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A Day With Riley  
in Indiana



October Seven  
Nineteen Seventeen

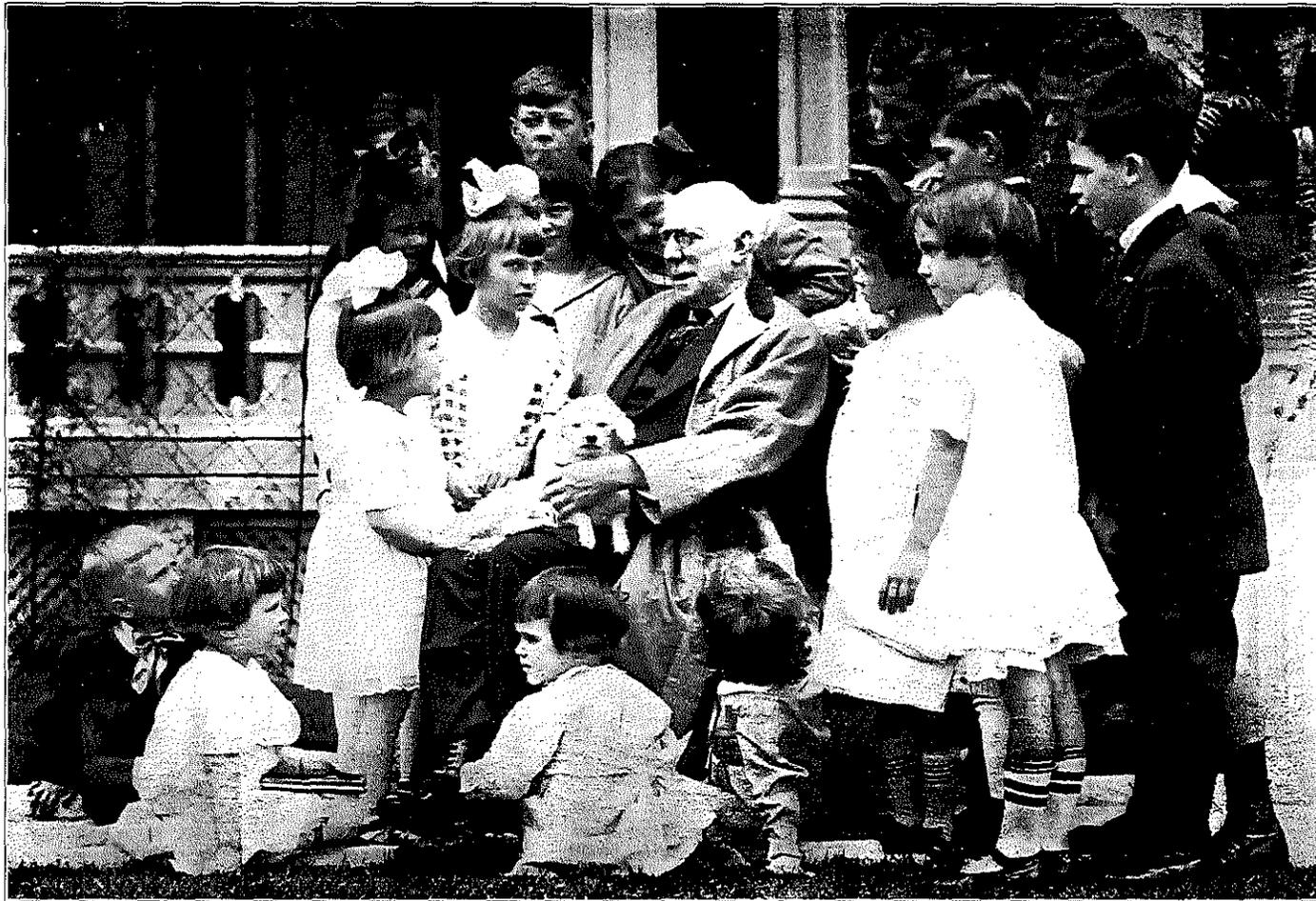
# A Day With Riley in Indiana

*In Grateful Memory of Our  
Hoosier Poet-Laureate*



By  
Horace Ellis  
State Superintendent of Public Instruction  
Indianapolis, Indiana

Programs and Materials  
October 7  
1917



"I believe *all* childern's good,  
Ef they're only *understood*,—  
Even *bad* ones, 'pears to me,  
'S jes' as good as they kin be!"

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## A NEIGHORLY APPEAL

**L**IKE the peal of a distant convent bell; like the tender whisperings of the leaves or the solemn sigh of the forest; like the echo of a flute note across the lake at twilight, come, out of the recesses of the recent past, the memories of our poet-laureate, James Whitcomb Riley. As heaven's last best gift to Indiana, the neighborly people of this great commonwealth adore the name of Riley and hail the recurrence of his birth anniversary with a joy almost transcendent. Not because he saw more clearly than others the frailties of his neighbors, and he mirthfully and mercilessly noted these; not because he drew brilliantly wise conclusions from his experiences with the ordinary folks of his day, though he constantly crystallized pioneer experiences into epigrams of abiding value,

"And it's the man that does his best  
Who gets more kicks than all the rest."

but because of a boundless love for all mankind, an affection for children unprecedented, a sympathy for the distressed—whatever the cause—this was the character-trait our Hoosier singer possessed in bountiful measure. Just as little grains of gold on the mountainside, of themselves not particularly valuable, indicate unerringly the nearby storehouse of mineral riches, so do our poet's frequent lilt, or trill, or the more suspended effusions of the soul inevitably suggest the presence of a life full of grandeur and of goodness. He became a singer because Omnipotence taught him to revere eternal truths in living; and his poetry, in turn, is but the simple pronouncements of those verities.

