

NOTED FICTION CHARACTERS IN REAL LIFE

REAL MEN AND WOMEN INCLUDING GROVER CLEVELAND AND MRS. WIGGS USED AS HEROES AND HEROINES IN POPULAR NOVELS

GROVER CLEVELAND (WHEN GOVERNOR OF NEW YORK.) THE ORIGINAL OF THE HON. PETER STIRLING

WHEN an author wants a character he goes and takes what he requires. It may be a President, a general, a bishop or a street sweeper; so long as the character suits his need the author appropriates him. He will even make his own kindred, or himself, sit as a model if need be. Probably all really great characters of fiction have been drawn with modifications from real persons, or are the result of a skillful blending of the salient points in the characters of two, or possibly more, persons.

Sometimes the author copies his model so closely that the copy is mistaken as to the original. Bishop Ethelbert Talbot, the Protestant Episcopal bishop of Central Pennsylvania, is the Bishop in Owen Wister's novel "The Virginian" and the author has stuck so closely to the original that every one who knows the novel practically knows Bishop Talbot, and all who know the bishop recognize his portrait as drawn by Wister. Of course, liberties are taken with the character and story of the right reverend gentleman—the exigencies of the story required that—but the artist has strayed no further from the truth than he was obliged to.

Bishop Talbot was a well-known man when Wister took him up and added to his fame. He is a native of Missouri, and after his graduation and ordination in 1832 became pastor in the little town of Macon, Missouri, for 14 years. Then he became missionary bishop of Wyoming and Idaho. From this charge he was removed after ten years in the West, to the See of Central Pennsylvania.

The bishop is something of a writer himself, and some days turns about and put Owen Wister into a book. His experiences in the West are told in "My People of the Plains." He is fond of hearing and telling a good story, but withal has much native dignity. When he was a missionary bishop the people under his charge were primitive and rude, a class of not respecters for whom almost no writers in books. They had no wagers for ecclesiastical authority or, in fact, for religion, but the bishop soon got on their right side and they came to respect and love him.

Once, during his career in the West, the bishop held services in a saloon the walls of which were covered with cloth to conceal some decorations which were decidedly unecclesiastical; and once, when a drunken man told him he had "got full to celebrate" the bishop's arrival, the bishop let the man sit in a front pew. With this awful example before him the bishop began a sermon on temperance. At first the man appeared dejected, but finally brightened up and at last the bishop heard him muttering, "That's right, bishop; go for 'em." By and by he became more "enthusiased" and jumping to his feet exclaimed, "Good, good! Give 'em hell, bishop!"

Another of the bishop's Western sermons, which had the Pharisee and the Publican as its text, caused such a noisy protest on the part of one member of the congregation that the man had to be forcibly ejected. "Did you ever hear such rot?" said the man afterwards. "That bishop just boosted the Republicans all through his sermon and didn't say a word about the Democrats."

Bishop Talbot is said to have been the original of the man who, having delivered a humorous address to a British audience, was told afterwards by the vicar that he could hardly keep from smiling all through, and that he must excuse some of the people from actually laughing. The bishop is now 80 years old, with the prospect of a long life before him. He has had his little trials and tribulations, as notably in the case of the Reverend Irvine about four years ago, but has come through them all right.

Mrs. Asquith a "Dodo" Character.
Mrs. Asquith, wife of the present British Prime Minister, sat unconsciously as the model for the principal feminine character in the novel of "Dodo," a book which had a vast popularity about 15 years ago, but which is now almost forgotten. She was the beautiful Miss Margaret Tennant then, daughter of a wealthy Scottish baronet, and a society celebrity. She knew all the prominent men worth knowing—politicians, scientists and authors. She founded a little circle of the elect called "The Souls," who conversed with each other in a jargon of their own invention. She knew all the reigning monarchs in Europe. She hunted and wrote poetry, and Gladstone wrote poetry to her. When E. F. Benson, son



IRVING BACHELIER, THE LITTLE BOY IN HIS OWN NOVEL "EBEN HOLDEN"

of the Archbishop of Canterbury, "went in" for literature and wrote "Dodo" in 1882, he took Miss Tennant for his model and wrote a note to her afterwards apologizing for doing so. She was really such a handy character that how could Benson be blamed anyway. But Miss Tennant did not at all object to be written up and for a long time she was known as "Dodo." Now she is the calm and dignified Mrs. Asquith, the Premier's wife.

