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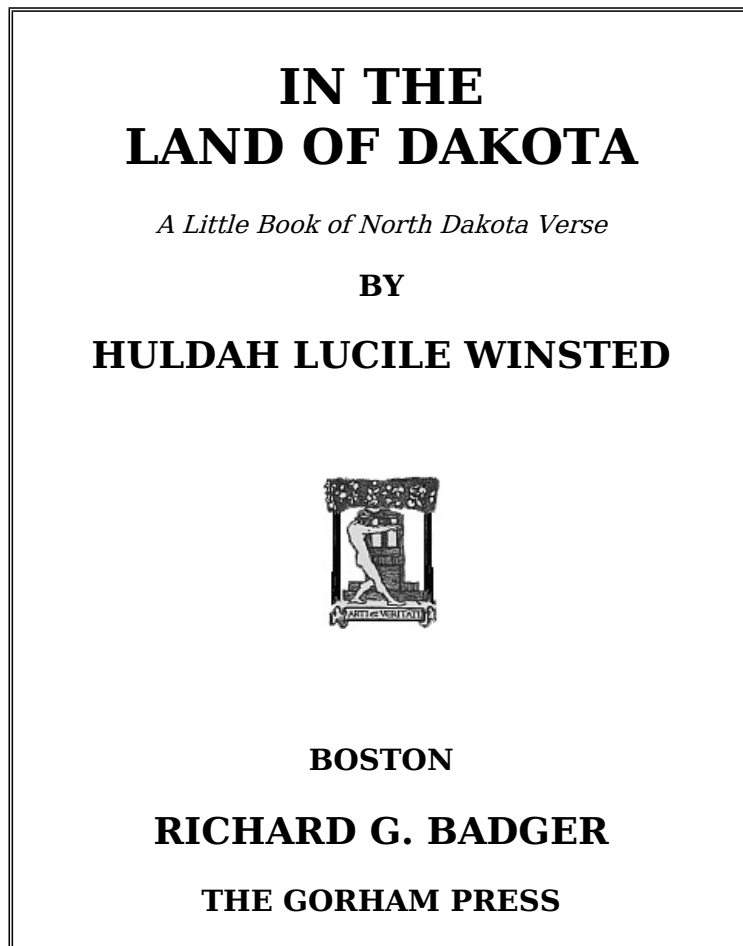
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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK IN THE LAND OF DAKOTA: A LITTLE BOOK OF NORTH DAKOTA VERSE ***



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TO MY FRIEND
MRS. WILLIAM A. ANDERSON

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IN THE LAND OF DAKOTA

IN THE LAND OF DAKOTA

In the East ye struggle for glory
And power, and wealth, and fame,
And time ye expend, and much labor,
To trace down your ancestors' name;
But here in the land of Dakota
Where the winds sweep over the plains,
Is winnowed away much useless "chaff,"
And only true worth remains.

In the East ye crush out the life-blood
Of innocent children, grown old
By premature toiling and labor
To fill up your coffers with gold;
But here in the Land of Dakota
Our children are happy and free,
And over the plains of its limitless mains
Re-echo their laughter and glee.

In the East ye build up great mansions
And sky-scrapers gaunt and high,
That shut out the glory and grandeur
Of the infinite tender sky;
But here in the Land of Dakota
Our eyes look up on high
And our souls learn wonderful lessons
From the white clouds sailing by.

THE SEASONS IN NORTH DAKOTA

[Pg 10]

Spring—and the wild March wind
The snow-covered prairies sweep;
From North Dakota's frozen clod
The fur-clad Pasque Flowers peep.

Summer—and gentle showers,
And soft the zephyrs blow;
O'er North Dakota's rolling plains
The modest Roses grow.

Autumn—and burnished skies,
And parching, sun-scorched sod;
And by the wayside still there blooms
The stately Goldenrod.

Winter—the flowers are dead
And fierce the cold winds blow;
Yet 'spite of North Dakota's snow
The flowers of Hope still grow.

