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Jacob Piatt Dunn and Sarah A. Finley Wrigley**

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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE WORD HOOSIER; JOHN FINLEY ***

INDIANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS

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VOLUME IV NUMBER 2

THE WORD HOOSIER

By JACOB PIATT DUNN

AND

JOHN FINLEY

By MRS. SARAH A. WRIGLEY

(His Daughter)

INDIANAPOLIS

THE BOBBS-MERRILL COMPANY

1907

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THE WORD "HOOSIER."

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During the period of about three-quarters of a century in which the State of Indiana and its people have been designated by the word "Hoosier," there has been a large amount of discussion of the origin and meaning of the term, but with a notable lack of any satisfactory result. Some of these discussions have been almost wholly conjectural in character, but others have been more methodical, and of the latter the latest and most exhaustive—that of Mr. Meredith Nicholson^[1]—sums up the results in the statement "The origin of the term 'Hoosier' is not known with certainty." Indeed the statement might properly have been made much broader, for a consideration of the various theories offered leaves the unprejudiced investigator with the feeling that the real solution of the problem has not even been suggested. This lack of satisfactory conclusions, however, may be of some value, for it strongly suggests the probability that the various theorists have made some false assumption of fact, and have thus been thrown on a false scent, at the very beginning of their

investigations.

As is natural in such a case, there has been much of assertion of what was merely conjectural, often accompanied by the pioneer's effort to make evidence of his theory by the statement that he was "in Indiana at the time and knows the facts." The acceptance of all such testimony would necessarily lead to the adoption of several conflicting conclusions. In addition to this cause of error, there have crept into the discussion several misstatements of fact that have been commonly adopted, and it is evident that in order to reach any reliable conclusion now, it will be necessary to examine the facts critically and ascertain what are tenable.

The traditional belief in Indiana is that the word was first put in print by John Finley, in his poem "The Hoosiers Nest," and this is noted by Berry Sulgrove, who was certainly as well acquainted with Indiana tradition as any man of his time.^[2] This belief is at least probably well founded, for up to the present time no prior use of the word in print has been discovered. This poem attracted much attention at the time, and was unquestionably the chief cause of the widespread adoption of the word in its application to Indiana, for which reasons it becomes a natural starting-point in the inquiry.

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It is stated by Oliver H. Smith that this poem originally appeared as a New Year's "carriers' address" of the Indianapolis Journal in 1830,^[3] and this statement has commonly been followed by other writers, but this is clearly erroneous, as any one may see by inspection of the files of the Journal, for it printed its address in the body of the paper in 1830, and it is a totally different production. After that year it discontinued this practice and issued its addresses on separate sheets, as is commonly done at present. No printed copy of the original publication is in existence, so far as known, but Mr. Finley's daughter—Mrs. Sarah Wrigley, former librarian of the Morrison Library, at Richmond, Indiana—has a manuscript copy, in the author's handwriting, which fixes the date of publication as Jan. 1, 1833. There is no reason to question this date, although Mr. Finley states in his little volume of poems printed in 1860, that this poem was written in 1830. The poem as it originally appeared was never reprinted in full, so far as is known, and in that form it is entirely unknown to the present generation, although it has been reproduced in several forms, and in two of them by direct authority of the author.^[4] The author used his privilege of revising his work, and while he may have improved his poetry, he seriously marred its historical value.

As the manuscript copy is presumably a literal transcript of the original publication, with possibly the exception that the title may have been added at a later date, I reproduce it here in full:

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ADDRESS

Of the Carrier of the Indianapolis Journal,
January 1, 1833.

THE HOOSIER'S NEST.

Compelled to seek the Muse's aid,
Your carrier feels almost dismay'd
When he attempts in nothing less
Than verse his patrons to address,
Aware how very few excel
In the fair art he loves so well,
And that the wight who would pursue it
Must give his whole attention to it;
But, ever as his mind delights
To follow fancy's airy flights
Some object of terrestrial mien
Uncourteously obtrudes between
And rudely scatters to the winds
The tangled threads of thought he spins;
His wayward, wild imagination
Seeks objects of its own creation
Where Joy and Pleasure, hand in hand,
Escort him over "Fairylan,"
Till some imperious earth-born care
Will give the order, "As you were!"
From this the captious may infer
That I am but a groveling cur
Who would essay to pass for more
Than other people take me for,
So, lest my friends be led to doubt it,
I think I'll say no more about it,
But hope that on this noted day
My annual tribute of a lay
In dogg'el numbers will suffice
For such as are not over nice.

The great events which have occur'd

(And all have seen, or read or heard)
Within a year, are quite too many
For me to tarry long on any—
Then let not retrospection roam
But be confined to things at home.
A four years' wordy war just o'er
Has left us where we were before
Old Hick'ry triumphs,—we submit
(Although we thought another fit)
For all of Jeffersonian school
Wish the majority to rule—
Elected for another term
We hope his measures will be firm
But peaceful, as the case requires
To nullify the nullifiers—
And if executive constructions
By inf'rence prove the sage deductions
That Uncle Sam's "old Mother Bank"
Is managed by a foreign crank
And constituted by adoption
The "heir apparent" of corruption—
No matter if the facts will show
That such assertions are not so,
His Veto vengeance must pursue her
And all that are appended to her—
But tho' hard times may sorely press us,
And want, and debts, and duns distress us,
We'll share a part of Mammon's manna
By chart'ring Banks in Indiana.

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Blest Indiana! In whose soil
Men seek the sure rewards of toil,
And honest poverty and worth
Find here the best retreat on earth,
While hosts of Preachers, Doctors, Lawyers,
All independent as wood-sawyers,
With men of every hue and fashion,
Flock to this rising "Hoosher" nation.
Men who can legislate or plow,
Wage politics or milk a cow—
So plastic are their various parts,
Within the circle of their arts,
With equal tact the "Hoosher" loons,
Hunt offices or hunt raccoons.
A captain, colonel, or a 'squire,
Who would ascend a little higher,
Must court the people, honest souls.
He bows, caresses and cajoles,
Till they conceive he has more merit
Than nature willed he should inherit,
And, running counter to his nature,
He runs into the Legislature,
Where if he pass for wise and mute,
Or chance to steer the proper chute,
In half a dozen years or more
He's qualified for Congress floor.

I would not have the world suppose
Our public men are all like those,
For even in this infant State
Some may be wise, and good, and great.
But, having gone so far, 'twould seem
(Since "Hoosher" manners is the theme)
That I, lest strangers take exception,
Should give a more minute description,
And if my strains be not seraphic
I trust you'll find them somewhat graphic.

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Suppose in riding somewhere West
A stranger found a "Hoosher's" nest,
In other words, a buckeye cabin
Just big enough to hold Queen Mab in,
Its situation low but airy
Was on the borders of a prairie,
And fearing he might be benighted

He hailed the house and then alighted
The "Hoosher" met him at the door,
Their salutations soon were o'er;
He took the stranger's horse aside
And to a sturdy sapling tied;
Then, having stripped the saddle off,
He fed him in a sugar trough.
The stranger stooped to enter in,
The entrance closing with a pin,
And manifested strong desire
To seat him by the log heap fire,
Where half a dozen Hoosheroons,
With mush and milk, tincups and spoons,
White heads, bare feet and dirty faces,
Seemed much inclined to keep their places,
But Madam, anxious to display
Her rough and undisputed sway,
Her offspring to the ladder led
And cuffed the youngsters up to bed.
Invited shortly to partake
Of venison, milk and johnny-cake
The stranger made a hearty meal
And glances round the room would steal;
One side was lined with skins of "varments"
The other spread with divers garments,
Dried pumpkins overhead were strung
Where venison hams in plenty hung,
Two rifles placed above the door,
Three dogs lay stretched upon the floor,
In short, the domicile was rife,
With specimens of "Hoosher" life.