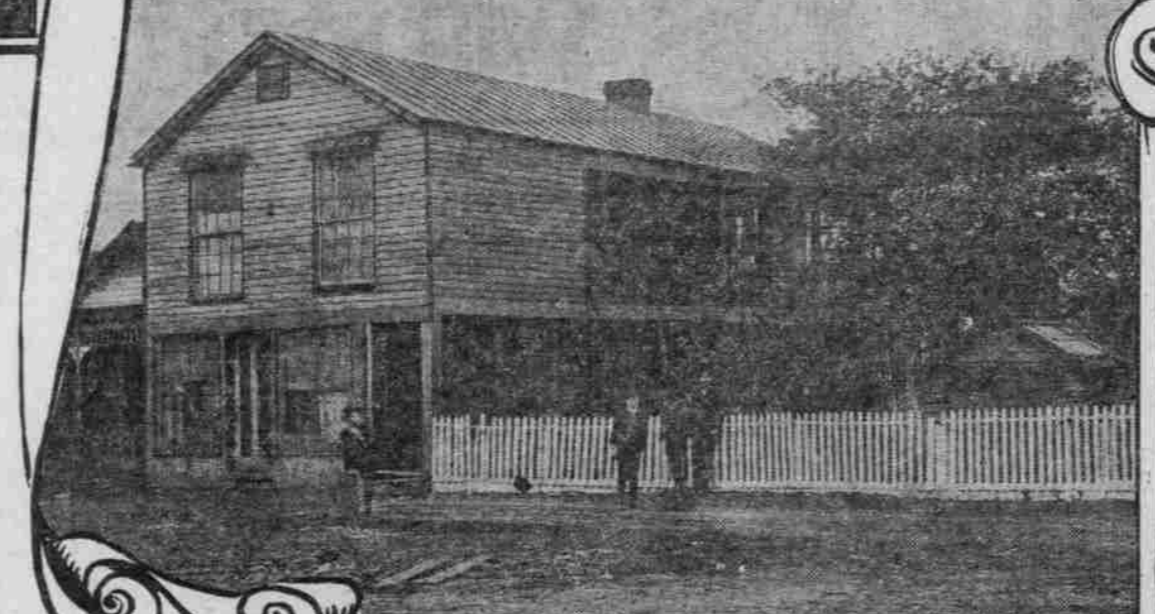
When Mrs. Frances Hodgson Burnett looked about for a character for a story she pitched upon her son, Vivian, and gave him to the world as Little Lord Fauntleroy. Vivian's elder brother, Lionel, furnished a few paragraphs for the book, but Cedric was taken practically entire from Vivian. In fact, Mrs. Burnett tried to make her book an almost exact reproduction of the sayings and doings of her second son. It made a good story but was rather tough on Vivian who, when he went to Harvard, was "spotted" at once as the original of Little Lord Fauntleroy, and had things made pleasant for him accordingly in that peculiar manner which sophomores know so well how to apply to a "freshie." When Little Lord Fauntleroy was graduated from Harvard he went at once into the advertising business and now, a man of 30, runs the business end of a children's magazine, of which his mother is editor.

"Mr. Dooley" and "Mrs. Wiggs."
The original of Peter Finley Dunne's Mr. Dooley, as you may have heard before, was a saloonkeeper in Chicago named McGarry. McGarry was always ready to pass a solemn opinion upon any subject, spoke with a rich Irish brogue and never smiled. Dunne began to write the humorous things he said in little sketches for the Chicago Evening Post, upon which paper he was then a reporter. Needless to say they "took." He called McGarry McGarry in his "stories."

McGarry took a good deal of pride in seeing his sayings in print. One day Alfred Henry Lewis went into the saloon kept by McGarry. "Did you see the Post today?" said McGarry, in a pleasant voice. "Yes," said Lewis, "I did; and it's a shame for Pete Dunne to treat you in that way. How do you think your fine young daughter can take the place in society your position demands if such sayings as those appear. Everyone recognizes them, too. And worse than anything else, they're in a rich brogue. Why, you've hardly any accent at all." "Mr. Dooley" took all this seriously. He decided that he must see Mr. Dunne, and the next day he went to the managing editor of the Post and protested, and then went to the author of the sketches and protested. The result was that Mr. Dunne changed the name from "McGarry" to "Dooley." McGarry was quite satisfied and thereafter read the



Mrs. ASQUITH WIFE OF THE BRITISH PREMIER, AND ORIGINAL OF "THE DODO" AND HER DAUGHTER



HOME OF MRS. MARY A. BASS, THE ORIGINAL MRS. WIGGS

"Dooley" sayings with as much pride as ever.

