

*History of the Little Church on the Circle, Christ Church Parish, Indianapolis, 1837-1955.* By Eli Lilly. (Indianapolis: The Rector, Wardens and Vestrymen of Christ Protestant Episcopal Church of Indianapolis, 1957. Pp. xii, 376. Frontispiece, appendix, index, illustrations.)

This excellent history of an unusual organization, Christ Church, Indianapolis, has been written by a devout member. For the earlier years of the church's history, he has investigated the records of the church, its organizations, and its leaders. For the recent period, he brings to the work his own recollections of many years of experience as a leader in the organization. He understands its spiritual life as well as the problems of leadership, finances, and growth. Two features tend to distinguish the recent years. Christ Church is a downtown church which has refused to sell its site for a high price or to surrender to the hardship caused by the greater distances which its members must come in order to attend its services. Christ Church is also an endowed church. An endowment of a million dollars has been placed in the hands of the Bishop and governing body of the Diocesan Corporation in order that Christ Church can remain on Monument Circle in a state of good repair and that services can be rendered in perpetuity. To encourage the members to support their church and not depend upon the endowment, the unexpended balances from the income of the endowment may be used for other religious, educational, or charitable purposes.

A beautifully written opening chapter sketches very briefly the history of Christianity from the beginning to the founding of the Episcopal church in Indianapolis. Christ Church was founded in the capital city in 1837 and its own building was in use by the next year. The history of the early period was often involved in minor matters, such as the disturbance of congregational harmony by the marriage of a lady organist to a mulatto. The author has filled in the background of the religious story by inserting in the narrative from time to time incidents and brief statements of important events in secular history. At times these additions are very effective but on other occasions the relationship is not so clear.

Early in the Civil War the rector resigned because he was thought to be too sympathetic with the Confederacy. Nevertheless, the new church which had been erected in 1857 was paid for and consecrated on November 20, 1862. The peace of the church was further disturbed, however, when Joseph J. Bingham, son-in-law of Bishop George B. Upfold and editor of the Indianapolis *Sentinel*, was arrested with other prominent alleged members of the Sons of Liberty. Christ Church, however, came through the war years quite successfully, although differing attitudes in respect to the war may have played some part in the formation of a new Episcopal church in Indianapolis.

Since the Civil War, Christ Church has not only refused to leave the Circle, but has grown to be a large church, particularly when measured by its services. Excavation has even increased the physical size of the church building. Its title of the "Little Church on the Circle" should not hide the reality of its spiritual leadership of a large number

of communicants among whom are many important leaders of the capital city. The author's modesty in respect to his leadership in the church leaves this part of his history somewhat incomplete.

The illustrations are items of special interest. The frontispiece is a beautiful picture in color of the interior of Christ Church in 1953. Among excellent photographs of rectors, prominent members, and views of the church are five reproductions of graceful etchings by Frederick Polley, and two drawings by Christian Schrader. Among the more interesting illustrations are those of the Circle in 1873, the Old State House, and east and west Market streets. The author is to be congratulated upon having produced so fine a history.

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*Those Innocent Years: The Legacy and Inheritance of a Hero of the Victorian Era, James Whitcomb Riley.* By Richard Crowder. (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1957. Pp. 288. Frontispiece, index. \$4.50.)

There is no denying that James Whitcomb Riley remains, more than four decades after his death, a figure to conjure with. In the Hoosier heartland he is still a force, as Mr. Crowder makes clear in his prologue. There is a stop named for him on the Indiana Turnpike; there is a New York Central train named for him; there are Riley rooms in hotels and department stores in Indiana. Local poets still make their annual pilgrimage to his grave in Crown Hill Cemetery on crisp October afternoons at the time of his birthday.

Yet Riley is a poet whose works are taught in no college survey course in American literature. In grade schools where literary standards are lower children still read and recite his homespun verses, but for persons seriously concerned with literature he is a fossil in the quarries of nineteenth-century American taste. The problem that Mr. Crowder faced in writing this book was how to reconcile Riley the symbol with Riley the writer. As an academician himself, the biographer had to limn the Hoosier Hero without really thinking him a hero.

Mr. Crowder meets his problem squarely. He is concerned in *Those Innocent Years* with picturing the idolized Riley against his Victorian backdrop. In essence, Riley's popularity, which even disarmed such perceptive critics as William Dean Howells, sprang from his native talent as an actor and his exploitation of Indiana people and places at a time when local color was a popular literary staple. Moreover, when Riley conquered the eastern fleshpots, Hoosier egos expanded vicariously. Riley reflected accurately the image of nineteenth-century, midwestern America that his public held of itself. He gave his readers what they wanted—easy optimism and cracker-barrel wisdom. He consciously and unconsciously averted his gaze from the problems of man's relationship to man or man's relationship to God, the context out of which enduring classics always have been written.