STEVENSONIANA

Robert Louis Stevenson.

From a Photograph in the Possession of Edmund Gosse Esq.

STEVENSONIANA

An anecdotal life and appreciation of
Robert Louis Stevenson
Edited from the writings of J. M. Barrie, S. R. Crockett, G. K. Chesterton, Conan Doyle, Edmund Gosse, W. E. Henley, Henry James, Ian Maclaren, D. Christie Murray, W. Robertson Nicoll, A. W. Pinero, A. T. Quiller-Couch, Lord Rosebery, Leslie Stephen, I. Zangwill, etc.

BY

J. A. HAMMERTON

A NEW AND REVISED EDITION
WITH FORTY ILLUSTRATIONS

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INTRODUCTION TO NEW EDITION

ON the publication of the library edition of this work it met with a gratifying reception from the critical press of England and America and from Stevensonians on both sides of the Atlantic. Indeed, out of some scores of reviews there were but three in any sense adverse, and each of these was so whole-heartedly abusive that it indicated the hand of a prejudiced critic. As one of these suspiciously intemperate articles appeared in a provincial journal more notable for its football reports than for literary opinion, it were waste of time to notice it. But, were I so minded, I might furnish forth—and in due time, perhaps, I shall—an instructive chapter on the ethics of reviewing, based chiefly on the other two unpleasantly personal attacks. It is far from my wish to involve in a literary controversy any work that is associated, however unworthily, with the name of R. L. Stevenson. But I shall permit myself the remark, that if within this book I have enclosed a considerable area whereon a certain gentleman had promised himself to build, and if the bare idea of it received the disapproval of another, it would only have been in accord with good taste had both refrained from availing themselves of the opportunities of anonymous journalism to abuse it when it issued from the press. Thus much, but no more, by way of reference to a matter that concerns the sphere of literary workers rather than the wider world of general readers. The opinions of the reviewers printed with the present edition, together with the pleasing fact that a thousand Stevensonian collectors

have taken up the first expensive edition of 'Stevensoniana,' may be thought to outweigh in some measure the unfavourable views of two, or perhaps three, excellent but not disinterested gentlemen.

There is another reason why I have been tempted to preface this edition with some reference to the criticisms which the book has evoked. The idea that governed its compilation was not, in the first instance, the production of an 'anecdotal life' of Stevenson, but, as several critics have been good enough to point out, the result of my labour is a work of sufficient sequence and coherency to justify the addition that is made to the title-page of this popular re-issue.

A very large proportion of the volume is drawn from sources not easily available to the general reader, and numerous letters which I have received from Stevensonians, at home and more particularly in America, indicate that a considerable amount of material which has eluded even the enthusiastic collector has here been captured to his service. In order, as far as possible, to avoid duplication, permission was not sought to reprint from works devoted entirely to the work or personality of R. L. S.

As the plan of the book has precluded me from the expression of any personal opinion, I refrain even here from taking sides in the unhappy controversy that followed upon the late W. E. Henley's memorable article in the *Pall Mall Magazine*, but I did not see my way entirely to exclude that article, and gladly availed myself of Mr. Henley's kind permission to make what use of it I cared. Without abating one jot of my admiration for R. L. S., I found it possible to include a great part of the much debated essay, and surely the whole of it might have been incorporated without endangering in any degree the cherished memory of one whose friendship is among the strongest claims on our remembrance that Henley himself possessed? There are others, still among

us, who, in vastly greater measure than he, will owe any niche they may obtain in the mind of the next generation to that same friendship. But, as I have seen it stated with some show of authority since the death of Mr. Henley, that had he lived he would have retracted much of what he wrote in that article, it may be worth while to quote his own words from a letter I received from him not many months before his death: 'As for the *P. M. M.* I want to make a distinction. You may take all you wish of it, till you come to the last paragraph. You excerpt a few lines from this: but I bar. *Take the whole paragraph, please*; or end on "rare fellows in their day." You see, it cost me a lot to write that paragraph. I should not have written it, had I not felt the occasion very instant. Had I known what I know now, I should pretty certainly have dotted i's and crossed t's. I say no more. Only I say that that paragraph is what I mean, and what I want to leave.' In face of this I did not hesitate to print the paragraph, and the more it is read the greater is the wonder it should have provoked so much heated discussion. After all, it is salutary to remember that Stevenson was a little lower than the angels!

To Mr. Graham Balfour I am indebted for a gracious act of friendliness, whereby I have been enabled to correct several errors that had escaped my vigilance in the first edition, and especially to remove a reference to Stevenson and Father Damien which, on following Mr. Balfour's directions, I found to be quite inaccurate. Its place has been taken by an extract from the letter of chief Mataafa to the president of the Stevenson Fellowship in San Francisco; in every way more agreeable reading.

I have not, however, sought to extend the volume by any gatherings from the ceaseless stream of literary journalism concerned with the life and work of R. L. S.; a stream that is flowing with unabated vigour. Interesting though this has been since I brought 'Stevensoniana' to completion three years ago, I confess I have detected

little that would warrant the extension of these already crowded pages.

An important feature of the present edition is the collection of illustrations with which it has been enriched. Scarcely less interesting than some of the literary matter are these scenes and portraits, and with the exception of the admirably produced brochure in the 'Bookman Booklets' series no such collection has hitherto been available in book form.

The means of thanking individually the goodly company of authors, editors, and publishers, without whose indulgent assistance 'Stevensoniana' had remained for its editor an 'enchanted cigarette'—if Balzac's simile may be so applied—cannot be duly exercised within the scant pages of this introduction, and to attempt a detailed list of acknowledgments would be to weight the volume with extra pages of doubtful interest. The editor is none the less—he could not be more—sincere in his expression of gratitude to all who have co-operated.

Special mention must be made of the kindness of the following publishers, whose names do not all appear in acknowledgments of the books issued from their houses: Messrs. Hodder and Stoughton, Mr. John Murray, Messrs. Chatto and Windus, Messrs. Longmans, Green, and Co., Messrs. William Blackwood and Sons, Messrs. Isbister and Co., Mr. William Heinemann, Messrs. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, Mr. John Lane, Mr. A. H. Bullen, Mr. David Nutt, and Mr. A. L. Humphreys.

J. A. H.

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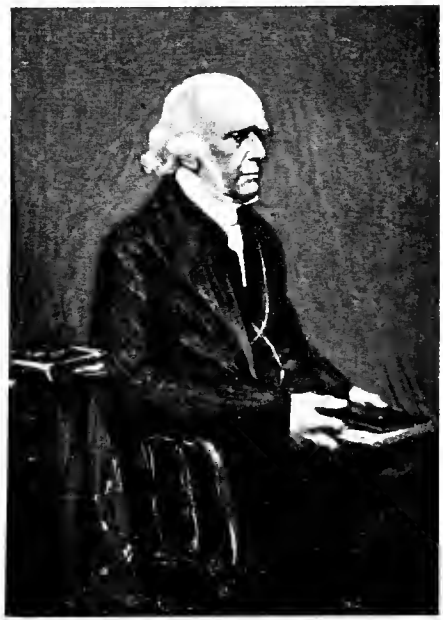

Rev. Lewis Balfour

Robert Stevenson

THE TWO GRANDFATHERS OF R. L. STEVENSON

STEVENSONIANA

I

HIS FOREBEARS AND INHERITED CHARACTERISTICS

Robert Louis (Lewis) Stevenson was born at No. 8 Howard Place, Edinburgh, November 13, 1850. Thomas, his father, was the youngest son of Robert Stevenson, in common with whom and the latter's stepfather he held the post of Engineer to the Board of Northern Lighthouses. The mother of Robert Louis was the daughter of Dr. Lewis Balfour, parish minister of Colinton.

