# ON THE OVERLAND AND OTHER POEMS

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On the Overland and Other Poems by Frederick Mortimer Clapp

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#### ON THE OVERLAND.

Out of the desolation and the emptiness, the vast flat, gaunt green land, out of the pale, primeval, blue sky and the sweet sun, the horizon's gold and silver bastioned, purple-piled cloud mountain ranges

of thunder storms that bring thin rains at night,—
speak, O thou mute and mighty earth-transfusing spirit,
speak and break

the spell of the phantasmal, hurtling, inert, smiling day. Voice of the dull-brown haycocks, listless windmills, the barren,

squat, meek, lonely little houses, the glittering, restless, wind-streaked chrysoprase of corn, stark dearth of red earth miles on miles, gigantic palisaded rock-ruins crumbling by dry rivers, thistles, daisies,

lank fences stalking out against the sky threading the waste, voice of the soul of this treeless land where never the feet of men were set till yesterday, speak while the train

rolls making rhythms, rattling roaring, clicking crashing, caught

out of the emptiness, rhythms of space, sledge-riveted fast and faster

into my spirit, till my spirit makes its wings of them,—
nay more, bid thou God's self speak, as from west to eastern

wheels whirl me hurl me, hissing, jarring, being bound beyond the sea . . .

Let Him look out with me, with me remember what else were but a hopeless cirque of changes, the blank stupendous ages of the making,—winter, spring,

the fierce, still summer, autumn when gigantic winds hurled down His heavens on His earth,—
snow, the endless, soothing, saving, silent whiteness,—
as zon into less bleak zon crept.

O world divine!
add thou this to thy story, this remember,
how I caught up upon this beating iron thing,
saw clear as God sees,
in one moment seized in my life His life,—
how I, who foresaw seeing all with Him,
am all this vast land's dull unaging change, the gorgeous
harvest,

and all the blue, pale sky, the fields, the houses, hills,—
I who am my love who sits across the ocean!
O to be for her sake, being her, creation's self and God's self, heart that feels it all and hand that makes and moves continent and ocean, earth and heavens, as grinding still, still breathless, ponderous, arrowlike, relentless,

hour on hour we roar.

The bare land twists and twists and falls behind, the cross-treed poles jump up, and flickering drift to nothing dots across the world's edge—

the eager wires, sagging, heaving on, pierce the thin air with windless murmurings far flashing light-swift thoughts from sea to sea. But thou, more strong to grip life vast and whole, greenly to grasp the great world like spring grass, bluely to hold it mine like sun-blue seas, to see beyond man, nature, fathoming God,—be quicker than thy dreams, O soul of mine... speed, speed, thou more than God, thou throbbing, whistling pulse of all things,—

life, love ...