THE DELUGE

[Pg 11]

(A Berthold Indian Legend)

Long ago, yes, oh, so long since,—
When the world was young and fair,
All the animals were friendly;
E'en the bison and the bear
Aided man with all their cunning,
Helped him with their counsels grave,
Helped him as the gods alone can—
Made him wise and strong and brave.
And the flowers on the prairies
Blossomed ever, shy and sweet,
For the land of the Dakotas
Knew not frost, nor killing heat.

But there lived a dread god, North Wind,
Cruel was he, with heart of stone,
Feared of all and loved by no one,
Living to himself alone

In the land of snow and blizzard,
In the land of deadening cold,
Plotting ever some new mischief,
Some new ravage, cruel and bold.
And one day this mighty North Wind
Left his throne of ice and snow,
In the cold, far distant northland
Where the wriggling ice-worms glow;
Southward came he, and the flowers
Bent their lovely heads in death,
For from out his icy nostrils
Came an all-destroying breath.—
At the mighty, stately forests
Angrily his teeth he gnashed,
With one mighty blow he felled them
And with chains the rivers lashed;
Ceased their laughter and their murmur,
Ceased their sweet life-giving flow.—
All the birds and beasts in terror
Fled, and knew not where to go;
Food they found not, and no shelter,
Dying were the mortals all,
And a slow relentless snow shroud
Draped the earth as with a pall.—
Death supreme reigned; loud the North Wind
Roared defiance to the gods!—
Birds and beasts and man in terror
Fled, and, dying, called the gods
To avenge their death and suffering,
To unite them one and all
In the holy cause of vengeance,
To secure the North Wind's fall.—
And the South Wind, fairest maiden
Of the gods, took up their cause;
Girded now herself for battle,
And after a moment's pause
Called unto her loyal brothers,
The strong East Wind, and the West,
"Help revenge the suffering mortals"—
And they granted her request.

[Pg 12]

[Pg 13]

Strong the fight raged in Dakota
'Twixt the North Wind and his foes,
Now one side yields, now the other,
Fierce and loud the tempest blows;—
Savagely the monster charges
Grappling with his unseen foes
While a wild, chaotic blizzard,
Such as ne'er was seen, arose,
Hiding all within its fury,
Made the daylight dark as night,
For the very gods were grappling
In a last terrific fight.—

Ages long the battle lasted—
Then the maiden fair and lovely,
Smiled benignant on her foe,
And his very heart was melting
(For 'twas made of ice and snow);
Loosed the rivers from their bondage,
Vanished now the shroud of snow,
And o'er North Dakota's prairies
Flowers fair began to grow;
With the advent of the flowers
Came the birds and beasts and man,
Built again their homes and wigwams—
And no more they anxious scan
The horizon for the North Wind,
Knowing that he's met his fate;
But the South Wind, fair and lovely
Rules now o'er Dakota's state.

[Pg 14]

Southward now each year the North Wind
Wends his way to see her face,
To the land of the Dakotas

Where the battle once took place;
Smiling sweet, the maiden greets him,
Warms again his chilly heart;
Satisfied, he briefly lingers—
With him, winter's cold, depart.

NORTH DAKOTA SUNSETS

[Pg 15]

Such beautiful tints in the western skies!
Purples and gold and the deepest rose,
Crimson and scarlet the heavens suffuse
Where the sun of the prairies sinks to repose;—
Spaces where lingering daylight plays
With the skirts of night in her sombre gown,
Spaces where gathering mists hang low
Ere the shadows of night come drooping down.—
Such, North Dakota, thy sunsets are—
Spreading their glory near and far,
Flooding the soul with a holier peace
That lingers long after the daylight shall cease!

NORTH DAKOTA—PAST AND PRESENT

[Pg 16]

(The Passing of the Red Man)

Low-lying hills, "bad lands" and rolling plain,
Stretching afar like billows on the main,
With winding rivers seeking distant homes,
And leagues of virgin prairie
Where stately bison roams.