The following account of Stevenson's grandfather is abridged from the article in the 'Encyclopædia Britannica':

Robert Stevenson was the only son of Alan Stevenson, partner in a West Indian house in Glasgow, and was born in that city 8th June 1772. Having lost his father in infancy, he removed with his mother to Edinburgh. In his youth he assisted his stepfather, Thomas Smith, in his light-house schemes, and at the early age of nineteen was sent to superintend the erection of a lighthouse on the island of Little Cumbrae. He succeeded his stepfather, whose daughter he married in 1799, as Engineer to the Board of Northern Lighthouses, and at the same time began general practice as a civil engineer. During his period of office from 1797 to 1843, he designed and executed no fewer than eighteen lighthouses, the most important being that on the Bell Rock, begun in 1807 and

Robert Stevenson, Grandfather.

completed in 1810. In his general practice as a civil engineer he was employed in the construction of many county roads, harbours, docks, breakwaters, and several important bridges. It was he that brought into notice the superiority of malleable iron rods for railways over the old cast-iron, and he was the inventor of the movable jib and balance cranes. It was chiefly through his interposition that an Admiralty survey was established, from which the Admiralty sailing directions for the coasts of Great Britain and Ireland have been prepared. He published an account of the Bell Rock lighthouse in 1824, and, besides contributing important articles on engineering subjects to Brewster's 'Edinburgh Encyclopædia' and the 'Encyclopædia Britannica,' was the author of various papers read before the societies he was connected with. He died at Edinburgh, 12th July 1850.

A 'Life of Robert Stevenson,' by his son David Stevenson, appeared in 1878. David Stevenson (1815-86), who along with his brother Alan succeeded to his father's business, was the author of a 'Sketch of the Civil Engineering of North America,' 'Marine Surveying,' 'Canal and River Engineering,' and of various papers read before learned societies.

Mr. J. F. George, writing in *Scottish Notes and Queries*, April 1903, supplies some suggestive notes of Stevenson's ancestry on his mother's side. His maternal grandfather, the Rev. Dr. Lewis Balfour of Colinton, was a younger son of John Balfour of Pilrig, and grandson of Professor James Balfour of the same place. Mr. George writes:

The Balfour Pedigree.

About 1650, James Balfour, one of the Principal Clerks of the Court of Session, married Bridget, daughter of Chalmers of Balbithan, Keithhall, and that estate was for some time in the name of Balfour. His son, James Balfour of Balbithan, Merchant and Magistrate of Edinburgh, paid poll-tax in 1696, but by 1699 the land had been sold. This was probably due to the fact that Balfour was one of the Governors of the Darien Company. His grandson, James Balfour of Pilrig (1705-1795), sometime Professor of Moral Philosophy in Edinburgh University, whose portrait is sketched in 'Catriona,' also made a Garioch [Aberdeenshire district] marriage,

his wife being Cecilia, fifth daughter of Sir John Elphinstone, second bart. of Logie (Elphinstone) and Sheriff of Aberdeen, by Mary, daughter of Sir Gilbert Elliot, first bart. of Minto.

Referring to the Minto descent, Stevenson claims to have 'shaken a spear in the Debatable Land and shouted the slogan of the Elliots.' He evidently knew little or nothing of his relations on the Elphinstone side. The Logie Elphinstones were a cadet branch of Glack, an estate acquired by Nicholas Elphinstone in 1499. William Elphinstone, a younger son of James of Glack and Elizabeth Wood of Bonnyton, married Margaret Forbes, and was father of Sir James Elphinstone, bart. of Logie, so created in 1701. . . .

Stevenson would have been delighted to acknowledge his relationship, remote though it was, to the 'Wolf of Badenoch,' who burned Elgin Cathedral without the Earl of Kildare's excuse that he thought the bishop was in it; the Wolf's son, the victor of Harlaw, [and] his nephew 'John o' Coull,' Constable of France. . . . Also among Tusitala's kin may be noted, in addition to the later Gordons of Gight, the Tiger Earl of Crawford, familiarly known as 'Earl Beardie,' the 'Wicked Master' of the same line, who was fatally stabbed by a Dundee cobbler 'for taking a stoup of drink from him'; Lady Jean Lindsay, who ran away with a 'common jockey with the horn,' and latterly became a beggar; David Lindsay, the last laird of Edzell, who ended his days as hostler at a Kirkwall inn, and 'Mussel Mou'ed Charlie,' the Jacobite ballad-singer.

Stevenson always believed he had a strong spiritual affinity to Robert Fergusson. It is more than probable that there was a distant material affinity as well. Margaret Forbes, the mother of Sir James Elphinstone, the purchaser of Logie, has not been identified, but it is possible she was of the branch of the Tolquhon Forbeses who previously owned Logie. Fergusson's mother, Elizabeth Forbes, was the daughter of a Kildrummy tacksman, who by constant tradition is stated to have been of the house of Tolquhon. It would certainly be interesting if this suggested connection could be proved.

In a little work entitled 'The Parish of Colinton,' published in Edinburgh in the autumn of 1902, two

letters are printed from the celebrated Lord Cockburn, author of 'Memorials of his Time,' to the Rev. Dr. Lewis Balfour. In the first Cockburn is solicitous, in a practical way, about the heightening of the church spire. In the second, dated January 1840, he takes the liberty of modifying, in characteristic fashion, what he considered the over-lavish contribution which the minister had made to a valedictory presentation to the schoolmaster:

Anecdote of Dr. Lewis Balfour.

As I am told it is by no means a case of such urgency as justifies these heroic sacrifices, so take £4 off your benevolent but nonsensical £5. I meant to have given only £1, but that our friend might not lose by the deduction of your £4, I have made it £5.

In the editor's copy of the 'Account of the Skerryvore Lighthouse,' written by Alan Stevenson, and published by Messrs. A. and C. Black in 1848—two years before the birth of Alan's nephew, the novelist—there is pasted a newspaper clipping, evidently from the *Scotsman*, being a biographical sketch of the celebrated engineer. This article is written with so much literary grace and sympathetic knowledge of the man that it is worthy of quotation here:

Alan Stevenson, builder of Skerryvore.

Alan, eldest son of the late Robert Stevenson, the well-known civil engineer and author of the Bell Rock Lighthouse, was born at Edinburgh in 1807. He was educated at the High School and University, where he greatly distinguished himself, and took the then somewhat unusual degree of Master of Arts and obtained under Leslie the Fellowes Prize for excellency as an advanced student of Natural Philosophy. He afterwards studied in England under the direction of a clergyman, and received the degree of Bachelor of Laws from the University of Glasgow.

