

A TRAGEDY OF THE WHEAT FIELDS

by
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Over the fields of rippling gold,
Bright the Alberta sun
Lingered above the ripening grain,
The farmer's work, well done.

Thick as a forest, smooth and strong,
Stood the marvellous wheat,
Restlessly stirring and seeming to sway
Under the summer heat.

Wide spreading fields to the skyline stretched,
Over a prairie clean,
Ne'er such a crop in all of the years,
Had come to this land, I ween.

Bent was her back and gray was her head,
Rough her hands and chafed,
But she looked at the wheat and her eyes were bright,
As she softly, proudly laughed.

Out in the fields the binder whirled;
The harvest had just begun.
Like music, the grind of the blithe, sharp blades,
Whistling under that sun.

Suddenly out of a bright, blue sky,
Like an evil sprite, there sprung
A great black hand, that shut out the sun,
And over the fields it hung.

Still and suspended in the sky,
The black cloud paused apace,
And then with fury, its fingers spread,
In a vast vindictive race.

Down spat the hail, in a biting storm,
Bullets of ice and snow,
And over the trembling, shaking wheat,
The frozen rocks plunged low.

Shivering and trapped the sensitive grain,
Cringed and crouched to the ground,
While the storm hissed over the slender stalks,
And covered them in a mound.

Oh! never was crop more gracious or strong,
Or work that was better done
Than under that false and smiling sky
And bright Alberta sun.

And now in the fields where the grain had been

But now in the fields where the grain had been
Only stubble and stalk;
A barren field, bare, bleak and dry,
A bitter waste and mock.

Her man rode in from the harvest fields,
Tired, haggard and grey.
He tried to smile, as he patted her back,
In his rough yet tender way.

But her hands went out with a mothering cry,
As she drew his head to her breast,
And she said with a smile that was sadder than tears:
"Let's pretend it was for the best!"

Calgary 1922.