

Minnesota: The Lily of the West

I

*Come all you men of enterprise who feel inclined to roam,¹
Beyond the Mississippi, to seek a pleasant home;
Pray take a pioneer's advice, I'll point you out the best,
I mean sweet Minnesota, the lily of the west.*

Minnesota, Minnesota the lily of the west.

II

*I've traveled the New England states, New York and Caroline,
The broad and "sunny south," and thought them very fine,
But in tropic breeze, or frigid gale, my mind could never rest,
Till I came to Minnesota, the lily of the west.*

Minnesota, Minnesota the lily of the west.

III

*Our prairies are all dotted o'er with houses white as snow,
Where nothing was but cabins rude a short ten years ago,
So that's the way we do things here, enjoying it with zest,
In lovely Minnesota, the lily of the west.*

Minnesota, Minnesota the lily of the west.

IV

*Our infant state, her banner waves in democratic style;
Though young a good example sets, though some do her beguile,
Her sons the bravest of the brave, her daughters are the best,
They're the pride of Minnesota, the lily of the west.*

Minnesota, Minnesota the lily of the west.

¹This Minnesota ballad was found last year by Dean Theodore C. Blegen of the University of Minnesota after he saw it "listed as in the Library of Congress." Since the record showed that both the words and the music were available in Washington, Dean Blegen sent for a photostatic copy, which he gave to the Minnesota Historical Society. In presenting it, he wrote that naturally he "assumed that it was a variant of 'The Beauty of the West,'" a ballad that was widely sung in frontier Minnesota. Several versions were published by Bessie M. Stanchfield in the issue of this magazine for September, 1946 (27:179-189). Dean Blegen had "hoped that the music might turn out to be the first authentic printed record of the melody" which Miss Stanchfield had recorded and published (p. 182). Instead, this ballad, set to the music of a harmonized "quartette" which had been "composed by Will Hill" of Rushford, Minnesota, proved to be something quite different. The words, given herewith, are an interesting addition to the literature of Minnesota settlement.



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