

THE HOOSIERS

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IS NO END"

To the Memory of
CALEB MILLS
SOMETIME PROFESSOR IN WABASH COLLEGE
THE FRUITS OF WHOSE ENLIGHTENMENT,
FORESIGHT
AND COURAGE
ARE AN ENDURING HERITAGE
TO THE PEOPLE OF INDIANA

PREFACE

These pages represent an effort to give some hint of the forces that have made for cultivation in Indiana. While the immediate purpose has been an examination of the State's performance in literature, it has seemed proper to approach the subject with a slight review of Indiana's political and social history. Owing to limitations of space, much is suggested merely which it would be profitable to discuss at length. It is hoped that such matters as racial influences, folk-speech, etc., which are but lightly touched here, may appeal to others who will make them the subject of more searching inquiry. Only names that have seemed most significant are included; many creditable writers are necessarily omitted.

I take pleasure in acknowledging my indebtedness to Dr. Edward Eggleston, Miss Anna Nicholas, and Mr. Merrill Moores for their courteous responses to many requests for information. Miss May Louise Shipp gave me access to papers relating to her kinswoman, Mrs. Dumont, which I could not have seen but for her kindness. Miss Eliza G. Browning, the Public Librarian of Indianapolis, Mr. H. S. Wedding, the Librarian of Wabash College, and Mr. Charles R. Dudley, of the Denver Library, were most generous and indulgent on my behalf.

M. N.

DENVER, July, 1900.

THE HOOSIERS

CHAPTER I

INDIANA AND HER PEOPLE

THE rise of Indiana as an enlightened commonwealth has been accompanied by phenomena of unusual interest and variety, and whatever contributions the State may make to the total of national achievement in any department of endeavor are to be appraised in the light of her history and development. The origin of the beginners of the State, the influences that wrought upon them, the embarrassments that have attended the later generations in their labors, become matters of moment in any inquiry that is directed to their intellectual history. It is not of so great importance that a few individuals within a State shall, from time to time, show talent or genius, as that the general level of cultivation in the community shall be continually raised. Where, as in Indiana, the appearance of artistic talent follows naturally an intellectual development that uplifts the whole, the condition presented is at once interesting and admirable. Owing to a misapprehension of the State's social history, an exaggerated importance has been given to the manifestations of creative talent perceptible in Indiana, the assumption being in many quarters that the Hoosier Commonwealth is in some way set apart from her neighbors by reason of the uncouthness and ignorance of the inhabitants; and the word "Hoosier" has perhaps been unfortunate as applied to Indianians in that it has sometimes been taken as a synonym for boorishness and illiteracy. The Indiana husbandmen, even in the pioneer

period, differed little or not at all from the settlers in other territorial divisions of the West and Southwest; and the early Indiana townfolk were the peers of any of their fellows of the urban class in the Ohio Valley.

The Indianians came primarily of American stock, and they have been influenced much less than the majority of their neighbors in other states by the currents of alien migration that have flowed around and beyond them. The frontiersmen, who carried the rifle and the axe to make way for the plough, were brave, hardy, and intelligent; and those who accompanied them and became builders of cities and framers and interpreters of law, were their kinsmen, and possessed the natural qualities and the cultivation that would have made them conspicuous anywhere. The Indianians remained in a striking degree the fixed population of the territory that fell to them. They were sustained and lifted by religion through all their formative years, and when aroused to the importance of education were quick to insure intelligence in their posterity. The artistic impulse appeared naturally in later generations. The value of the literature produced in the State may be debatable, but there is no just occasion for surprise that attention to literary expression has been so general.

Indiana has always lain near the currents of national life, and her beginnings were joined to the larger fortunes of the national destiny. Three flags have been emblems of government in her territory, and wars whose principal incidents occurred far from the western wilderness played an important part in her history. Early in the eighteenth century the French settled on the Wabash, which was an

