetry Page the very best productions, and as an incentive to increased interest in this department of TRUTH, we will give each week a prize of FIVE (\$5) DOLLARS to the person sending us the best piece of poetry, either selected or original. No conditions are attached to the offer whatever. Any reader of TRUTH may compete. No money is required, and the prize will be awarded to the sender of the best poem, irrespective of person or place. Address, "Editor Poet's Page, TRUTH Office, Toronto, Canada." Be sure to note carefully the above address, as contributions for this page not so addressed will be liable to be overlooked. Anyone can compete, as a selection, possessing the necessary merit, will stand equally as good a chance of securing the prize as anything original. Let our readers show their appreciation of this liberal offer by a good lively competition each week.

A SPECIAL PRIZE.

The publisher of TRUTH will give a prize of ten dollars gold for the best original poem having reference to her Majesty Queen Victoria, suitable for publication for May 24th, the length not to exceed a hundred lines. Any person may compete and the Publisher reserves the right of using any sent, whether awarded the prize or not. All competitions to be sent in not later than May 14th.

A prize of ten dollars will also be given for the best original poem suitable for Dominion Day, (July 1st) to be sent in not later than June 15th.

The proper name and address to accompany each poem sent. Address all directly to Publisher of TRUTH, Toronto.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT.

Mr. F. P. Beynon, St. Catharines, Ont., acknowledges, with thanks, the receipt of five dollars, prize awarded for poem published in TRUTH, March 23th.

THE AWARD.

The following original poem from the pen of Mrs. W. D. Norris, 30 Alexander St., Toronto, is awarded the prize this week. It will be read with real interest just now, when so many absent patriots—many of whom may never return—are being so dearly remembered.

—For Truth.

To One of the Absent.

BY MRS. W. D. NORRIS.

You bade me good-bye with a smile, dear,
And away to the west, wild and drear,
At the sound of war's bugle, thrill calling,
You went without shadow of fear;
And when I complained of your going
To face dangers untold in the west,
You chided me gently by saying:
"Encourage me, love, 'twill be best."

I know every hour you will miss me;
You'll grieve while I'm far, far away,
But it's duty's demand, and I'm ready,
Could I show the "white feather" to day?
There, now, you're my own bright-eyed blessing,
And show the true spirit within;
Those eyes now so fearfully flashing
Shall guide me through war's crash and din;

With your men you wait cheerful and willing,
To defend and take care to the poor
Helpless children and sad "prisoned" women,
Who had homes on Saskatchewan's shore;
And now I'm so proud of you, darling,
I can worship a hero so brave;
While I pray for your safe home-returning,
When the peace flag shall quietly wave.

Many hearts are now mourning for loved ones
Who died at their post, true and brave,
In defiance of one heartless rebel
Whose life not a "million" should save.
Let justice be done low, unfailing;
Naught but death can atone for his sin;
Let the fate he has meted to others,
By Our Dauntless be meted to him.

So strengthen your arm for the fray, dear,
I'll not wish you back 'ere the fight
Shall decide 'ere you, country and comrades,
In favor of honor and right.
Don't come back until quiet contentment
Fills the homes, now deserted, out west;
And the true song of peace finds an echo
In each sturdy settler's breast.

Then when you are homeward returning,
With heart that has never known fear;
Remember the love-light is burning
Unceasingly, constantly, here;
And "bright eyes" will give you a welcome
Which even a soldier may prize
While the lips will be smiling with pleasure
That have prayed in your absence with sighs.

And the whole world will sing with the praises
Of Canada's noblest and best,
Who, shoulder to shoulder, defended
And saved the unhappy Northwest;
While in coming years, round the hearthstone,
Will be told how the dark coats, and red,
Routed every rebel Indian and Halfbreed,
And avenged both the living and dead.

—For Truth.

Left Alone.

BY MRS. I. L. PETERSTON.

I am sitting to-night by my window,
All alone in my cheerless room;
The evening shadows are falling,
Fast gathers the deepening gloom.
But my thoughts, on airy pinions
Are swiftly wandering afar,
To the great North-West Rebellion,
To the loved one gone to the war.

I picture him anxiously longing
For the comforts of home so dear;
I see how his eye fondly glances
As he thinks of the loved ones there.
But, yearning to turn from his country,
In her hour of peril and pain,
He murmurs a prayer for their safety,
Then onward to duty again.

But a picture more dark comes before me,
Disease, death, and danger surround;
Wherever his footsteps may wander
Those phantoms of misery abound.
Oh! if harm should befall him I but quickly
I turn from the heart-sickening sight,
Drive back from my mind the dark fancies,
And call up a vision more bright.