The host who centered his affections,
On game, and range, and quarter sections
Discoursed his weary guest for hours,
Till Somnus' ever potent powers
Of sublunary cares bereft them
And then I came away and left them.

No matter how the story ended
The application I intended
Is from the famous Scottish poet
Who seemed to feel as well as know it
"That buirdly chieils and clever hizzies
Are bred in sic a way as this is."
One more subject I'll barely mention
To which I ask your kind attention
My pockets are so shrunk of late
I can not nibble "Hoosher bait."

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It will be noted that throughout the manuscript the word is spelled "Hoosher" and is always put in quotation marks. Mrs. Wrigley informs me that her father had no knowledge of the origin of the word, but found it in verbal use when he wrote. She is confident, however, that he coined the word "hoosheroon," and the probability of this is increased by the fact that he did not quote it in his manuscript. In later editions of the poem he used the form "Hoosier." His original spelling shows that the word was not common in print, and several years passed before the spelling became fixed in its present form.

Although the word "Hoosier" has not been found in print earlier than January 1, 1833, it became common enough immediately afterwards. In fact the term seems to have met general approval, and to have been accepted by everybody. On January 8, 1833, at the Jackson dinner at Indianapolis, John W. Davis gave the toast, "The Hoosier State of Indiana."^[5] On August 3, 1833, the Indiana Democrat published the following prospectus of a new paper to be established by ex-Gov. Ray and partner:

PROSPECTUS
FOR PUBLISHING
THE HOOSIER
AT GREENCASTLE, INDIANA,
BY J. B. RAY & W. M. TANNEHILL.

We intend publishing a real *Newspaper*. To this promise, (though comprehensive enough) we would add, that it is intended to make the *moral* and political world contribute their full share, in enriching its columns.

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The arts and sciences, and agriculture and commerce, and literature shall all

receive a due portion of our care.

Left to our choice we might refrain from remark on presidential matters; but supposing, that you may require an intimation, suffice it to say, that our past preference has been for General Jackson and his administration; and we deem it premature to decide as to the future without knowing who are to be the candidates. Those men who shall sustain *Western measures*, shall be our men. Believing that there is but *one* interest in the *West*, and but little occasion for partyism beyond the investigation of principles and the conduct of functionaries, we would rather encourage *union* than excite *division*. We shall constantly keep in view the happiness, interest and prosperity of *all*. To the *good*, this paper will be as a shield; to the *bad*, a terror.

The Hoosier will be published weekly, at \$2 in advance and 25 cents for every three months delay of payment, per annum, on a good sheet of paper of superroyal size, to be enlarged to an imperial as the subscription will justify it.

This paper shall do honor to the people of Putnam county; and we expect to see them patronize us. The press is now at Greencastle. Let subscription papers be returned by the 1st of Sept. when the first number will appear.

On Oct. 26, 1833 the Indiana Democrat republished from the Cincinnati Republican a discussion of the origin and making of the word "Hoosier," which will be quoted in full hereafter, which shows that the term had then obtained general adoption. C. F. Hoffman, a traveler who passed through the northern part of the state, says, under date of Dec. 29, 1833:

I am now in the land of the *Hooshiers*, and find that long-haired race much more civilized than some of their Western neighbors are willing to represent them. The term "Hooshier," like that of Yankee, or Buckeye, first applied contemptuously, has now become a *soubriquet* that bears nothing invidious with it to the ear of an Indianian. ^[6]

On Jan. 4, 1834, the Indiana Democrat quoted from the Maysville, Ky., Monitor, "The *Hoosier* State like true democrats have taken the lead in appointing delegates to a National Convention etc." On May 10, 1834, the Indianapolis Journal printed the following editorial paragraph:

The Hooshier, started some time ago by Messrs. Ray and Tannehill, at Greencastle, has sunk into repose; and a new paper entitled the "Greencastle Advertiser," published by James M. Grooms, has taken its place.

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It is quite possible that this statement was made with the mischievous intent of stirring up Gov. Ray, for he was rather sensitive, and the Whigs seemed to delight in starting stories that called forth indignant denials from him. If this was the purpose it was successful, for on May 31 the Journal said:

We understand that another No. of the Hooshier has been recently received in town, and that it contains quite a bitter complaint about our remark a week or two ago, that it had "sunk into repose." We assure the Editor that we made the remark as a mere matter of news, without any intention to rejoice at the suspension of the paper. Several weeks had passed over without any paper being received, and it was currently reported that it had "blowed out" and therefore, as a mere passing remark, we stated that it had "sunk into repose." We have no objection that it should live a thousand years.

The new paper, however, did not last as long as that. It was sold in the fall of 1834 to J. W. Osborn who continued the publication, but changed the name, in the following spring, to the "Western Plough Boy." On Sept. 19, 1834, the Indiana Democrat had the following reference to Mr. Finley:

The poet *laureat* of Hoosierland and editor of the Richmond Palladium has threatened to cut acquaintance with B. of the Democrat!! The gentleman alluded to is the same individual that was unceremoniously robbed, by the Cincinnati Chronicle, of the credit of immortalizing our State in verse, by that justly celebrated epic of the "Hoosier's Nest."

On Nov. 29. 1834, the Vincennes Sun used the caption, "Hoosier and Mammoth Pumpkins," over an article reprinted from the Cincinnati Mirror concerning a load of big pumpkins from Indiana.

These extracts sufficiently demonstrate the general acceptance of the name in the two years following the publication of Finley's poem. The diversified spelling of the word at this period shows that it was new in print, and indeed some years elapsed before the now accepted spelling became universal. On Jan. 6, 1838 the Ft. Wayne Sentinel, republished the portion of the poem beginning with the words, "Blest Indiana, in her soil." It was very probable that this publication was made directly from an original copy of the carrier's address, for Thomas Tigar, one of the founders and editors of the Ft. Wayne Sentinel, had been connected with the Indianapolis press in January 1833, and the old-fashioned newspaperman was accustomed to preserve articles that struck his fancy, and reproduce them. In this publication the poem is

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given as in the Finley manuscript, except that the first two times the word occurs it is spelled "hoosier" and once afterward "hoosheer," the latter evidently a typographical error. At the other points it is spelled "hoosher." This original form of the word also indicates that there has been some change in the pronunciation, and this is confirmed from another source. For many years there have been periodical discussions of the origin of the word in the newspapers of the State, and in one of these, which occurred in the Indianapolis Journal, in 1860, when numerous contemporaries of Finley were still living, Hon. Jere Smith, a prominent citizen of Winchester, made this statement:

My recollection is that the word began to be used in this country in the fall of 1824, but it might have been as late as 1826 or 1827, when the Louisville & Portland canal was being made. I first heard it at a corn-husking. It was used in the sense of "rip-roaring," "half horse" and "half alligator," and such like backwoods coinages. It was then, and for some years afterwards, spoken as if spelled "husher," the "u" having the sound it has in "bush," "push," etc. In 1829, 1830 and 1831 its sound glided into "hoosher," till finally Mr. Finley's "Hoosier's Nest" made the present orthography and pronunciation classical, and it has remained so since.^[7]

Of course, this is not conclusive evidence that there was a change in pronunciation, for Mr. Smith's observation may have extended to one neighborhood only, and it may have taken on a variant pronunciation at the start, but his testimony, in connection with the changed spelling, is certainly very plausible.