essential link in the chain of communication between the settlements of the St. Lawrence and Great Lakes and those of the Lower Mississippi; and the *coureurs des bois*, as they guided their frail navies up and down the stream, or sang their *chansons de voyage* as they lay in lonely camps, gave the first color of romance to the Hoosier country. The treaty signed at Paris, February 10, 1763, ended French dominion and brought British rule. The American Revolution made itself felt on the Wabash when, in 1779, George Rogers Clark effected the capture of Fort Vincennes from a British commander. The first territorial governor of Indiana became the ninth president of the United States after the rollicking hard cider campaign of "Tippecanoe and Tyler too"; and when, years afterward, Benjamin Harrison, his grandson, was elected twenty-third president, the bonds between State and Nation were close and strong. Indiana valiantly defended herself against the Indians in the War of 1812; she sent five regiments to the Mexican War, equipped 208,300 volunteers for the war of the rebellion, and 7300 for the war with Spain. Slavery was an issue on Indiana soil long before the Northwest Territory had been divided. At a convention held at Vincennes in 1802, a year and a half after the organization of Indiana Territory, a memorial was sent to the National Congress asking that the antislavery proviso in the ordinance of 1787 be repealed, and slavery was thereafter a potent influence in territorial politics until the admission of Indiana, as a free state, in 1816.^[1]

The victories of George Rogers Clark were not only of great importance in determining the future political

relations of the Northwest Territory, but they defined the character of the population that should dominate in the region he conquered. The Ohio was the highway that led into the new world, and the first comers to Indiana in the years immediately following the Revolution were mainly drawn either directly from Pennsylvania, the Carolinas, or Virginia, or were of that fascinating band of hunters and frontiersmen of similar origin, who had only a few years earlier begun the redemption of Tennessee and Kentucky from savagery. Kentucky was a temporary resting-place for many who later drifted West and Northwest; and their descendants, markedly of Scotch-Irish origin, are still clearly defined in Indiana. Philadelphia and Charleston were the two ports to which these Presbyterian Irish came in greatest numbers in the early years of the eighteenth century. They at once left the seaboard settlements and spread along the Alleghanies, the Pennsylvanians moving southward until they met their Carolina brethren, when the united stream swept with fresh strength boldly into the Ohio Valley. Emigration from the north of Ireland “waxed and waned,” says Dr. Eggleston,^[2] “as the great Irish linen industry of the last century declined or prospered.” Some of these people were steady and thrifty; others were reckless and adventurous. The frontier life afforded an outlet for their wild spirits, and Indian wars and the hunting of big game were their congenial employments. The Germans, also derived from Pennsylvania and the Carolinas, joined the westward stream; the English, the Dutch, and the Swiss added to it in varying degree, but the North-Irish element, dating from the earliest settlement, was long potent in

politics, society, and religion, and became a most important factor in Indiana history.

Northern Indiana was settled much more slowly than the southern half of the State, owing primarily to the fierce resistance of the Miami Confederacy, which barred ingress by way of the lakes, rivers, and portages, and defeated successive armies that were sent against it. When the way was opened, the Middle States and New England slowly contributed to the population. Many of these immigrants paused first in the Western Reserve of Ohio, and a smaller proportion in Michigan. It is a question for the scientists whether the differences still observable between the people of the northern prairie region in Indiana and those of the woodland areas—differences of thrift, energy, and initiative^[3]—are not due as much to natural conditions as to racial influences; and they may also have an explanation of the fact that Indiana's literary activity has been observed principally in the southern half of the State, below a line drawn through Crawfordsville. The seniority of the southern settlements is not a wholly satisfactory solution, and the difference in antecedents invites speculation.

It happened fortunately that the worst element contributed to the population of Indiana and Illinois in early years—known as “poor whites”—was the least permanent. Dr. Eggleston describes them as “a semi-nomadic people, descendants of the colonial bond-servants,”^[4] who moved on in large numbers to Missouri so early as 1845, and thence from the famous Pike County scattered widely, appearing finally in California, where Bret Harte took note of them. Professor Fiske in his account of the dispersion of

these people^[5] does not mention Indiana as one of their outlets, and the State's proportion was unquestionably small. Romance has not attached to them where they linger in Southern Indiana, although they are of the same strain as their kindred at the south who have so often delighted the readers of fiction. By way of illustration it may be said that in the hills of Brown County the traveller passes here and there a rude wagon drawn by oxen. A dusty native walks beside the team, and seated on the floor of the wagon is an old grandmother, smoking a clay pipe with great contentment. The same picture may be met within the Kentucky and Tennessee mountains, but with the difference that in those regions the story-tellers have woven the spell of romance about the hill folk, whereas in Indiana similar characters are looked upon as ugly and uninteresting.

