

The Infinite Plan

AND OTHER POEMS

Mary Alice McNeill

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POEMS



BY

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THE INFINITE PLAN.

All hail to thee, Death, thou destroyer of time!
Thou wonder of wonders, and myst'ry sublime!
Upon thy car mounted, thy sickle in hand,
An angel of mercy thou sweep'st o'er the land.
Men call thee a monster and pale at thy name;
They dread thee as tyrant, who all things would claim.
But, monster or tyrant, thy mission is blessed
With rest that is peace, and a peace that is rest.
Pain, sickness and sorrow, the woundings of strife,
The hells that are hid in the pathway of life,
The terror of lies and the torture of fear,
The groans of the stricken, the sigh and the tear,
Alike at thy coming, O, merciful Death,
Are stilled in a trice by the balm of thy breath!
By man, in his ignorance, error and pride,
Thyself hath been slandered, thy nature belied;
For thou art no fiend only made to destroy,
Nor merciless demon foul means to employ.
Thou bringest but peace to the weary and worn,

The aged, enfeebled, by earth's evils torn;
The outcast, the wretched, despised and disowned,
Find all that they need on thy bosom enthroned.



The battle is ended. Great deeds have been done.
A foe has been routed, a victory won.
The fierce oaths of mortals are hushed with the din;
And clouds are uplifting, the light streameth in.
Around lies the wreckage, great heaps of the slain.
Death, thou hast been busy and great is thy gain.
A thousand brave heroes asleep in thine arms,
No longer give heed to the battle's alarms.
The wind sighs thy presence, the earth groans thy name;
But Thou wert invoked and thou art not to blame.
Thou didst not incite these bold spirits to strife,
Thou didst not e'en envy them gladness of life.
Thou hast but obeyed the Great Father's behest,
And done for humanity what he deemed best.
So, always, thy mission to soothe and caress,
To shorten man's torture, his pain and distress.



Without death imagine a world of this kind,
Where strength is o'erbearing and passion is blind,
Where aught is the stronger's legitimate prey,
The passion of all is to kill and to slay.
Yes, think of a state without surcease of pain,
A hopeless condition that must e'er remain,
A mortal infliction that cannot be cured,
The unnumbered evils that must be endured.
Then, think of debauchery, madness and crime,
Without stint of limit or bound'ry of time,
Of piteous cries that must ever ascend
From anguish of torture that knoweth no end.
Can aught be more fearful, or evil more dread
Than life on a plane where there can be no dead?
No. Death, thou art friend both to beast and to man,
Thy place is high up in the Infinite Plan.



'Tis true thou art homely, grim-visaged, they say,
Thy footfall is noiseless, and stealthy thy way.
Thou hast no regard for the rich and the great,
Thou heedest not beauty, position nor state;
As often thou smitest the upright and just,
And leavest the low and the vile to their lust.

The child at its play and the youth in his pride,
The maid that is courted, the belle and the bride,
No more are exempt from thy merciless rage,
Than man in his dotage, his feeble old age.
By higher decree thy sword hangs over all,
And none can foretell where its next blow may fall.
No wealth can persuade thee, no logic or force,
To alter thy purpose or turn from thy course.
But onward forever thy speed is the same,
And mortals will halt at the sound of thy name.
But shunned as thou art and so dreaded by man,
Thou art his true friend in the Infinite Plan.



Why people should fear thee, to me has seemed strange,
Though death thou art called, thou art only a change.
A substance thou art not, of mind thou hast none;
Thou art but a shadow cast over man's sun.
O'er life as an essence thou hast no control,
Nor canst thou extinguish the light of one soul.
Earth-born, thou art circumscribed, bound to one sphere;
In matter commences and ends thy career.
Beyond these scant limits, where life is renewed,
Where higher enjoyments and aims are pursued,

Thy foot-prints are wanting, thy name is unknown,
As tears which thou causest, the sigh and the groan.
Yes, thou art of matter, and, though it seems strange,
To life and its attributes only a change.
A change from the lowly, the gross and the rude,
The simple, imperfect, the humble and crude;
A change of condition, environment, state,
From the low of the earth to the lofty and great.
Aye, out through the worlds to us mystic and strange,
All matter obeys thee, O wonderful change.