There have been offered a number of explanations of the origin of the word, and naturally those most commonly heard are those that have been most extensively presented in print. Of the "authorities" on the subject perhaps the best known is Bartlett "Dictionary of Americanism's" which was originally published in 1838 and was widely circulated in that and the subsequent edition, besides being frequently quoted. Its statement is as follows:

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Hoosier. A nickname given at the West, to natives of Indiana.

A correspondent of the Providence Journal, writing from Indiana, gives the following account of the origin of this term:

Throughout all the early Western settlements were men who rejoiced in their physical strength, and on numerous occasions, at log-rollings and house-raisings, demonstrated this to their entire satisfaction. They were styled by their fellow-citizens, hushers, from their primary capacity to still their opponents. It was a common term for a bully throughout the West. The boatmen of Indiana were formerly as rude and primitive a set as could well belong to a civilized country, and they were often in the habit of displaying their pugilistic accomplishments upon the levee at New Orleans. Upon a certain occasion there one of these rustic professors of the "noble art" very adroitly and successfully practiced the "fancy" upon several individuals at one time. Being himself not a native of the Western world, in the exuberance of his exultation he sprang up, exclaiming, in a foreign accent, "I'm a hoosier, I'm a hoosier." Some of the New Orleans papers reported the case, and afterwards transferred the corruption of the word "husher" (hoosier) to all the boatmen from Indiana, and from thence to all her citizens. The Kentuckians, on the contrary, maintained that the nickname expresses the gruff exclamation of their neighbors, when one knocks at a door, etc., "Who's yere?"

Both of these theories have had adherents, and especially the latter, though nobody has ever found any basis for their historical features beyond the assertion of this newspaper correspondent. Nobody has ever produced any evidence of the use of the word "husher" as here indicated. It is not found in any dictionary of any kind—not even in Bartlett's. I have never found any indication of its former use or its present survival. And there is no greater evidence of the use of the expression "Who's yere?" when approaching a house. As a matter of fact, the common custom when coming to a house and desiring communication with the residents was to call, "Hallo the house!" And this custom is referred to in Finley's line:

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He hailed the house, and then alighted.

Furthermore, if a person who came to a house called "Who's yere?" what cause would there be for calling the people who lived in the house "who's yeres?" There is neither evidence nor reason to support it. But there is still a stronger reason for discarding these theories, and most others. To produce the change of a word or term by corruption, there must be practical identity of sound and accent. It was natural enough for the Indiana pioneers to convert "au poste" into "Opost." It was natural enough for the New Mexican settlers to change "Jicarilla" to "Hickory." It was natural enough for the Colorado cowboys to transform "Purgatoire river" to "Picketwire river." But there is scant possibility of changing "husher," or "who's yere"—as it would probably be spoken—into "hoosh-er." This consideration has led to the suggestion that the expression from which the word came was "who is yer?" but there is nothing to support this. The early settlers did not use "is" for "are" but usually pronounced the latter

"air." And they did not say "yer" for "you," though they often used it for "your."

Another theory, almost as popular as these, derives the word from "hussar," and this theory, in its various forms, harks back to a Col. John Jacob Lehmanowsky, who served under Napoleon, and afterwards settled in Indiana, where he became widely known as a lecturer on the Napoleonic wars. The tradition preserved in his family is that once while in Kentucky he became engaged in a dispute with some natives, and sought to settle the matter by announcing that he was a hussar. They understood him to say that he was a "hoosier," and thereafter applied that name to everybody from Indiana. This theory has several shapes, one being presented by the Rev. Aaron Wood, the pioneer preacher, thus:

The name "hoosier" originated as follows: When the young men of the Indiana side of the Ohio river went to Louisville, the Kentucky men boasted over them, calling them "New Purchase Greenies," claiming to be a superior race, composed of half horse, half alligator, and tipped off with snapping turtle. These taunts produced fights in the market house and streets of Louisville. On one occasion a stout bully from Indiana was victor in a fist fight, and having heard Colonel Lehmanowsky lecture on the "Wars of Europe," who always gave martial prowess to the German Hussars in a fight, pronouncing hussars "hoosiers" the Indianian, when the Kentuckian cried "enough," jumped up and said: "I am a Hoosier," and hence the Indianians were called by that name. This was its true origin. I was in the State when it occurred.^[8]

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Unfortunately, others are equally positive as to their "true origins." The chief objection that has been urged to this theory is that Lehmanowsky was not in the State when the term began to be used, and the evidence on this point is not very satisfactory. His son, M. L. Lehmanowsky, of DePauw, Ind., informs me that his father came to this country in 1815, but he is unable to fix the date of his removal to Indiana. Published sketches of his life^[9] state that he was with Napoleon at Waterloo; that he was afterwards imprisoned at Paris; that he escaped and made his way to New York; that he remained for several years at New York and Philadelphia where he taught school; that he came to Rush county, Indiana, and there married and bought a farm; that after bearing him seven children his wife died; that he then removed to Harrison county, arriving there in 1837. These data would indicate that he came to Indiana sometime before 1830. The date of the deed to his farm, as shown by the Rush county records, is April 30, 1835. Aside from the question of date, it is not credible that a Polish officer pronounced "hussar" "hoosier," or that from the use of that word by a known foreigner a new term could spring into existence, and so quickly be applied to the natives of the State where he chanced to live.

To these theories of the origin of the word may be added one communicated to me by James Whitcomb Riley, whose acquaintance with dialect makes him an authority on the subject. It is evidently of later origin than the others, and not so well known to the public. A casual conversation happening to turn to this subject, he said: "These stories commonly told about the origin of the word 'Hoosier' are all nonsense. The real origin is found in the pugnacious habits of the early settlers. They were very vicious fighters, and not only gouged and scratched, but frequently bit off noses and ears. This was so ordinary an affair that a settler coming into a bar room on a morning after a fight, and seeing an ear on the floor, would merely push it aside with his foot and carelessly ask, 'Who's year?'" I feel safe in venturing the opinion that this theory is quite as plausible, and almost as well sustained by historical evidence, as any of the others.

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In this connection it is of interest to note the earliest known discussion of the meaning of the word, which has been referred to as republished in the Indiana Democrat of Oct. 26, 1833. It is as follows:

HOOSHIER.

