

MOUNTAIN MAN

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Mountain man by Verne Bright

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VERNE BRIGHT

**MOUNTAIN
MAN**

Stockton, Calif.

Mountain Man

©

By

Verne Bright

LIMITED EDITION

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THE CAXTON PRINTERS, LTD.

Caldwell, Idaho

1948

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to 500 signed and numbered copies of which this is copy
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Verne Bright

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To
LAURENCE PRATT

Who from the beginning, with his advice
and encouragement, has shared in this
undertaking.

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Frontier and Midland, and *Better Verse*, for
permission to reprint certain portions of this
poem that first appeared in their pages.

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PRELUDE FOR DANIEL BOONE

Daniel Boone on the Femme Osage
Built a wildwood hermitage
To fend him in his ancient age
From devious folk of street and town:
From broadcloth coat and taffeta gown;
From *bons vivants* and social tricks,
Tinsel trappings and politics;
From gold in hand and curious neighbors,
Hard hearts warped by endless labors. . . .
Mid uncleared acres he built his house
Under a beech grove's friendly boughs
And sat him down for a time of dream.

The haunted mirth of a woodland stream
At his dooryard edge was a fiddle tune
Played at twilight under the moon:
This is the singing fiddle's theme,
This is the dream of Daniel Boone. . . .

Wagons west, like ships full sail,
Creak and rumble on the river trail,
Tramp of men and bull teams' thunder,
Conestogas piled with plunder,
Children laughing and women singing,
Herdboys shouting and mule bells ringing!

"New land! New land!" he hears the cry,
"Beyond the sunset, beyond the sky!"

"Beaver! Beaver!" the dusk air quivers,
"Where the mountains rise by the westmost rivers!"
"Gold! Gold!" the belling tongue
Rings out. . . .

He listens. . . .

No longer young,
He keeps his place by his own doorstone.
Missouri . . . Missouri . . . old . . . alone. . . .
The mist comes up, the cold winds shiver
And scud on the river. . . .

The dream smoked out, the caravan
Was lost in the dusk-heart, gray and wan,
And night curved in like a grave's lost place
Then . . . burning before the westing race,
Pioneer. . . .

His dream went black,
His soul sought out the zodiac. . . .
Westward the star. . . . Old Dan Boone,
Scouting the sky with the hunter's moon.