Earth's plains and her mountains, each valley and glade
Are rich in the soils, which thy ruins have made.
Her forests sing grandly, her meadows are green,
And she is a garden, because thou hast been.
No seedlet nor plant, not a flower nor tree,
But owes its existence, O Death, unto thee.
Of forces eternal thou art in the van
And ledest the host in the Infinite Plan.



But, stay. We are told that all longing is vain;
That life is but breath, thought a creature of brain;

That mind is a thing which on matter depends ;
Is by it created and so with it ends.
As sound from a trumpet, a wave of the sea,
When free from impulsion, it ceases to be.
We're told that far back in the ages unknown,
That earth as vapor was into space thrown,
Which solid became through the instinct of force,
Took on itself motion and chose its own course.
Then down through the numberless cycles of time,
In splendor terrific, of aspect sublime,
Convulsed and tormented by turmoil and strife,
It sped on its pathway, a thing without life.
Anon it grew calmer, more peaceful and firm,
Then clung to its surface the life-bearing germ.
But whence came this germ that has peopled the earth ?
From what region sprung, or from what source its birth ?
Has matter within it the power to live ?
Its own forms to fashion and life to them give ?
Deep down in its nature is wisdom concealed,
Or by its own power sensation revealed ?
Is matter, then, all, the eternal, supreme ?
Is hope a delusion, the soul but a dream ?
O, groundless assertion and notion absurd !
Life has no beginning. It's one with the Word

Of Him, the Eternal whose image in man
Proclaims him the end of the Infinite Plan.



All kinds of religions, philosophies, too,
Though counted by thousands, the old and the new,
If simple and childish or worldly profound,
Though false in the main, have a base that is sound.
For out of the cravings of human desire
Out of the soul's wish to mount and aspire,
Out of the instinct of genius to build
Their standards are planted, the land with them filled.
How many the battles bold zealots have fought ?
How great is the mischief that bigots have wrought ?
A thousand times over the world's been ablaze
For sake of a creed, in the name of a craze.
The Pagan, the Christian, in panoplied hordes,
Mad demons of slaughter, have met and crossed swords.
The spoils of their fury have filled land and main,
And rivers run red with the blood of their slain.
Aye, few are the peoples, the countries or climes
But know of their murders, have witnessed their crimes.



I love not contention. The evils of war,
Its turmoils and madness my soul doth abhor.
But great is the number, who glory in strife,
And give to the battle-field service and life.
But wherefore you ask this condition of things?
The woe and the sorrow, the ill that war brings?
Can mortal be wrong, who from reason denies,
That out of great harm greater good may arise?
Nay, struggle we know leads to power in man,
And hence is embraced in the Infinite Plan.
That warfare is evil there can be no doubt,
But what of the earthquake, the storm and the drouth?
For ev'ry life lost on the red battle field,
A hundred or more to the elements yield.
The wind and the sea wave, the sun and the frost
Responsible are for a share of the lost.
The flood that is followed by sickness and want,
By hunger and famine, so grim and so gaunt,—
O, Wisdom's anointed, pray tell if you can,
Why these must have place in the Infinite Plan.



When Infinite Wisdom prescribed the earth's course,
He gave to the elements power and force.

He wove in their natures obedience to law,
And fashioned their service to ends he foresaw.
So, onward through cycles of unending time,
With changeless endeavor and rythm sublime,
Creation moves onward, its object and plan—
The progress of life, its perfection in man.



There's folly in ignorance, darkness and dread;
There's danger for mortals that see not ahead;
There's sore tribulation and penance severe
For him of contentment who boasts no career:
Who sees in his indolence nothing to do,
No evil to vanquish, no good to pursue,
Who seeks for no change in condition or state,
Nor dreams of a destiny higher than fate,
Who, aimless and thoughtless, adrift on life's sea,
Has no aspiration save only to be.
'Twere better to fall in the battle field's strife,
Than merely to float on the surface of life.
Stern purpose requires an effort from all,
The high and the low, the great and the small,
And nature despises stagnation in man,
As having no place in the Infinite Plan.