The rural and urban classes produced a first generation that realized a type drawing strength from both farm and town and destined to steady improvement throughout the century. New people poured in from the Eastern States and from Europe; but in no old community of the seaboard has loftier dignity been conferred by long residence or pioneer ancestry than in Indiana. This pride was brought in more particularly from the Southeast, and there are still communities in which the stranger will be sensible of it. The native Americans of Indiana have continued the dominant element to a greater extent than in most Northern States, 74 per cent of the total population in 1890 consisting of natives; 20 per cent of natives of other States; while the foreign-born population comprised only 6 per cent of the total.^[6] In the larger cities, as Indianapolis,

Evansville, and Fort Wayne, the Germans had an important part from the beginning, and the Irish were well distributed; but before the Scandinavians and Slavs had begun to seek homes in America, the land values in Indiana had so appreciated that this class of immigrants could find no footing. The centre of population in the United States, which lay just east of Baltimore in the first decade of the century, moved gradually westward, until, in the last decade, it lay in Indiana at a point sixty-five miles south of Indianapolis.

The older Indiana towns enjoyed in their beginnings all the benefits that may be bestowed upon new communities by a people of good social antecedents. Many of these towns have lost their prestige, owing to changed political or commercial conditions; the departed glory of some of them is only a tradition among the elders; but the charm of many remains. Indiana, as Territory and State, has had three political capitals, Vincennes and Corydon having enjoyed the distinction before Indianapolis finally attained it. Vincennes, however, refused to fall with her political dethronement, but built upon her memories, and became "no mean city." In 1847 the railway connecting Madison with Indianapolis was completed. Madison was thus made the gateway of the State, and one of the most important shipping points on the Ohio, with daily steam packet to Cincinnati and Louisville; but this prosperity was only temporary, for east and west lines of railway soon drew the traffic away from the river. Madison retains its dignity in spite of reverses, and is marked by an air of quaint gravity. It may be called picturesque without offence to the

inhabitants, who rejoice in its repose and natural beauty, and do not complain because their wharves are not so busy as they used to be. The social life there had a distinction of its own, which has not vanished, though the names identified with the town's fame—Lanier, Hendricks, Bright, King, and Marshall—have slowly disappeared, and few of the old régime remain. The juxtaposition of Kentucky was not without an influence in the years of the town's ascendancy, and there was no little sympathy with Southern political ideas in the ante-bellum days.

Brookville is another town which, like Madison, sent forth many men to bring fame to other communities. It lies in the White Water Valley, amid one of the loveliest landscapes in all Hoosierdom. The Wallaces, the Nobles, and the Rays were identified with the place, and each of these families gave a governor to the State. Abram A. Hammond, still another governor, lived there for a short time, as did James B. Eads, the distinguished engineer, who was a native of Lawrenceburg; and William M. Chase, the artist, also a native Hoosier, is on Brookville's list of notables. John D. Howland and his brother, Livingston, lived there before their removal to Indianapolis, where the former was one of the most cultivated men of his day, and the latter a creditable judge, and a wit much quoted by his contemporaries. Centerville lives principally in its memories, having been the home of the Mortons, and of others who attained distinction. The removal of the seat of Wayne County to Richmond dealt the town a blow from which it has never recovered, though it shares with its successful rival in the reputation which the county enjoys

for the cultivation of its people. The family of Robert Underwood Johnson was prominent in Wayne County; and though the poet and editor was not born there, he lived in the county from early infancy until his graduation in 1871 from Earlham College, whose seat is Richmond. His cousin, Mrs. Alice Williams Brotherton, the author of two volumes of verse, and a contributor to the periodicals, lived as a young woman at Cambridge, in the same county. Fort Wayne has always stood a little apart from the capital and the other towns lying nearer the Ohio. This has been due to its geographical position and direct railway connection with Chicago and the seaboard cities. Socially and commercially it has not been so intimately related to the capital as most of the other Indiana towns; but it was an important centre, with unmistakable metropolitan airs almost as soon as Indianapolis. Fort Wayne's list of distinguished citizens has included Hugh McCulloch, a native of Maine, who was Secretary of the Treasury under two presidents, and Jesse Lynch Williams, of North Carolina Quaker stock, who was prominently identified with canal and railroad building in Indiana. Mr. Williams was a leader in good works throughout his long life. Mr. McCulloch wrote "Men and Measures," a volume of memoirs, and his family has produced a poet. A grandson and namesake of Mr. Williams is the author of several volumes of fiction.