His own wish was to study for the Church, but he gave it up for his father's profession—in which he soon made himself a name. Though obliged by illness to retire from work when in the fulness of his years and powers, the services he performed

as Engineer to the Commissioners of Northern Lighthouses were such as to entitle him to lasting remembrance in the annals of our highest scientific achievements—in a department at once so perilous, difficult in its nature, and so inestimable in its results. During his connection with the Board, he introduced many improvements in the dioptric system of illumination, and erected numerous lighthouses on our coasts, including his masterpiece, the renowned Skerryvore.

There is little doubt that the mental tension caused by the responsibilities and difficulties of this work, acting upon his sensitive, chivalrous, and unsparing nature, was the main cause of the sudden shattering of his nervous system, which, in 1852, made it necessary for him to withdraw absolutely from his profession and the world. What a trial this must have been to one of his keen, intrepid temper, his high enthusiasm, and his delight in the full exercise of his powers, no one but himself and those who never left him for these long dreary years can ever tell—when his mind, his will, his affections survived, as it were, the organ through which they were wont to act—like one whose harp is all unstrung, and who has the misery to know it can do his bidding no more. He died peacefully at his house at Portobello [23rd December 1865], in his fifty-ninth year.

Besides his purely professional excellences, Mr. Stevenson had genuine literary genius—not receptive merely, but in the true sense original.

He had in everything he did that grace and delicacy, that perception of spiritual depth and height, that sense of a beauty transcending all adequate expression, and that tender, pervading melancholy, which are among the bitter-sweet birthrights of genius. This is not the place for expatiating on that characteristic part of his nature, his ideality—without which in its measure and intensity he would not have been the great engineer and man of science we all know him to have been. Imagination proper—the sense of the possible, of a realisable ideal—has to do with building lighthouses and breakwaters, not much less than with the making of epics or oratorios. All such creative acts postulate a faculty of projection from the finite and known into the unknown and untried, whence is brought back that which becomes to the race a possession and a joy for ever—

be it a Skerryvore or Eddystone, a 'Divine Comedy' or a 'Prince of Denmark.'

Mr. Stevenson read Italian and Spanish critically and with ease, and knew both literatures thoroughly. He knew Homer by heart; and read Aristophanes in Greek more readily than most of us could read Montaigne in French. We remember, many years ago, hearing him say that when alone for months in the midst of the sea, at his lighthouse work, he read Don Quixote, Aristophanes, and Dante, twice through.

We have before us now a little volume printed this year for private circulation, entitled 'The Ten Hymns of Synesius, Bishop of Cyrene, A.D. 410, in English verse,' etc., which he thus speaks of in his preface: 'It pleased God in 1852 to disable me, by a severe nervous affection, for my duties as engineer to the Board of Northern Lighthouses; and I took to beguiling my great sufferings by trying to versify the whole ten hymns of Synesius. During many an hour the employment helped to soothe my pain.'

It is quite wonderful, if we consider the nature of the task and his broken health, how nobly he has rendered those sublime old hymns, in which we find the doctrine of the pre-existence of the soul so glorified in Wordsworth's 'Intimations of Immortality,' and with which the heavenly-minded Leighton refreshed himself, and eight of which were translated by Coleridge into English anacreontics, before that strange and mournful prodigy had reached his fifteenth year.

From an appreciation of R. L. S. published in the *Quarterly Review*, April 1895:

Thomas Stevenson's literary taste.

For his pedigree, it was, in the best Scottish sense, honourable. To be mentioned in Gibbon's 'Decline and Fall,' says Thackeray, is like having your name written on the façade of St. Peter's at Rome. It is hardly less to have had a grandfather whose name stands in one of Scott's prefaces, more especially when the book thus introduced is 'The Pirate,' and secret ambition pricks us on till we rival or outdo that ill-written yet moving romance of the sea-rover, with a certain 'Treasure Island' of our own.

THOMAS STEVENSON

MRS THOMAS STEVENSON

THE FATHER AND MOTHER OF ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

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From his Highland ancestors Louis drew the strain of Celtic melancholy, with all its perils and possibilities, and its kinship to the mood of day-dreaming, which has flung over so many of his pages now the vivid light wherein figures imagined grow real as flesh and blood, and yet again the ghostly, strange, lonesome, and stinging mist, under whose spell we see the world bewitched, and every object quickens with a throb of infectious terror. 'Love, anger, and indignation,' we read in the son's too brief and touching outline of his father, Thomas Stevenson, 'shone through him and broke forth in imagery.'

How impressive, how enlightening is it to be told of his 'just and picturesque' language, of his 'freakish humour,' clothing itself in a vesture at once apt and emphatic; above all, of the painful yet surely most admirable circumstance attending his last moments, when, as he began to 'feel the ebbing' of that great power of speech, the dying 'would reject one word after another as inadequate, and leave his phrase unfinished, rather than finish it without propriety.' What an inbred charm and eloquence must language have possessed for such a one, who even with failing breath would not handle it rudely!

Here is the artist, born, not made; his more illustrious descendant has the fame, but Thomas Stevenson had the gift; and his original delicacy of tone and spirit was bequeathed along with the humour and the emotion—but these, perhaps, in less ample measure—to the son whom we are considering.

The following short sketch of Stevenson's mother, called forth by her death, appeared in the *Scots Pictorial*, May 22, 1897, and was signed 'W. S. D.':

The Mother of R. L. S.

Mrs. Stevenson did not look her age—far from it. So bright and almost youthful in appearance was she, that one found it difficult to realise the fact of her being the mother of that far-famed son who died two and a half years ago at the age of forty-five. Mrs. Stevenson's absorption in all that related to her dear son was in a sense public property. Some inkling of it, at all events, was given at the meeting held in the Music Hall of Edinburgh for the purpose of publicly setting a-foot the movement for a national com-

memoration of his fame. How fresh in memory seem all the incidents connected with that great concourse of (as one fears) chiefly *pseudo* enthusiasts! Lord Rosebery was in the chair, and it was well that he was so. For if the story be true that Mrs. Stevenson had found some difficulty in gaining admission to the Hall with the rest of the crowd, Lord Rosebery's speech made amends for that curious mismanagement. He intimated the fact of her presence in the first words of his speech; and with what supreme tact he did so, in gesture and in modulation of voice, who can forget that saw and heard him? The brief words, 'His mother is here,' make themselves audible now; and with how pathetic an echo!

It may at the same time be interesting to record how the fond motherly pride which led Mrs. Stevenson to that platform showed itself in ways less public. Even a chance acquaintance could see how Mrs. Stevenson was wrapped up in all that recalled her son. His early works? She had a little album of his first *Cornhill* and other essays and stories, which one felt it a privilege to be allowed a glimpse of; and there was something as *naïf* as it now seems touching in her wonderment about the booklet, written in early days for a small missionary sale of work in her own drawing-room, which has come to be a collectors' joy and treasure. His first Colinton and Swanston days? There she put one right: it was not in the manse but at the hill-farm that he wrote 'The Pentland Rising.' And as one told over the names which he has immortalised, she put in one's hands the view of each place—to linger over Halkerside as a scene consecrated to a double memory, for there were the rock-engraven initials both of father and son. And the portraits? Ah! it goes to one's heart to think how Mrs. Stevenson spoke of them. Was she not a true mother, in holding that most likenesses represented poor Louis as more of an invalid than he was, and pronouncing in favour of that Samoan photograph, taken in his riding things, which showed him robust and athletic?