The brave Mandan, the Sheyenne and the Sioux,
The Chippewa and the Grosventre too,
Along the rivers and the plains did dwell;
The land they called Dakota,
And methink they named it well.

And here they lived for centuries untold,
Watching the secrets of the plains unfold;
Their homes they built and smoked the pipe of peace,
And vowed by the Great Spirit
Their friendship would not cease.

* * * *

Gone are the braves. The papooses and the squaw
No longer wait for winter snows to thaw;
The tepee's gone, the peace pipe and the dance,
Gone, gone, alas! forever,
The Red Man's fighting chance.

For pale face came, and from Dakota's plain
The Red Man drove, and claimed his vast domain;
No power on earth could stay the Viking's son,
For "iron men" are born
In the land of midnight sun.

[Pg 17]

* * * *

Onward they came, these Northmen, feared of old,
Bold pioneers, to wrest the hidden gold
From North Dakota's hills and virgin sod;
The ploughshare won the land
For these "master men" of God.

* * * *

Their children now look out on well-tilled fields,
And garner wealth, that many a rich mine yields;
The argosies of earth their treasures bear—

For empty rank and title and sham,
They little care.

* * * *

O boys and girls of North Dakota's Land,
Guard, love her well! Pledge her your heart and hand!
Where else on earth are seen such sunset fires—
What other race can boast
More fearless dames and sires!

A PRAIRIE SUNRISE

[Pg 18]

Gray and silent is the morning—
Shadows like some airy lawn
Veil the prairies from our vision;
Night is breaking into dawn.

Look! Along the eastern heavens
Yonder cloud a beacon glows,
Touching all with mellow brightness;
Gray is turning into rose.

Sombre shadows swiftly vanish—
Gorgeous are the fiery dyes
That adorn the far horizons,
Flooding earth, and air and skies.

See! The sun is slowly rising
O'er the level fields of grain,
Restless, golden billows surging
On a vast and boundless main.—

Hark! A distant sound is breaking
Through the stillness deep and calm—
O'er the prairies floats the cadence
Of sweet Nature's morning psalm.

DAKOTA LAND, DAKOTA LAND

[Pg 19]

Dakota Land, Dakota Land,
We love thy rolling prairies;
Thy "bad lands" 'yond Missouri's bed
The fertile valley of the Red—
Dakota Land, Dakota Land,
We love thy rolling prairies.

Dakota Land, Dakota Land,
We love thy sunset fires;
Thy sunny days, thy azure skies,
Thy starry nights, thy sunrise dyes—
Dakota Land, Dakota Land,
We love thy sunset fires.

Dakota Land, Dakota Land,
We love thy modest wild rose;
Thy fields of waving, golden grain,
Like billows on a boundless main—
Dakota Land, Dakota Land,
We love thy modest wild rose.

Dakota Land, Dakota Land,
We love thy changing seasons;
Thy winter's cold, thy summer nights,
Thy blust'ry spring, thy autumn bright—
Dakota Land, Dakota Land,
We love thy changing seasons.

[Pg 20]

Dakota Land, Dakota Land,
We love thy far horizons;

No mountains hide the gorgeous dyes
That paint with splendour western skies—
Dakota Land, Dakota Land,
We love thy far horizons.

NORTH DAKOTA'S MISSION

[Pg 21]

Pioneers of North Dakota
Spread her fame!
Bid thy youths and bid thy maidens
Guard her name!—
Tell them of your dreams and visions—
Tell them of your great ambitions;—
How you fought to win the land;
Tell them of brave Custer's band.

Tell them how you fought the Red Man,
How he lost—
Tell them North Dakota's story
And the cost!—
Can they too, like you, the price pay?
Can they too, like you, their lives lay
Down, if need be, for their state?
Dare they share her every fate?—

* * * *

To the children of Dakota
This we give,
First of all, a glorious vision
How to live—
Them we give our mines and "bad lands,"
Prairies broad and fertile wheat lands
Stretching from Missouri's bed
To the Valley of the Red.

