

The Real AGATHA CHRISTIE

● If young Agatha Miller had not caught a cold nearly 40 years ago, some of the world's best detective stories might never have been written . . .

AGATHA CHRISTIE, author of the "Herald" Serial, "The Moving Finger," an instalment of which appears on Page 13, lives in one of the loveliest corners of England. As a famous literary figure she is something of a recluse, most of her work being done in her Devon home, The Greenway House, overlooking an historic river valley.

She is the wife of Max Mallowan, who served in the British Air Ministry in the early part of the war, and later as Arab adviser to the British Government in Tripolitania. Mallowan is an archaeologist, and she met him in 1930, two years after she had divorced her first husband.

"I was born Agatha Mary Clarissa Miller," Agatha Christie has said of herself, "in Torquay, Devon, during the last decade of last century. My father, an American, died when I was a child and my mother, an intelligent woman with an original mind,

encouraged me when I was very young to write stories and poems.

"It was a rainy day—I had a cold. I was the youngest of the family and very much alone. There was nothing to do with myself until she said: 'You'd better write a story.'"

Occasionally she had short stories published, but her first detective story, "The Mysterious Affair At Styles" went the rounds of several publishers before The Bodley Head accepted it. She has since written more than 40 books and become one of the world's most financially successful detective fiction writers.

Married to Col. Archibald Christie, C.M.G., D.S.O., during the last war, she divorced him in 1928.

Of herself, Agatha Christie says: "My chief dislikes are crowds, loud noises, gramophones, and cinemas. I dislike the taste of alcohol and do not like smoking. I DO like sun, sea, flowers, travelling, strange foods, sports, concerts, theatres, pianos, and doing embroidery."



Agatha Christie at work. CIRCLE: Walking in the grounds of her Devon home with her archaeologist husband, Max Mallowan. It was her association with archaeology which inspired Mrs. Mallowan's mystery novels of ancient and modern Egypt, such as "Death Comes As the End," also published as a "Herald" Serial last November.

Mrs. Allan A. Ryan

A well-known figure in the American social world, Mrs. Allan A. Ryan is a blonde with shining reddish tints in her hair and a delicate blonde complexion which she safeguards with Pond's Two Creams. She says: "I am wholeheartedly devoted to the Pond's method of skin care."



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She Wore a Punch Bonnet . . .

SYDNEY IN THE 'SIXTIES

LETTERS written in Sydney more than 80 years ago by Fanny, a 17-year-old schoolgirl, were published last week and on April 16. In them Fanny, writing to her "Dearest Mamma," told of Miss Moore's School for Young Ladies and described what she saw of social life in the Mid-Victorian city.

Among Fanny's friends were several who, like herself, wrote in letters and diaries of events and interests now long forgotten. Frequently they wrote of clothes, and in the following extracts from authentic letters preserved by Mr. C. S. Gillham, of Epping, Fanny and two contemporaries, Mary and Ruth, refer to the fashions of their day:

I HAVE not got a dress yet and will not be able to do so until my dear Papa sends me some "tin."
— Fanny, writing from Balmain, in 1861.

AS you desired, I am keeping an account of all the money I spend. I gave 5/6 a yard for some silk to make a jacket with. The pattern was from a very fashionable £4/12/ jacket which Miss Cohen lately got from Giles, one of the most fashionable shops in Sydney. Miss Cohen's was corded with white, but as many of them are worn without it, and as it would only be pretty when in the height of fashion, I thought it would be better for me not to put on the white cording.
— Fanny, writing from Balmain, in 1861.

PUNCH's bonnets, with all their horrors, are quite the rage. I, of course, being among fashionable people had to get one, so went to David Jones and got one that had



just arrived by the mail. Tho' not the very ultra and fine, it is a most comfortable and pretty bonnet. You must let me get one for you, they wear them so cheaply and simply trimmed. I had to give £1/15/ for mine, but could only get a horsehair that would suit and they are always expensive.
— Mary Bruce, from Sydney, in 1861

I AM afraid I shall be weak enough to buy a pork pie hat a la Lady Young, who always wears one with a long white feather, though she is anything but young. They are not a bit of shade but look so nice for riding.
— Mary Bruce, from Buckhurst, in 1861.

SEWING machines are getting very general, they are a grand invention. I shall never be contented to "stitch, stitch" again. I am paying for Lotty to learn. I think she will be 6 or 7 weeks before she will learn it, then, of course, time and practice will give the knack. They will, I foresee, become very general and to know how to use them will be a great advantage. They require great atten-



FANNY was a daughter of Thomas Charles Suttor, of Mt. Grosvenor, Peel, near Bathurst. She died in 1935 on the eve of her 90th birthday.



tion. Some ladies have them who will never be able to do with them what I see under skillful hands they can be made to do.
— Ruth Watson, from Balmain, in 1862.

WE had such a delightful dance, or, rather, party last night, 25 altogether, all members of the Archery Club, and a good many gentlemen, and danced incessantly till 12. I made up a net dress with six flounces and a kind of high body, which I flatter myself, was the dress of the evening, all said it looked so well.
— Mary Bruce, from Buckhurst.

SO far I have not been able to write to anyone, for last week I was so taken up with the frantic effort of making a dress with 7 flounces in three days besides interruptions . . . I find my black silk such a comfort and can go about with all the independence of a gentleman without luggage.
— Mary Bruce, from William Street, in 1861.