You may not be able great armies to lead,
Nor sway the vast multitude, bound to a creed.
You may not be equal the heavens to climb
And wring from the universe secrets sublime.
But you can do something. A thought of your own,
A germ of pure truth from the inner life thrown,
May set in vibration, with banner unfurled,
A power triumphant to girdle the world.
An act of true kindness, an unselfish deed,
A thoughtful assistance in time of great need,
Of true human value, may have greater weight
Than winning of battles or service to state.



It's manly to labor for honor or fame,
If honestly won there is worth in a name.
But let us remember, while courting renown,
We do not mount upward by pulling men down.
For these are our equals; our rights are the same;
We're under one law and one origin claim.
Though born amid snow drifts, or browned by the sun,
We're counted as brothers, our father is one.
To stand side by side and give aid man to man,
Is ours to rise through the Infinite Plan.



There's power in knowledge. In study there's gain.
No labor for wisdom is labor in vain.
It's thus we move onward from matter to mind,
And leave earth's delusions and errors behind.
We leave imperfection, the false and the rude,
As being is realized, life understood.
So let us devotedly study God's plan,
Acknowledge His image reflected in man,
Rejoice in our birth-right as claimed from above,
The offspring of Spirit, of Infinite Love;
Eschew the false idea of Almighty wrath
Broadcasting temptation in man's earthly path,
As wholly unworthy the God whom we trust,
The great, loving Father, pure, holy and just.
From Wisdom supreme could occasion arise,
To bring into being the father of lies
Who shares, we're informed, with Jehovah his throne,
And claims of the nations four-fifths as his own?
Deny the election, the dogma of sin,
The Hades of torture and torment within,
And banish forever the serpent and fall,
And notion that God ever cursed man at all.



O, Father, how deep is the darkness around !
How widely doth error and falsehood abound !
Since base superstition awaits in our path,
To threaten us daily with thy divine wrath.
How wrong to ascribe to the life-giving Word
A thing so ungodlike, so impious, absurd !
Pride, jealousy, wrath are but mortal in kind,
And never proceed from the Infinite Mind.
No, God is omnipotent, goodness supreme ;
His wrath but imputed, a low monkish scheme,
Devised in a cell with a cunning sublime,
To further the end of extortion and crime.
O mortal, how deep is thy need of a guide !
An unerring Mentor to walk by thy side,
To point thee to freedom from danger and sin
In knowlege and use of thy powers within.
To help thee to see the immortal in man
And realize truth in the Infinite Plan.



Since God is omnipotent, changeless, all wise,
As no one in reason e'er doubts or denies,
There can be no truth in a Satan at all,
And naught to beguile him, man never could fall.

Persuaded in nothing, and nothing to gain,
No purpose to serve and no end to attain,
Without an excuse or a motive to sin,
'Twere foolish to claim such a thing could have been.
Nay, up through the lowest and crudest of forms,
Through fire and flood, earth's convulsions and storms,
With unceasing effort life wended its way,
From darkness and cloud mists to sunshine and day
Till all being ready the human appeared,
A creature made upright, a lord to be feared.
Scarce diff'ring from beast as he crept from his cave,
His cunning preserved him, though doubtlessly brave.
Since then as if mounted on wings of the wind,
His roughness and rudeness far lingering behind,
His rise has been rapid, his power to climb,
And fame of his genius has reached the sublime.
He's measured the earth, has computed her course,
Discovered her treasures, pursued to their source,
The might of his brain and the skill of his hands
Her elements bow to, obey his commands.
They build for him palaces, harvest his grain
And bear him in triumph o'er mountain and main.
Unmindful of distance, more speedy than time,
They scatter his orders in every clime.

They lighten his burdens on land and on sea,
Encourage the brave and enlighten the free.
Yes, man is progressive, by nature divine,
To greater endeavors his powers incline.
His course must be upward, his power increased,
Till free from all grossness of matter released,
Until he becomes a true spiritual man,
Unfolded, evolved through the Infinite Plan.