The appellation of Hooshier has been used in many of the Western States, for several years, to designate, in a good natural way, an inhabitant of our sister state of Indiana. Ex-Governor Ray has lately started a newspaper in Indiana, which he names "The Hoshier" (sic). Many of our ingenious native philologists have attempted, though very unsatisfactorily, to explain this somewhat singular term. Mordecai M. Noah, in the late number of his Evening Star, undertakes to account for it upon the faith of a rather apocryphal story of a recruiting officer, who was engaged during the last war, in enlisting a company of HUSSARS, whom by mistake he unfortunately denominated Hooshiers. Another etymologist tells us that when the state of Indiana was being surveyed, the surveyors, on finding the residence of a squatter, would exclaim "*Who's here*,"—that this exclamation, abbreviated to *Hooshier* was, in process of time, applied as a distinctive appellation to the original settlers of that state, and, finally to its inhabitants generally. Neither of these hypotheses are deserving any attention. The word Hooshier is indebted for its existence to that once numerous and unique, but now extinct class of mortals called the Ohio Boatmen.—In its original acceptation it was equivalent to "Ripstaver," "Scrouger," "Screamer," "Bulger," "Ring-tailroarer," and a hundred others, equally expressive, but which have never attained to such a respectable

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standing as itself. By some caprice which can never be explained, the appellation Hooshier became confined solely to such boatmen as had their homes upon the Indiana shore, and from them it was gradually applied to all the Indianians, who acknowledge it as good naturedly as the appellation of Yankee—Whatever may have been the original acceptance of Hooshier this we know, that the people to whom it is now applied, are amongst the bravest, most intelligent, most enterprising, most magnanimous, and most democratic of the Great West, and should we ever feel disposed to quit the state in which we are now sojourning, our own noble Ohio, it will be to enroll ourselves as adopted citizens in the land of the "HOOSHIER."—Cincinnati Republican.

Here is a presentation of the question, ten months after Finley's publication, covering most of the ground that has since been occupied. The "hussar" theory is carried back to the war of 1812, long before Col. Lehmanowsky was in this country. The "who's here" theory is carried back to the government surveys, although it is certain that there were few, if any, "squatters" on government lands in Indiana before the surveys were made. The "husher" theory, in embryo, is presented in the writers theory, which is apparently conjectural, except perhaps as evidence that the word was applied to the rather rough-looking class of flat-boatmen who made their trips down the Ohio and Mississippi.

There has been notable tendency to locate these stories at Louisville, and to connect them with the building of the Louisville and Portland canal which was under construction from 1826 to 1831, inclusive. The "husher" story is located there by several of its advocates. Another story, of recent origin, coming from one Vanblaricum, was recounted by Mr. George Cottman in the Indianapolis Press of February 6, 1901. Vanblaricum claimed that while passing through southern Tennessee he met a man named Hoosier, and this man said that a member of his family had a contract on the construction of the Louisville and Portland canal; that he employed his laborers from the Indiana side, and the neighbors got to calling them "Hoosier's men," from which the name "Hoosier" came to be applied to Indiana men generally. Vanblaricum could not give the address of his informant, or any information tending to confirm the story. At my request Mr. Louis Ludlow, Washington correspondent of the Indianapolis Sentinel, made inquiry of the representatives from the southern districts of Tennessee, and learned that none of them had ever heard of such a story, or knew of the name "Hoosier" in his district. An examination of the directories of Atlanta, Augusta, Baltimore, Chattanooga, Cincinnati, Kansas City, Little Rock, Louisville, Memphis, Nashville, New Orleans, Philadelphia, Richmond, St. Louis, St. Joseph, Savannah, Wheeling, Wilmington, the District of Columbia, and the state of Tennessee, failed to reveal any such name as Hoosier. As it is hardly possible for a family name to disappear completely, we may reasonably drop the Vanblaricum story from consideration. The same conclusion will also apply to the story of a Louisville baker, named Hoosier, from whom the term is sometimes said to have come. It is now known that the occurrence of "Hoosier" as a Christian name in the minutes of an early Methodist conference in Indiana, was the result of misspelling. The members name was "Ho-si-er (accent on the second syllable) J. Durbin," and the secretary in writing it put in an extra "o." It may be mentioned in this connection that "Hooser" is a rather common family name in the South, and that "Hoos" is occasionally found.

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One of the most interesting wild-goose chases I ever indulged in was occasioned by a passage in the narrative of Francis and Theresa Pulszky, entitled "White, Red and Black." The Pulskys accompanied Kossuth on his trip through the States and visited Indianapolis in 1852. In the account of this visit Mrs. Pulszky says:

Governor Wright is a type of the Hoosiers, and justly proud to be one of them. I asked him wherefrom his people had got this name. He told me that "Hoosa" is the Indian name for maize, the principal produce of the State.

This opened a new vista. The names "Coosa" and "Tallapoosa" came to memory. How simple! The Indiana flatboatmen taking their loads of corn down the river were called "Hoosa men" by the Southern Indians, and so the name originated. But a search of Indian vocabularies showed no such name for maize or for anything else. The nearest approaches to it are "Hoosac" and "Housatonic," which are both probably corruptions from the same stem, "awass," meaning beyond or further. The latter word is supposed to be the Indian "wassatinak," which is the New England form of the Algonquin "awassadinang," meaning beyond the mountains.

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In 1854 Amelia M. Murray visited Indianapolis, and was for a time the guest of Governor Wright. In her book entitled "Letters from the United States, Cuba and Canada" (page 324), she says:

Madame Pfeiffer (she evidently meant Mrs. Pulszky, for Madame Pfeiffer did not come here and does not mention the subject) mistook Governor Wright, when she gave from his authority another derivation for the word "Hoosier." It originated in a settler's exclaiming "Huzza," upon gaining the victory over a marauding party from a neighboring State.

With these conflicting statements, I called on Mr. John C. Wright, son of Governor Wright. He remembered the visits of the Pulszkys and Miss Murray, but knew nothing of Madame Pfeiffer. He said: "I often heard my father discuss this subject. His theory was that the Indiana flatboatmen were athletic and pugnacious, and were accustomed, when on the levees

of the Southern cities, to 'jump up and crack their heels together' and shout 'Huzza,' whence the name of 'huzza fellows.' We have the same idea now in 'hoorah people,' or 'a hoorah time.'"

It will be noted that all these theories practically carry three features in common:

1. They are alike in the idea that the word was first applied to a rough, boisterous, uncouth, illiterate class of people, and that the word originally implied this character.
2. They are alike in the idea that the word came from the South, or was first applied by Southern people.
3. They are alike in the idea that the word was coined for the purpose of designating Indiana people, and was not in existence before it was applied to them. [Pg 19]

If our primary suspicion be correct, that all the investigators and theorists have followed some false lead from the beginning, it will presumably be found in one of these three common features. Of the three, the one that would more probably have been derived from assumption than from observation is the third. If we adopt the hypothesis that it is erroneous, we have left the proposition that the word "hoosier," was in use at the South, signifying a rough or uncouth person, before it was applied to Indiana; and if this were true it would presumably continue to be used there in that sense. Now this condition actually exists, as appears from the following evidence.

In her recent novel, "In Connection with the De Willoughby Claim," Mrs. Frances Hodgson Burnett refers several times to one of her characters—a boy from North Carolina—as a "hoosier." In reply to an inquiry she writes to me:

The word "hoosier" in Tennessee and North Carolina seems to imply, as you suggest, an uncouth sort of rustic. In the days when I first heard it my idea was also that—in agreement with you again—it was a slang term. I think a Tennessean or Carolinian of the class given to colloquialisms would have applied the term "hoosier" to any rustic person without reference to his belonging to any locality in particular. But when I lived in Tennessee I was very young and did not inquire closely into the matter.