The haunting lines of that 'Underwoods' poem come back—'It is not yours, O mother, to complain'—and its companion piece, 'Mater Triumphans.' Collate them; let the tropic intensity of the one harmonise with the stately cadence of the

[*Patrick*

NO. 8 HOWARD PLACE, EDINBURGH

Where R. L. Stevenson was born, 13th November 1850

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other; and what is your final reflection? Why, an utterance of thanks. For the singer of great destinies, the achiever of deeds equalling those he sang—he who 'with pen did open' more than 'the doors of kings,' who 'thrilled with the joy of girded men' others that could tell no more than he of having

> 'Wielded in the front of war
> The weapons that he made'—

this true inspirer of the modern world had not, after all, to break with the ties of which his verses spoke. The poem first named, in particular, is something more than the universal mother's consolation against the universal complaint of the proverb, 'a son's a son till he gets a wife.' It is something more than a melodious voice of comfort to those mothers whose sons—in our Empire especially—perforce go over seas and to far-off lands. The heartfelt pain of a life-long exile underlies it. 'It is not yours, O mother, to complain': that is the part of 'the children . . . austerely led.' But the severance in his case was not life-long, if the exile inevitably became so. Though it was never given him his 'numerous footsteps nimbly to retrace,' one great motive for his return was at all events done away with. For it is recalled that in a happy article of time the late Mrs. Stevenson went to visit him at Vailima; and that on that fateful December day three winters ago she was by his side.

Anecdote of Mrs. Thomas Stevenson.

At a meeting of the Mansfield House Settlement in the spring of 1902, Mr. Percy Alden, the warden, related a story of the mother of Robert Louis Stevenson. The widow of the novelist was telling how, in one of the Marquesas Islands, the old lady had taken walks with a native chieftain 'who had killed thousands, and eaten *hundreds*!'

'Oh, Fanny!' exclaimed the novelist's mother in horror, 'you know it was only eleven!'

II

FROM BOYHOOD TO MANHOOD

An only child and delicate, Louis was the subject of his mother's anxious care. His nurse Alison Cunningham ('Cummie') is credited with helping to shape his early tastes, especially in the sense of awakening in him his love for the romance of Scotland. He was precocious in a literary way, at six years of age dictating to his mother a history of Moses for a prize offered by an uncle. Mother and nurse constantly read to him, and he had reached the age of eight years before he began to read books himself. He went to school in 1859, *but ill health rendered his attendance irregular, and during the years* 1862-63 *his mother travelled with him a great deal on the Continent for his health's sake. At school his bent of mind was displayed by his starting several manuscript magazines, and before he was fifteen he had used up no small quantity of paper in scribbling stories, the most pretentious of which is said to have had for subject the murder of Archbishop Sharpe. In* 1867 *he went to Edinburgh University, which he left without taking a degree, and where his time was largely spent in a 'highly rational system of truantry.' Declining in* 1871 *to follow his father's profession, he read for the Scots bar, to which he was called in July* 1875. *Some months were spent in a law office, but his total practice as a barrister extended to four briefs, for which the fees did not reach 'double figures.' From* 1873 *to* 1879 *his life was chiefly passed in travel, and his first two books were devoted to accounts of Continental wayfaring.*

NO. 17 HERIOT ROW, EDINBURGH [*Patrick*

In May 1857 Robert Louis Stevenson's parents took up their abode here, and this remained the family headquarters until the death of Thomas Stevenson in 1887

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Most people seem to know that R. L. Stevenson was baptized Lewis and not Louis, but very few know the reason for the change. It was not, as is generally supposed, made by himself out of some literary affection or affectation for foreign ways, but by his father. Thomas Stevenson was a sturdy Scots Tory, than whom no Tory in the world is more desperate, and there was in Edinburgh a person of authority no less stringent a Radical. Now that this person, whose name was Lewis, a rare name in Scotland, should be taken by any one to have given his name to the boy, was more than Thomas Stevenson could endure. And so the name was spelled Frenchwise to divert suspicion. In later days, we believe that R. L. S. hankered after the ancient name, but it made no difference, since no one called him 'Louis' save in print.—*Pall Mall Gazette.*

Lewis, not Louis.

To the *English Illustrated Magazine*, May 1899, 'Two of his Cousins' (Mrs. Marie Clothilde Balfour and her husband, Dr. J. Craig Balfour of Edinburgh) contributed an article which contained many valuable details of Stevenson's childhood and youth in Edinburgh. From this paper the following excerpts are taken:

Robert Louis Stevenson was an only son, but he was one of a large family of cousins and kinsfolk. Called after his grandfather, Dr. Lewis Balfour, he had five cousins who shared the name with him; so that they had to be distinguished from each other by sobriquets more or less reasonable. There were, for instance, 'Delhi' and 'Cramond,' from the respective places of their birth; while his own nickname among the boys was 'Smout.' He was a very delicate child, as has been said, and not always fit for play with other children; but he had a delightful and untirable companion always at hand—himself. He never was lonely, even in the 'land of counterpane.' He told himself stories, of which instalments were told sometimes to other people also: they were generally tales of adventure so complicated that it was a marvel how he ever found his way

Boyhood recalled by 'Two of his Cousins.'

through them; and yet he never made a mistake—or, at least, never let himself be found out in one.

With his cousins 'Smout' was always a favourite. 'Even when it was at his own expense, he had a way of telling a story that made it seem the funniest thing in the world,' one of them says of him. 'I've heard him repeating old tales against me, and he made us laugh over them consumedly—I as much as any one.' Moreover, he and they, as was natural, shared many interests. Whether it was the fashion among boys then, a fashion that has since gone out, I do not know—it may have only come from having many relations in far countries—but several of the cousins had 'museums,' as they called them, collections of things sent home from India or China, begged from one or the other, or picked up in Leith curiosity-shops. Leith was a great place of pilgrimage in those days to the boys: they knew all the windows where, amid a heterogeneous collection, something out of the way might be looked for, a necklace of berries or some South Sea shells, a bit of jade, or perhaps a carved junk or models of Chinese or Malay fishing-boats. Louis Stevenson not only had a 'museum' himself, but he was a great purveyor to the others, by way of exchange; for in wintering abroad with his mother he had special opportunities, and was able to bring back from the Riviera bits of Roman pottery, tear-bottles, plaited palms from Bordighera, and so on. But his manner of exchange with his cousins was peculiar: he 'sold' the things at the rate of so many 'whacks' on the hand given with a strap or cane, to be taken without flinching. If the 'buyer' so much as winced, it had all to be begun over again. One of the cousins, who was not very old then, remembers having hard work sometimes to stand it when the object was a very enviable one, and the price of it, in 'whacks,' was high. It must be remembered that it was then a common thing that the entry into boys' societies was made conditional on bearing pain without complaint. I do not know whether it still is so.

When he was still a little lad, one of his uncles, Dr. George Balfour, was living at Cramond, some five miles out of Edinburgh. Louis was often out with his cousin and namesake, 'Cramond' Lewis; and it was the memory, no doubt, of days spent in the narrow wooded valley of the Almond, where the

Age 20 Months, 1852

From a Crayon Drawing, 1854

Age 14, 1865

JUVENILE PORTRAITS OF R. L. STEVENSON

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old bridge crosses the river and the village nestles down beside it, that led him later to choose this spot for the home of Balfour of Shaws, in 'Kidnapped.' It is beautiful enough, full of sun and shade and the sound of running water, to be long and lovingly remembered: and he was not one who forgot.