Sunday, October 7, is the anniversary of our

laureate's birth. If serious illness did not forbid, we may be sure we should have from the one whom we affectionately call Governor James P. Goodrich, formal appeal to the Indiana people, through public proclamation, for their appropriate observance of this day. But because of our great misfortune in this regard, as head of the public school system of Indiana, a system made vastly richer because of the life of James Whitcomb Riley, I am setting apart Friday, October 5, 1917, as Riley Day for all our Indiana schools, public, private, parochial. I earnestly recommend that programs shall be prepared and executed in all our schools the intent of which programs shall be the cherishing of the memory of Riley, the emulation of his sincere and simple interpretation of the virtues of our people, and the inspiring to future good behavior the children of our schools, who are soon to become the men and women of the commonwealth.

I beg also to ask co-operation of all of Indiana's churches in this celebration, since Riley Day proper is Sunday, October 7, 1917. In making this appeal to pastors and priests alike, I beg to ask that the thought of the universal brotherhood we all so much desire may thus be magnified.

Respectfully,

*Horace Ellis,*

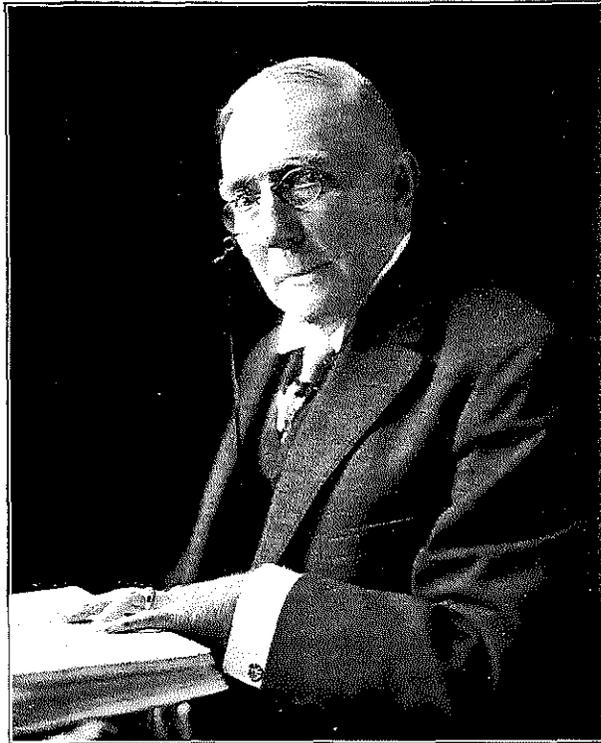
State Superintendent  
of Public Instruction.

Indianapolis, Indiana,  
September 19, 1917.



I

A Good man never dies—  
In worthy deed and prayer  
And helpful hands, and honest eyes,  
If smiles or tears be there:  
Who lives for you and me—  
Lives for the world he tries  
To help—he lives eternally,  
A good man never dies.



II

Who lives to bravely take  
His share of toil and stress,  
And, for his weaker fellows' sake,  
Makes every burden less,—  
He may, at last, seem worn—  
Lie fallen—hands and eyes  
Folded—yet, though we mourn and  
mourn,  
A good man never dies.

## THE HUMAN SIDE OF RILEY

Mr. Riley is best known to the world at large as a poet. It is quite proper that this should continue to be the side of our great Hoosier's life-work most prominently fixed in the minds of the people, for the greater part of his energies in his vigorous years, were employed in producing his marvelously sweet songs. But there are other sides of Riley's life, at least partly separated from his genius as a poet, that are quite as well known and admired among his many friends who lived near him, and of these, let me speak my word.

Mr. Riley was very human in what he said and did, aside from those distinctive human traits depicted in his verse and writings. He looked at the happenings in his own neighbors' everyday life from the standpoint of averages and equality among men. He saw good in every human being, and strove to make those he met feel that he recognized that good to the uttermost. His heart and mind were too big to harbor any impulse or thought of selfishness toward himself or superiority over his fellows. He felt that he was their equal but not their superior; that he was an average man among the mass of human beings. He loved everything that was good, and that made him lift the averages of humanity above their usual levels and ideals, by his inspired lines. He made the world better by what he said and did, as he passed along, as well as by giving it the immortal words that he penned. His life was one that reached from the valley of lowly life to the mountain top of inspired genius and enduring greatness.

Indianapolis, Indiana.  
September 27, 1917.

*Caleb S. Denny.*

From a Letter to State Superintendent  
Horace Ellis.

## JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY

---

There must be great rejoicin' on the Golden Shore today,  
An' the big an' little angels must be feelin' mighty gay;  
Could we look beyond the curtain now I fancy we should see  
Old Aunt Mary waitin', smilin', for the coming that's to be,  
An' Little Orphant Annie an' the whole excited pack  
Dancin' up an' down an' shoutin': "Mr. Riley's comin' back!"

There's a heap o' real sadness in this good old world today,  
There are lumpy throats this morning now that Riley's gone away;  
There's a voice now stilled forever that in sweetness only spoke,  
An' whispered words of courage with a faith that never broke.  
There is much joy and laughter that we mortals here will lack.  
But the angels must be happy now that Riley's comin' back.

The world was gettin' dreary, there was too much sigh an' frown  
In this vale o' mortal strivin', so God sent Jim Riley down;  
An' He said: "Go there an' cheer 'em in your good old-fashioned  
way,  
With your songs of tender sweetness, but don't make your  
plans to stay

Coz you're needed up in Heaven. I am lendin' you to men  
Just to help 'em with your music, but I'll want you back again."

An' Riley came, an' mortals heard the music of his voice,  
An' they caught his songs o' beauty an' they started to rejoice;  
An' they leaned on him in sorrow, an' they shared with him  
their joys,

An' they walked with him the pathways that they knew when  
they were boys.