'Tis plain that this life's but a primary school,
Where one may be wise or he may be a fool,
A diligent student to grasp and retain,
A shiftless indiff'rent neglectful of gain.
When time has arrived to pass out of this grade,
Each bearing within him the record he's made,
'Twould hardly seem just, when the ordeal is past,
The newly arrived are examined and classed,
That all should be deemed, both the worthy and base,
As equally armed to begin the new race.
No, let it be known that the "now" and the "here"
Are changes for gain which all mortals may share.
Yes, now is the time and this earth is the place;
No other is promised. Then, stern duty face.

Be swift to make use of the one promised day,
For night cometh on when no human may say,
When over the border, beyond the Divide,
What chance may befall or what fortune betide.
To use our best efforts in peace and in strife,
Bring wisdom to bear on all things of this life,
To march side by side and give aid man to man
Is our chief work in God's Infinite Plan.

A PROMISE FULFILLED.

I sit in my cabin alone,
My cabin of rude, rustic build;
And soothed by the wind's solemn moan,
My mind is with memories filled.

I think of the pleasures and joys,
The pastimes my early life knew,
My sports with the girls and the boys,
My talks and my rambles with you.

The school of our youth where we read
From books that were aged and queer.
The kindly old master's white head
And goose-quill placed over his ear.

The woods I recalled where we played,
The path that led down to the spring,
The nooks where we sought the cool shade,
And vine that we used for a swing.

I think of the old church that stood
By silent graves over the way,
Its pulpit of white-painted wood
And altar where all knelt to pray.

O, yes, I remember so well
Where aster and goldenrod grew
And wild flowers down in the dell,
Which often I gathered for you.

Our lingering homeward returns
Of evenings mellow and fine,
Our trysts 'neath the wide spreading ferns,
A hand that was always in mine.

I dream of the years further on,
When lessons and rambles were o'er,
When schoolmates were scattered and gone
And masters reproved us no more.

I've visions of still later years,
When most of youth's follies had flown,
When you were surrounded with cares
And I into manhood had grown.

Ah! well I remember the day
When told that my fortune had fled,
On wings of the wind flown away,
And I must now toil for my bread.

Nor do I forget your brave part
When told of my fate so unkind,
Nor how you encouraged my heart
And drove the wild thoughts from my mind.

I see the bright glow on your cheek,
While utt'ring these words brave and true:
"Go into the world, love, and seek,
I'll share any hardship with you.

"I'll go with you now or I'll wait;
Go, seek for us two but a home;
When found, if it be soon or late,
You've only to speak and I'll come.

"Ill come to you, love, anywhere,
In this land or over the sea;
Whatever you choose I will share,
My pledge shall be sacred to me.

"O! what is a year or a score
To love such as yours and as mine!
Our paths may be two on this shore,
But one in the life that's divine."

These words are sweet comfort to me,
Brave words that are sacredly true,
And while you wait over the sea
You know I'll be working for you.

I knew when I placed in your hand
The wild rose I plucked from the vine,
That Love with his unyielding band,
Was binding your young heart to mine.

I felt when a boy by your side,
We roamed through the heather at will,
That you would be some time my bride
And climb with me life's rugged hill.

And now a rude home in this land,
This wild wood of song and of glee,
Unfolding as shaped by my hand,
Will soon be an off'ring to thee.

'Tis yet but a promise I know,
A rift in the cloud mists of years,
A star of hope striving to glow
By shaming my doubts and my fears.

The course I shall henceforth pursue
Is moulded and shaped, and now
With only one purpose in view,
I'm putting my hand to the plow.

I'll never turn back nor complain,
Though rude the success I may find,
And hope with this muscle and brain,
To leave a clean record behind.



I see here a land of great wealth,
As wrought from its rocks and its soil,
A climate for pleasure and health
And comfort for those who may toil.

Here Nature is kind to the poor,
Responsive to labor's demand;
You've only to knock at her door
And ask with the voice of command.

Far back in the annals of time,
The ages and eons of yore,
She wrought a great work in this clime,
And laid up a wonderful store.

For on-coming millions she stored
With wisdom far greater than Man's,
She not even trifles ignored,
In working her far-sighted plans.