Mrs. C. W. Bean, of Washington, Ind., furnishes me this statement:

In the year 1888, as a child, I visited Nashville, Tenn. One day I was walking down the street with two of my aunts, and our attention was attracted by a large number of mountaineers on the streets, mostly from northern Georgia, who had come in to some sort of society meeting. One of my aunts said, "What a lot of hoosiers there are in town." In surprise I said, "Why I am a Hoosier." A horrified look came over my aunt's face and she exclaimed, "For the Lord's sake, child, don't let any one here know you're a hoosier." I did not make the claim again for on inspection the visitors proved a wild-looking lot who might be suspected of never having seen civilization before. [Pg 20]

Miss Mary E. Johnson, of Nashville, Tenn., gives the following statement:

I have been familiar with the use of the word "hoosier" all my life, and always as meaning a rough class of country people. The idea attached to it, as I understand it, is not so much that they are from the country, as that they are green and gawky. I think the sense is much the same as in "hayseed," "jay" or "yahoo."

Hon. Thetus W. Sims, Representative in Congress from the Tenth Tennessee district, says:

I have heard all my life of the word "hoosier" as applied to an ignorant, rough, unpolished fellow.

Mrs. Samuel M. Deal (formerly Miss Mary L. Davis of Indianapolis) gives me this statement:

While visiting Columbia, S. C., I was walking one day with a young gentleman, and we passed a rough looking countryman, "My! what a hoosier," exclaimed my escort. "That is a very noble term to apply to such an object," I said. "Why so," he inquired. "Why I am a Hoosier—all Indiana people are," I answered. "Oh! we do not use it in that sense here," he rejoined. "With us a hoosier means a jay."

The following three statements were furnished to me by Mr. Meredith Nicholson, who collected them some months since:

John Bell Henneman, of the department of English, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, writes:

The word "hoosier" is generally used in Virginia, South Carolina, Tennessee as an equivalent for "a country hoodlum," "a rough, uncouth countryman," etc. The idea of "country" is always attached to it in my mind, with a degree of "uncouthness" added. I simply speak from my general understanding of the term as heard used in the States mentioned above.

Mr. Raymond Weeks, of Columbia, Mo., writes:

Pardon my delay in answering your question concerning the word "hoosier" in this section. The word means a native of Indiana, and has a rare popular sense of a backwoodsman, a rustic. One hears: "He is a regular hoosier."

Mrs. John M. Judah, of Memphis, writes:

About the word "Hoosier"—one hears it in Tennessee often. It always means rough, uncouth, countrified. "I am a Hoosier," I have said, and my friends answer bewilderingly, "But all Indiana-born are Hoosiers," I declare, "What nonsense!" is the answer generally, but one old politician responded with a little more intelligence on the subject: "You Indianians should forget that. It has been untrue for many years." In one of Mrs. Evans's novels—"St. Elmo," I think—a noble philanthropic young Southern woman is reproached by her haughty father for teaching the poor children in the neighborhood—"a lot of hoosiers," he calls them. I have seen it in other books, too, but I can not recall them. In newspapers the word is common enough, in the sense I referred to.

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It is scarcely possible that this widespread use of the word in this general sense could have resulted if the word had been coined to signify a native of Indiana, but it would have been natural enough, if the word were in common use as slang in the South, to apply it to the people of Indiana. Many of the early settlers were of a rough and ready character, and doubtless most of them looked it in their long and toilsome emigration, but, more than that, it is an historical fact that about the time of the publication of Finley's poem there was a great fad of nicknaming in the West, and especially as to the several States. It was a feature of the humor of the day, and all genial spirits "pushed it along." A good illustration of this is seen in the following passage from Hoffman's "Winter in the West"^[10] referred to above:

There was a long-haired "hooshier" from Indiana, a couple of smart-looking "suckers" from the southern part of Illinois, a keen-eyed, leather-belted "badger" from the mines of Ouisconsin, and a sturdy, yoemanlike fellow, whose white capot, Indian moccasins and red sash proclaimed, while he boasted a three years' residence, the genuine "wolverine," or naturalized Michigianian. Could one refuse to drink with such a company? The spokesman was evidently a "red horse" from Kentucky, and nothing was wanting but a "buckeye" from Ohio to render the assemblage as complete as it was select.

This same frontier jocularly furnishes an explanation for the origin of several of the theories of the derivation of the name. If an assuming sort of person, in a crowd accustomed to the use of "hoosier" in its general slang sense, should pretentiously announce that he was a "husher," or a "hussar," nothing would be more characteristically American than for somebody to observe, "He is a hoosier, sure enough." And the victim of the little pleasantry would naturally suppose that the joker had made a mistake in the term. But the significance of the word must have been quite generally understood, for the testimony is uniform that it carried its slurring significance from the start. Still it was not materially more objectionable than the names applied to the people of other States, and it was commonly accepted in the spirit of humor. As Mr. Finley put it, in later forms of his poem:

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With feelings proud we contemplate
The rising glory of our State;
Nor take offense by application
Of its good-natured appellation.

It appears that the word was not generally known throughout the State until after the publication of "The Hoosiers' Nest," though it was known earlier in some localities, and these localities were points of contact with the Southern people. And this was true as to Mr. Finley's locality, for the upper part of the Whitewater valley was largely settled by Southerners, and from the Tennessee-Carolina mountain region, where the word was especially in use. Such settlements had a certain individuality. In his "Sketches" (page 38) the Rev. Aaron Wood says:

Previous to 1830 society was not homogeneous, but in scraps, made so by the eclectic affinity of race, tastes, sects and interest. There was a wide difference in the domestic habits of the families peculiar to the provincial gossip, dialect and tastes of the older States from which they had emigrated.

The tradition in my own family, which was located in the lower part of the Whitewater valley, is that the word was not heard there until "along in the thirties." In that region it always carried the idea of roughness or uncouthness, and it developed a derivative—"hoosieri"—which was used as an adjective or adverb to indicate something that was rough, awkward or shiftless. Testimony as to a similar condition in the middle part of the Whitewater valley is furnished in the following statement, given me by the Rev. T. A. Goodwin:

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In the summer of 1830 I went with my father, Samuel Goodwin, from our home at Brookville to Cincinnati. We traveled in an old-fashioned one-horse Dearborn wagon. I was a boy of twelve years and it was a great occasion for me. At Cincinnati I had a fip for a treat, and at that time there was nothing I relished so much as one of those big pieces of gingerbread that were served as refreshment on muster days, Fourth of July and other gala occasions, in

connection with cider. I went into a baker's shop and asked for "a fip's worth of gingerbread." The man said, "I guess you want hoosier-bait," and when he produced it I found that he had the right idea. That was the first time I ever heard the word "hoosier," but in a few years it became quite commonly applied to Indiana people. The gingerbread referred to was cooked in square pans—about fifteen inches across, I should think—and with furrows marked across the top, dividing it into quarter-sections. A quarter-section sold for a fip, which was 6-1/4 cents. It is an odd fact that when Hosier J. Durbin joined the Indiana Methodist Conference, in 1835, his name was misspelled "Hoosier" in the minutes, and was so printed. The word "Hoosier" always had the sense of roughness or uncouthness in its early use.

At the time this statement was made, neither Mr. Goodwin nor I knew of the existence of the last four lines of Finley's poem, in which this same term "hoosier-bait" occurs, they being omitted in all the ordinary forms of the poem. The derivation of this term is obvious, whether "bait" be taken in its sense of a lure or its sense of food. It was simply something that "hoosiers" were fond of, and its application was natural at a time when the ideal of happiness was "a country-boy with a hunk of gingerbread."