But the heavenly angels missed him, missed his tender, gentle  
knack

Of makin' people happy, an' they wanted Riley back.

There must be great rejoicin' on the streets of Heaven today,  
An' all the angel children must be troopin' down the way,  
Singin' heavenly songs of welcome an' preparin' now to greet  
The soul that God had tintured with an everlasting sweet;  
The world is robed in sadness an' is draped in somber black,  
But joy must reign in Heaven now that Riley's comin' back.

—Edgar A. Guest in Indianapolis Star.  
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## THE POETRY OF RILEY

---

The poetry of James Whitcomb Riley, like the music of the Pied Piper, draws together everywhere troupes of admiring children who justly crown him "The Poet-Laureate of Childhood." Children love Mr. Riley, and he loves them and can tell how they feel and think about things in a beautiful, simple way. He has taught both old and young to see and hear anew; he has taken them to the grassy fields and murmuring brooks and has shown them the great out-doors in which he lived with its family of creatures all the way from the humble frog and the tree-toad to,

"The hulk of a hawk becalmed  
Far out on the azure seas."

Mr. Riley has given us an intimate acquaintanceship with Hoosier life and the Hoosier child, because he knows them as no one else does. His teachers were his playmates, and nature, and experience, and the common daily life about him, in all of which he could, by means of his rare poetic gift, understand the deeper meaning, and put what he saw and felt into living songs. He has sung to us of childish joys and sorrows, of the comradeship of men and women, of respect for the aged, of love of country, of cheerfulness in the doing of duty. In sooth, he has given us an outlook upon life that is unafraid and full of trust.

Along with the open books of life and nature from which Mr. Riley learned, he gives much credit to the reading in which he was started by his last teacher, Mr. Lee O. Harris, whom he calls, "Schoolmaster and Songmaster," and who influenced his pupil to substitute for the cheap literature that he had up to that time read, the works of Dickens, Scott, Irving, and Hawthorne. In these he found new people and scenes, and new material for his imagination to work upon. This strengthened in him the desire for writing that he seems to have had even during, "Those wondrous years when belief is not bound to the eyes and the ears, and the vision divine is so clear and unmarred that each baker of pies in the dirt is a bard."

Mr. Riley gives evidence of possessing the seeing eye and hearing ear when he was young, in the way he celebrates the scenes of his childhood days, spent in quest of fun, in such poems as; "The Old Swimmin' Hole," "In Swimming Time," "The Brook-Song" and "With the Current." We fancy, when in search of a larger experience he left Greenfield, riding away on the wagon of a traveling doctor, to beat the drum and advertise for him, that the "palpitating syllables of sound" that "rolled in upon his ear" were the ones he afterwards put in his poem "The Drum."

The artistic instinct in Mr. Riley showed itself early; when he was a sign painter, he worked with the same care at his lettering that an artist would take in painting a great picture; his artistic feeling also showed itself in his power to act out his advertisements for the doctor, and also later, when in lecturing and reciting, he put himself in the place of the person spoken of and brought out the humor and pathos in a way that greatly moved the hearts of his hearers.

Like Lowell, and many of our authors, Mr. Riley was unsuccessful in his attempt to study law, which he took up to please his father, but soon gave up in answer to the call of the literary passion in him and in favor of the songs such as, "If I Knew What Poets Know," which were constantly singing themselves to him and waiting to be taken down. This singing power increased his desire for recognition which at last found expression in the pages of a newspaper, "The Anderson Democrat," where the quaint rhyming notices from his pen greatly pleased his readers, but did not satisfy the poet.

Later, the editor of The Indianapolis Journal invited Mr. Riley to a position on that paper; this greatly pleased him, for he had come to his own and his success from that time was constant and permanent. His first popularity came through a series of articles and poems said to be from the pen of "Benjamin F. Johnson of Boone," an

uneducated farmer, who sends to the Journal, poems and letters written in dialect and full of charming nature descriptions, which the writer said, "Came right from the Hart." It was soon found out that Benjamin F. Johnson of Boone was Mr. Riley himself, and Mr. George Hitt of the Journal, shortly after, brought out the first volume of the Hoosier poet's verse, called "The Old Swimmin' Hole and 'Leven More Poems." The story of success that followed this volume, is like the brook that has swollen into a great river enriching the lands through which it passes by its wealth and life-giving power.

The honor shown Mr. Riley in his own county is a source of deep gratification to all who know him. Colleges have recognized his merit and placed him on their rolls. The National Institute of Arts and Literature made him a member in 1911, and the next year conferred upon him the medal for poetry, which was the greatest honor in the gift of any institution in the United States.

Mr. Riley's introduction to the noted authors of our country came in 1887, when he attended the convention in the interests of International Copyright, held in New York. Before Riley spoke, James Russell Lowell, who presided at the great banquet, had read "Longing" and "Aladdins' Lamp;" George William Curtis, selections from "Prue and I;" Charles Dudley Warner, from "How Betsy and I Caught the Bear;" William Dean Howells, from "Our Wedding Journey;" Thomas Nelson Page and Harry Stilwell Edwards, choice bits from their sketches of Virginia and Georgia; and George W. Cable from "Old Creole Days." All the famous authors before him had read, but Mr. Riley with his characteristic modesty, recited, "Thoughts Fer the Discouraged Farmer." Tumultuous cheers followed and the scholars of the East knew that a poet had come out of the West. Upon the request of Mr. Lowell, Mr. Riley for a second recitation, spoke "Nothin' to Say" and New York was taken by storm. There was wild applause, eyes were full of tears, hearts were beating hard, and the occasion was one never to be forgotten.

The teachers in Mr. Riley's own state delighted to honor him in 1905 at their state association where four thousand of them were present to hear their poet praised

from the lips of distinguished educators, statesmen, poets and editors. Mr. Riley's response upon this occasion was again in his characteristic modesty; he spoke of his own teachers and recited "Old Glory" in a way that touched the hearts of his audience.

