My dear Sir: Your letter in reference to "Button's Inn" is received. I am ~~under~~ the debtor of the Octagon Club for ~~them~~ the approval which you express. If you ~~should~~ would like another similar sensation you might read the first chapter of "Letters to a King" and the "Death of Herslopen" in "A Son of Old Harry". By the way, my last book, "An Outing with the Tuner of Hearts," has a quiet beauty which is all the dearer to me because the story it tells is simply

CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY NY HISTORICAL SOCIETY 2013

a page out of my own life.

As to your inquiry with regard to "Mr. Jukes", I attribute the reason you find him so entirely natural, is because he is a manly man of a type frequent enough in life but exceedingly rare in fiction - a man whose nature is not distorted by a false background. Your guess that he must have been copied from life, is quite wide of the mark. The character that is truly traced from life can

CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY 2014

merely be made to fill out the exactly
life-like in a work of fiction. The reason
is not far to seek. The novelist
who transplants an actual character
to his pages is apt to turn his
matchless against a background
of his own training. If his depic-
tion of the character is true, the
background is almost of necessity
different from that against which
it was projected in life and
which became, as every man's
environment does, a part of it.

CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY NY HISTORICAL SOCIETY 2013

The lack of harmony between the character and its background, is what makes the most carefully studied "historical" characters as they are called appear false and unreal. I have seldom used such characters for this reason. Columbus, in "Out of the Sunset Sea", is almost the only instance in my works. Being alive to the difficulty I think I avoided it to an extent very unusual; but I did so only at the expense of a much tedious and exhaustive study of the background — the time in which he lived."

CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY NY HISTORICAL SOCIETY 2013

Jackson, like all true and natural characters was "drawn from life" only in this sense; he was a creation harmonious in its parts and accurately fitted to the time in which he is described as having lived.

My opportunities for the study of the environment were rarely good. In the first place, the time itself, just when the world was walking to its new and later life, has always had a great attraction for me. Its characteristics lingered till my own early

days. In fact, I ~~once~~ journeyed ~~[illegible]~~ through four states when almost a man, without crossing a railroad track. In the second place I ~~had the opportunity~~ visited the Temple as a boy before it was wholly dismantled and while yet much of the glamour attending the Mormon regime still clung about it. A distinguished apostate was afterwards my intimate associate for months as a prisoner of war, when the interchange of views and experiences constituted our only occupation. Finally, one of the most prominent of the early Mormons ~~[illegible]~~ went from this county. One of the early converts did also denounce himself as a murderer and on trial was adjudged to have acted in self-defense.

CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY NY HISTORICAL SOCIETY 2013

I did not try to paint Jackson like anyone else. If I had he would not have been like himself. "Si je suis ce que je suis, je ne suis pas ce que je suis," is the French master phrased it, is true not only of the literary artist but of his creation as also. Jackson grew out of his time; was of it in the most intimate and truest sense, but he was not built on any model nor his lines traced from another life.

I borrowed some of my material from history — the dust from which the man was formed — but the man himself was just as much a creation as the first Adam & literary characters which your

etter part of it to stimulate others to such achievement.

out of epochs and embody their spirit are not imitations but realities.

I did not wish to treat the doctrines or character of Mormonism but only to hint at the causes of its amazing influence upon certain types of Americans of that time. How, it gets its converts from abroad; then they were all Americans. So I used one of these types in depicting a section, and a picture of that time.

CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY NY HISTORICAL SOCIETY 2013

~~Dear Sir~~

I have been thus full in replying to your letter because the ordinarily accepted theory of the true character and field of fiction is most egregiously false and absurd.

Yours very truly

[illegible]