

The Handcart Song

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I know this is not a true hymn by anyone's definition, but it was a greatly-beloved song, full of hope and comfort. Besides being sung in its original format as presented here, in the past each verse has been broken into two verses, making it a twelve-verse song.

Ye Saints who dwell on Europe's shore,
Prepare yourselves for many more
To leave behind your native lands
For sure God's judgments are at hand.
For you must cross the raging main
before the promised land you gain,
then with the faithful make a start
to cross the plains with your handcart.

Chorus:

*For some must push and some must pull,
As we go marching up the hill.
For merrily on our way we go,
Until we reach the valley-O*

The land that boasts of so much light
We know they're all as dark as night
Where poor men toil and want for bread
and rich men's dogs are better fed.
The land that boasts of liberty
You ne'er again would wish to see
When you from England make a start
To cross the plains in your handcart.

But some will say it is too bad,
the saints upon the foot to pad,
And more than that, to pull a load,
As they go marching o'er the road.
But then we say it is the plan,
To gather up the best of men,
And women too, for none but they
Will ever travel in this way.

As o'er the road the carts were pulled,
'Twould very much surprise the world
To see the old and feeble dame
Thus lend a hand to pull the same
And maidens fair will dance and sing,
Young men more happy than a king,
And children too will laugh and play,
Their strength increasing day by day.

And long before the valley's gained,
We will be met upon the plains
With music sweet and friends so dear
And fresh supplies our hearts to cheer.
And then with music and with song
How cheerfully we'll march along
And thank the day we made a start
To cross the plains with our handcart.

When you get there among the rest,
Obedient be and you'll be blessed,
and in God's chambers be shut in
While judgments cleanse the earth from sin.
For we do know it will be so;
God's servant spoke it long ago.
We say it is high time to start
To cross the plains with our handcart.