The gloom and the shadows are deepening
And without darkness relief supreme;
But my heart beats lightly and joyous,
For lovingly, fondly I dream
Of the time when the war will be over,
And traitorous foes will be o'ercome;
Then, with honor and pride can my darling
Return to his wife and his home.

—For Truth.

My Boy's Last Request.

BY J. M. V.

Half-raised upon his dying couch, his head
Dropped o'er his mother's bosom,—like a bud
Which, broken from its parent stalk, ad heres
By some attenuate fibre. His thin hand
From 'neath the downy pillow drew a book,
And slowly pressed it to her bloodless lip.

"Mother, dear mother, see your birthday gift,
Fresh and unopened, yet have I kept your word,
And ere I slept each night, and every morn,
Did read its pages, with my humble prayer,
Until this sickness came."

He paused—for breath
Came scantily, and with a tollsome strife,—
"Brother or sister have I none, or else
I'd lay this Bible on their hearts and say,
Come, read it on my grave, among the flowers;
So you who gave it must take it back again,
And love it for my sake." "My son—my son,"
Murmured the mourner, in that tender tone
Which woman, in her sternest agony
Commands, to soothe the pang of those she loves,
"The soul! the soul!—to whose charge yield you
that?"

"Mother,—to God who gave it."

So that soul,
With a slight shudder and a lingering smile,
Left the pale clay for its Creator's arms.
Woodstock, Ont.

Only.

BY W. FLETCHER JOHNSON.

Only a trifle, yet broken
Are souls that were heavy and strong;
Only a word, lightly spoken,
Yet the soul bursteth forth into song.

Only a dew-drop, yet brighter
The verdure of meadow and lawn;
Only a sunbeam, yet lighter
And fairer the rosy-hued dawn.

Only a day, a mere glimmer
Of time, as it vanishes fast;
Only a day, growing dimmer
Mid shadows and gloom of the past.

Only a day, yet forever
Its impulse shall with thee remain;
And the fruit of its labors shall never
Be given to ripen again.

Time was, when it glittered before thee,
A part of futurity's dream;
And brighter the heavens were o'er thee,
With hope-star's Utopian beam.

Time is, when it hovers around thee,
And fingers an hour by thy side;
While spools of fair promise that bound thee,
Go drifting away with the tide.

Only a day, nor yet ever
Its moments forgotten shall be
Till bubbles of time's stream forever
Are wafted in eternity's sea.

The Passion-Flowers of Life.

The setting sun was sinking fast
Behind the heath-clad moor,
And as he fell, his rays he threw
Upon a cottage door.

An old, old man sat in the porch,
His grey head moving slow,
For eighty years had round it wreathed
Their coronal of snow.

A grandeur to his aged locks
By the bright sun was given,
Shedding a halo on his head
As if 'twere ripe for Heaven.

Upon his knee, by holier play,
To slumber deep beguiled,
There slept a flower of God's own land,—
A darling little child.

A tiny little velvet hand
Within his own was pressed;
A little tiny golden head
Lay nestling on his breast.

The old, old man with trembling lip
A blessing breathed of love;
And sure am I that old man's prayer
Recorded stands above.

Though "Time the Reaper" on his brow
His silver stamp had set;
And Heaven called one link of gold
Bound earth to Heaven yet.

Of gold I see, even angels bow
Before that influence mild,
God's dearest, purest gift to man,
A loving little child.

And thus the buds of childhood's love
Amid our daily strife
Bloom ever in their tenderness,
The Passion-Flowers of Life!

—For Truth.

An Advice.

BY ALBION W. STEERS.

"A mouth that's always open wide
Bespeaks an empty head."
Is a fact that I have somewhere learned
From something that I've read.

"A tongue that's always wagging does not
Always speak the truth."
Is another fact my mother taught me
In my early youth.

A mouth and tongue that always talk
Of things that "I" have done,
Proclaim an egotist at once;
A foolish mother's son.

I know the tongue no man hath tamed,
'Tis an unruly evil.
If it do not try to hold,
'Twill send you to the devil.

Let others speak of what you do,
Even though they do not praise you,
Let others judge if what you do,
Up in the world should raise you.

And when you speak of any woman,
Or man gone to the wall,
Speak kindly of them all, my friend,
Or do not speak at all.

Your evil words *heresay* may be,
Perhaps you could not prove them,
But once they're said and gone my friend,
'Twill be too late rue them.

But when you know it will do good,
An evil work to scan,
Stand up erect; tell the whole truth,
And tell it like a man.

—For Truth.

Lion or Bear?

