Prairie Chickens

Hamlin Garland
To be connected with the giant enterprise of building a railway to the Pacific was still the dream of his ambition. On leaving the army he did not stop to be boomd and banqueted for the service he had rendered in aiding to conquer the Rebellion, but immediately enlisted to aid in conquering the wilderness which separated the Mississippi valley and the Pacific coast. He became the Chief Engineer of the Union Pacific Railroad, and a chief promoter of the great system of railways which to-day unites all sections of the country with the Pacific States.

Should time and other engagements permit, the writer proposes at some future day to trace the career of General Dodge as a railroad engineer and railroad builder.

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PRAIRIE CHICKENS.

BY HAMLIN GARLAND.

From brown-plowed hillocks,
In early red morning.
They woke the tardy sower with this cheerful cry;
A mellow boom and whoop
That held a warning—
A song that brought the seed-time very nigh.
The circling, splendid anthem
Of their greeting
Ran like the morning beating of a hundred mellow drums—
Boom, boom, boom!
Each hillock kept repeating,
Like cannon answering cannon when the golden sunset comes.

They drum no more—
Those splendid, spring-time pickets!
The sweep of share and sickle has thrust them from the hills.
They have scattered from the meadow
Like the partridge in the thickets;
They have perished from the sportsman, who kills, and kills, and kills!

Often now,
When seated at my writing,
I lay my pencil down and fall to dreaming still
Of the stern, hard days,
Of the old-time Iowa seeding,
When the prairie chickens woke me with their war-dance on the hill.