After the word had been applied to Indiana, and had entered on its double-sense stage, writers who were familiar with both uses distinguished between them by making it a proper noun when Indiana was referred to. An illustration of this is seen in the writings of J. S. Robb, author of "The Swamp Doctor in the Southwest" and other humorous sketches, published in 1843. He refers to Indiana as "the Hoosier state," but in a sketch of an eccentric St. Louis character he writes thus:

One day, opposite the Planter's House, during a military parade, George was engaged in selling his edition of the Advocate of Truth, when a tall hoosier, who had been gazing at him with astonishment for some time, roared out in an immoderate fit of laughter.

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"What do you see so funny in me to laugh at?" inquired George.

"Why, boss," said the hoosier, "I wur jest a thinkin' ef I'd seed you out in the woods, with all that har on, they would a been the d—dest runnin' done by this 'coon ever seen in them diggins—you're ekill to the elephant! and a leetle the haryest small man I've seen scart up lately."

Unfortunately, however, not many writers were familiar with the double use of the word, and the distinction has gradually died out, while persistent assertions that the word was coined to designate Indiana people have loaded on them all the odium for the significance that the word has anywhere.

The real problem of the derivation of the word "hoosier," is not a question of the origin of a word formed to designate the State of Indiana and its people, but of the origin of a slang term widely in use in the South, signifying an uncouth rustic. There seems never to have been any attempt at a rational philological derivation, unless we may so account Mr. Charles G. Leland's remarks in Barriere and Leland's "Dictionary of Slang, Jargon and Cant," which are as follows:

Hoosier (American). A nickname given to natives of Indiana. Bartlett cites from the Providence journal a story which has the appearance of being an after-manufacture to suit the name, deriving hoosier from "husher—from their primary capacity to still their opponents." He also asserts that the Kentuckians maintained that the nickname expresses the exclamation of an Indian when he knocks at a door and exclaims "Who's yere?" However, the word originally was not hoosier at all, but hoosieroon, or hoosheroon, hoosier being an abbreviation of this. I can remember that in 1834, having read of hoosiers, and spoken of them a boy from the West corrected me, and said that the word was properly hoosieroon. This would indicate a Spanish origin.

The source of Mr. Leland's error is plain. "Hoosieroon" was undoubtedly coined by Mr. Finley to designate a Hoosier child, and what the boy probably told Mr. Leland was that the name to apply properly to him would be Hoosieroon. But that alone would not dispose wholly of the Spanish suggestion, for "oon" or "on" is not only a Spanish ending, but is a Spanish diminutive indicating blood relation. In reality, however, Mr. Finley did not understand Spanish, and the ending was probably suggested to him by quadron and octoron, which, of course, were in general use. There is no Spanish word that would give any suggestion of "hoosier." The only other language of continental Europe that could be looked to for its origin would be French, but there is no French word approaching it except, perhaps, "huche," which means a kneading trough, and there is no probability of derivation from that.

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In fact, "hoosier" carries Anglo-Saxon credentials. It is Anglo-Saxon in form and Anglo-Saxon in ring. If it came from any foreign language, it has been thoroughly anglicized. And in considering its derivation it is to be remembered that the Southerners have always had a remarkable faculty for creating new words and modifying old ones. Anyone who has noted the advent of "snollygoster" in the present generation, or has read Longstreet's elucidation of "fescue," "abisselfa," and "anpersant"^[11] will readily concede that. And in this connection it is

to be observed that the word "yahoo" has long been in use in Southern slang, in almost exactly the same sense as "hoosier," and the latter word may possibly have developed from its last syllable. We have a very common slang word in the North—"yap"—with the same signification, which may have come from the same source, though more probably from the provincial English "yap," to yelp or bark. "Yahoo" is commonly said to have been coined by Swift, but there is a possibility that it was in slang use in his day.

It is very probable that the chief cause of the absence of conjectures of the derivation of "Hoosier" from an English stem was the lack in our dictionaries of any word from which it could be supposed to come, and it is a singular fact that in our latest dictionaries—the Standard and the Century—there appears the word "hooze," which has been in use for centuries in England. It is used now to denote a disease common to calves, similar to the gapes in chickens, caused by the lodgement of worms in the throat. The symptoms of this disease include staring eyes, rough coat with hair turned backward, and hoarse wheezing. So forlorn an aspect might readily suggest giving the name "hooser" or "hoosier" to an uncouth, rough-looking person. In this country, for some reason, this disease has been known only by the name of the worm that causes it—"strongylus micrurus"—it sounds very much like "strangle us marcus" as the veterinarians pronounce it—but in England "hooze" is the common name. This word is from a very strong old stem. Halliwell, in his "Dictionary of Archaic and Provincial Words," gives "hooze" and "hoors," and states that "hoos" occurs in the "Promptorium Parvulorum," and "hoozy" in the "Cornwall Glossary," the latter being used also in Devonshire. Palmer, in his "Folk-Etymology," says that "hoarst—a Lincolnshire word for a cold on the chest, as if that which makes one hoarse," is a corruption of the Old English "host," a cough, Danish "hoste," Dutch "hoeste," Anglo-Saxon "hweost," a wheeziness; and refers to Old English "hooze," to cough, and Cleveland "hooze," to wheeze. Descriptions of the effect of hooze on the appearance of animals will be found in Armatage's "Cattle Doctor," and in the "Transactions of the Highland Society of Scotland," fourth series, Vol. 10, at page 206.

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There is also a possibility of a geographical origin for the word, for there is a coast parish of Cheshire, England, about seven miles west of Liverpool, named Hoose. The name probably refers to the cliffs in the vicinity, for "hoo," which occurs both in composition and independently in old English names of places, is a Saxon word signifying high. However, this is an obscure parish, and no especial peculiarity of the people is known that would probably give rise to a distinctive name for them.

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There is one other possibility that is worthy of mention—that the word may come to us through England from the Hindoo. In India there is in general use a word commonly written "huzur," which is a respectful form of address to persons of rank or superiority. In "The Potter's Thumb" Mrs. Steel writes it "hoozur." Akin to it is "housha," the title of a village authority in Bengal. It may seem impossible that "hoosier" could come from so far off a source, and yet it is almost certain that our slang word "fakir," and its derivative verb "fake," came from the Hindoo through England, whither for many years people of all classes have been returning from Indian service. It is even more certain that the word "khaki" was introduced from India, and passed into general use in English and American nurseries long before khaki-cloth was known to us.

As a matter of fact, words pass from one language to another in slang very readily. For example, throughout England and America a kidnapper is said in thieves' slang to be "on the kinchin lay," and it can scarcely be questioned that this word is direct from the German "kindchen." The change in meaning from "huzur" to "hoosier" would be explicable by the outlandish dress and looks of the Indian grandees from a native English standpoint, and one might naturally say of an uncouth person, "He looks like a huzur."

It is not my purpose to urge that any one of these suggested possibilities of derivation is preferable to the other, or to assert that there may not be other and more rational ones. It is sufficient to have pointed out that there are abundant sources from which the word may have been derived. The essential point is that Indiana and her people had nothing whatever to do with its origin or its signification. It was applied to us in raillery, and our only connection with it is that we have meekly borne it for some three score years and ten, and have made it widely recognized as a badge of honor, rather than a term or reproach.