Among the places in Edinburgh where his memory clings closest, of course the house in Heriot Row comes first. How dear it was to him we can guess: *we* know how well his cousins loved it, and how hard it is to pass the door now, when it is empty of all save remembrance. For all are gone who used to live there—all, except only 'Cummie,' his old nurse—and the house is strange to us. Thomas Stevenson, kindest and quaintest of uncles, his wife, his son, so many of the old friends—even Coolin and Smuroch and Jura, the dogs—surely are still just within the door; we cannot think them elsewhere; and we would not enter to be disappointed. Happily, I could almost say, the house now is strange to us. There Louis was at home, falling ill, tediously roused back to comparative health, playing all the time, as he played, boy and man, all his life; playing in sickness and making a play of sickness, and finding even there enjoyment. In the library he shared with his cousins a world of adventure, amid pirates and savages, in unknown seas and strange waters; a long folding arm-chair or lounge was usually chosen for the boat, being conveniently on castors, and was pushed about by the bar-bells, which he was ordered to use to develop his chest. He was apt to remember their existence more often for other, and less improving, purposes, such as the above. It was here, upstairs, that he undertook to make his younger cousins 'see ghosts'; they were shut, each in his turn and alone, in a dark room, where the spectres were produced by means of a magic-lantern worked by threads passing out under the door. Louis, upon the landing outside, vastly enjoyed the fun; the small boy within submitted to it—with a difference. One of them is even willing to admit that he may have been a *little* bit frightened. . . . Still, Louis had the knack of making anything in which he shared delightful, though it might be, and generally was, 'creepy.' It is only fair to allow also that he frightened himself quite as much as he ever frightened any one else. Later, indeed, when he was abroad and alone, having

read some old books on magic, it came into his head that he, too, would like to 'raise the devil'; and with great pains he copied the circles, the double pentagon, and the mystic symbols, drawing them about himself upon the floor, and making all his preparations carefully according to instruction. It was at night, and he was alone: 'And I got into the very biggest fright you can just imagine,' he afterwards told his cousin, one of the writers of this article, 'lest the devil should take me at my word, and really appear. I wondered how on earth I was going to get rid of him. I tell you, even now when I think of it I get hot all over.'

It was in the Heriot Row house, too, that he had his theatre; and what that was to him he himself has told us. Who has not read that most delightful chapter in 'Memories and Portraits,' which is headed 'Penny Plain, and Twopence Coloured'; and who, having read it, will not go on pilgrimage to another spot where his memory is still green, and which he himself has pointed out?

'There stands, I fancy, to this day . . . a certain stationer's shop at a corner of the wide thoroughfare that joins the city of my childhood to the sea.' . . .

Yes, it stands there still, at the corner of Antigua Street: a shop whose door pouts between two slanting windows, with a lending library filling shelves in its recesses, where some thirty years ago were piles of ancient fashion-books and bygone Keepsakes and Garlands. Then it was 'dark, and smelt of Bibles'; and in 'the Leith Walk window all the year round there stood displayed a theatre in working order.'

It may be that nowadays boys do not play with toy theatres, but they did then; and Louis tells us even that this same shop-window was 'a loadstone rock for all that bore the name of boy.' One of his cousins remembers still the joys of stage-management—for he concedes that looking on was slow work in comparison—the manipulation of the 'spoons' or wire-slides which held the figures, the painting of scenery (they scorned the 'twopence coloured' for economic as well as artistic reasons), and above all the delight of trick pieces, when, by means of threads, Cinderella's pumpkin opened into a carriage, or Harlequin turned a roast of beef into a plum-pudding. . . .

And there is still another place where he would wish to be

[*Specially photographed by Auty & Heaven*

SHOP AT CORNER OF ANTIGUA STREET, EDINBURGH

"There stands, I fancy, to this day . . . a certain stationer's shop at a corner of the wide thoroughfare that joins the city of my childhood to the sea."—R. L. S. in *Penny Plain and Twopence Coloured*

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remembered, the place that he himself remembered best of all: the old home at Colinton, where his mother and all her brothers and sisters grew up, and left only to go forth into the furthermost ends of the earth. For 'the face of the earth was peppered with the children of the manse, and letters with outlandish stamps became familiar to the local postmen,' . . . and presently the grandchildren came and went, and in time brought *their* children also to see—and to remember. A beautiful place, surely.

Set in the midst of the curving bank and clasping circle of trees there is the house, 'not so large as I had supposed' (we have, all of us, come back to feel that, after magnifying it in remembrance), but still 'a well-beloved house, its image fondly dwelt on by many travellers'—in so many parts of the world talked of and told of by those who had been children there to their own children, who will some day find their way back to it, as surely as needles to a magnet; written to so often, thought of so long, so full of the memories of those who have lived there, and of those who have died. A *well-beloved house*, surely. All about it one can almost trace the footsteps that have worn its paths. Here is the 'great yew, making a pleasing horror of shade'; yonder the deodar, which the eldest uncle sent home from India, a seed within an envelope, and which is now a tall and splendid tree. Up there are the gooseberry-bushes that used to be, we steadfastly believe, the best in all the world; and a little higher is the graveyard, where '*spunkies might be seen to dance, at least by children.*' And so many children have come and gone here; the sons and daughters of the manse themselves, and after them the next generation, a goodly troop of cousins, and among them the delicate lad who came out from Edinburgh to 'get well again,' Louis Stevenson. . . .

Down in the deep mill-pool one of the cousins went to sea in a tub, and only the special providence that watches over boys brought him back safe and sound to land; another rode the pony round by the 'black road,' through the kitchen and out at the front door, with the old cook clamorous behind him and the chiefer authorities safely out of the way. And from among the stones of the church-yard wall yonder, dead men's eyes looked out and wove themselves into nightmares.

An article on 'The Works of Robert Louis Stevenson' in the *Edinburgh Review*, July 1895, contained this passage relating to his life in Edinburgh:

Influence of Early Environment.

Like Scott in his youth, he went climbing Arthur's Seat, scrambling over Salisbury Crags and Samson's stony ribs, and making excursions through the sheep-downs in the pastoral solitudes of the Pentlands. Like Scott in his ardent and impressionable youth, he was all unconsciously storing up the materials for his fictions. It was from Old Edinburgh he drew the fresh inspirations which never failed, even in the intoxicating atmosphere of the balmy South Seas, when, adapting his romances to the demands of the day, he had turned his attention to the white savages and the survivals of the buccaneers. The 'Picturesque Edinburgh' is admirably picturesque, and never did a sentimentally sensational writer light upon a more congenial subject.

The impressions of his school days were deep and lasting. He recalls how he used to scramble up the wooded precipices of the Castle Hill, which had been scaled before him by nocturnal storming-parties in the wars of the Succession and in civil broils, and how he would triumph when he had laid a hand on the basement of the battlements. He remembers sympathetically how the urchins from Heriot's Hospital used to snatch a fearful joy in intruding on the sombre precincts of the Greyfriars' Cemetery, sanctified by the sufferings of Covenanting martyrs, and shout timid challenges in quavering accents at the haunted mausoleum of the Bloody Mackenzie.