More greatly appreciated by Mr. Riley than all other honors bestowed upon him were the tributes paid him by the school children over the state, upon his birthdays, when they recited his poems, sang his songs that have been set to music, and wrote him letters. He wrote letters to them upon these occasions. Following is a letter written by Mr. Riley upon his birthday, to the children of Indianapolis.

*To the School Children of Indianapolis:*

*You are conspirators—every one of you, that's what you are—you have conspired to inform the general public of my birthday, and I am already so old that I want to forget all about it. But I will be magnanimous and forgive you, for I know that your intent is really friendly, and to have such friends as you are makes me—don't care how old I am! In fact it makes me so glad and happy that I feel as absolutely young and spry as a very schoolboy—even as one of you—and so to all intents I am.*

*Therefore let me be with you throughout the long, lovely day, and share your mingled joys and blessings with your parents and your teachers, and in the words of little Tim Craitchit: "God bless us; every one."*

*Ever gratefully and faithfully your old friend,*

*October 7, 1911.*

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY.

Mr. Riley's generous gift of a library site to the city of Indianapolis, is said to have been prompted by his love for the children. Surely he could not have thought of a kinder thing to do in their honor than to aid so largely in providing boys and girls a place where they can go to get books and read the best that has been said in the writings of the world.

On July 22, 1916, at his home in lovely Lockerbie Street, he passed peacefully into the great Beyond.

CHARITY DYE.

I  
POEMS OF PATRIOTISM

## POEMS OF PATRIOTISM

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THE SOLDIER

The Soldier!—meek the title, yet divine:  
Therefore, with reverence, as with wild acclaim,  
We fain would honor an exalted line  
The glorious lineage of the glorious name:  
The Soldier.—Lo, he ever was and is,  
Our Country's high custodian, by right  
Of patriot blood that brims that heart of his  
With fiercest love, yet honor infinite.

The Soldier!—Why, the very utterance  
Is music—as of rallying bugles, blent  
With blur of drums and cymbals and the chants  
Of battle-hymns that shake the continent!—  
The thunder-chorus of a world is stirred  
To awful, universal jubilee,—  
Yet ever through it, pure and sweet, are heard  
The prayers of Womanhood, and Infancy.

Ay, glad and grateful, that in such a cause  
His veins were drained at Freedom's holy shrine—  
Rechristening the land—as first it was,—  
His blood poured thus in sacramental sign  
Of new baptism of the hallowed name  
“My Country”—now on every lip once more  
And blest of God with still enduring fame.—  
This thought even then The Soldier gloried o'er.

*Abridged.*

*Stir all your echoes up,  
O Independence Bell,  
And pour from your inverted cup  
The song we love so well.*

*Lift high your happy voice,  
And swing your iron tongue  
Till syllables of praise rejoice  
That never yet were sung.*

*Ring in the gleaming dawn  
Of Freedom—Toll the knell  
Of Tyranny, and then ring on,  
O Independence Bell.*



LIBERTY

I

Sing! every bird, to-day!  
Sing for the sky so clear,  
And the gracious breath of the atmosphere  
Shall waft our cares away.  
Sing! sing! for the sunshine free;  
Sing through the land from sea to sea;  
Lift each voice in the highest key  
And sing for Liberty!

II

Sing for the arms that fling  
Their fetters in the dust  
And lift their hands in higher trust  
Unto the one Great King;  
Sing for the patriot heart and hand;  
Sing for the country they have planned;  
Sing that the world may understand  
This is Freedom's land!

III

Sing in the tones of prayer,  
Sing till the soaring soul  
Shall float above the world's control  
In Freedom everywhere!  
Sing for the good that is to be,  
Sing for the eyes that are to see  
The land where man at least is free,  
O sing for Liberty!

*Ode from "Liberty."*

## AMERICA

*O Thou, America—Messiah of Nations!*

### I

In the need that bows us thus,  
America!  
Shape a mighty song for us—  
America!  
Song to whelm a hundred years'  
Roar of wars and rain of tears  
'Neath a world's triumphant cheers:  
America! America!

### II

Lift the trumpet to thy mouth,  
America!  
East and West and North and South—  
America!  
Call us round the dazzling shrine  
Of the starry old ensign—  
New baptized in blood of thine,  
America! America!



### III

Dying eyes through pitying mists,  
America!  
See the Assassin's shackled wrists,  
America!  
Patient eyes that turn their sight  
From all blackening crime and blight  
Still toward Heaven's holy light—  
America! America!



### IV

High o'erlooking sea and land,  
America!  
Trustfully with outheld hand,  
America!  
Thou dost welcome all in quest  
Of thy freedom, peace and rest—  
Every exile is thy guest,  
America! America!

### V

Thine a universal love,  
America!  
Thine the cross and crown thereof,  
America!  
Aid us, then, to sing thy worth;  
God hath builded, from thy birth,  
The first nation of the earth—  
America! America!

## THE BOY PATRIOT

I WANT to be a Soldier!—  
A Soldier!—  
A Soldier!—

I want to be a Soldier, with a saber in my hand  
Or a little carbine rifle, or a musket on my shoulder,  
Or just a snare-drum, snarling in the middle of the band;  
I want to hear, high overhead, The Old Flag flap her  
wings  
While all the Army, following, in chorus cheers and  
sings;

I want to hear the tramp and jar  
Of patriots a million,  
As gaily dancing off to war  
As dancing a cotillion.