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Addendum, February, 1907. The greater part of the preceding was published in the Indianapolis News of Aug. 23 and 30, 1902. Afterwards I rewrote and enlarged it. Since then there have appeared two publications which threw some additional light on the subject. One of these is an account of Col. Lehmanowsky, purporting to be autobiographical, published under the title, "Under Two Captains," by Rev. W. A. Sadtler, Ph. D., of Philadelphia. This demonstrates that Lehmanowsky believed he originated the word, for he gives the following account of it:

In this connection I may mention an amusing incident that occurred somewhat later in a town in Kentucky, where I happened for a day or two. There was a drunken brawl in progress on the street, and as quite a number were involved in it, the people with whom I was speaking began to be alarmed. I remarked just then that a few hussars would soon quiet them. My remark was caught up

by some bystander, and the word hussar construed to mean the men of the State of Indiana (from which I had just come), and thus the word "Hoosier" came into existence. Such is the irony of fate! Learned men have labored long to introduce some favored word of the most approved classic derivation, and as a rule have failed. Here a chance word of mine, miscalled by an ignorant loafer, catches the popular fancy and passes into Literature.^[12]

At the same time he furnishes conclusive evidence that he did not originate it, for he says that he did not leave Washington for the West until the spring of 1833; that he went as far as Ohio with his family and passed the winter of 1833-4 in the state,^[13] reaching Indiana the next spring, or more than a year after "The Hoosier's Nest" had appeared in print. His story, as given above, locates the incident at a still later date.

The other publication is the third volume of The English Dialect Dictionary, in which appears the following: .

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"HOOZER, Cum. 4 (hu-zer) said of anything unusually large."

The "Cum 4" is a reference to "A Glossary of the Words and Phrases pertaining to the Dialect of Cumberland;" edition of 1899.

Although I had long been convinced that "hoosier," or some word closely resembling it, must be an old English dialect or slang word, I had never found any trace of a similar substantive with this ending until in this publication, and, in my opinion, this word "hoozer" is the original form of our "hoosier." It evidently harks back to the Anglo-Saxon "hoo" for its derivation. It might naturally signify a hill-dweller or highlander as well as something large, but either would easily give rise to the derivative idea of uncouthness and rusticity.

There is a suggestiveness in the fact that it is Cumberland dialect. The very center of hoosierdom in the South is the Cumberland Plateau with its associated Cumberland Mountains, Cumberland River, Cumberland Gap, and Cumberland Presbyterianism. The name Cumberland in these, however, is honorary in origin, the river and mountains having been named for that Duke of Cumberland who is known to the Scotch as "The Butcher of Culloden." But many of the settlers of this region, or their immediate forebears, were from Cumberland county, England, and so "hoozer" was a natural importation to the region. Thence it was probably brought to us by their migratory descendants, many of whom settled in the upper Whitewater Valley—the home of John Finley.

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JOHN FINLEY.

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For many years Mr. Finley was known as "The Hoosier Poet," an appellation since transferred to James Whitcomb Riley, who wrote of him:

"The voice that sang the Hoosier's Nest—
Of Western singers first and best—"

Readers are always interested in the development of an author. They naturally inquire of his ancestry, early environment and education: how much was due to native talent, how much acquired by association with kindred spirits.

Mr. Finley's ancestors were Scotch-Irish Presbyterians; the family was driven from Scotland to Ireland by religious persecution, and failing to find the religious and political freedom they sought the seven brothers emigrated to America, in 1724. Samuel Finley became president of Princeton College; John explored the western wilds with Daniel Boone, and the youngest brother, William, settled on a farm in Western Pennsylvania. His son, Andrew, married and removed to Brownsburg, Rockridge county, Virginia, where John Finley was born, January 11, 1797.

Andrew Finley was a merchant in the village, but the family occupied a farm in a beautiful valley near the Blue Ridge Mountains. This mountain range could not fail to impress a child of poetic temperament—the blue haze veiling its summit, the drifting clouds that clung to its side, the rising sun dispersing the mists in the valley, or, the shadows creeping over valley and mountain as the setting sun disappeared beyond the western horizon, all left lasting pictures in his memory and influenced his after life.

His school days were cut short by his father's financial reverses, following the capture of a cargo of flour by the British during the war of 1812. This misfortune threw the boy of sixteen on his own resources, and, as nothing better offered he accepted a position with a relative who was conducting a tanning and currying business in Greenbrier county. This was a most humiliating alternative for a young Virginian whose surroundings led him to look upon manual labor as only fit for slaves, but it was part of the discipline of life which resulted in marked regard for all practical workmen, and an abhorrence of the institution of slavery.

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In 1816 he joined an emigrant company and with fifty dollars in his pocket, a saddle-horse and rifle and a pair of saddle-bags, turned his face towards the "Eldorado of the West." His

first stopping place was Cincinnati, Ohio, but in 1820, we find him in Richmond, Ind., where he lived to see a small village develop into a thriving city.

Taking an active part in its growth, he was rewarded by the confidence and esteem of his fellow citizens who elected him to various offices of trust and responsibility. His official career began in 1822, as Justice of the Peace. He represented Wayne county in the Legislature, 1828-31, and then was Enrolling Clerk of the Senate for three years. During this time he met the leading men of the State and formed many lasting friendships. 1833-37, he edited and held a controlling interest in the principal newspaper of the county, the Richmond Palladium, and in 1837, was elected clerk of the Wayne County Courts, with a term of seven years; this necessitated a removal to the county seat, Centerville, but on the expiration of the term (1845) he returned to Richmond, having always considered it his home. Elected mayor of the city in the spring of 1852, he retained the office, by re-election, until his death, December 23, 1866, having almost continuous public service for more than forty years.

He was a man of sterling integrity; none who knew him ever doubted his word; an oath could not make it more binding. As a member of the Masonic fraternity he was active in the relief of the poor and needy; his sympathy and assistance were freely given to the ignorant negroes seeking refuge in Indiana: he looked upon them as children that had been deprived of their birthright.

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A self-educated man, his reading covered a wide field; he was familiar with standard English authors and was a constant reader of the best current periodicals and newspapers, especially those containing the opinions of leading statesmen on political questions and internal improvements.

He was twice married, and had six children, one son, Maj. John H. Finley, gave his life for his country in the war for the Union—from this blow the father never recovered. A widow and three daughters survived him. Robert Burns was his favorite poet, the humor convulsed him with silent laughter, and "Highland Mary," or "The Cotter's Saturday Night" brought the quick tears to his eyes.

Mr. Finley's reputation as a poet was established when the Indiana Journal published "The Hoosier's Nest," January 1, 1833. It was the first "Carrier's Address" written by the author, and was followed by an "address" to the Journal for eight or nine years in succession. The Palladium also had an annual "address." These were rhyming reviews of State and National questions or humorous references to peculiarities of candidates for public office. They were of local interest but did not arrest general attention as the graphic description of Hoosier life had done. After a lapse of seventy-five years "The Hoosier's Nest" is still in demand at Old Settlers' Picnics, and at the reunions of the many "Hoosier Clubs" springing up wherever Indiana's sons have become prominent in the Great West. The following extract is conceded to be the best description of pioneer life to be found in print:

"I'm told in riding somewhere West
A stranger found a *Hoosier's Nest*—
In other words a Buckeye cabin,
Just big enough to hold Queen *Mab* in;
Its situation, low but airy,
Was on the borders of a prairie;
And fearing he might be benighted,
He hailed the house, and then alighted.

The Hoosier met him at the door—
Their salutations soon were o'er.
He took the stranger's horse aside,
And to a sturdy sapling tied;
Then having stripped the saddle off,
He fed him in a sugar trough.