As he grows up, his sense of the sublime and beautiful awakens into vigorous life. He becomes alive to the unrivalled beauties of a city which surpass the attractions of Prague or Salzburg. For Edinburgh, though like Jerusalem it is set upon a hill and surrounded by hills, is not shut in by a cincture of mountains. From the Castle, which is its Zion, and which crowns the rocky ridge of the Old Town, he looked out upon the epitomised panorama of stern but fertile Caledonia. In the distance is the blue range of the Highland hills, which used to be the barrier in the days of 'Kidnapped' and

COLINTON MANSE IN THE PRESENT DAY [*Patrick*

"The sound of water everywhere; . . . and in the midst of this, the Manse"

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'Catriona' between civilisation and comparative barbarism. In the middle distance are the Pentlands, which figure continually in his reminiscences, where the persecuted Covenanters were wont to hold their conventicles, and sometimes show fight at their field-preachings when assailed by the troopers of the Council. Hard by are the heights which look down upon Holyrood, once a favourite and convenient refuge of the malefactors of the Scottish metropolis, as Windsor Forest and Bagshot Heath used to be for the outlaws of London. Yet the grand and somewhat gloomy landscape is softened by a pleasant intermingling of the scenes and sights of peace and prosperity. Between the Castle and the Bass, where Balfour was kept in captivity, are stretched the rich farms of East Lothian; on the other side is Linlithgowshire, with the winding river, where Balfour and Alan went wandering; beyond the broad estuary of the Forth the grey smoke is rising from the prosperous fishing villages and townlets which skirt the coasts of the 'Kingdom,' and where the absconding banker was tracked by the *carbonari*; and the sea-view, as Stevenson says, is alive with steamers trailing their smoke towards the horizon, and with vessels under sail tacking towards the Baltic.

'The Early Home of Robert Louis Stevenson' was the subject of an article by Mr. John A. Ross in *Good Words*, March 1895, from which these passages are selected:

Swanston: His Early Home.

The place charms you by way of surprise. What is it doing there? How do you account for it? Most villages have their *raison d'être* writ large. They have grown up round old churches, or round solitary inns, which were convenient resting-places for travellers. One can find no reason for Swanston being where it is, or for it being anywhere at all. The wide, well-kept road which leads from the high-road to it, goes straight as an arrow to the garden gate of the old farmhouse which Stevenson writes so charmingly about in his 'Picturesque Notes of Edinburgh'; and there it stops. A little used by-path, deep with moss and leaf mould, leads to the village proper; and on the hillside above the village green, that stops also. You seem to have arrived at the final end of things.

Far up on the steep hillside you can trace the faint track of an old road that was used in the days of peddlers and pack-horses. It climbs the flank of Kirk Yetton, and rambles on into the heart of the Pentlands, and in the old days led to an old chapel which now lies submerged beneath one of the Edinburgh reservoirs. But in its best days it cannot have been more than a bridle-path. And as it does not prove that at any time Swanston was on the way from any place, to any other place, it leaves the problem of the existence of the village unsolved.

Its seclusion is not that of the familiar village which can be seen on the outskirts of any great city; the village which has played at being in the country, till its mighty neighbour has found it out and enfolded it, so that now it is merely a less convenient suburb than a business man chooses as his place of residence. It is the seclusion of a lonely hamlet in one of the deep glens of Perthshire or Argyleshire, where the inhabitants live a life apart from the hum and bustle of the world's great centres. Here, almost within reach of the sound of the church bells of Edinburgh, and quite within sight of the banner of brown smoke which drifts lazily across it before the wind, or which hangs over it like a thick palpable pall when no wind is stirring, and which has gained for it the fondly familiar name of 'Auld Reekie,' you have men and women living a life apart from the daily newspaper, and not greatly influenced by the penny post. No railway train rushes past to disturb the stillness. Let the Flying Scotsman or the Midday Diner rush their fastest and shriek their loudest, no echo of them can reach this hamlet at the base of the Pentlands. The stranger who arrives at Swanston steps back from the nineteenth to the seventeenth century. . . .

The village proper lies behind what is ambitiously called The Square. There is the inevitable village store, with its legend about tea and tobacco. . . . Every one seems to have built where and how he pleased. Consequently you have the oddest and most picturesque grouping of cottages you can possibly imagine. And where the village green is cut off from the hillside by a rough stone wall, stands the humble cottage of the shepherd John Todd, whose name and characteristics will be familiar to some at least of the succeeding generations, embalmed in Stevenson's matchless 'Pastoral.'

SWANSTON COTTAGE: THE EARLY HOME OF R. L. STEVENSON [*Patrick*

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Swanston Cottage, Stevenson's own home, lies a little to the north-west of the village, from no part of which is it visible. You must climb the hillside at the back of the village green to see it, so completely is it embowered among trees.

The inhabitants are a long-lived race. They enter the mortal sphere in the usual way; about a century later they begin to complain of rheumatism. Then they gradually lose their grip of things, and in a moment of fatuity come into Edinburgh 'to be near the doctor,' as they say, and of course they die. I spoke to the veritable oldest inhabitant a few days ago about the longevity of the place. 'Ou ay,' was the response, 'they just come and bide.' . . .

The old lady remembered Louis Stevenson well. The family spent the greater part of each year in Swanston Cottage, and the lad's face and figure must have been familiar to all the villagers. He went daily to one of the city schools. I shall change that. He daily started from home to go to school. But he was a sad truant; so, I have no doubt, his parents and teachers thought. We, with the light of experience to guide us, know that he was better occupied.

In those early days, however, no stranger dreamt great things of young Stevenson. 'He is an awfu' laddie for speirin' questions about a' thing,' John Todd used to say; 'an' whenever you turn your back, awa' he gangs an' writes it a' doon.' That is a much likelier method than regular attendance at school for developing a genius—or a poacher! . . .

It, Swanston, may seem very tame and uninteresting to many men and women in the great cities, where the interests of life are so various and intricate as to be kaleidoscopic. But it did not present itself in that light to young Stevenson. For him, that easy, leisurely life, taking its time and direction not from the firing of the one o'clock gun in Edinburgh Castle, but from the needs and habits of man's humble dependants—horses, cows, and sheep—had an indescribable charm. It is—as he so beautifully points out in the chapter 'Pastoral' in 'Memories and Portraits'—the ancestral and archetypal life; which alone remains permanently interesting, amid the ever-changing forms and fashions which modern life has assumed.

And, as has been pointed out already, the peculiar flavour of

this life as seen in Swanston, is that it is here by way of contrast. It is going on within gunshot of one of the great homes of the English-speaking race, as placidly as if railways and telegraphs and telephones and typewriters and all the modern achievements which make life so desirable and so unpicturesque, had never been heard of. A contrast such as this is part of God's constant parable to our wayward fretting race, with its feverish energies, unrestrained ambitions, and endless crop of anxieties, cares, and squalid worries.

Mrs. Jessie Patrick Findlay wrote an article on 'A Link with the Early Home of R. L. Stevenson' in the Edinburgh *Evening Dispatch*, April 5, 1899. The following paragraphs are interesting:

More Swanston Memories.

