

**CERTAIN AMERICAN
FACES; SKETCHES
FROM LIFE**

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Certain American faces; sketches from life by Charles Lewis Slattery

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CHARLES LEWIS SLATTERY

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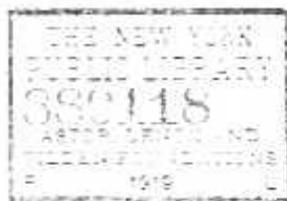
CERTAIN
AMERICAN FACES

Sketches from Life

BY
CHARLES LEWIS SLATTERY



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PREFACE

IN England there have been many collections of short sketches of notable characters in the intellectual and spiritual realm, all the way from the great classic, Walton's *Lives*, to Mr. Arthur Christopher Benson's *Leaves of the Tree*, written in our own time. As I was reading with intense pleasure Mr. Benson's book, it came over me that we had in America men not only of equal interior power, but also of equal personal charm, worthy of a similar chronicle; and I wondered if we were going to allow their unique traits to be forgotten. In spite of an impression to the contrary, we in America are far more reticent than our brave English allies: it is painfully difficult

for us to speak of the ideals and the heroes about whom we care most. We are possibly a little too sensitive to ridicule. We imagine the smiling critic as he takes up our imaginary volume--we think we hear him murmur, "All very well, this book; but it ought to be called, 'Great Men Who have Known Me.'" And forthwith, though we have reverently touched the hem of the garments of the saints, we allow the fragrant memory of them to fade from the earth.

Most of the names commemorated in this book are well known. Two or three will be strange to almost every reader: I have included them because they represent a group of striking personalities of such real power that they would stand among the renowned of the earth if the appeal of a conspicuous opportunity had come to them, and also because they are the sort of people who inspire others to attainment and to action, while they themselves prefer a dimmer light. One of the heroes is a boy, his life here finished

before its promise had been tested: these are days when we know the greatness of youth, and exalt the glory of the unfinished. We suspect to what famous tasks the Master of All the Worlds has assigned them in the blessed Country to which they have gone.

As one generation passes and another begins, we, who have known the old leaders, lament that those who are to lead the future did not know face to face the men who inspired us. I remember that once in a college class-room the lecturer broke off from his subject with the remark that, when he was a young man, he and his friends were constantly looking forward to a new poem by Browning or Tennyson or Matthew Arnold, a new essay by Carlyle, or a new novel by Thackeray; and he wondered how we of a duller age could have any courage or spirit without the incentive which had been his. There is a benevolent motive, therefore, in the attempt to prolong the lives of our heroes and saints. We would have them flash, if

only for an instant, their radiant faces upon
the oncoming generation.

C. L. S.

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