

Richard Baxter Townshend [5D15]



Repton School, Derbyshire



Trinity College, Cambridge



Wadham College, Oxford



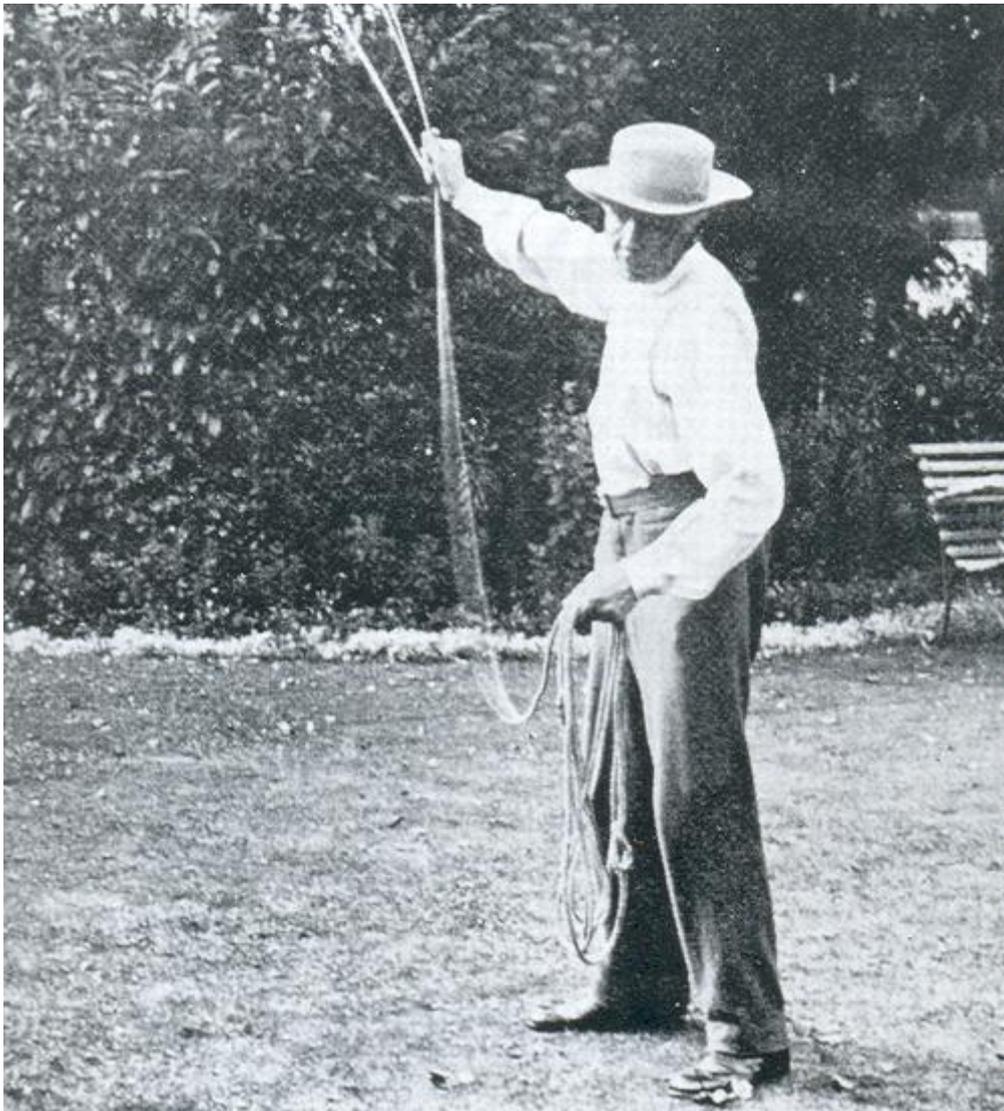
Hilderstone Church



Sir Edward Elgar



Richard demonstrating the lasso



Introduction by Professor J. Monaghan from the University of Oklahoma Press reprint of "A Tenderfoot in Colorado."

