



Edgar A. Guest (1881-1959) was born in Birmingham, England, and brought to the U.S. by his father in 1891. He was known as the "Poet of the

People" for his sentimental verses. He became a writer of daily rhymes for the *Detroit Free Press* in the 1890's. His poems became so popular they became syndicated to newspapers throughout the country and made his name a household word. His first book *A Heap o' Livin'* (1916) became a best-seller and was followed by similar collections of his optimistic rhymes on such subjects as home, mother, and the virtue of hard work. Other volumes include *Poems of Patriotism*, *Just Folks*, *Path to Home* and *The Light of Faith*.

A PATRIOTIC WISH ~ Edgar Guest

I'd like to be the sort of man the flag could boast about;

I'd like to be the sort of man it cannot live without;

I'd like to be the type of man That really is American:

The head-erect and shoulders-square,
Clean-minded fellow, just and fair,
That all men picture when they see
The glorious banner of the free.

I'd like to be the sort of man the flag now typifies,

The kind of man we really want the flag to symbolize;

The loyal brother to a trust,
The big, unselfish soul and just,
The friend of every man oppressed,
The strong support of all that's best,
The sturdy chap the banner's meant,
Where'er it flies, to represent.

I'd like to be the sort of man the flag's supposed to mean,

The man that all in fancy see wherever it is seen,

The chap that's ready for a fight
Whenever there's a wrong to right,
The friend in every time of need,
The doer of the daring deed,
The clean and generous handed man
That is a real American.

LINES FOR A FLAG RAISING

CEREMONY ~ Edgar Guest

Full many a flag the breeze has kissed;
Through ages long the morning sun
Has risen over the early mist

The flags of men to look upon.

And some were red against the sky,
And some with colors true were gay,
And some in shame were born to die,
For Flags of hate must pass away.

Such symbols fall as men depart,
Brief is the reign of arrant might;
The vicious and the vile at heart
Give way in time before the right.

A flag is nothing in itself;

It but reflects the lives of men;

And they who lived and toiled for pelf
Went out as vipers in a den.

God cleans the sky from time to time
Of every tyrant flag that flies,

And every brazen badge of crime
Falls to the ground and swiftly dies.

Proud kings are mouldering in the dust;
Proud flags of ages past are gone;

Only the symbols of the just

Have lived and shall keep living on.

So long as we shall serve the truth,

So long as honor stamps us fair,

Each age shall pass unto its youth

Old Glory proudly flying there!

But if we fail our splendid past,

If we prove faithless, weak and base,

That age shall be our banner's last;

A fairer flag shall take its place.

This flag we fling unto the skies

Is but an emblem of our hearts,

And when our love of freedom dies,

Our banner with our race departs.

Full many a flag the breezes kiss,

Full many a flag the sun has known,

But none so bright and fair as this;

None quite so splendid as our own!

This tells the world that we are men

Who cling to manhood's ways and truth;

It is our soul's great voice and pen,

The strength of age, the guide of youth,

And it shall ever hold the sky

So long as we shall keep our trust;

But if our love of right shall die

Our Flag shall sink into the dust

SHOW THE FLAG ~ Edgar Guest

Show the flag and let it wave
As a symbol of the brave
Let it float upon the breeze
As a sign for each who sees
That beneath it, where it rides,
Loyalty to-day abides.
Show the flag and signify
That it wasn't born to die;
Let its colors speak for you
That you still are standing true,
True in sight of God and man
To the work that flag began.
Show the flag that all may see
That you serve humanity.
Let it whisper to the breeze
That comes singing through the trees
That whatever storms descend
You'll be faithful to the end.
Show the flag and let it fly,
Cheering every passer-by.
Men that may have stepped aside,
May have lost their old-time pride,
May behold it there, and then,
Consecrate themselves again.
Show the flag! The day is gone
When men blindly hurry on
Serving only gods of gold;
Now the spirit that was cold
Warms again to courage fine.
Show the flag and fall in line!

A CREED ~ Edgar Guest

Lord let me not in service lag.
Let me be worthy of our flag.
Let me remember when I'm tired,
The sons heroic who have died.

In freedom's name and in my way,
Teach me to be as brave as they.
In all I am, in all I do,
Unto our flag I would be true.

For God and country let me stand,
Unstained of soul, clean of hand.
Teach me to serve and guard and love,
The starry flag that flies above.

OUR DUTY TO OUR FLAG ~ Edgar Guest

Less hate and greed
Is what we need
And more of service true;
More men to love
The flag above
And keep it first in view.
Less boast and brag
About the flag,
More faith in what it means;
More heads erect,
More self-respect,
Less talk of war machines.
The time to fight
To keep it bright
Is not along the way,
Nor 'cross the foam,
But here at home
Within ourselves -- to-day.
'Tis we must love
That flag above
With all our might and main;
For from our hands,
Not distant lands,
Shall come dishonor's stain.
If that flag be
Dishonored, we
Have done it, not the foe;
If it shall fall
We first of all
Shall be to strike a blow.