*I want to be a Soldier!—  
A Soldier!—  
A Soldier!—*

*I want to be a Soldier, with a saber in my hand  
Or a little carbine rifle, or a musket on my shoulder,  
Or just a snare-drum, snarling in the middle of the band.*

I want to see the battle!—  
The battle!—  
The battle!—

I want to see the battle, and be in it to the end;—  
I want to hear the cannon clear their throats and catch  
the prattle  
Of all the pretty compliments the enemy can send!—  
And then I know my wits will go,—and where I  
*shouldn't* be—  
Well, there's the spot, in any fight, that you may search  
for me.

So, when our foes have had their fill,  
Though I'm among the dying,  
To see The Old Flag flying still,  
I'll laugh to leave her flying!

*I want to be a Soldier!—  
A Soldier!—  
A Soldier!—*

*I want to be a Soldier, with a saber in my hand  
Or a little carbine rifle, or a musket on my shoulder,  
Or just a snare-drum, snarling in the middle of the band.*

## THE NAME OF OLD GLORY

### I

Old Glory! say, who,  
By the ships and the crew,  
And the long, blended ranks of the gray and the blue,—  
Who gave you, Old Glory, the name that you bear  
With such pride everywhere  
As you cast yourself free to the rapturous air  
And leap out full-length, as we're wanting you to?—  
Who gave you that name, with the ring of the same,  
And the honor and fame so becoming to you?—  
Your stripes stroked in ripples of white and of red,  
With your stars at their glittering best overhead—  
By day or by night  
Their delightfulest light  
Laughing down from their little square heaven of blue!—  
Who gave you the name of Old Glory?—say, who—  
Who gave you the name of Old Glory?

*The old banner lifted, and faltering then  
In vague lisps and whispers fell silent again.*

### II

Old Glory,—speak out!—we are asking about  
How you happened to "favor" a name, so to say,  
That sounds so familiar and careless and gay  
As we cheer it and shout in our wild breezy way—  
We—the *crowd*, every man of us, calling you that—  
We—Tom, Dick, and Harry—each swinging his hat  
And hurraing "Old Glory!" like you were our kin,  
When—*Lord!*—we all know we're as common as sin!  
And yet it just seems like you *humor* us all  
And waft us your thanks, as we hail you and fall  
Into line, with you over us, waving us on  
Where our glorified, sanctified betters have gone.—  
And this is the reason we're wanting to know—  
(And we're wanting it *so!*—  
Where our own fathers went we are willing to go)—  
Who gave you the name of Old Glory—*Oho!*—  
Who gave you the name of Old Glory?

*The old flag unfurled with a billowy thrill  
For an instant, then wistfully sighed and was still.*

### III

Old Glory: the story we're wanting to hear  
Is what the plain facts of your christening were,—  
For your name—just to hear it,  
Repeat it, and cheer it, 's a tang to the spirit  
As salt as a tear;—  
And seeing you fly, and the boys marching by,  
There's a shout in the throat and a blur in the eye  
And an aching to live for you always—or die,  
If, dying, we still keep you waving on high.  
And so, by our love  
For you, floating above,  
And the scars of all wars and the sorrows thereof,  
Who gave you the name of Old Glory and why  
Are we thrilled at the name of Old Glory?

*Then the banner leaped, like a sail in the blast,  
And fluttered an audible answer at last.*

### IV

And it spake, with a shake of the voice, and it said;—  
By the driven snow-white and the living blood-red  
Of my bars, and their heaven of stars overhead—  
By the symbol conjoined of them all, skyward cast,  
As I float from the steeple, or flap at the mast,  
Or droop o'er the sod where the long grasses nod,—  
My name is as old as the glory of God.  
    . . . So I came by the name of Old Glory.



POEMS FOR THE HOUR  
II

THERE IS A NEED.

There is a need for every ache of pain  
That falls unto our lot. No heart may bleed  
That resignation may not heal again,  
And teach us—there's a need.

There is a need for every tear that drips  
Adown the face of sorrow. None may heed,  
But weeping washes whiter on the lips  
Our prayers—and there's a need.

There is a need for weariness and dearth  
Of all that brings delight. At topmost speed  
Of pleasure sobs may break amid our mirth  
Unheard—and there's a need.

There is a need for all the growing load  
Of agony we bear as years succeed;  
For lo, the Master's footprints in the road  
Before us—There's a need.

## OUR KIND OF A MAN

THE kind of a man for you and me!  
He faces the world unflinchingly,  
And smites, as long as the wrong resists  
With a knuckled faith and force-like fists;  
He lives the life he is preaching of,  
And loves where most is the need of love;  
His voice is clear to the deaf man's ears,  
And his face sublime through the blind man's tears;  
The light shines out where the clouds were dim,  
And the widow's prayer goes up for him;  
The latch is clicked at the hovel door  
And the sick man sees the sun once more,  
And out o'er the barren fields he sees  
Springing blossoms and waving trees,  
Feeling as only the dying may,  
That God's own servant has come that way,  
Smoothing the path as it still winds on  
Through the golden gate where his loved have gone.

The kind of a man for me and you!  
However little of worth we do  
He credits full, and abides in trust  
That time will teach us how more is just.  
He walks abroad, and he meets all kinds  
Of querulous and uneasy minds,  
And, sympathizing, he shares the pain  
Of the doubts that rack us, heart and brain;  
And, knowing this, as we grasp his hand,  
We are surely coming to understand!  
He looks on sin with pitying eyes—  
E'en as the Lord, since Paradise,—  
Else, should we read, Though our sins should glow  
As scarlet, they shall be white as snow?—  
And, feeling still, with a grief half glad,  
That the bad are as good as the good are bad,  
He strikes straight out for the Right—and he  
Is the kind of a man for you and me!

## DREAM-MARCH

Wasn't it a funny dream!—perfectly bewild'rin!—  
Last night, and night before, and night before that,  
Seemed like I saw the march o' regiments o' children,  
Marching to the robin's fife and cricket's rat-ta-tat!