The opening chapter of Richard Baxter Townshend's *A Tenderfoot in Colorado* will remind many readers of the first pages of Owen Wister's *Virginian*. Each book begins with a description of the author's experiences when he went Out West after graduating from college. Oddly enough, several chapters of each book appeared first as magazine articles during the 1890's—the decade that established the present pattern for "westerns." Wister's articles were published in American periodicals and Townshend's in British. As a writer of "westerns" the latter might even be called England's Owen Wister.

Both young men came from families of moderate wealth. Richard Townshend's parents were landed gentry with a home in Bristol, England, and a seat in Cork County, Ireland, where Richard was born on March 8, 1846. As a boy he was sent to Repton "public school," an exclusive private school founded in 1557. Here he earned a minor scholarship to Cambridge. At Trinity College he received a B.A. degree, along with the name of "cherub" because of his curly hair, blue eyes, and pink cheeks.

Townshend completed his studies at a time when the Chisholm Trail in the American West had become one of the famous bonanzas of the century. Summer after summer, men with cash doubled and tripled their investments by buying cattle in Texas and selling them Up North. In Great Britain the industrial revolution had produced excess capital and many Englishmen flocked to American ranching country. Richard, a younger son, was not one of the wealthy speculators, but he did have some money to invest when he stepped off a Union Pacific Railroad train into the exciting drama of the West in 1869.

This book describes the twenty-three-year-old man's first association with gun-packing gamblers, half-wild Indians, and eager promoters. Being an educated Britisher schooled in the grammatical precision of Latin, French, and Cambridge English, he especially enjoyed the ungrammatical Western idiom, and his narrative reproduces it to perfection. This alone gives the volume unusual distinction because too many writers of Western Americana have overplayed the idiosyncrasies of Western speech, inventing a spurious lingo typical only of drug-store cowboys.

For five years Townshend prowled along the eastern slope of the Rockies and the upper reaches of the Arkansas. As a tenderfoot he knew, and in this book describes, early-day Julesburg, Denver, Central City and Colorado Springs. Interested always in guns, he met many men who considered a gun part of their everyday wearing apparel. He also became acquainted with three early governors of the Territory: A. C. Hunt, a United States marshal appointed by resident Andrew Johnson; Edward McCook, a political general appointed by Grant; and that Quaker graduate of the University of Pennsylvania, William Gilpin, who was a successful professional soldier before assuming the governorship.

During Townshend's first year in the West, gold was discovered on Ute Indian lands in south western Colorado. Prospectors ignored the reservation boundaries and swarmed over the red men's hunting ground. The Utes threatened war, and Townshend accompanied the federal commission which went to the reservation to preserve peace—an exciting event that has never been recorded with such vivid details by any other writer.

Later, Townshend bought a cattle ranch on the Plains some twenty-five miles east of the site of Colorado Springs. Out there, Cheyennes and Arapahos were still uncertain characters and he endured as well as enjoyed the vicissitudes of life on the open range until 1874 when he sold out for "time payments," using the first instalment to buy wagons and goods he believed saleable in New Mexico. With this venture Townshend concludes his book, but this was not the end of his Colorado experiences. Hauling his trade goods, Townshend stopped at Jemez, New Mexico, a village west of Santa Fe. He planned to sell his supplies here to the Mexican residents, also to the Navahos who came to trade, and to the Jemez Indians in their nearby pueblo. Townshend learned Spanish quickly, thanks to his early schooling in Latin. He was granted a room in the pueblo where his blue eyes and rosy English cheeks earned him the name of *Poshizmo*, or Dawn God. However, with nothing to do except wait for customers and watch the shadows of ladders to the flat roofs creep along the smooth walls, Townshend became restless. Hearing rumours of new gold discoveries back in Colorado, he decided to return to that country.

Townshend packed camp equipment on burros and, accompanied by two companions, rode away in the late summer of 1876. While travelling across the Navaho lands, he noticed that these Indians had already heard about Custer's defeat in Montana. Although they did not hinder him he felt safer when his little party left their semi barren country, entered Colorado, and climbed the San Juan Mountains where tall grass grew beneath the red-stemmed pines.