The original of that other noted fiction philosopher, "Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch" was Mary A. Bass who lives in Louisville, Ky., in a region known as "The Patch." Miss Alice Hegan (now Mrs. Rice) knew her and used to visit her. Mrs. Bass used to go to school with Miss Hegan's mother. But there was good "copy" in Mrs. Bass, too good for a young lady with literary tendencies to throw away. So Alice took Mrs. Bass just as she was, into fame with "The Patch," and jumped made a story out of her, and jumped into fame with "The Patch." Really Mrs. Bass was the author, for Miss Hegan was little more than an amanuensis, taking down what Mrs. Bass said and did and writing it out. Miss Hegan made money out of the story. Mrs. Bass remained in poverty and indignation. It hardly would have been safe for the authoress to have visited the "Cabbage Patch" after the publication of the story, for the old lady was furious and became more and more enraged as it leaked out that she was the original of Mrs. Wiggs and crowds of visitors began haunting her modest home and wanting to talk with her. She refused to see the curious seekers, and once threw dirty water on a too persistent visitor. Mrs. Bass always spoke of Miss Hegan's story as "that fool book," and consulted a lawyer as to how best to keep away curious visitors. He advised her to use a broomstick, and she announced her intention of following the directions of her legal adviser. Alas, it was rumored that her son had purchased a shotgun. So visitors naturally fell off, and after a stormy period of celebrity Mrs. Bass was left in peace again. It was a long time

before she forgave the daughter of her old friend for "writing her up." If indeed she yet has done so completely. Cleveland an Indifferent "Original!"

It is well known that "The Honorable Peter Stirling" of Paul Leicester Ford's story of that name was Grover Cleveland. Everybody recognized the portrait, so closely was it drawn to the original. It was a clever piece of work, but, oh, the ingratitude of great men to the "literary fellers" who strive to add to their fame in print! Mr. Cleveland was not indignant, like Mrs. Bass, and being "put into a book," but, worse still, he was indifferent. When somebody wrote to him and asked if he was the original of the "Honorable Peter," he replied: "I have never read 'The Honorable Peter Stirling.' I believe the author has declared that he had the incidents of my political life somewhat in mind when he wrote the book." And Mr. Cleveland never read it!

The original of Robert Louis Stevenson's "Wild Scotchman" is "Thomas Fleming," a trading agent at Arne Island, one of the Marshall group, 150 miles from the nearest white settlement in the South Sea Islands. Fleming left his home in Paisley, Scotland when a boy of 15 and went out to sea the world. He became a sailor and, after roaming about the waters of the earth for some years, finally settled down on Arne Island. When Stevenson went sailing about amid these Southern "Isles of Eden" lying in dark purple spheres of sea, he touched at Arne and found Fleming there. Here, indeed, was "copy" too good to be neglected and a character just suited to Stevenson's genius. Fleming went into a story—it was inevitable.

Only the other day Fleming, accompanied by his wife, visited San Francisco. It was the first time he had left his island home for 35 years, and he gazed with amazement upon trolley cars and electric lights. After his still of sightseeing he sailed again for his home in the South Seas. "Perhaps it is a little lonely out there," he said, "but somehow it gets into a man's blood—and he stays on."

Bachelier His Own Model.
An author who has embalmed himself in fiction is Irving Bachelier. He is the "Eben Holden" of his well-known story of that name. The story is, of course, not a detailed account of the author's life, but in it he has "written himself up" pretty closely and has set down an accurate record, as far as he could remember, of the things he said and thought of as a child. The people "Eben Holden" tells about are the people that Bachelier knew as a child. "In my childhood," said the author to me recently, "I was told that my brother—then a baby—had been brought over the hills in a basket by old Mr. Bellows. That was how I supposed the little fellow had come to our home. I think it was that which gave me the notion of the boy's journey through the woods in a basket."