She spread o'er these valleys and plains
These forests of beauty and worth,
And down in the darker domains,
Of rock-inclosed chambers of earth.

Whatever she found that would aid
In comforts and pleasures of man,
She hid in these strongholds she'd made,
According to Infinite Plan.

So, none but the sluggard is here
 'Mid plenty to hunger consigned,
For only with moderate care,
 The poorest abundance may find.

Hence, here in this cabin I'll wait
 This letter's flight over the sea,
And though its arrival be late,
 I'm sure you will hasten to me.

You'll do as you promised last year —
 How well I remember your vow —
“I'll come to you, love, anywhere,”
 O, hasten and come to me now.



I wait in my cabin alone,
 And find it both roomy and wide;
I dream of a love all my own
 Awaiting me over the tide.

I hear in my slumbers the roar
 Of storm driven waves of the sea;
As voices on some distant shore
 They seem to be calling to me.

I think of these winds and these waves,
 The rocks and the treacherous shoals,
The silence of deep, ocean graves,
 And sadness of long waiting souls.

They often steal into my sleep,
 Disturb my sweet peace with alarm,
Lest you should be out on the deep,
 Your person in danger of harm.

At eve when my labors are o'er,
 I rest from the toils of the day,
When shadows fall soft on the floor,
 My thoughts in the clouds are away.

Away to that far distant clime,
 A land I must ever revere,
The love and the courage sublime
 Of her whom I hold ever dear.

I see in the distance my home,
The joy of my boyhood so free,
Then why have I chosen to roam
So far from its pleasures and thee?



Alone in my cabin no more,
The house that I built in my pride,
My love having crossed the tide o'er,
Is now my companion and bride.

United in heart and in hand
We have in great comfort begun
To build up a home in this land
From wilds of a wilderness won.

A place far removed from all strife,
The foibles and follies of pride,
The stings and the stains of false life,
Wherein all that's baleful reside.

By sweet, honest effort and toil,
Assisted by prudence and skill,
We'll win from this generous soil
Enough our small coffers to fill.

Yes, hopefully settled at last
In quarters quite rude, though, in build,
No longer lamenting the past,
With peace and contentment we're filled.

We work as we once loved to play,
As birds in the bramble or wood
With songs in our hearts all the day,
And thoughts of the pure and the good.

Our hands may be roughened by toil,
Our faces be browned by the sun,
We'll not from our duties recoil,
Till all of our earth-work is done.



AFTER FIFTY YEARS.

We sit in our cottage tonight,
Are sheltered from winds and the cold,
But Time has brought change in his flight,
For nothing is now as of old.

The forests are gone from the plains,
On hills where the tall poplars grew
No shadow of them now remains,
The trees that we loved, I and you.

The oaks and the elms, too, have flown,
Of vines there are now but a few,
Of wild grapes and berries that shone
In minglings of purple and blue.

We hunt them no more on the hill,
Nor down in the valley below,
Where robins their glad carols trill
To calls of the bluejay and crow.

We hunt them no more in the glen,
Where often we rambled and played,
With children who're now busy men,
And long from the old place have strayed.

Low zephyrs come up from the moor,
Soft shadows descend from the sky;
They stealthily enter our door,
And always their voices are nigh.

We hear them converse sad and low
Of change in this wilderness vast
Since they with their friends long ago
Came hither to sing of the past.



We sit in our cottage alone,
Although neither stately nor grand,
We're pleased when we think it our own,
With all these broad acres of land.

All won from the wilderness rude,
By industry, prudence and care;
To us surely God has been good,
Has given us wealth in full share.

It's true we have labored and slaved,
Have gathered and garnered and stored;
What others have wasted we've saved,
Nor used what we could not afford.

If now we are aged and gray,
Our spriteliness withered and waned,
For aught we have lost in this way
In wisdom and foresight we've gained.

We've gained in a spiritual way,
In warfare with error and strife;
We're broader and stronger today
For what we have done in this life.

We're stronger in faith and in hope,
Our loves and affections have grown,
Our views are far broader in scope,
Our sympathies deeper in tone.

Yes, furrowed and faded and gray,
These houses we live in are old,
All covered with marks of decay,
They'll soon be no better than mould.