[Pg 22]

And the fame of North Dakota's name
Shall rise,
Like the never-tiring Phoenix
To the skies!—
State of promise and of fair play,
State where rises bright a new day
For the weak and the oppressed,
State which millions shall call blest!

Men and women of Dakota
Who shall say
What the fruitage of our efforts
Of to-day?—
Labor then, nor lose the vision
Of this North Dakota's mission,
To free body, soul, and mind,
To help all their true work find.

WE WHO HAVE LIVED IN DAKOTA

[Pg 23]

We who have lived in Dakota
We who have loved her right well,
We who have known her, and tried her,
Marvelous tales could we tell;
Tales of the Sioux and the Mandan,
Tales of the Sheyenne as well;
Deeds of brave Custer and Sully,
Fain unto you we would tell.

Hard have we worked, and we've conquered,
Conquered the Red Man—the sod.—
Over the primeval prairies
Forward and onward we've trod.

Fought we with sword and with ploughshare,
Wresting our bread from the clod—
Virgin and untouched we found it
As left by the hand of our God.

Yes, we've weathered the blizzards.
Crop failures many we've known.—
Early and late have we labored,
Felt the cold wind to the bone.—
Glad we have been when our neighbor
Garnered the golden grain,
Knowing our mortgage was unpaid,
And all of our efforts seemed vain.

Glad have we been when the harvest
Yielded an hundred-fold—
Paying the debt and the mortgage,
Lining our pockets with gold.
Yes, we still love North Dakota,
Knowing she'll compensate well
Those who are willing to try her;—
To summer and winter her well.

[Pg 24]

MISCELLANEOUS VERSES

[Pg 25-26]

GUIDING VOICES

[Pg 27]

Echoes of beloved voices
Reach us in the silent night,
Sooth the feverish, restless spirit,
Bring us messages of light;
Messages of love to cheer us
Onward still, though dark the way,
Whispers fraught with hope and courage
For the battles of the day.

'Midst the clamor and the tumult
And the din of shop and mill,
Still the voices of our loved ones
All our vibrant beings thrill
With celestial music holy;
Quenching lust, and pain and strife,
Which are rife where Mammon reigneth
All supreme in human life.

When the evening shadows lengthen
On life's pathway, as we go,
And our sight is getting dimmer
And the sands of time run low,
"Courage, brother," still they whisper,
"Keep the path, we'll guide the way,
Till thou reach the land where shadows
Lose themselves in Perfect Day."

A PRAYER

[Pg 28]

Make me gentle, Lord, and kind;
Honest, frugal, pure of mind;
Patient, humble, meek and mild;
Trustful as a little child.

Make me earnest, Lord, and strong;
Just and faithful; foe of wrong;
Slow to anger; friend of all;
Swift to answer duty's call.

My love for thee, lips cannot tell,
 Nor words, nor actions, half as well
 As my full heart would wish;
 But sometimes, in another land,
 When we have reached the Golden Strand
 I know, you'll surely understand.

A DREAM

[Pg 30]

It was midnight. And those spirits
 Who men's destinies control
 Were in solemn court assembled,
 Waiting for the bell to toll
 The final hour of the year;
 And what happened you will hear:

Elves and gnomes and dwarfs came tripping
 On the light fantastic toe,
 From their distant caves and castles
 In the land of ice and snow;
 And the elf-king, white and hoary,
 From his throne arose and spoke:
 "Fellow spirits all, I greet you."
 (And just then old Father Time
 Rang out the old year—1909.)
 "Friends, I feel our power is waning,—
 Man, our ward, is now proclaiming
 Among others, a most curious thing,
 That in a chair he likes to swing
 Because his ancestor, an ape,
 Was very apt to use his tape
 To swing himself from limb to limb
 Of trees and vines which on them cling.
 Moreover, he is now so learned
 That to a fossil he is turned,
 Instead of joining our free band
 Of spirits, in the fairy land."