BY F. LYNTON.

Sons of Britain, long renowned
For your deeds of might;
Sons of Britain, ever found
Foremost in the fight!
Why has all thy glory passed
From the earth away?
Why art thou afraid to move
In the strife to-day?

Lion of England! why not wake!
Art afraid to roar?
Why not let thy thunders break
Over sea and shore?
Hear ye not the Russian Bear
Growling loud and deep?
See! he's rising from his lair,
While you calmly sleep!

British Lion, or Russian Bear,
Which of you shall reign?
Which shall get the lion's share?
Which shall gnaw the chain?
Which shall hold the world in thrall
By the fate of war?

Russia, with her glittering steel,
And her forced command,
Ruler with a reluctant heel
And an iron hand;
But 'neath Britain's gentler sway
Nations prosper well,
And throughout her realm to-day
Happy people dwell.

Let the cloud that's round thee cast,
In its fury burst;
Let the threatening Russian blast,
On thee do its worst;
If ye will, ere 'tis too late,
To your danger wake,
Not the czar, in all his state,
Can thine empire shake!

Renunciation.

BY SIDNEY LOCKWOOD.

A door has shut between thy path and mine;
Late passion flower strewn;
And I, through life, thy love must o'en resign—
Must live my life alone!

God hath decreed that I must walk; alone
The bleak and barren plain;
Nor on thy loving breast may hush my moan.
Nor rest in joy or pain.

We two, on earth, must journey far apart;
Of love I may not think;
Renunciation e'er must be my part;
But, just this side the brink.

Come to me, friend of youth's bright happy morn,
When I a dylog lie,
And with thy fond arms round my fading form,
Receive my latest sigh.

And when thou comest to the Fadoles Land,
In wedding garments dressed,
Beside the peartly portal I shall stand,
To welcome thee to rest.

A Poem by Milton.

[The following sublime and effecting production was discovered among the remains of the great epic poet, and is published in the recent Oxford edition of Milton's works:]

I am old and blind!
Men point at me as smitten by God's wrath;
Afflicted and deserted of my kind;
Yet I am not cast down.

I am weak, yet strong;
I murmur not that I no longer see;
Poor, old, and helpless I the more belong,
Father supreme to thee.

O merciful One,
When men are furthest, then thou art most near;
When friends pass by me, and my weakness aghast,
Thy chariot I hear.

Thy glorious face
Is leaning towards me, and its holy light
Shines upon my lonely dwelling-place—
And there is no more night.

On my bended knee
I recognize thy purposes clearly shown:
My vision thou hast dimmed that I may see
Thyself—Thyself alone.

I have sought to fear,
This darkness is the shadow of thy wing;
Beneath it I am almost sacred, here
Can come no evil thing.

Oh! I seem to stand,
Trembling, where foot of mortal ne'er hath been,
Wrapp'd in the radiance of thy sinless hand,
Which eye hath never seen.

Visions come and go:
Shapes of resplendent beauty around me throng;
From angel's lips I seem to hear the flow
Of soft and holy song.

Is it nothing now,
When heaven is opening on my sightless eyes?
When airs from paradise refresh my brow
The earth in darkness lies.

Waiting.

Learn to wait, life's hardest lesson,
Conceded perchance, through blinding tears,
While the heart throbs sadly echo
To the tread of past years.

Learn to wait hope's slow fruition;
Faint not though the way seems long;
There is joy in each condition,
Hearts though suffering may grow strong.

Constant sunshine, however welcome,
Ne'er would ripen fruit or flower;
Giant oaks owe half their greatness
To the scathing tempest's power.

Thus a soul untouched by sorrow
Alms not at a higher state;
Joy seeks not a brighter morrow,
Only sad hearts learn to wait.

Human strength and human greatness
Spring not from life's sunny side,
Heroes must be more than driftwood
Floating on a waveless tide.

—For Truth.

Such a Friend!

I've found a friend; O, such a friend,
He loved me ere I knew him,
He drew me with the cords of love,
And thus he bound me to him;
And round my heart still closely twine
Those ties which naught can sever,
For I am his and he is mine,
Forever and forever.

I've found a friend; O, such a friend;
He bled, he died to save me,
And not alone the gift of life,
But his own self he gave me;
Naught that I have my own I call,
I hold it for the giver,
My heart, my strength, my life, my all,
Are his, and his forever.

I've found a friend; O, such a friend,
So kind and true, and tender;
So wise a counsellor and guide,
So mighty a defender;
From him who loves me now so well,
What power my soul can sever,
Shall life or death, or earth, or hell
No, I am his forever.