Lily-banners overhead, with the dew upon 'em,  
On flashed the little army, as with sword and flame;  
Like the buzz o' bumble-wings, with the honey on 'em,  
Came an eery, cheery chant, chiming as it came:—

Where go the children? Traveling! Traveling!  
Where go the children, traveling ahead?  
Some go to kindergarten; some go to day-school;  
Some go to night-school; and some go to bed!

Smooth roads or rough roads, warm or winter weather,  
On go the children, towhead and brown,  
Brave boys and brave girls, rank and file together,  
Marching out of Morning-Land, over dale and down:

Some go a-gipsy out in country places—  
Out through the orchards, with blossoms on the  
boughs,

Wild, sweet, and pink and white as their own glad faces;  
And some go, at evening, calling home the cows.

Where go the children? Traveling! Traveling!  
Where go the children, traveling ahead?  
Some go to foreign wars, and camps by the fire-light—  
Some go to glory so; and some go to bed!

Some go through grassy lanes leading to the city—  
Thinner grow the green trees and thicker grows the  
dust;  
Ever, though, to little people any path is pretty  
So it leads to newer lands, as they know it must.

Some go singing less; some go to list'ning;  
Some go to thinking over ever-nobler themes;  
Some go unhungry, but ever bravely whistling,  
Turning never home again only in their dreams.

Where go the children? Traveling! Traveling!  
Where go the children, traveling ahead?  
Some go to conquer things; some go to try them;  
Some go to dream them; and some go to bed!



### THE PRAYER PERFECT

Dear Lord! kind Lord!  
 Gracious Lord! I pray  
 Thou wilt look on all I love  
 Tenderly to-day!  
 Weed their hearts of weariness;  
 Scatter every care  
 Down a wake of angel-wings  
 Winnowing the air.

Bring unto the sorrowing  
 All release from pain;  
 Let the lips of laughter  
 Overflow again;  
 And with all the needy  
 O divide, I pray,  
 This vast treasure of content  
 That is mine to-day!



### THE ABSENCE OF LITTLE WESLEY

Sence little Wesley went, the place seems all so strange  
 and still—  
 W'y, I miss his yell o' "Gran'pap" as I'd miss the whip-  
 perwill!  
 And to think I ust to *scold* him fer his everlastin' noise,  
 When I on'y rickollect him as the best o' little boys!  
 I wisht a hunderd times a day 'at he'd come trompin' in,  
 And all the noise he ever made was twic't as loud ag'in!—  
 It 'u'd seem like some soft music played on some fine  
 instrument,  
 'Longside o' this loud lonesomeness, sence little Wesley  
 went!

Of course the clock don't tick no louder than it ust to do—  
 Yit now they's times it 'pears like it 'u'd bu'st itse'f in  
 two!  
 And let a rooster, suddent-like, crow som'ers clos't  
 around,  
 And seem 's ef, mighty nigh it, it 'u'd lift me off the  
 ground!  
 And same with all the cattle when they bawl around the  
 bars,  
 In the red o' airy morning, er the dusk and dew  
 and stars,  
 When the neighbors' boys 'at passes never stop, but jes'  
 go on,  
 A-whistling' kind o' to theirse'v's—sence little Wesley's  
 gone!

And then, o' nights, when Mother's settin' up oncom-  
 mon late,  
 A-bilin' 'pears er somepin', and I set and smoke and wait,  
 Tel the moon out through the winder don't look bigger'n  
 a dime,  
 And things keep gittin' stiller—stiller—stiller all the  
 time,—  
 I've ketch'd myse'f a-wishin' like—as I clumb on the  
 cheer  
 To wind the clock, as I hev done fer more'n fifty year—  
 A-wishin' 'at the time hed come fer us to go to bed,  
 With our last prayers, and our last tears, sence little  
 Wesley's dead!



### THOUGHTS TO REMEMBER

You have more'n likely noticed,  
 When you didn't when you *could*,  
 That jes' the thing you *didn't* do  
 Was jes' the thing you should.

\* \* \* \* \*

First and best of earthly joys,  
 I like little girls and boys.  
 Which of all do I like best?  
 Why, the one that's happiest.

\* \* \* \* \*

To attain the highest good  
 Of true man and womanhood,  
 Simply do your honest best—  
 God with joy will do the rest.



III  
POEMS CHILDREN LOVE

### A BOY'S MOTHER

My mother she's so good to me,  
Ef I was good as I could be,  
I couldn't be as good—no sir!—  
Can't any boy be good as her!

She loves me when I'm glad er sad;  
She loves me when I'm good er bad;  
An', what's a funniest thing, she says  
She loves me when she punishes.

I don't like her to punish me.—  
That don't hurt,—but it hurts to see  
Her cryin'.—Nen I cry; an' nen  
We both cry an' be good again.

She loves me when she cuts an' sews  
My little cloak an' Sund'y clothes;  
An' when my Pa comes home to tea,  
She loves him most as much as me.

She laughs an' tells him all I said,  
An' grabs me up an' pats my head;  
An' I hug *her*, an' hug my Pa  
An' love him purt' nigh as much as Ma.



### A LIFE-LESSON

There! little girl; don't cry!  
They have broken your doll, I know;  
And your tea-set blue,  
And your play-house, too,  
Are things of long ago;  
But childish troubles will soon pass by.—  
There! little girl; don't cry!

There! little girl; don't cry!  
They have broken your slate, I know;  
And the glad, wild ways  
Of your schoolgirl days  
Are things of the long ago;  
But life and love will soon come by.—  
There! little girl; don't cry!

There! little girl; don't cry!  
They have broken your heart, I know;  
And the rainbow gleams  
Of your youthful dreams  
Are things of the long ago;  
But the heaven holds all for which you sigh.—  
There! little girl; don't cry!