The stranger stooped to enter in—
The entrance closing with a pin
And manifested strong desire
To seat him by the log-heap fire,
Where half a dozen *Hoosieroons*,
With mush and milk, tin cups and spoons,
White heads, bare feet, and dirty faces,
Seemed much inclined to keep their places,
But Madame, anxious to display
Her rough but undisputed sway,
Her offsprings to the ladder led,
And cuffed the youngsters up to bed.

Invited shortly to partake
Of venison, milk, and *johnny cake*,
The stranger made a hearty meal,
And glances round the room would steal.

One side was lined with divers' garments,
The other spread with skins of *varmint*s;
Dried pumpkins overhead were strung,
Where venison hams in plenty hung;

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Two rifles placed above the door;
Three dogs lay stretched upon the floor—
In short, the domicile was rife
With specimens of Hoosier life."

The word *Hoosieroon* was coined for the poem, and "*Hoosier*" no longer designated a rough, uncouth backwoodsman but a self-reliant man who was able to subdue the wilderness, defend his home, and command the respect of his neighbors:

"He is, (and not the little-great)
The bone and sinew of the State."

"Bachelor's Hall" was published anonymously, and was immediately credited to the Irish poet, Thomas Moore; it was reproduced in England and Ireland many times before the authorship was established. It was set to music for "Miss Leslie's Magazine," and was sung at a banquet given for the members of the Indiana Legislature:

"Bachelor's Hall! What a quare-looking place it is!
Kape me from sich all the days of my life!
Sure, but I think what a burnin' disgrace it is,
Niver at all to be gettin' a wife.
See the ould bachelor, gloomy and sad enough,
Placing his tay-kittle over the fire;
Soon it tips over—St. Patrick! he's mad enough
(If he were present) to fight with the Squire.

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Pots, dishes, pans, and sich grasy commodities,
Ashes and praty-skins kiver the floor;
His cupboard's a storehouse of comical oddities,
Things that had niver been neighbors before.
Late in the night then he goes to bed shiverin';
Niver the bit is the bed made at all;
He crapes like a terrapin under the kiverin':
Bad luck to the picture of Bachelor's Hall!"

His poem entitled, *Our Home's Fireside*, expresses his appreciation of domestic life. He felt that the homes of a country are the fountain of all true happiness, and the bulwark of civil and religious liberty:

"There's not a place on earth so dear
As our Home's Fireside,
When parents, children all draw near
To our Home's Fireside;
When the toil-spent day is past,
And loud roars the wintry blast,
Then how sweet to get at last
By our Home's Fireside!

'Tis wedded love's peculiar seat,
At our Home's Fireside,
Where happiness and virtue meet
At our Home's Fireside;
When each prattler, loth to miss,
Climbs to claim the wonted kiss,
'Tis the sum of human bliss,
At our Home's Fireside."

He was ambitious to write a National Hymn which should voice the patriotism of the people, but this wish was never gratified. The "Ode for the Fourth of July" was an effort in that direction—constant attention to business prevented the cultivation of his poetical talent:

"ODE FOR THE FOURTH OF JULY."

Tune—"Hail to the Chief."

Hail to the day that gave birth to a nation!
And hail each remembrance it annu'lly brings!
Hail Independence! Thy stern declaration
Gave Freedom a home in defiance of Kings.
Britain's despotic sway
Trammeled thy early day.
Infant America, "child of the skies."
Till with a daring hand
Freedom's immortal band
Severed thy shakles and bid thee arise!

[Pg 36]

Then was the standard of Liberty planted—
The star-spangled banner proud floated on high;
Columbia's sons met the foeman undaunted,

With firm resolution to conquer or die.
Precious the prize they sought,
Dearly that prize they bought:
Freedom and peace cost the blood of the brave.
Heaven befriended them,
Fortune attended them—
Liberty triumphed o'er tyranny's grave!

Peace to those patriots, heroes, and sages,
Whose glorious legacy now we enjoy!
May it descend to the world's latest ages,
Like primitive gold, without any alloy!
Then let our motto be,
"Union and Liberty,"
High on our national banner enshrined,
Like a bright morning star,
Glittering from afar,
Casting its beams o'er the world of mankind.

When urged by friends to make a collection of poems for publication; he found, (in 1866), that many had been lost beyond recovery, his hope of writing something more worthy of preservation made him careless of that which had been published; there is, however, considerable variety in the collection, ranging from "grave to gay." These are some of the titles; "Lines," written on opening a mound on the bank of Whitewater near Richmond, Ind. containing a human skeleton. "What is Life," "What is Faith," "A Prayer," "My Loves and Hates." This was the first poem written for publication. "Valedictory, on closing my term as Clerk of the Wayne County Courts."

In lighter vein are, "Advertisement for a Wife," "The Last of the Family," "To My Old Coat," and "The Miller."

Mr. Finley was not a church member but his creed is embraced in the following sentence —"The Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man."

[Pg 37]

An unpublished fragment, found after death in the pocket-book he carried, shows his truly devotional spirit:—

"My Heav'nly Father! deign to hear
The supplications of a child,
Who would before thy throne appear,
With spirit meek, and undefiled.

Let not the vanities of earth
Forbid that I should come to Thee,
Of such as I, (by Heav'nly birth)
Thy Kingdom, Thou hast said, shall be."

TO JOHN FINLEY.
By Benjamin S. Parker.

"Hail thou poet occidental,
First in Indiana's Clime—
Whose true passions sentimental,
Outward flowed in living rhyme.

Let no more thy harp, forsaken,
Hang upon the willow tree,
But again its chords awaken
To thy songs blithe melody,

As thou didst in time now olden,
When our Hoosier state was young,
'Ere the praises of these golden
Days of progress yet were sung."

Strickland W. Gillilan, wrote a "Versified Tribute."

"He nursed the Infant Hoosier muse
When she could scarcely lisp her name;
Forerunner of the world's great lights
That since have added to her fame,
He blazed the way to greater things,
With "Hoosier's Nest," and "Bachelor's Hall;"
And, while the grand world-chorus rings

With songs our Hoosier choir sings,
Let not the stream forget the springs,—
Let Finley's name before them all."

FOOTNOTES:

- [1] "The Hoosiers," pp. 20-30.
- [2] History of Indianapolis and Marion County, p. 72.
- [3] "Early Indiana Trials and Sketches," p. 211.
- [4] Coggeshall's "The Poets and Poetry of the West," and Finley's "The Hoosier's Nest and Other Poems" published in 1860.
- [5] Indiana Democrat, Jan. 12, 1833.
- [6] "A Winter in the West," p. 226.
- [7] Indianapolis Journal, January 20, 1860.
- [8] Sketches, p. 45.
- [9] Salem Democrat, October 25, 1899; March 28, 1900.
- [10] Published in 1835, Vol. 1, Page 210.
- [11] Georgia Scenes, page 73.
- [12] Pages 188-9.
- [13] Pages 182-5.

Transcriber's Notes:

Inconsistencies in spelling and hyphenation have been retained from the original.

- Page 11: typograpical should be typographical; perodical should be periodical
- Page 14: ocured should be occurred
- Page 17: Pulskys should be Pulszkys
- Page 22: eclectic should be eclectic
- Page 24: Dictionary should be Dictionary
- Page 26: symptons should be symptoms
- Page 28: ocured should be occurred
- Page 32: abhorence should be abhorrence
- Page 36: shakles should be shackles; Advertisment should be Advertisement

Punctuation has been corrected without note.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE WORD HOOSIER; JOHN FINLEY ***

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