



A BIG ORDER.

DOCTOR (to new patient)—“Well, now, what’s the trouble?”

PATIENT—“Well, I’ve been reading the newspapers, and have got every one of the symptoms described in all the quack doctors’ advertisements.”—*Sydney Bulletin.*

ACROSS THE PRAIRIE.

“ALL aboard going West!” You start with fevered haste,
You have read, and smoked, and dozed, and read again;
But the bustle comes at last, for you sight the vessel’s mast,
That is to say, the smoke-stack of our train.

You’ve got your luggage checked, and perhaps it’s all correct,
Unless the baggage-smasher’s been too “smart”;
But if they’re strong and good—made of iron and hardwood—
It’s odds that they’ll at least survive the start.

You’re surprised to see so many people going this long journey,
But half a week’s a trifle in the cars;
You can sit or lie at ease, and do everything you please,
Read your novel, twirl your thumbs or smoke cigars.

If you smoke, you take a “smoker,” but if you can’t stand a
choker,
A rich upholstered first will suit you quite;
There’s the “dining” car, the “parlor,” the “colonist” and
“tourist”
And, if you like, a “sleeper” for the night.

It’s not so very charming to talk of land and farming
If you haven’t got an acre of your own;
So you speculate a quarter in a little reading matter,
And try to feel that you’re amused until the journey’s done.

The depot’s left behind, we’re going “like the wind,”
Though thirty miles an hour’s about the speed;
We soon get past the houses to where the broncho browses
Upon his native prairie, and many cattle feed.

These cattle of a thousand plains, with homesteads, settlements and
grains,
And miles on miles of grassland pass the view;
Lakes dark with ducks and geese, that never seem to cease,
Perhaps you think I’m “hatching,” but it’s true.

There’s the ever-present gopher (he’s a breakfast for the badger),
And many a fat buck-rabbit hops around;
The odoriferous skunk is there, the coyote, fox, perhaps a bear,
While here and there the antelope is found.

The prairie’s one big yellow, for the grass is sere and mellow,
Very dry, except in places round a slough;
Quite often in the fall half-an-hour destroys it all,
Just a spark blown from an engine will blacken all the view!

“What’s that dark line ahead?” “That’s the bush,” your neighbor said,
And very soon you “get there” with a rush;
The oaks, the poplars slim and tall, the slender birch towers over
all,
Entangled in an undergrowth of brush.

You leave the sound of axe: for the foot-hills making tracks—
The prairie’s slowly breaking into “waves,”
Like the great Atlantic Ocean, sudden stopped in its commotion,
’Tis here the slaughtered “buffler” have their graves;

For their bones lay strewn around, and whitened all the ground,
Till lately they’ve been gathered into piles.
Gone, too, most all the Indians who roamed around these regions,
Scarce a sign of their existence, save the long-forgotten trails.

The foot-hills of the Rockies, where nearly all the stock is,
Droves wandering o’er the uplands at their will;
If you’re bent on having sport, ’tis the region you have sought,
With plenty of big game to try your skill.

Far above us, crowned with ice, the rugged mountains rise,
And we take an “observation car” to get a better view;
There’s nothing half so grand in the whole of Switzerland
As the glaciers of the Selkirks, and the defiles passing through,

Where the Fraser river winds, banked with firs and giant pines—
The woodlands and the fisheries of Columbia are her boast.
Here you take your fill of pleasure, and fish or shoot at leisure,
While the train goes speeding downward to the coast.

When I started this effusion, I was under the delusion
I could make a score of verses without coming to confusion;
But I’ve wasted too much time (and I’m badly fixed for rhyme),
So I guess I’ll bring this poem to a most abrupt conclusion.
PORTAGE LA PRAIRIE. W. T. NEWSON.

THE TRIUMPH OF INTELLECT.



‘T WAS a calm, clear night and the starstinkled serenely in the ether above, while the electric light flickered spasmodically in the widely dispersed lamps. All was silent save the shriek of a distant locomotive, the whoops and yells of a party of passing roisterers and the gabble of a group of females returning from an adjacent sewing society, together with a few minor sounds which it might be deemed superfluous to embrace in the catalogue. On a suburban street a youth and maiden swang languidly upon a gate in front of a spacious mansion with a capacious mortgage on it. ’Twas the lover’s trysting place. Those who have been accustomed to tryst themselves, can alone realize the significance of this phrase. The custom of trysting on a gate is an old and time-honored one. Poets have embalmed in it their lays. It was, doubtless in reference to this habit, that the Scotch balladist wrote in those touching lines:

I gaed a wae’f’ gait yestreen.

But we digress.

“Algernon,” said the maiden, “do you really love me?”