

Dear Madame:

"A Fool's Errand"  
was a novel — not a history,  
not a biography, not an auto-  
biography. Like every novel it  
used the facts of the time and  
life with which it dealt as the  
basis for incident.

Thus it happened, that all its inci-  
dents were so easily paralleled  
at that time, that very many  
have supposed or professed  
to suppose, that they were the  
originals of this or that char-

acter in the book. I suppose  
at least a hundred, perhaps  
five hundred people have set  
up such slurs.

In some cases, the characters  
were built upon actualities, as  
in the case of Gyre Hyman, who  
is made to narrate an actual  
incident, the whipping of the Min-  
sters, in which he took the very  
part indicated. I do not know that he  
did narrate it; if he had he could have  
done it in that way. There was a pretty  
strong basis for Ezekiel Doughter, though  
the character is greatly sublimated.

John Walters, is based on the  
life of John Walter Stephens, sen-  
ator from Brunswick County. Burke-  
rose, a character which I am im-  
formed ~~Mr James E Boyd~~ <sup>a gentleman</sup> as  
summed in order to secure of a  
Federal ~~Appointments~~ office  
~~appointment as District Attorney~~  
— the President who ~~appointed~~ <sup>made the appointments</sup> ~~Boyd~~  
wrote me to that effect — was  
down in spirit but not at all  
in fact, from another man,  
the party who assumed it,  
~~Mr Boyd~~, never on <sup>my</sup> ~~any~~  
mind and the character repre-  
sents exactly what he was not.

Burlison, Gurney and the  
love incidents are purely crea-  
tions. They were put in merely  
to smother the hellishness of that  
epoch - The letters were mostly  
from my own letter - book

Those in the chapter "How can I  
my Dog", are exact copies of a  
letter to me by a committee of  
the bar of my district and of  
my reply. The scene in

"All the world was in a sea"

is an almost literal reproduction  
of one that occurred at Gurney

have U.S. when I made, as  
Judge of that District, a final  
raid on the K.K. based largely  
by on "Kirkwood's" confessions,  
which is literally given down.

Judge Tuttle had nothing to  
<sup>now, not within fifty miles and knew of it only  
by its results.</sup> do with it. In fact, Denton was  
made for the purpose of the story,  
a pure creation, with much of  
my own experience and ~~was~~ only  
the one incident from Tuttle's  
life in it. I should have put  
Mr. Wes Bull in this scene, as  
he really figured in it in a

most worthy and ~~brave~~ <sup>courageous</sup>  
manner. I was on the bench  
at the time and Mr. Ball  
on that occasion really did the  
things attributed to Seroussi and  
I had the role of Denton. In  
fact Denton was a dummy  
used chiefly to avoid what might  
seem egotistical reference to the  
judicial relation <sup>the author</sup> & returned to  
the Kulkus regime. Colonel Seroussi  
~~There~~ was wholly a crea-  
tion, though many of the inci-  
dents were from my own ex-  
-

periences of many from that of  
adventures.

The "Ride for life", is based on  
a much more remarkable ride  
made by a little Souther school  
teacher, for a like purpose. ~~I had such~~ No such in-  
cident as that ever occurred to  
Judge Battle. It simply afforded a good  
opportunity to bring in the <sup>intended</sup> Bridge  
burning barbarity which had been dis-  
closed to me in the confession  
of one of the Klans.

In short, the characters were  
all creations pure and simple,  
but so carefully were actual in

evidents used, that men got the impression that they were pictured there and that Servome was autobiographical. It was a true picture of the time, ~~and~~ but not intended to depict individuals. I simply used the knowledge I had of locality and incident to give verisimilitude, flavor and individual interest.

As I said it was a novel and its ~~whose~~ power resulted wholly from its truthful realism and consistent delineation of character and not at all from actual



an unintended reproduction  
of individuals. It was truer  
than history as all good histor-  
ical novels ~~are~~ must be, because  
it gave the flesh as well as  
the bones of an epoch. Its im-  
itators have failed because it  
was so simply done that few  
noted its art and many like  
you concluded that "there was  
no imagination in it." There was, it  
is true, little "imagining" of incident  
because my experience ~~on the~~  
and that of others known ~~to me~~  
had given a superabundance. But all

that makes <sup>it</sup> a ~~slow~~ novel was just  
as much the work of imagination  
as if the scene had a celestial air  
instead of a terrestrial setting. The  
characters are just as much "creations"  
as Milton's "Good" or "Devil" which  
were, of course, only combinations  
resulting from his knowledge  
of human attributes.

I have made this letter some  
what long because yours is only  
one of a sort of inquiries  
I get which are of a character  
so inconsistent with the whole

terror and import of the book  
that I quite ~~would~~ wonder that  
~~they have~~ ~~any~~ ~~one~~ should  
entertain them. Though, perhaps, I  
should not as a southern woman  
ever stand as proof positive of its  
falsity, the fact that, "Judge  
Lougee knows that he didn't  
die of yellow fever!"

Sincerely yours

Albin W. Lougee