On glancing down the obituary column of the *Scotsman* of April 1st, my eye was arrested by the following intimation:—'At Swanston, on the 30th March, Adam Ritchie, aged 78'; and at once, through the force of association, a little group of figures arose in my mind's eye, evoked by the magic spell of R. L. Stevenson's connection with Swanston.

His readers are familiar with two of these figures—John Todd, 'the oldest herd on the Pentlands'—that man of wrath and rugged tenderness; and Robert Young, the gardener at Swanston Cottage—that man of peace and eke of wilfulness. Stevenson, so far as we know, has left no written record of his acquaintance with the third of these figures—that of Adam Ritchie, the Swanston ploughman, who has just passed away. But Adam had the honour of a whilom intimacy with the vagrant scholar, and had much to say, in his slow, quiet way, about 'the lang-haired, idle-set laddie' that sometimes joined him while he was ploughing the fields round about that little moorland hamlet of some twenty houses which Stevenson graphically describes.

Adam Ritchie, like others of the 'douce' inhabitants of Swanston, did not know very well what to make of Stevenson. Although he succumbed to the spell of the youth's winning personality, he shook his head doubtfully at first over his

wandering proclivities, and could not divine his business among the fields and moors; apparently he 'did naething ava, and looked as if there wasna muckle in him!' But soon Adam began to have an inkling of the strange lad's 'trade,' and he delighted to tell how 'mony a time Stevenson would gang up the rig wi' me when I was ploughin', but he wadna gang very far without takin' oot his note-book and bit pencil, and there he would be writin' doon—Guidness kens what! He was never what ye could call communicative, but he was a devil to think, and he wasna sweir to speir what he didna ken.'

The Edinburgh *Evening Dispatch*, August 30, 1902, published a short sketch styled 'The Secret of Swanston: the Truth about Stevenson.' Despite a certain air of self-sufficiency and its pretentious heading, the anonymous article yields some items worthy of quotation:

'Stevenson's "Jekyll and Hyde,"' I said, looking at the book my friend had laid down as I entered his room. 'Yes,' he answered, 'the most bewildering book produced in the Victorian era. Where do you think he got the idea of the double life?'

'The Secret of Swanston.'

'That's a much disputed point, but the balance of evidence favours Deacon Brodie's Close in Edinburgh. Stevenson,' I continued, 'was familiar with the story of that worthy citizen by day and that criminal by night. It seems to have possessed a peculiar fascination for him. In an early dramatic effort of his we can see its influence.'

'He says himself that he got it from his brownies,' interrupted my friend, 'quite unexpectedly when he was waiting for his demon.'

'All the same, he was indebted there to his studies in Old Edinburgh. Over Scott and Stevenson alike the High Street had cast its spell. The key to all Stevenson's stories is the same.'

The narrator goes on to propose a walk; his friend, who has recently returned from Fontainebleau, favours a visit to Deacon Brodie's Close, but on his part he objects,

and a compromise is arranged in a ramble out to Swanston. The little sketch continues:

Down the long road we swung, till the roof of a house, struggling through the trees, half concealed by a knoll, came in sight, all dominated by a scarred ridge of the Pentlands.

'Pleasant enough on this summer evening to vie with Fontainebleau itself,' said my friend, looking round on the village of Swanston, where the honeysuckle clambered over the low roofs of the thatched cottages, and the little children flirted water at each other from the cool hill burn which winds down the hollow. 'Curious I should have lived all these years in Edinburgh, been an admirer of Stevenson, and never been out here before. Were this near Paris it would be the home of a colony of artists.'

'Let's sit down,' he said, moving towards a rustic seat by the dyke. The two country folks in possession moved along as we approached.

'Yes, we've a lot of visitors out here now.' This in response to our inquiry. 'An American the other day told me he came here first after landing. It's a' aboot that Stevenson an' his bukes. There's nothing in them. Noo, there's Burns,' he said. 'That's poetry. That wis wark.'

'Ay,' chimed in the other Swanston man, 'Stevenson would dae naething but lie aboot the dykes. He wouldna wark. He was aye rinnin' aboot wi' lang Todd, amang the hills, getting him to tell a' the stories he kent.'

'Todd?' broke in my friend. 'Is that the roaring shepherd?'

'I believe,' was the reply, 'he had the impidence to ca' him that in his bukes—though Todd was the makkin' o' 'im. Gin Todd had kent what Stevenson was ta dae wi' it, he wouldna have tell't him so much.' . . .

We walked half-way home in silence. Suddenly my friend broke out: 'There were two Stevensons—Stevenson the Worker, Stevenson the Idler—Stevenson the Scot, Stevenson the Frenchman—"polar twins" continuously struggling in the agonised womb of consciousness.'

'That's from "Jekyll and Hyde,"' I replied.

'Yes,' he said slowly, 'that's my explanation. It wasn't Deacon Brodie at all. In the story, Hyde, the worse one, wins.

THE "ROARING SHEPHERD'S" COTTAGE, SWANSTON [*Patrick*

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Henley, in his estimate of Stevenson, makes out that the later Stevenson, the friend of the missionary—the believer in prayer—was not the real Stevenson. The Stevenson who quarrelled with his father of the revolt period—that to him was the real Stevenson. All the time Stevenson was coming to himself—to his best self. In real life Jekyll won, and not Hyde.

'That,' said he, as we parted, 'is the secret of Swanston—the truth about Stevenson—at last.'

Stevenson's Literary Apprenticeship.

The initials S. R. C. appended to an essay on 'The Apprenticeship of Robert Louis Stevenson,' in the *Bookman* of March 1893, stand for Samuel Rutherford Crockett, who in that very year came into fame with the publication of 'The Stickit Minister.' After giving us a hint of Stevenson's home-sickness as disclosed in his private letters, and contrasting that with his 'boasting in print of his high-set, far-shining palace, his nineteen waterfalls, and the blue sky over all' away there in Samoa, Mr. Crockett goes on to say:

There is 'a nameless trickle that springs in the green side of Allermuir, and is fed from Halkerside with a perennial teacupful'—a streamlet with a brief race and no history, save that by its side a dreamy, loose-jointed stripling used to come and sit, and most industriously make bad verses. Beneath lies the Lothian plain dotted with villages, blue smoke blowing westward over it, while to seaward is the pyramid of Berwick Law with the Bass a-tiptoe looking over its shoulder. Beneath there is a fine tangle of moss and heather, peat-hag and bracken, in which to play at hunted Covenanter. It was just here that Robert Louis Stevenson found his articulate soul. The spring is still there, the trickle of water, the one inconsiderable but indubitable pool, overhung by the smallest stone that was ever called a 'rock.' But for literary purposes 'tis an excellent rock. More excellent was it when our John-a-Dreams lay hid in the fastnesses and made a world for himself—or many worlds, rather—some of which he has since annexed to English literature.

Long and lazy, frank with himself and with his intimates, sulky with those unworthy to be admitted into his little world of imaginings, it is small wonder if many who then saw the moody boy, to this day retain the impression that he 'had a want.' Memory of Stevenson the Younger is mostly dead about the Pentlands. But some will still vaguely remember him as a lad 'that lay aboot the dyke-backs wi' a buik'—this with the happiest touch of scorn for the 'fecklessness' of such a performance. 'He wasna thocht verra muckle o'.' 'It wasna jaloosed (suspected) that he wad ever come to muckle.' These are the sole impressions which the inquirer can now gather hereabouts of the boyhood of the romancer. . . .