[Pg 31]

Silence reigned supreme a moment;
 Then an old dwarf, ripe with age,
 Arose, and all those elves and fairies
 Bowed their heads a little space
 For that "grand old man," whose wisdom
 In that hall rang loud and clear:
 "Time has come when man no longer
 Feels he needs invoke our aid,
 For creation, now he tells us,
 By itself was surely made;—
 Blind he is to Nature's teachings,
 And so wise in his conceit
 That he would forget the lessons
 Taught by wayside flowers sweet;
 By the river and the mountain
 And the myriad things that creep
 Upon the earth. And this wondrous
 Human being calls himself but a machine,
 Classed among the things he fashions
 From the metals earth doth yield.
 Ah, his very heart is hardening—
 Love no longer can hold sway
 When the heir of all creation
 Says he's only made of clay."

[Pg 32]

* * * *

I awoke from my light slumber
 At the New Year's earliest beam,
 Pondering deeply if a lesson
 Could be learned, e'en from a dream.

THE LIGHT

[Pg 33]

The way is long, the night is drear,
I stumble on through doubt and fear;
My heart grows numb, all hope takes flight;
Oh, Father, let me see the light!

Was it for me that He has died?
Was it for me the Crucified
Bore the deep anguish in the night?—
Oh, Father, let me see the light!

O doubting child, look up and see,
It was for sinners, such as thee,
Christ conquered sin, and death, and night.
Look up, dear child, behold The Light!

SISTER DEAR, I LOVE YOU SO

[Pg 34]

Sister dear, I love you so!
As the seasons come and go,
Dearer still, my friend, you grow.
Sister dear, I love you so!

Sister dear, I love you so!
Ah, forgive each thoughtless blow;
Though I've often hurt you—oh,
Sister dear, I love you so!

Sister dear, I love you so!
May love's flame still brighter glow,
Friendship's fires ne'er burn low.—
Sister dear, I love you so!

Sister dear, I love you so!
As your birthdays come and go,
Let me whisper, soft and low,
Sister dear, I love you so!

Sister dear, I love you so!
When life's fires dimmer glow,
Take this with you, as you go,
Sister dear, I love you so!

NIGHT WATCHES

[Pg 35]

In the still watches of night
Long ere the dawn comes a-creeping
Over the eastern skies,
Think of the hearts that are breaking;—
Oh, hear the moans and the sobbing—
Feel how the pulses are throbbing,
Just because some one was thoughtless.—
Oh, was that someone you?

MEN ARE THREE

[Pg 36]

There are all kinds of people we meet on the road,
As we travel along life's way;
And some are surly and some are grave
And others are jolly and gay.
And some folks are short, while others are tall,
Still others are skinny and thin—
And some skip along, a-humming a song,

But others are simply all in.
But where'er they come from, or whither they go,
We pigeon-hole each of them so,
We group them, and sort them, and label them all,
The short ones, the skinny, and tall.

There's the man or the woman, the boy or the girl,
That's always a-wishing a share
In somebody's fortune, or somebody's fame,
Yes, they wish for the moon 'way up there.—
Then there's that group of persons
Who talk, talk, and talk,
You simply don't know what they say—
From morning till night they keep talking away,
And the night is like unto the day.—
But quietly along, on the very same road,
Walk others, with little to say,
And if they have wishes (What mortals have not?),
They put them discreetly away.
They're the workers, the lifters of burdens,—who dare
To fight for the right if need be,
Alone 'gainst a world—
And defiance they hurl
To all tyrants wherever they be.

[Pg 37]

You have met these three classes of people, I'm sure,
As you've traveled adown life's way—
The folks with their wish-bone enormously grown,
And the "jaw-bones," who talk all the day.—
And I know you have shunned them,
As others have done
From the day that time began,
But you've hailed with delight,
And you've longed for the sight
Of the steady, quiet, "back-boned" man.

