

Two Graphic Hoosier Pictures

[The two pictures here poetically presented of the Hoosier pioneer home are so akin that we thus reprint them as a pair. The "Hoosier's Nest," by John Finley, for many years the mayor of Richmond, was, perhaps, the first Indiana poem to win fame, and it is further distinguished by its introduction of the term "Hoosier" into literature. It was first published in 1833 (not in 1830, as commonly stated), according to Mr. J. P. Dunn, as a Carrier's Address for the Indianapolis *Journal*, and after some revision by the author, became fixed in the form from which we here quote. The other, untitled poem, from a far more famous poet, James Whitcomb Riley, is practically unknown and is not to be found in any of the author's books. It was read before an old settler's meeting at Oaklandon, in 1878, and is reported in full in the Indianapolis *Sentinel* for August 5th (or 6th). Both the poems are considerably longer than here given, and take a wider range than the theme of the cabin home].

The Hoosier's Nest

I'M told, in riding somewhere West,
A stranger found a Hoosier's Nest,
In other words, a buckeye cabin,
Just big enough to hide 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 Hoosierooms,
With mush and milk, tin-cups and spoons,
White heads, bare feet and dirty faces,
Seemed much inclined to keep their places;
But madam, anxious to display
Her rough but undisputed sway,
Her off-spring 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 varmints;
Dried pumpkins over-head 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 Hoosier life.

The host, who centered his affections
On game and range and quarter-sections,
Discoursed his weary guest for hours,
Till Somnus' all-composing powers
Of sublunary cares bereft 'em,
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 burly chieles and clever hizzies
Are bred in sic a way as this is.

Mr. Riley's Poem

[This poem, we find, is in the *Sentinel* of Aug. 4, 1878.

O'ER the vision like a mirage falls
The old log cabin with its dingy walls,
And crippled chimney, with the crutch-like prop
Beneath a sagging shoulder at the top;
The coon skin, battened fast on either side;
The wisps of leaf tobacco, "cut and dried";
The yellow strands of quartered apples hung
In rich festoons that tangle in among
The morning-glory vines that clamber o'er
The little clapboard roof above the door;
The old well-sweep, that drops a courtesy
To every thirsty soul so graciously
The stranger, as he drains the dripping gourd,
Intuitively murmurs: "Thank the Lord!"
Again, through mists of memory, arise
The simple scenes of home before the eyes;

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The happy mother numming, with her wheel,
The dear old melodies that used to steal
So drowsily upon the summer air
The house-dog hid his bone, forgot his care.
And nestled at her feet, to dream, perchance,
Some cooling dream of winter-time romance;
The square of sunshine thro' the open door,
That notched its way across the puncheon floor,
And made a golden coverlet whereon
The god of slumber had a picture drawn
Of babyhood, in all the loveliness
Of dimpled cheek and limb and linsey dress;
The bough-filled fireplace and the mantel wide;
The fire-scorched ankles stretched on either side,
Where, perched upon its shoulders 'neath the joist,
The old clock hiccoughed, harsh and husky-voiced,
And snarled the premonition, dire and dread,
When it should hammer time upon the head;
Tomatoes, red and yellow, in a row,
Preserved not then for diet, but for show,
Like rare and precious jewels in the rough,
Whose worth was not appraised at half enough;
The jars of Jelly with their dusty tops;
The bunch of pennyroyal, the cordial drops;
The flask of camphor and the vial of squills;
The box of buttons, garden seeds and pills;
And, ending all the mantel's bric-a-brac,
The old, time-honored "family almanack."

And memory, with a mother's touch of love,
Climbs with us to the dusky loft above;

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Again we stretch our limbs upon the bed,
Where first our simple, childish prayers were said,
And, while without the merry cricket trills
A challenge to the solemn whippoorwills,
And, filing on the chorus with his glee,
The katydid whets all the harmony
To feather-edge of incoherent song,
We drop asleep, and peacefully along
The current of our dreams we glide away
To that dim harbor of another day,
Where brown Toil waits us, and where Labor stands
To welcome us with rough and horny hands.