Of death we're not troubled with fear,
Nor worried our patience anon;
The way of our progress is clear,
And soon we'll be called to move on.

We'll go with whatever we've learned
Of knowledge, of wisdom and truth,
To find in our new sphere returned
To us the bold vigor of youth.

These shells are no part of the man
The Christ came to teach and to save;
They're only earth's helps in the plan;
Their usefulness ends at the grave.



We sit in our cottage alone,
Contented and cosy and warm;
We hark to the winter wind's moan,
The swish and the roar of the storm.

We pity in sorrow the poor,
Who, out in the snow and the rain,
Are driven from threshold to door
In sickness and hunger and pain.

How many a poor wretch tonight,
In Death's grip with hunger and cold,
Will perish and pass out of sight,
Whose story will never be told.

Oh! why these conditions severe
Of life to us given in love
By Him whom we humbly revere,
The Infinite Father above?

Why sickness and sorrow and pain,
Disease, with her poisonous breath,
Infecting the land and the main,
With evils more dreaded than death?

Can it be that a God from His throne,
In some distant region or sphere,
Has ordered each sigh and each groan,
Each sorrow and heartache and tear?

Can it be that the Infinite Mind,
In shaping His ideals within,
Has need of a world of this kind,
These conflicts with Satan and sin.

Or may be the germinal man,
Is strengthened by struggle and strife,
And these are a part of the plan,
To perfect his being and life.

Be this as it may we all know,
Or studying Nature may find,
That tallest and strongest trees grow,
Where bought and swayed by the wind.

Without opposition there can
Be nothing of good or of worth;
This law is for Nature and Man,
And reaches from Heaven to earth.

So, strong in our knowledge we'll wait
These bodies' return to earth's mould,
Then on to that higher estate,
Where nothing decays or grows old.

There can be no region or place
Whence travelers never return,
No unending sleep of our race,
Of which there is aught we may learn.

No tidings of kindred or friend,
No voices from those whom we love,
No answers to prayers that we send
The great, loving Father above.

Then, poets may sing of the gloom
To which our beloved ones have flown,
And scientists talk of the tomb,
As ending quite all that is known.

We know that the Father above,
(To whom may all homage ascend)
Has touched us with infinite love,
And given us life without end.

THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

Have you ever crossed these mountains,
When the sun was sinking low,
When the air was filled with crystals
And the ground was white with snow?

Have you ever, just at sunset,
From some lone and lofty crest,
Felt your soul drink in its glories
As you gazed into the west?

Have you ever crossed these mountains
In a North Pacific train,
When the stars were in their glory,
And the moon just on the wane?

If you have, then I am certain,
You'll at once with me agree,
That the wonders of this region
Are worth coming miles to see.

In a Pullman Palace seated,
As you ride above the clouds,
And behold them trooping rearward,
In their gray and ghostly shrouds,

You imagine that beneath you
Lies a sea of ether blue,
And these clouds are floating islands,
As they really seemed to you.

In the distance looming darkly,
All around on ev'ry side,
You can faintly see a shore line,
Hemming in this quiet tide.

Rising here and there, high mountains,
With their caps of gleaming snow,
Cast their dark and gloomy shadows
In this noiseless sea below.

By your Pullman window seated,
Quite unconsciously, it seems,
You ignore the cares of travel
For this wonder-land of dreams.

You forget the friends around,
And the comrade seated near
As you gaze into the moonlight
On the strange, grotesque and queer,

Till it seems to you conclusive,
That you've left the real behind,
And are drifting through a region
Of a wholly different kind.

Through a wild fantastic region
Where the strangest shapes are found,
And where nothing but the weird
And the ghostly may be found.

You're reminded of the country,
Which was sung in olden time,
By the king of all the poets,
Now immortalized in rhyme,

Where the Sirens and the Furies,
And the Harpies had their den,
And the gods performed their wonders,
As they ruled and ruined men.

Now you seem to hear the thunders
Of a Jupiter enraged,
And the roaring forge of Vulcan,
In his nether prison caged ;

Now the low and solemn ringing
Of the anvils down below,
Where the Cyclops fashioned thunder bolts
For Jupiter to throw.

