

THE POEMS AND PROSE
✿ ✿ SKETCHES OF ✿ ✿
JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY

THE BOOK OF
JOYOUS CHILDREN

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S
SONS, NEW YORK, 1906

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GRATEFULLY AND AFFECTIONATELY
INSCRIBED
TO
JOEL CHANDLER HARRIS

*YOU who to the rounded prime
Of a life of toil and stress,
Still have kept the morning-time
Of glad youth in heart and spirit,
So your laugh, as children hear it,
Seems their own, no less,—
Take this book of childish rhyme—
The Book of Joyous Children.*

*Their first happiness on earth
Here is echoed—their first glee:
Rich, in sooth, the volume's worth—
Not in classic lore, but rich in
The child-sagas of the kitchen;—
Therefore, take from me
To your heart of childish mirth
The Book of Joyous Children.*

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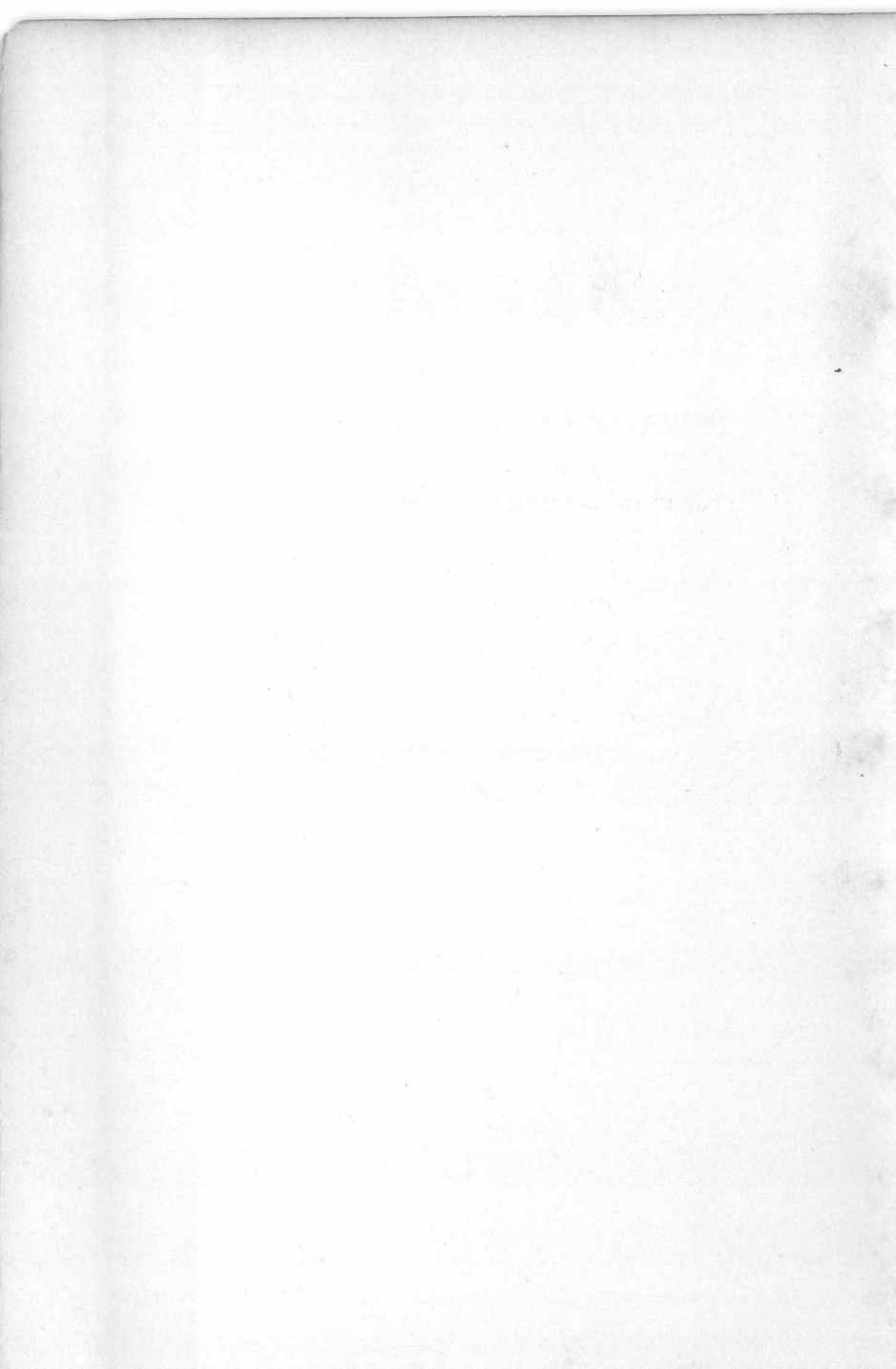
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THE BOOK
OF JOYOUS CHILDREN



THE BOOK OF JOYOUS CHILDREN

BOUND and bordered in leaf-green,
Edged with trellised buds and flowers
And glad Summer-gold, with clean
White and purple morning-glories
Such as suit the songs and stories
Of this book of ours,
Unrevised in text or scene,—
The Book of Joyous Children.

THE BOOK OF JOYOUS CHILDREN

Wild and breathless in their glee—
Lawless rangers of all ways
Winding through lush greenery
Of Elysian vales—the viny,
Bowery groves of shady, shiny
Haunts of childish days.
Spread and read again with me
The Book of Joyous Children.

What a whir of wings, and what
Sudden drench of dews upon
The young brows, wreathed, all unsought,
With the apple-blossom garlands
Of the poets of those far lands
Whence all dreams are drawn
Set herein and soiling not
The Book of Joyous Children.

THE BOOK OF JOYOUS CHILDREN

In their blithe companionship
Taste again, these pages through,
The hot honey on your lip
Of the sun-smit wild strawberry,
Or the chill tart of the cherry;
Kneel, all glowing, to
The cool spring, and with it sip
The Book of Joyous Children.

As their laughter needs no rule,
So accept their language, pray.—
Touch it not with any tool :
Surely we may understand it,—
As the heart has parsed or scanned it
Is a worthy way,
Though found not in any School
The Book of Joyous Children.

THE BOOK OF JOYOUS CHILDREN

Be a truant—know no place
Of prison under heaven's rim!
Front the Father's smiling face—
Smiling, that *you* smile the brighter
For the heavy hearts made lighter,
Since you smile with Him.
Take—and thank Him for His grace—
The Book of Joyous Children.

AN IMPROMPTU FAIRY-TALE

*WHEN I wuz ist a little bit o' weenty-teenty kid
I maked up a Fairy-tale, all by mysef, I did:—*

I

Wunst upon a time wunst
They wuz a Fairy King,
An' ever'thing he have wuz *gold*—
His clo'es, an' *ever'thing*!
An' all the other Fairies
In his goldun Palace-hall
Had to hump an' hustle—
'Cause he wuz bosst of all!

AN IMPROMPTU FAIRY-TALE

II

He have a goldun trumput,
An' when he blow' on that,
It 's a sign he want' his boots,
Er his coat er hat :
They 's a sign fer ever'thing,—
An' all the Fairies knowed
Ever' sign, an' come a-hoppin'
When the King blowed!

AN IMPROMPTU FAIRY-TALE

III

Wunst he blowed an' telled 'em all:

“Saddle up yer bees—

Fireflies is gittin' fat

An' sassy as you please!—

Guess we 'll go a-huntin'!”

So they hunt' a little bit,

Till the King blowed “Supper-time,”

Nen they all quit.