MEMORIAL DAY ~ Edgar Guest

The finest tribute we can pay
Unto our hero dead to-day,
Is not a rose wreath, white and red,
In memory of the blood they shed;
It is to stand beside each mound,
Each couch of consecrated ground,
And pledge ourselves as warriors true
Unto the work they died to do.

Into God's valleys where they lie
At rest, beneath the open sky,
Triumphant now o'er every foe,
As living tributes let us go.
No wreath of rose or immortelles
Or spoken word or tolling bells
Will do to-day, unless we give
Our pledge that liberty shall live.

Our hearts must be the roses red
We place above our hero dead;
To-day beside their graves we must
Renew allegiance to their trust;
Must bare our heads and humbly say
We hold the Flag as dear as they,
And stand, as once they stood, to die
To keep the Stars and Stripes on high.

The finest tribute we can pay
Unto our hero dead to-day
Is not of speech or roses red,
But living, throbbing hearts instead,
That shall renew the pledge they sealed
With death upon the battlefield:
That freedom's flag shall bear no stain
And free men wear no tyrant's chain.

THE FLAG ON THE FARM~ Edgar Guest

We've raised a flagpole on the farm
And flung Old Glory to the sky,
And it's another touch of charm
That seems to cheer the passer-by,
But more than that, no matter where
We're laboring in wood and field,
We turn and see it in the air,
Our promise of a greater yield.
It whispers to us all day long,
From dawn to dusk: "Be true, be strong;
Who falters now with plow or hoe
Gives comfort to his country's foe."

It seems to me I've never tried
To do so much about the place,
Nor been so slow to come inside,
But since I've got the flag to face,
Each night when I come home to rest
I feel that I must look up there
And say: "Old Flag, I've done my best,
To-day I've tried to do my share."
And sometimes, just to catch the breeze,
I stop my work, and o'er the trees
Old Glory fairly shouts my way:
"You're shirking far too much to-day!"

The help have caught the spirit, too;
The hired man takes off his cap
Before the old red, white and blue,
Then to the horses says: "giddap!"
And starting bravely to the field
He tells the milkmaid by the door:
"We're going to make these acres yield
More than they've ever done before."
She smiles to hear his gallant brag,
Then drops a curtsy to the flag.
And in her eyes there seems to shine
A patriotism that is fine.

We've raised a flagpole on the farm
And flung Old Glory to the sky;
We're far removed from war's alarm,
But courage here is running high.
We're doing things we never dreamed
We'd ever find the time to do;
Deeds that impossible once seemed
Each morning now we hurry through.
The flag now waves above our toil
And sheds its glory on the soil,
And boy and man looks up to it
As if to say: "I'll do my bit!"

HEROES ~ Edgar Guest

There are different kinds of heroes; there are
some you hear about.
They get their pictures printed, and their
names the newsboys shout;
There are heroes known to glory that were not
afraid to die
In the service of their country and to keep the
flag on high;
There are brave men in the trenches, there are
brave men on the sea,
But the silent, quiet heroes also prove their
bravery.

I am thinking of a hero that was never known
to fame,
Just a manly little fellow with a very common
name;
He was freckle-faced and ruddy, but his head
was nobly shaped,
And he one day took the whipping that his
comrades all escaped.
And he never made a murmur, never
whimpered in reply;
He would rather take the censure than to stand
and tell a lie.

And I'm thinking of another that had courage
that was fine,
And I've often wished in moments that such
strength of will were mine.
He stood against his comrades, and he left
them then and there
When they wanted him to join them in a deed
that wasn't fair.
He stood alone, undaunted, with his little head
erect;
He would rather take the jeering than to lose
his self-respect.

And I know a lot of others that have grown to
manhood now,
Who have yet to wear the laurel that adorns
the victor's brow.
They have plodded on in honor through the
dusty, dreary ways,
They have hungered for life's comforts and
the joys of easy days,
But they've chosen to be toilers, and in this
their splendor's told:
They would rather never have it than to do
some things for gold.

A PATRIOTIC CREED ~ Edgar Guest

To serve my country day by day
At any humble post I may;
To honor and respect her flag,
To live the traits of which I brag;
To be American in deed
As well as in my printed creed.

To stand for truth and honest toil,
To till my little patch of soil,
And keep in mind the debt I owe
To them who died that I might know
My country, prosperous and free,
And passed this heritage to me.

I always must in trouble's hour
Be guided by the men in power;
For God and country I must live,
My best for God and country give;
No act of mine that men may scan
Must shame the name American.
To do my best and play my part,
American in mind and heart;
To serve the flag and bravely stand
To guard the glory of my land;
To be American in deed:
God grant me strength to keep this creed!