Yes, the air is filled with voices,
Superhuman you declare,
As you harken to the wailing
Of a Ceres in despair.

In the meantime you are plunging
Down the mountain's western side,
Over bridges, through deep canons,
What a wild and fearful ride !

Then a consciousness assails you
That you've traveled long and far,
Calmly gazing through the window
Of a Pullman Palace car

On the darkened sky above you
And the frozen ground below,
As you speed upon your journey,
In a storm of sleet and snow.

Then you rouse to ask your porter
If Chinook winds act this way,
And to smile at his rejoinder,
"No, Dakota gone astray."

But you do not feel discomfort,
Nor are stricken with alarm,
For you know that you are sheltered,
And protected from all harm.

So, you meditate and ponder,
As you swiftly glide along,
Over rails of steel united,
Locked and bolted well and strong,

On a roadway for safe travel,
Scarce a safer may be found,
Tho' you search among the many,
Built upon the level ground.

Yes, you meditate and ponder;
 Wonder how the idea grew
In the brain of common mortals
 Thus to undertake and do

Such a work of vast importance,
 Such a feat of daring skill,
As to plan and build a railroad
 O'er this grand colossal hill;

O'er these wild and rugged mountains,
 Which for ages here have stood,
And defied the skill of mortals,
 Since the time of Noah's flood.

Stretching southward from the Arctic
 To the swelt'ring torrid zone,
With its vast array of treasures,
 But till recent times unknown.

They have barred the wheels of traffic
 From the Eastward toward the West,
And have rendered travel toilsome,
 Or unpleasant at the best.

But the Yankee mind is fertile
 Of devices strange and bold,
And its powers of contrivance
 Are both great and manifold.

What was recently considered
 But the foolishhest of dreams,
By these powers of invention
 Have become accomplished schemes.

Now, by many routes of travel,
 You may scale this mountain chain,
Both in luxury and comfort,
 On a solid Pullman train.

You may wine and feast and slumber,
 You may smoke and chat with friends,
While you listen to the music
 Of your train as it ascends

Up these trails of weary travel,
 Which were trod not long ago,
By the brave who suffered hunger,
 Died, perhaps, beneath the snow.

Paths whereon for months they plodded,
 In the dust and heat and cold,
While they battled with the savage,
 Who, in crime, is ever bold.

O, what giant strides of progress,
 Only just within our ken,
Have been made in modes of travel,
 By a few far-seeing men!

Men of grit and brawn and courage,
 Men of fertile, active brains,
Who could estimate a venture,
 And compute its certain gains,

Who with staff and chain and compass,
 Who with pick and ax and spade,
Have these great and wondrous highways,
 To the grand Pacific made

Roads of travel for the millions,
 Ways of traffic, rich in gain,
Through the valleys and the gorges
 Of this dreaded mountain chain,

O'er these winding streams terrific,
 And these canyons deep and wide,
Winding upward to the summit,
 Of this great and grand divide.

Roads of travel, smooth and easy,
 Bridged and tunneled well and strong,
For the comfort and the safety
 Of the ever growing throng;

For besides these hosts of dwellers,
 East and west on either side,
In the future shall these regions,
 For another host provide,

Who shall build them homes and mansions
 From the wealth which they have won,
In the bowels of these mountains,
 Where shines neither star nor sun,

From these rare and rainless valleys,
 Touched by irrigation's wand
Which in richest fruits and treasures,
 Shall abundantly respond.

And these wild and racing rivers,
Once so famous for their gold,
From their plunging falls and cascades,
Shall another power unfold,

Which shall set great turbines spinning,
Light their streets and cook their meals,
And by many rare inventions,
Turn their car and factory wheels.

It will triumph o'er all powers,
Wrung from wood and coal combined,
In its usefulness, its comfort
And its service to mankind.

Here a score of wealthy cities,
Mighty centers shall become,
Of a traffic, which in volume
Shall soon reach a royal sum.

Then this region shall be honored,
In its barrenness redeemed!
Shall attain a state of culture,
Of which man has never dreamed.