Lafayette is one of the most attractive of Indiana cities, fortunate in its natural setting and in the friendliness of its people to all good endeavors. Purdue University, the state school of technology, which is situated there, is not diligent in the sciences to the neglect of the arts. Roswell Smith

(1829-1892), the founder of the *Century Magazine*, practised law for twenty years at Lafayette. Terre Haute has been the home of distinguished politicians rather than of famous literary folk; but Richard W. Thompson, who became Secretary of the Navy in President Hayes's cabinet, was a writer of books; and Daniel W. Voorhees, long a senator in Congress, was the greatest forensic orator of his day in the Ohio Valley. Voorhees had none of the qualities essential in a great lawyer, but he was most effective as a speaker before the people. The code of 1852 contained a provision giving to the defence the final plea to the jury in criminal trials; but this was changed in 1873 because it had become notorious that Voorhees and others of similar persuasive powers could almost invariably procure the acquittal of persons charged with the gravest crimes by appealing to the natural sympathies and domestic attachments of the jurors. Voorhees received from Berry Sulgrove the name of the "tall sycamore of the Wabash." His appearance was commanding, and many of the dangerous qualities that go to the making of personal magnetism were combined in him. Thomas H. Nelson, also of the Terre Haute group, was worthy to be named with Thompson and Voorhees as an orator, though never so widely known as they. He was a native of Kentucky, and an accomplished man of the world, who filled acceptably several diplomatic positions. Salem, in Washington County, is another of the older towns that contained in its earliest years families of marked cultivation. John Hay, the author, diplomat, and cabinet officer, and Newton Booth, governor of California and senator in Congress from that State, were born there. At least one generation benefited by the

instruction of John I. Morrison, sometimes called “the Hoosier Arnold,” who sent out from the Salem Seminary in the third decade of the century a group of men destined to take high place in nearly every field that called for character and intelligence. Hanover, the seat of Hanover College, enjoyed a somewhat similar atmosphere, and Noble Butler, who afterward became, at Louisville, the teacher in literature and elocution of Mary Anderson, the actress, was one of the Hanover faculty.

Indianapolis was planned under the direction of Christopher Harrison, a man of varied talents, who buried himself in the wilderness of Southern Indiana early in the century, followed by the shadowy tradition that he had been an unsuccessful suitor for the hand of Miss Patterson, the famous Baltimore beauty who married Jerome Bonaparte. Emerging from his exile, he became a resident of Salem, sought consolation in politics, and was elected lieutenant-governor in 1816. Among those who assisted in marking the lines of the new city was Alexander Ralston, a Scotchman, who had aided in a similar task at the national capital, and who brought to his work a fancy for diagonal avenues and broad streets pleasantly suggestive of Washington. Ralston was said to have been obscurely implicated in Burr’s conspiracy; but he became a resident within the boundaries he had drawn for the capital in the woods, and died there, an exemplary citizen. Indianapolis was named by Jeremiah Sullivan, in the legislature of 1821, which formally designated the site of the new capital. The older towns on the Ohio and in the White Water Valley contributed at once to the population of the place, and the

currents of migration from the East and South met there. Dr. Eggleston described the town in his novel "Roxy" as it appeared in 1840:—

"The stumps stood in the streets; the mud was only navigable to a man on a tall horse; the buildings were ugly and unpainted, the people were raw immigrants dressed in butternut jeans, and for the most part afflicted either with the 'agur' or the 'yellow janders'; the taverns were new wooden buildings with swinging signs that creaked in the wind, their floors being well coated with a yellow *adobe* from the boots of the guests. The alkaline biscuits on the table were yellow like the floors; the fried 'middling' looked much the same; the general yellowness had extended to the walls and the bed clothing, and, combined with the butternut jeans and copperas-dyed linsey-woolsey of the clothes, it gave the universe an air of having the jaundice."

Old residents pronounce the description unfair; but however crude the earlier years may have been, the founders were faithful to the settlement, and among those who were there before 1840 were the Fletcher, Morris, Merrill, Coe, Ray, Blake, Sharpe, Yandes, and Holliday families, which were to be associated with the best that was thought and done in the community. In 1839 Henry Ward Beecher became pastor of the Second Presbyterian Church, and he was a useful citizen through the nine years of his residence. Good lecture courses were provided so early as 1855, and Edward Everett, Bayard Taylor, Dr. Holland, Theodore Parker, Park Benjamin, and Ole Bull were cordially welcomed. The Civil War disturbed the old order,

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