SMILES AND TEARS

[Pg 38]

Swift run the hours on to days
And days to years—
And each and every one is filled
With smiles or tears.

Sometimes the skies are over-cast
The live-long Day—
But when the sun shall smile again
Why, who can say!

COLUMBIA TO SHAKESPEARE

[Pg 39]

(An Appreciation)

We are gathered here from the ends of the earth,
The children of Teuton and Celt;
The children, too, of Latin and Slav
At Liberty's shrine have knelt.

America is proud to take
From out of bondage and strife,
And weave them all into one great whole,
These strands of human life.

She'll dye them all in the self-same red
Of Liberty's crimson hue;
And place them as the glorious stars
On Freedom's field of blue.

And we, the children of all the earth,
To thee, poet of all times,
Bring honor, and laurel, and love as well—

And crown thee, king of rhymes.

Thou brought us to the very homes
Of Saxon, Dane and Moor,
And sweetly sang thy choicest lays
Alike to rich and poor.

Thou didst act well, thy every part,
On this brief stage of life;
Thou taught us too, our parts to play
In peaceful work, or strife.

[Pg 40]

Renowned bard of Albion's land
America bids thee rise
Like Phœnix, fabled from of old—
Immortal, to the skies.

THE ANSWER

[Pg 41]

Writ in the skies above me
In sentence of purest gold,
In answer to age-long questions:
God ruleth as of old!

THE IMMIGRANT TO THE STARS AND STRIPES

O Flag, on all the earth the best,
Thou emblem of true liberty,
We, immigrants from all the earth,
Pledge thee our love and loyalty!
Thy crimson bars to us are dear,
Thy stars with hope our hearts imbue;
Thou emblem of fraternity,
We will be true, yes true to you!

O Flag, thou flag of Washington,
Thou emblem of democracy,
We'll follow thee, whate'er befall,
We pledge to thee our fealty!
Our brain, our brawn, our life, our all—
America, we give to you!
With heart and hand we pledge anew
To God and you, we will be true!

[Pg 42]

We will be true, yes, true to you,
O Flag, and all for which you stand:
Equality and liberty
And happiness throughout the land.—
Thy foster sons, America,
Will serve thee well—thy daughters too;
Their life, their all, they pledge anew,
O Stars and Stripes, to you—to you!

THE PEACE OF THE WOODS

[Pg 43]

Oh, oft when I come to the city,
I long for the peace of the woods;
For the sighing of winds in the pine trees
And the laughter of running brooks;
The chatter of squirrel and chipmunk,
The call of the shy wood dove.—
Oh, the forest's the place to listen
To that grandest of anthems—Love.

Ere the darksome shades of the forest

Have vanished, at early dawn,
A million happy creatures
Are chanting their morning psalm;
They sing of the joy of living,
In happiness, peace, and love,
And gratefully raise their voices
To the great All-Giver above.
And I, in a gladsome spirit,
Join in with the happy throng;
Sustained, and strengthened, and soothed,
By Nature's mighty song.—
And oft when I come to the city,
I long for that song of love,
That the forest's happy creatures
Raise to the Father above.

[Pg 44]

KEEP THE PATH CLEAR!

[Pg 45]

Oh, do not trifle with friendship, I pray,
Guard it more closely each swift-flying day;
Gifts the most precious, and gold cannot pay
For friendship once broken.
It's vanished for aye!—

Keep clear the path to your friend's heart, I pray!
Weeds of forgetfulness soon choke the way;
Pass that way often; keep polished, I pray,
The flagstones that guide you down friendship's own way!

TRANSCRIBER'S NOTE:

One minor change has been made (to correct thoughtless to thoughtless) for a typesetter's error; otherwise, every effort has been made to remain true to the author's words and intent.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK IN THE LAND OF DAKOTA: A LITTLE BOOK
OF NORTH DAKOTA VERSE ***

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