

Verse by Western Canadian Writers

First Place in a Vancouver Poetry Club Competition

The "Vancouver Poetry Club" held a contest for unsigned poems to be submitted to the vote. The following poem by Mrs. Alice M. Winlow won the highest number of votes and received the prize, which was a beautiful water-color of "The Lions," the work of Miss M. P. Judge.

RECONCILIATION

(By Alice M. Winlow.)

O give me one white sea-gull on the wing,
The slender silver moon,
One red rose dew-impearled,
And I will leave the world
Asking no further boon
To light the grave with beauty's blossoming.

The sea-gull on her snow-curved wing shall hold
The opal light of dawn,
The silver light of eve,
And soaring aloft shall cleave
A pathway where have gone
The songs of earth, a company of gold.

The slender moon, a silken curving thread,
Shall loop my robe with light
And tender amethyst,
And for my sake I wist
Make delicately bright
The beauties of earth's twilight when I'm dead.

The crimson of the rose shall heal my heart.
Her cool deliciousness
Shall fill with fragrant breath
The shadowy aisles of death,
And petalled loveliness
Shall fold two hearts in one that were apart.

THE MOTHER

(By Gordon Stace Smith, Creston, B. C.)

Long since she left the Old Land for this place;
Here on the Frontier she has spent her years,
Seeing the bleak, blazed trail, with tiresome pace,

Change to this road that now so smooth appears.
And she can point where the first school house stood,
Built in the Bee-days by swart pioneers.

Well she remembers, in young womanhood,
How, with the One who was her world and all,
They found the Homestead in the solitude.

Remembers too the clearing—very small
At first, but soon a sunny patch of cheer—
And the log house beside the river fall.

And then the children came, with voices clear
Filling with mirth the house and the homestead—
Of all her life the gladdest time was here!—

Privations passed unnoted, unespied,
And life too, even in this wilderness,
The same as in the whole world far and wide.

Changes advance, like evolution does,
So unperceived! At first a scattered few
Then slowly from the out-world came the mass,

Bringing their alien creeds and customs too—
Utopia is discovered and destroyed
And the great days into the Past withdrew!

Her memory teems of freedom once enjoyed:—
"In the auld days, at scarce two steps frae hame,
"The wild deer wi' the kine unstartled toyed;

"Wi' unco bags o' fish an' handsome game
"Jack held the muckle table weel supplied—
"Afore the cities an' the railroads came.

"An' in the evenin' he wad point wi' pride
"To pelts o' cougar, elk an' bear he slayed,
"That carpeted the floor o' the hearth-side—

"Whereon the halefu' weans sae romp'd an' played—"
The children now are men and women grown,
And the great hunter to his rest is laid.

She seems a sainted spirit left alone
Musing on how her busy life has rushed,
And almost fearful of our modern tone
(For many old conventions we have crushed!)

With wild flowers and sweet thoughts she daily pays
Her homage to the grave where he is hushed:
Half happy there she sits alone and prays,
And dreams—I fancy—of the bygone days.

*MARBLE CANYON

(By Adrian C. Thrupp, Kamloops, B. C.)

There is a canyon on the way to Lillooet,
A wondrous work in marble—and its base is set
In iridescent blue-green waters deep,
E'er mirroring the mighty ramparts steep;
Our way, a road beribboning the base, we ply,
Above, an amber pinnacle against the sky,
Call'd Scarboro Castle—and a gory stain,
Where, saith tradition, many men were slain
In battle long ago. And opposite
The Devil's Pulpit—poorly named, for it
Pan's Pleasance really is, where he may play
His pipes and dance with Love the livelong day!
And serried ranks of trees close in below
But scatter as they climb the slopes as though
They were an army charging to the crest—
The cliffs and crags where maybe eagles nest,
Ave flecked with tiny specks of sombre green,
The daring trees that gnarled and torn are seen
Triumphant and serene, they've won the race,
And they alone have gain'd the hardest place!

When did a frozen river carve this mammoth chasm?
Or was it cleft by an aeonian spasm
As rag'd when the continents were changed?
But when the mightiest works of man are ranged
Beside these wonders, they are but a breath—
A little flurry on the winds of time—then death
Does overtake the form that man has built in vain—
The Life? It travails on through endless joys and pain.

*"Interest will all the more be taken in Marble Canyon when the Fraser Canyon highway is put through, for then it will be accessible to Vancouver."