### THE BROOK-SONG

Little brook! Little brook!  
You have such a happy look—  
Such a very merry manner, as you swerve and curve  
and crook—  
And your ripples, one by one,  
Reach each other's hands and run  
Like laughing little children in the sun!

Little brook, sing to me:  
Sing about a bumblebee  
That tumbles from a lily-bell and grumbled mumbly  
Because he wet the film  
Of his wings, and had to swim,  
While the water-bugs raced round and laughed at him!

Little brook—sing a song  
Of a leaf that sailed along  
Down the golden-braided center of your current swift  
and strong,  
And a dragon-fly that lit  
On the tilting rim of it,  
And rode away and wasn't scared a bit.

And sing—how oft in glee  
Came a truant boy like me,  
Who loved to lean and listen to your lilting melody,  
Till the gurgle and refrain  
Of your music in his brain  
Wrought a happiness as keen to him as pain.

Little brook—laugh and leap!  
Do not let the dreamer weep:  
Sing him all the songs of summer till he sink in softest  
sleep;  
And then sing soft and low  
Through his dreams of long ago—  
Sing back to him the rest he used to know!





### GRANNY

Granny's come to our house,  
 And ho! my lawzy-daisy!  
 All the children round the place  
 Is ist a-runnin' crazy!  
 Fetched a cake fer little Jake,  
 And fetched a pie for Nanny,  
 And fetched a pear fer all the pack  
 That runs to kiss their Granny!

Lucy Ellen's in her lap,  
 And Wade and Silas Walker  
 Both's a ridin' on her foot,  
 And 'Pollos on the rocker;  
 And Marthy's twins, from Aunt Marinn's,  
 And little Orphant Annie,  
 All's a-eatin' gingerbread  
 And giggle-un at Granny!

Tells us all the fairy tales  
 Ever thought er wondered—  
 And 'bundance o' other stories—  
 Bet she knows a hunderd!—  
 Bob's the one fer "Whittington,"  
 And "Golden Locks" fer Fanny!  
 Hear 'em laugh and clap their hands,  
 Listenin' at Granny!

"Jack the Giant-Killer" 's good;  
 And "Bean-stalk" 's another!—  
 So's the one of "Cinderell" "  
 And her old godmother;—  
 That-un's best of all the rest—  
 Bestest one of any,—  
 Where the mices scampers home  
 Like we runs to Granny!

Granny's come to our house,  
 Ho! my lawzy-daisy!  
 All the children round the place  
 Is ist a-runnin' crazy!  
 Fetched a cake fer little Jake,  
 An fetched a pie fer Nanny,  
 And fetched a pear fer all the pack  
 That runs to kiss their Granny!



### THE CIRCUS-DAY PARADE

The Circus!—The Circus!—The throb of the drums,  
 And the blare of the horns, as the Band-wagon comes;  
 The clash and the clang of the cymbals that beat,  
 As the glittering pageant winds down the long street!

In the Circus parade there is glory clean down  
 From the first spangled horse to the mule of the Clown,  
 With the gleam and the glint and the glamour and glare  
 Of the days of enchantment all glimmering there!

And there are the banners of silvery fold  
 Caressing the winds with their fringes of gold,  
 And their high-lifted standards, with spear-tips aglow,  
 And the helmeted knights that go riding below.

There's the Chariot, wrought of some marvelous shell  
 The Sea gave to Neptune, first washing it well  
 With its fabulous waters of gold, till it gleams  
 Like the galleon rare of an Argonaut's dreams.

And the Elephant, too, (with his undulant stride  
 That rocks the high throne of a king in his pride),  
 That in jungles of India shook from his flanks  
 The tigers that leapt from the Jujubee-banks.

Here's the long, ever-changing, mysterious line  
 Of the Cages, with hints of their glories divine  
 From the barred little windows, cut high in the rear  
 Where the close-hidden animals' noses appear.

Here's the Pyramid-car, with its splendor and flash,  
 And the Goddess on high, in a hot-scarlet sash  
 And a pen-wiper skirt!—O the rarest of sights  
 Is this "Queen of the Air" in cerulean tights!

Then the far-away clash of the cymbals, and then  
 The swoon of the tune ere it wakens again  
 With the capering tones of the gallant cornet  
 That go dancing away in a mad minuet.

The Circus!—The Circus—The throb of the drums,  
 And the blare of the horns, as the Band-wagon comes;  
 The clash and the clang of the cymbals that beat,  
 As the glittering pageant winds down the long street.





### THE MAN IN THE MOON

SAID The Raggedy Man, on a hot afternoon:

My!

Sakes!

What a lot o' mistakes

Some little folks makes on The Man in the Moon!

But people that's be'n up to *see* him, like *me*,

And calls on him frequent and intimuttly,

Might drop a few facts that would interest you

Clean!

Through!

If you wanted 'em to—

Some *actual* facts that might interest you!

O The Man in the Moon has a crick in his back;

Whee!

Whimm!

Ain't you sorry for him?

And a mole on his nose that is purple and black;

And his eyes are so weak that they water and run

If he dares to *dream* even he looks at the sun,—

So he jes' dreams of stars, as the doctors advise—

My!

Eyes!

But isn't he wise—

To jes' dream of stars, as the doctors advise?

And The Man in the Moon has a boil on his ear—

Whee!

Whing!

What a singular thing!

I know! but these facts are authentic, my dear,—

There's a boil on his ear; and a corn on his chin—

He calls it a dimple—but dimples stick in—

Yet it might be a dimple turned over, you know!

Whang!

Ho!

Why certainly so!—

It might be a dimple turned over, you know!

And The Man in the Moon has a rheumatic knee—

Gee!

Whizz!

What a pity that is!