Townshend prospected as far west as Silverton, then swung southeast toward the reservation of the Jicarilla Apaches (called "Hickories" by the natives). Winter overtook him near Pagosa Springs, Colorado. At an altitude of 7,000 feet he and a fellow prospector built a shelter of pine boughs and "holed up" in deep snow. When spring came, they rode south through the melting drifts into New Mexico. At Tierra Amarilla, a colonial Spanish settlement still in existence, Townshend received the first mail to reach him since the previous autumn. Letters from England convinced him that after an eight-year absence he should go home to his widowed mother, but he realized he must first clip the Wild-West, curly locks hanging to his shoulders. A second payment on his ranch supplied the necessary funds for the trip. However, he was not sufficiently wealthy to sail in style on the regular Cunard steamship for Liverpool. Instead he boarded a cheaper vessel bound for London, a city much closer to his mother's home at Wimbledon.

Arriving in the late summer of 1877, Townshend found the English climate muggy, misty, steamy hot, and very different from the Rockies' bracing air. Moreover, he felt like a stranger in his native land. Thirty-one years old now, he noticed that other men of his age were well established in "situations." That old friend of the family, Sir Francis Bond Head, whose North American travels had influenced Richard to go Out West, was dead. Richard's mother knew only elderly ladies and they had no work for a cowboy! He was introduced to a minister's daughter, Letitia Jane Dorothea Baker, who wrote poetry and read English history. Richard fell in love at once and wanted to marry her, but without a job this was impossible. He learned that Sir Francis' son, Jim Head, was in Colorado. Richard decided to join Jim, "make a quick stake," come back, and marry Dorothea

When he returned to Colorado Springs in 1878, he scarcely recognized the place. The town had been established as a health resort in 1871 by intelligent and art-minded people from Philadelphia. "High-toned" easterners afflicted with tuberculosis were settling here. The model city already possessed a fine high school and Colorado College. No saloons were allowed, but outside the city limits - where liquor was sold - Townshend met Jim Head, who was "bumming around" with Oswald Petre, son of Lord Petre. The three young men wanted to make some money. They discussed the new silver mines at Leadville - up on top of the world. Townshend had been there when the area was a worked-out gold camp. All agreed to load two wagons with bottled beer and drive up to the booming camp and sell it.

Like most of Townshend's investments this one proved fairly successful. At Leadville he found many opportunities to reinvest his profits in mining claims but such speculations were too hazardous for him. He did notice, however, that the day of the plodding ox team had passed. Speed was now so important in delivering freight that horses and mules fetched fantastic prices. Prospectors were paying \$100 for ordinary saddle mounts. Two years earlier, when in New Mexico, he had heard that such animals could be bought in Texas for \$10.00. A profit like that on a couple of hundred head would make the stake he needed to marry Dorothea.

In the fall of 1878, after snow had blanketed Colorado's mountains and plains, Townshend boarded the train for sunny San Antonio. Here he bought a span of mules and a roundup mess-wagon. With whip in hand and foot on the brake, he drove into the brush country between San Antonio and San Diego, Texas, a town of Mexicans sixty miles west of Corpus Christi. He soon learned that the \$10.00 horses he had hoped to buy would cost him \$15.00 to \$25.00. Even at these prices his profit promised to be good, so he bought some two hundred horses and mules from various ranchmen. One sinister fellow living on the outlaw strip between the Nueces and the Rio Grande offered him "wet" horses at \$5.00 per head. Townshend understood "wet" horses to be animals stolen in Mexico. Tempting as the price seemed, he did not buy because he believed that the Texas brand-inspector would not permit him to leave the state with such animals. He regretted his decision later when he learned that the inspector's chief interest was his fee.