So, with power from these rivers,
And with moisture on these plains,
Just to make this country famous,
How much needed still remains.

With a soil enriched with phosphates,
Of the kind to make plants grow,
With a climate full of sunshine,
And with little winter snow,

In the name of all that's sacred,
What could mortal wish for more,
Than to dwell in this fine region,
And to share its wealth galore.

Then, besides, there's other riches,
In the rocks beneath the soil,
Wealth in all the precious metals,
For the hundreds who may toil.

What with health and wealth and leisure,
Drinking in this mountain air,
Free from all the ills that burden,
Life can scarcely be a care.



Yes, we surely are progressive,
In our methods and our ways
And to genius, knowledge, patience
Be the mead of highest praise.

For 'tis these that give us power,
Both to revel in and climb,
Through the mountains of the mystic,
Of the strange and the sublime.

It is mind that builds our railroads,
Runs our factories and mills,
Spreads abroad our noble commerce,
And our stores with plenty fills.

Sure, 'tis mind that trains the muscles
Of the skillful human hand,
Gives the eye its subtle wisdom,
Moulds the brain at its command.

Mind that gives us power of foresight,
Makes us wish to plan, devise,
Urges us in ways unnumbered,
From the mean and low to rise.

Hence, in every undertaking,
Or pursuit of any kind,
It is generally conceded
That success depends on mind.

That a thorough mental training,
Should the heart be right within,
Is the safest guide to follow
And the surest lead to win.

If you're bent upon a venture
Where there's any risk involved,
If you're in an undertaking
Where are problems to be solved,

You will surely find it better,
To observe this simple plan,
In the choosing of a leader,
Take an educated man.

Take a man endowed with wisdom
For your counselor and friend,
You will find it both expedient,
And wisest in the end.

Should you sometimes be mistaken,
 And your friend but proves a tool
In the hands of scheming grafters,
 Still I argue, as a rule,

There's a force in education,
 In a trained and tutored mind,
Which, as means of human progress,
 You will seldom elsewhere find.

It is true that untaught genius
 May invent a useful thing;
It is true that native wisdom
 May a world of blessing bring;

But exceptions these are only,
 Not the rule as you will find,
For they're not a frequent product
 Of the genus of mankind.

True, the unskilled can do labor
 With the shovel, pick and hoe,
But the skilled will do it better,
 And the cost will be as low.

If you wish to sow a wheat field,
 And to have the work done well,
Should you wish to manufacture
 Ploughs and harrows you can sell,

You will always find it pleasant,
 And your profits will be large,
In proportion to the knowledge
 Of the men you place in charge.

If you wish to build a railroad,
 Or to bridge a mighty stream;
Or employ your means and credit,
 In some other useful scheme,

You would hardly think of calling
 To your counsel or your aid,
One who has no skill in planning,
 Nor is master of a trade.



Yes, Intelligence is mistress
Over all this mundane sphere,
And her power is augmenting,
And her scope from year to year.

She is overcoming ignorance,
Will be conqueror in time;
And will banish superstitions,
With their breeding nests of crime.

In the Unknown she is searching
With determination bold,
For the hidden things of promise
Which those darker regions hold.

Things created and intended
For the use of mortal man,
Ere the Infinite Creator
Furnished Nature with a plan.

She has searched throughout the earthly
For the secrets it contains,
And has even tried the entrance
To Immortal mind's domains.

Of her triumphs o'er the former
There is neither lack nor dearth,
For the fame of her inventions
Are abroad in all the earth.

She is hand and hand with Science,
And has made of her a friend,
And their efforts are united
To one grand and glorious end,

To the end of man's redemption
From his selfishness and sin,
And his progress toward God's Kingdom
And a better life therein.

To the kingdom of the spirit,
In the region of the soul,
Where he still must travel onward
To a further, higher goal.

In a field of greater efforts,
In a world of broader plains,
Far beyond all selfish motives,
Where the God of Nature reigns.

Where are endless plains and valleys,
Fanned by soft, refreshing breeze,
Filled with streams that flow forever,
Mountains grander far than these.

Here man wins a home through merit,
On himself depends the kind,
And his architect and builder
Is his own peculiar mind.