And his toes have worked round where his heels ought to be—

So whenever he wants to go North he goes *South*,  
And comes back with porridge-crumbs all round his mouth,

And he brushes them off with a Japanese fan,

Whing!

Whann!

What a marvelous man!

What a very remarkably marvelous man!

And The Man in the Moon, sighed The Raggedy Man,

Gits!

So!

Sul lonesome, you know,—

Up there by hisse'f sence creation began!—

That when I call on him and then come away,

He grabs me and holds me and begs me to stay,—

Till—Well! if it wasn't fer *Jimmy-cum-Jim*,

Dadd!

Limb!

I'd go pardners with him—

Jes' jump my job here and be pardners with *him*!

### OLD MAN WHISKERY-WHEE-KUM-WHEEZE

OLD Man Whiskery-Whee-Kum-Wheeze

Lives 'way up in the leaves o' trees.

An' wunst I slipped up-stairs to play

In Aunty's room, while she 'uz away;

An' I clumbed up in her cushion-chair

An' ist peeked out o' the winder there;

An' there I saw—wite out in the trees—

Old Man Whiskery-Whee-Kum-Wheeze!

An' Old Man Whiskery-Whee-Kum-Wheeze

Would bow an' bow, with the leaves in the breeze.

An' waggle his whiskers an' raggedy hair,

An' bow to me in the winder there!

An' I'd peek out, an' he'd peek in

An' waggle his whiskers an' bow ag'in,

Ist like the leaves 'u'd wave in the breeze—

Old Man Whiskery-Whee-Kum-Wheeze!

An' Old Man Whiskery-Whee-Kum-Wheeze,

Seem-like, says to me: "See my bees

A-bringin' my dinner? An' see my cup

O' locus'-blossoms they've plum filled up?"

An' "*Um-yum, honey!*" wuz last he said,

An' waggled his whiskers an' bowed his head;

An' I yells, "Gimme some, won't you please,

Old Man Whiskery-Whee-Kum-Wheeze?"



IV  
PROGRAMS

## SUGGESTIVE PROGRAMS FOR OBSERVANCE OF RILEY DAY

### Program I

1. School in concert,  
    "Thine a universal love,  
    America!  
    Thine the cross and crown thereof,  
    America!  
    Aid us, then, to sing thy worth:  
    God hath builded, from thy birth,  
    The first nation of the earth—  
    America!"
2. Song by the school .....America.
3. Short paper, Riley's Patriotism.  
    (Consult the poems in the group Poems of Patriotism  
    and as many others as you can.)
4. Recitation, "The Boy Patriot."
5. Vocal solo, "The Messiah of Nations".....Sousa.
6. Selections from poems read by the teacher. Read  
    portions or the whole of the following:  
    "Liberty."  
    "Soldiers Here To-Day."  
    "The Quest of the Fathers."  
    "To the Boy with a Country."
7. Responsive exercises from Riley, "Who Bides His  
    Time."

Teacher or older pupil:

Who bides his time and day by day  
Faces defeat full patiently,  
And lifts a mirthful roundelay,  
However poor his fortunes be,—

Class:

He will not fail in any qualm  
Of poverty—the paltry dime  
It will grow golden in his palm,  
Who bides his time.

Teacher:

Who bides his time—he tastes the sweet  
Of honey in the saltest tear;  
And though he fares with slowest feet,

Class:

Joy runs to meet him, drawing near;  
The birds are heralds of his cause;  
And like a never-ending rhyme,  
The roadsides bloom in his applause,  
Who bides his time.

Teacher:

Who bides his time, and fevers not  
In the hot race that none achieves,

Class:

Shall wear cool-wreathen laurel, wrought  
With crimson berries in the leaves;  
And he shall reign a goodly king,  
And sway his hand o'er every clime,  
With peace writ on his signet-ring,  
Who bides his time.

8. An account of the Riley Ambulance.  
    (Consult the daily newspapers of recent date.)
9. Song, "Billy and His Drum".....Riley.
10. School in concert, "A Perfect Prayer"..... Riley.

Program II

1. Song by the school ..... America.
2. Recitation, "Our Kind of a Man" ..... Riley.
3. Short paper, Riley's Love of Nature.

(Mention some of the things the poet admires in nature, and prove your statements by lines from his poems. Mention some of the haunts tenderly spoken of by the poet.)

4. Vocal solo, "There Is Ever a Song Somewhere."
5. Recitation by the small children, "The Circus-Day Parade."  
(Have the children act the parts as they recite the poem.)
6. Selections from Riley's dialect poems read by the teacher. Read one or more from the following:

"Griggsby's Station."  
"Little Orphant Annie."  
"The Raggedy Man."  
"I Got to Face Mother To-Day."

7. Responsive exercise, "Let Something Good Be Said."  
(Have each row or class recite a stanza, the whole school joining in the refrain.)
8. Recitation, "The Man in the Moon" ..... Riley.
9. Vocal solo, "There Little Girl Don't Cry" ..... Sobieski.
10. Song by the school ..... Indiana.

A SUGGESTION

Encourage the older pupils to compose appreciative couplets or verses similar to the following:

"Your songs like dew upon the grass  
Have brought a miracle to pass,  
To stud our lives with gems of thought,  
We love you for the songs you've brought."  
*From a school girl.*

Or,

"When Riley-Day comes slippen' round  
And punkins ripe lay on the ground,  
I feel as if I'd like to send  
Some poetry to a dear old friend."

*From a school boy to Mr. Riley on his birthday in October, 1913.*



### AWAY

I CAN not say, and I will not say  
That he is dead.—He is just away!

With a cheery smile, and a wave of the hand,  
He has wandered into an unknown land,

And left us dreaming how very fair  
It needs must be, since he lingers there.

And you—O you, who the wildest yearn  
For the old-time step and the glad return,—

Think of him faring on, as dear  
In the love of There as the love of Here.