In "Caleb West, Master Diver," F. Hopkinson Smith drew the portrait of Captain Thomas A. Scott, of New London, Conn. Scott was the "Captain Joe" of the story. Smith, among various other callings, is a first-class civil engineer, and was associated with Captain Scott in various engineering enterprises. Captain Scott was the head of the Scott Wrecking Company, and as soon as Hopkinson Smith and he became acquainted it was a foregone conclusion that the Captain would go into a book. The Captain had all the requisite qualifications for a hero of romance. When he died not long ago

he was sincerely mourned by all who knew him and by no one more sincerely than by the author who had made such good use of him in fiction. The Race Rock light, at the eastern entrance of Long Island Sound, is a monument to the engineering ability of F. Hopkinson Smith. Among engineers there that he averaged a panic and a probable disaster on the ferry-boat Union on the North River. The ferry-boat was rammed by a tug and a gash cut in her side. Scott, who happened to be on board, stuffed his body into the hole and thus stopped the inrush of the water until the boat could make her trip. The ferry company gave him \$100 to buy a new suit of clothes.

Winston Churchill—our Winston—when he models a character sticks with great fidelity to his original. His Stephen Brice in "The Crisis" is drawn from Henry Hitchcock, who died in 1902 after a career which included many of the stirring incidents told of in "The Crisis." He was a brother of Ethan Allen Hitchcock, until a few months ago Secretary of the Interior. Hitchcock went to St. Louis in the early '60s, studied law and then became a newspaper man. He first became prominent by reason of a speech he delivered in favor of Lincoln as a judge advocate. When Johnston surrendered to Sherman, Hitchcock was sent with dispatches, formally announcing the event to Washington.

The character of Jethro in Churchill's "Coniston" was drawn so accurately and so clearly from Russell Durkee, a New Hampshire "boss," that all the Granite State at once recognized it. Russell Durkee has been dead some years now, but during his active political life he was as Churchill pictured him. The fame of Durkee hardly extended across the borders of his state until Churchill drew him. Now it is spread over the country. He was a good sort of a boss, too—a lovable, easy boss—but nevertheless, a boss and could bid railroads come bow to him.

In "Cape Cod Folks" the authoress wrote so closely to actual facts that she got into trouble. Not content with drawing her characters from the life, she used the real names of the people of the little village which she took for the scene of her story. Then the Cape Cod folks got "mad" and begged a suit to have themselves taken out of the book. The matter was compromised by the authoress supplying fictitious names for those characters which at first she had called by their real names. One of her characters was supposed to have been drawn from Bartlett, the father of the Ashmead-Bartlett boys. At one time Bartlett, a man of education and family, did live on the Cape Cod shore and his characteristics were said to have closely

resembled those which Mrs. Sarah Pratt Greene described as pertaining to Mr. Cradlebow. But that must have been before the time of the authoress and "Cradlebow" was drawn from a man probably still living in the village where Mrs. Greene, when "Sally MacLean," taught school.

He went into the Army at the outbreak of the war and went with it to the sea as a judge advocate. The character of Henry Esmond from Thomas Fairfax, sixth Baronet of the name. It was this Lord Fairfax who settled in Virginia and started the line of American Barons which has recently ceased to be American by the naturalization of the present Lord Fairfax as a British subject. Thomas Fairfax inherited from his mother, the daughter and heiress of Sir Robert Berycliff, a great land estate in England, and also a tract of land in Virginia containing 5,700,000 acres.

As a young man, Thomas Fairfax held a commission in the Guards, and was one of the best swordsmen and gentlemen of his time. He was an educated man, too, and could be serious as often as gay. But one day Lord Fairfax resigned his commission in the army, gave up his English estates to his brother and crossed the Atlantic to live the rest of his life far from courts, the follies and troubles of Europe. It was a love affair that transformed the growing discontent of Thomas Fairfax with European life into action and caused him to seek his home in Virginia.

With the exception of Henry Esmond, probably the character in fiction most closely drawn from a great man is the character of Sir William Ashton in "The Pride of Lammermoor." Sir Walter Scott took John Dalrymple, Viscount Stair, for his model and drew a picture so like the original that there could be no mistaking its subject. The career and the character of Lord Stair were those given by Scott to Sir William Ashton. This Lord Stair was mainly responsible for the massacre of Glencoe, he being at the time Secretary of State for Scotland. Scott, however, rather curiously, does not lay much stress on that, but excoiates Stair under the name of Ashton for his other sins and his general character. Lord Stair has never had a very friendly biographer, but the most unfriendly he ever had was Sir Walter Scott. Yet probably a few million people have known Lord Stair through Sir William Ashton, and in him John Dalrymple has been even aware of the existence of the Viscount. The novel, and the opera written from it, have spread over the world a knowledge of Sir William Ashton, and in him John Dalrymple is "damned to everlasting fame." (Copyright, 1908, by the Associated Literary Press.)

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