In the spring of 1879, with ten riders, a cook, and mess-wagon, Townshend pointed his horses

northwest through the brush country. In this jungle of cactus and mesquite the drag and swing men could not see the bell mare being led at the head of the column. Finally, they emerged on the Llano Estacado and struck west over an ocean of grass for the Pecos. In New Mexico the Lincoln County War had commenced. Billy the Kid and three of his gang stopped them, threatened to steal all their horses, but after an ugly scene let them pass - an adventure recounted later in Townshend's skilful narrative style.

Climbing up to Raton Pass, Townshend's party enjoyed the clear water, cool air, and dancing quaking aspen leaves. The horses, full of fresh grass, stampeded but were cornered in a box canyon. Down on the north side of the mountains where the "picket wire plains" are studded with elk-horn cactus, Townshend felt at home. This was his old range. He trailed the horses north along the edge of the Rockies, drove past Colorado Springs and up through the mountains to the railhead of the Denver & South Park Railway, which was only thirty miles from Leadville. Here Townshend put his horses to work hauling freight to the silver camp, selling the teams at the end of each trip. This was slow but profitable. At the first opportunity he sold out, returned to England, married Dorothea, and began an academic life at the age of thirty-three.

For five years Townshend served as assistant master at Bath College. Then he moved to a village in Worcestershire, but in 1891 he settled permanently at Oxford. Through influential friends he became a member of Common Room in Wadham College where he might sip tea on the emerald lawn. Meanwhile, he wrote "Trial by Lynch Law," his first magazine article, which appeared in 1892 and later became chapter seven of *A Tenderfoot in Colorado*. Encouraged by the publication of this article he recorded other western experiences. He also wrote several narratives on the English civil war - one of Dorothea's special interests. Using his knowledge of Latin, he translated the Fourth Maccabees for Clarendon Press. He also translated works by Tacitus. In 1893 his alma mater awarded him an M.A. degree. During these years he served as treasurer of the Oxford University Golf Club, played tennis, and practiced shooting on the Bisley ranges.

In 1899, Townshend saw his first novel published. *Lone Pine* was a Pueblo Indian story with his own blue-eyed, curly-headed self as an important character. In 1903 he made a last visit to Colorado. Armed with a camera now instead of a rifle, he visited the Great Plains, the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, the Grand Canyon of the Colorado, and the pueblo at Jemez. The old chiefs he had known were gone but the two kivas (of the Summer and the Winter People) with the lodge-pole ladder-ends protruding from the roofs, were still there and the young men still followed ancient Indian traditions. Townshend regretted that he could not say the same about the cowboys. The open-range life he once knew seemed gone forever. His early-day friends no longer possessed the dash, the gay humour, the youthful glamour he had admired, and he returned to Oxford wondering why these toothless old men had ever seemed appealing.

When World War I commenced, Townshend joined the University Volunteers. He wanted to show the officious military instructor how to shoot, and shoot fast. It would have been easy for him to do so, but the chap wouldn't watch! Townshend retired philosophically to his garden where, with air rifles, he taught ambitious boys the correct way to shoot. However, this activity soon became too strenuous for the seventy-year-old man. His health broke in 1916 but he lived another seven years writing from his accumulated notes the texts of *A Tenderfoot in Colorado* and two other books. Happy with his memories, Townshend looked calmly at the end of the trail ahead. He survived the publication of this volume by less than four months and died on April 28, 1923.

Dorothea, her husband's constant companion during his later years, saw his other books of memoirs through the press. In the manuscript of one, written shortly before the death of this man of many adventures, she read these consoling words: "Life has not been a disappointment, and there is a good deal of truth in the line: 'And for His chosen, pours His best wine last!'"

