

The Cluck o' the Wheels

THE FELLERS THAT WRITES aint got 'round to tell
Of the bullies that battled the gumbo hell,
And plowed through the muck of the alkali flats,
—And didn't wear "chaps" and ten-gallon hats—
But rastled with broncs that was half wild cats,
And herded them 'long with a single jerk line;
Blazed their own trails to the camps and the mine—
They didn't mark trails them days with a sign.

They didn't write of nights by lonely camp fires,
In a land of far places,—and oak-hearted liars
That set in the light of the camp's warmin' blaze
And thrilled of adventure in dim, misty days
On trails far beyond the blue and the haze
Where sky-roof meets Earth; of days cold and long
Of Injun and horse thieves, and the lilt of the song
In the cluck o' the wheels as they jogged along—

Men now are the oxen and men are the mules,
And these have but muscle and brawn for their tools;
And men are the drivers that goad on and spur
To keep the wheels turning to make the soft purr
That comes when they cluck in the road's muck and stir;
For these were the fitted to trade and to gain,
And theirs were the string teams that crossed the great plain,
And these hooked their fellow men strong to the chain.

Dead, too, are the camp fires along the freight trail,
The freighter has gone and gone is his tale;
Not one hooks the swing teams strong to the chain*
To pull the vast cargoes across the wide plain,
For the cluck o' the wheels we listen in vain.
But string teams will always be trudgin' the road,
And there'll always be drivers to prod and to goad
The dumb, sweating creatures that pull on the load.

*The teams working anywhere between the wheelers and the lead horses.

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