

that three generations of Haliburtons were on the Nova Scotia Bench which is just as erroneous. But while few knew or even yet know little of the author, "Sam Slick" was of interest in all countries; everyone became acquainted with him in a very short space of time, and either became his familiar friend, or (like Professor Felton of Harvard to whom allusion is made above) his particular enemy.

That a person may have an influence on mankind it is not necessary that he shall have really existed. Some of the greatest persons in the world have only lived in the minds of their creators. As we only know people who have lived in other ages or in countries remote from our own, by the words, written or spoken, of their biographers, our ideas of them are formed by such words. So we have biographies, not only of real people, but also of imaginary ones, and as the authors who create imaginary people are often endowed with greater ability than ordinary biographers, and not "Cribb'd, cabin'd and confined" by "horrid" facts, which are almost as brain-benumbing as statistics, we get imaginary personages described to us, more real, more vivid, and more clearly delineated in every way than we would have had, had they been made of mortal clay instead of dreams. London, the centre of the world, is peopled to a visitor with shades and shapes drawn from the mind of Charles Dickens and many others; Farther north, the people limned by the Wizard of the North are the really living dead; in New England, Priscilla the Puritan Maiden, "modest and simple and sweet," still entices John Alden to speak for himself and not for his friend; in Nova Scotia, Evangeline, "the sunshine of St. Eulalie," still walks the meadows of Grand Pre, wearing "the Norman cap and the kirtle of homespun, and the earrings brought in the olden time from France;" And Sam Slick, a less romantic figure, but even at this date, clear cut and distinct, lean and lank, shrewd, keen, vulgar and witty, drives old Clay along the highways and byways of Nova Scotia selling wooden clocks to the farmers, telling stories, bragging, wheedling the men, flattering the women and sounding the praises of "soft sawder and human natur" to those he meets in the day's travels.

So absolutely alive is Sam Slick that he has devoured and obliterated the personality of his creator, and we find, almost without exception, writers speaking of him as if he were an historical personage and not a creation of fiction. Of this I might give numerous examples, but a few will suffice. Carlyle says in his "Past and Present;"

"Vagrant Sam Slicks, who rove over the earth doing 'strokes of Trade,' what wealth have they? Horseloads, shiploads of white and yellow metal; in very sooth, what ARE these? Slick rests nowhere, he is homeless."

R. Surtees in "Hillingdon Hall;"

"Oh, hang the law! The less law one has in the Justice Room the better. Get Stone's "Justice Manual." It will keep you all right as to form and if you read "Sam Slick" it'll do you more good than all the rubbishy stuff the lawyers have put together. Stone for the law, Slick for the sense."

And even Judge Howay, of New Westminster, in writing the history of B. C., and mentioning a famous letter written by Carmichael-Smith to Judge Haliburton about a possible railway through Canada from the Atlantic to the Pacific, speaks of it as a letter to "Sam Slick."

As has been said, Sam Slick did not come into being as a literary product intentionally. Haliburton wished to wake up Nova Scotia, and, with that purpose in view, he began in 1835 a series of letters, published anonymously in the Nova Scotian, a weekly newspaper published in Halifax by Joseph Howe. Into these, as Haliburton himself afterwards told Lord Abinger in England, there accidentally slipped, as the mouthpiece of his ideas, a Yankee Clockmaker. He did not

intend to describe such a person or to use the Yankee dialect but they both fitted the time and place, and once in, there they stayed.

The form in which these sketches appeared was no invention of Haliburton's. As early as 1830 there appeared in a newspaper published in Portland, Maine, a series of sketches written by one Seba Smith, a journalist of that city, purporting to be written during the President's Tour Down East, "By myself Major Jack Downing of Downingville," and these sketches first appeared in book form in 1833. They achieved a considerable local popularity and were, no doubt, read and enjoyed by Haliburton and his cronies. When he, himself, took up the pen, he followed the fashion of the day. A short extract from one of the Downing Letters will show the style and the similarity to the Clockmaker.

"When they talked o' making you governor down in Maine, your Aunt Nabby was wrathful enough,—'Well there,' says she, 'I never thought to live to see THIS day! Our family;' says she, 'If it wasn't so dreadful rich, ollers bore a good character and could hold up their heads and show their faces anywhere and to anybody, without their being able to say one word against us—and now to have one of us put up for Governor without ever having done anything to be ashamed of—is TOO bad!"

The sketches by Haliburton at once achieved a tremendous popularity in Nova Scotia, so much so that Howe had the temerity to issue them in book form. It was not a large book, indeed, or a pretentious one—a small 12 mo. bound in green cloth,—but a book nevertheless and one which was as much in demand locally as had been the newspaper in which the sketches first appeared. A small edition, issued, no doubt, with fear and trembling by the publisher, like the early editions of Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress," it was 'thumbed' to pieces, read and re-read, passed from hand to hand, until it is extremely difficult to find a copy, and if you do, it will probably be dirty and dog-eared, unless perchance, as in the case of the writer's copy, it has accidentally got into the hands of one who took no interest in it or was laid away so carefully that it was lost to all intents and purposes, until, after many years, it has been refound, to become the pride of the eyes and the joy of the soul of a Canadian Bibliomaniac. But this little book as well as the newspaper in which the sketches were first printed got further than the author had anticipated and found friends—at least, readers—outside of the Province as within. Some copies reached England and one found its way into the hands of Bentley, the Great London Publisher, who in 1838, without knowing its origin, printed what is ordinarily called the first Edition, although as a matter of fact there were two earlier ones issued in Nova Scotia, in 1836 and 1837. Finding a tremendous demand in

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