Jay Monaghan
Santa Barbara, California
January 2, 1968

Title Page of 'An Officer of the Long Parliament'

*AN OFFICER OF THE LONG
PARLIAMENT AND HIS
DESCENDANTS Being some
Account of the Life & Times
of Colonel Richard Townesend of
Castletown (Castletownshend) &
a Chronicle of his Family With
Illustrations Edited by Richard
& Dorothea Townshend*



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**Inspired Golf By Richard Baxter Townshend
Transcribed & Edited by Kevin Allen**

A Note on the Author

A real Victorian man of many, not to say contrasting, parts, Richard Baxter Townshend (1846 – 1923) came from an old Irish family with an estate in County Cork. He was educated at Repton School and Trinity College, Cambridge, where he read Classics, rowed for the First Boat Club and became a member of 'Maggie & Stump,' the Debating Society. Mindful perhaps of his lack of an inheritance as a younger son, he went out to the United States at the age of twenty-three, 'roughing it' as a cattle-rancher, gold-pro prospector and trader in horses and mules. In all he spent ten years in the West, experiencing many hardships and adventures including a meeting with Billy the Kid. Despite his success in a man's world, Townshend was remarkable for his somewhat feminine appearance. He had rosy cheeks and blue eyes, a high-pitched voice and a love of unusual clothes; his college nickname had been 'cherub.'

Having made his pile in America, he returned to England and took a teaching post at Bath College. His connection with the Elgar circle began with his marriage to Dorothea Baker, a sister of his University friend William Meath Baker, of Hasfield Court, Gloucestershire. Dorothea's elder sister, Mary Frances, or Minnie, was a close friend of Alice Roberts, who would marry the composer in 1889. Townshend quitted his teaching at Bath after five years and in 1891 moved to Oxford where he spent the rest of his life. Here he returned to scholarship and published translations of the Classics, many vivid articles describing his 'Wild West' days, (later published in book form), adventure stories and sporting books. In a city famed for eccentrics, he became a noted one, writing at his study desk sitting in a specially constructed saddle and riding around Oxford on a tricycle fitted with a continuously ringing bell. Somewhat deaf, he felt the bell helped other people to hear him coming, as he couldn't hear them. Those of us who have narrowly escaped onslaught by bicycle in Oxford can only suggest that the idea is long overdue for renewal.

Townshend described his American days with a scholar's commitment and he remains not without importance as a historian of the West. Many of his photographs of various Indian tribes and their ceremonies have been preserved at the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford and the Royal Anthropological Institute in London. Dorothea also turned to authorship, producing historical works and stories for girls, and occasionally collaborating with her husband on larger joint projects.

After his marriage Elgar met the cowboy-scholar frequently at Hasfield Court and the two unconventional men struck up a rapport. Townshend's unusual background would have been of much interest to the composer and it is easy to imagine him preferring the older man's many racy yarns of American adventure to the polite tea-time conversations of the Baker ladies. But it did not stop there. As the man who, as their friendship developed, taught Elgar to play golf, Townshend did more for English music than he knew; he was rewarded by inclusion in the musical portrait-gallery which was the composer's first great work, the 'Enigma' Variations. His music, the third variation of the set, is titled simply 'R.B.T.' In its affectionate caricature of his various mannerisms, the movement pays tribute to a loyal supporter and adds further lustre to the name of a remarkable man.

Townshend first began to teach Elgar golf on 23rd December, 1892, during a Christmas house-party at Hasfield Court; the magnificent house had extensive grounds where the

game could easily be played. No doubt the beginner was shown how to take a swing at a daisy, and told of the 'eye on the ball' and 'head as still as possible' maxims, among the many others that Townshend includes in the first chapter of his book. But perhaps it was his main theory of breathing synchronised with the swing – 'inspired golf' – that formed the basis of that first lesson. If so, it would have been most appropriate. We talk about composers having an 'inspiration,' a sudden, brilliant idea. But it cannot be mere coincidence that the word also refers to the drawing-in of a breath, with accompanying positive feelings of well-being and pleasurable anticipation. Those golf lessons at Hasfield went so well that they continued on Christmas Eve and Boxing Day; Christmas Day had other distractions of course but even so Elgar and Townshend managed to get out for a walk, during which, as Alice Elgar's diary tells us, they 'found golf balls,' evidence perhaps of Elgar's necessarily inexpert activities with the club of the preceding days.