

of a village authority in Bengal. It may seem impossible that "hoosier" could come from so far 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.

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 of 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 others, 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 of reproach.

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The Primitive Hoosier

THE following enthusiastic bit of writing, copied into the Journal from the New Orleans Picayune more than sixty years ago, gives a picture of the Hoosier of that period who came down the river with his flatboat load of produce. Says the Picayune writer:

"There is a primitive and pristine simplicity of character and independence of mind about a Hoosier that pleases us much. His step is as untrammelled by the artifice of fashion

and as free from the constraint of foppery as the mighty rivers of the West are from obstruction in their impetus course to the ocean, or as the path of the buffalo herd over the wild prairie. Born on the fructuous soil of freedom, and unchecked in his growth by avarice and dissimulation, he rises to manhood with a mind unwarpt and a spirit unbent like the trees of the forest around him. He loves liberty—loves it in his heart's core—he would fight—he would die for it. * * * He cries from his soul, 'Long live liberty!' because the instinct of his free and unsophisticated nature tells him that it is the inalienable birthright and heritage of man, and he thinks that to live without it is impossible as to exist without the free air that wantons round his Western home. He may be ignorant of the use of the eyeglass, but is his aim with his rifle less deadly? He may not be able to discuss the merits of the last novel, but thinkest thou that he is ignorant of the cardinal principal of liberty? In a word, he may not be a thing with his face hid in a stock, long hair and a shirt collar, but might not more confidence be placed in his brawny arm in time of war than in a whole regiment of such men of doubtful gender?

“We do love to see a Hoosier roll along the levee with the proceeds of the plunder of his flatboat in his pocket. It is the wages of industry, and no lordly ecclesiastic or titled layman dares claim a cent of it. See with what pity he regards those who are confined to the unchangeable monotony of a city life, and observe how he despises uniformity of dress. He has just donned a new blue dress coat with silk linings and flowered gilt buttons. His new pants look rather short for the present fashion, but this is easily accounted for—they were of stocking fit or French cut at the instep, and thinking they pressed rather close he has curtailed them of some six inches of their fair proportion. * * * He glories in still sporting the same unpolished peg boots, and the woolen, round-topped, wide-leafed hat in which he set out from home. The Hoosier says, or seems to say—

“‘A life in the woods for me,’ and his happy and independent life attests the wisdom of his choice.”