His literary works are totally unknown about Swanston and the Pentland edge. Only one old wife has an idea that there was a 'laddie Stevenson' who had written 'something aboot the Covenanters,' a creditable performance which was hardly to be expected of one who 'favoured the Estaiblished Kirk.' She is of opinion that she saw the identical pamphlet not so long ago. Here it is found after strict search, carefully preserved between the leds (boards) of the Bible—its green cover re-covered with an overcoat of brown paper which announces itself as having formed part of a teabag sold twenty-five years ago by a grocer of Penicuik. The 'something aboot the Covenanters' resolves itself into 'The Pentland Rising, a Page of History, 1666. Edinburgh: Andrew Elliot, 17 Princes Street, 1866.' In the centre of the bold apple-green within the teabag cover, is the motto:

> 'A cloud of witnesses ly here,
> Who for Christ's interest did appear.'
> —*Inscription on Battlefield at Rullion Green.*

The little pamphlet of twenty-two pages, the earliest and rarest of Robert Louis Stevenson's works, is very accurately dated as having been completed at 'Edinburgh, 28th Nov. 1866,' that is, just a fortnight after he had completed his sixteenth year, and on the anniversary of the bi-centenary of the battle of Rullion Green. We may take it that the little pamphlet was written at Swanston with his eye on the immediate scene of the events. Childish enough in its writing it is full of interest; and, though

crowded with references to the authorities (Wodrow, 'Cloud of Witnesses,' Naphthali, 'Faithful Contendings,' Kirkton, 'Outed Minister,' and even Defoe's 'History of the Church'), for directness of expression and clearness of narrative it might have been written by a simple-minded eye-witness. There is no doubt on which side are the young author's sympathies. He is frankly partisan, as indeed every Scot must be by nature. The 'persecutors' are all 'bloody-minded' and 'cruel.' In this strenuous advocacy we see the lad who had already acted it all out on the green Pentland side. 'I skulked in my favourite wilderness like a Cameronian of the Killing Time, and John Todd was my Claverhouse, and his dogs my questing dragoons.' This is the true, ineradicable way of learning history. The man who has thus learned his history may assume in later life a superficial calmness of criticism, he may read apologies for Clavers and Lag with resolve to rise superior to prejudice; he may even write them; but he will ever be Covenanter down at the heart of him, so that he cannot look upon a rusty old flag hung among bones and battle-axes in a museum without the water rising in his eyes, brimming to the overflow, and without gripping hands till the nails sink into the flesh to keep down something that takes him in the throat.

So it is strange in Stevenson's books, as well as in his conversation, to see his cosmopolitan ease, the calm light in the eyes which look out at once smiling and observant upon the wide world, in a moment exploded by a flash of suggestion from the bleak Nor'land where the whaups are crying about the martyrs' graves.

Does one but mention the Grassmarket to him, and it is no more Louis Stevenson of Samoa and the World that listens, but the lad who at sixteen wrote of young Hugh M'Kail who was martyred there in the flower of his youth; it is no intellectual Gallio, but one who, though he might have marched with the clans from the braes of Mar because the skirl of pipes makes him mad, yet longs like Peden to be 'wi' Ritchie' in the last stand which the preacher-soldier Richard Cameron made on Airds Moss. Artistic feeling, the society of many men, the influences of spheres where the Covenanters are only spoken of

as ignorant rebels, have not changed the essential Covenanting base of Stevenson's character.

Mr. Crockett further on quotes the following passage from 'The Pentland Rising' illustrative of 'the eery and other-world element in the lad': 'Kirkton the historian and popular tradition tell us,' he says, 'of a flame that would often rise from the grave, in a moss near Carnwath, of some of these poor rebels; of how it crept along the ground, of how it covered the house of the murderer, and scared him with its lurid glare.' Of this Mr. Crockett observes:

The manner in which this is told leaves us little room to doubt that the picture of the flame-wrapped house and the persecutor within, clammy terror sitting in the inwards of his soul, was one which long haunted the imagination of the boy. The idea is one which came out of the same basket as the spiritual terrors of Dr. Jekyll, and of Gordon Darnaway in 'The Merry Men,' and of Uncle Ebenezer alone in the great house of the Shaws. It shows that Stevenson, even as a schoolboy, was continually wandering round the confines of the other world, and companying with the men of a time to whom such things as these were the sternest of realities—the days, indeed, when in the words of the famous rhyme

> 'Hab Dab and Dawvid Dinn,
> Dang the De'il ower Dabson's Linn.'

Touching Stevenson's marked gift of descriptive writing, Mr. Crockett has an interesting comparison to make. He says:

Even at sixteen, the boy who in the fulness of his powers was to write the marvellous description of the Merry Men of Aros, had begun to learn his trade. It is instructive to compare the following two passages:—'On such a night, he peers upon a world of blackness where the waters wheel and boil, where the waves joust together with the noise of an explosion, and the

foam towers and vanishes in the twinkling of an eye. Never before had I seen the Merry Men thus violent. The fury, height, and transiency of their spoutings was a thing to be seen and not recounted. High over our heads on the cliff rose their white columns in the darkness; and the same instant, like phantoms, they were gone. Sometimes three at a time would thus aspire and vanish; sometimes a gust took them, and the spray would fall about us, heavy as a wave. Yet the spectacle was rather maddening in its levity than impressive by its force. Thought was beaten down by the confounding uproar; a gleeful vacancy possessed the brains of men, a state akin to madness; and I found myself at times following the dance of the Merry Men as it were a tune upon a jigging instrument.'

Here the magic is due not to any very remarkable photographic accuracy of description, certainly not to the cataloguing which sometimes passes for realism, but to an author whose personality is never hid from us, and who is conscious of his power to charm us, making himself part of what he describes, and throwing the limelight of his imagination upon the mad dance of the waters. . . .

If a description written by Stevenson, the apprentice, be taken to compare with this masterpiece of the complete craftsman, the result is very instructive.

'The sun, going down behind the Pentlands, casts golden lights and blue shadows on their snow-clad summits, slanted obliquely into the rich plain before them, bathing with rosy splendour the leafless, snow-sprinkled trees, and fading gradually into shadow in the distance. To the south, too, they beheld a deep-shaded amphitheatre of heather and bracken—the course of the Esk, near Penicuik, winding about at the foot of its gorge —the broad, brown expanse of Maw Moss—and fading into blue indistinctness in the south, the wild heath-clad Peebles-shire hills.'

Clearly, of course, this is the work of a beginner, but it is work done with an eye on the object—carefully done too, for though the effect of the whole be commonplace, it is so because it is easier to describe the Day of Judgment than an ordinary sunset. From Rullion Green every word is true, absolutely and exactly. The sun does still 'slant obliquely,' the Moorfoots do

curve round to form an amphitheatre, through which the Esk water runs. Maw Moss is still a 'broad, brown expanse.' On the whole, in 'The Pentland Rising' we have a 'prentice work of no ordinary promise, and one which, written at the age of between fifteen and sixteen, reveals many of the most interesting and remarkable characteristics of a style and personality as unique as any in all English literature.

From an article by Mr. Luther S. Livingstone in the New York *Bookman*, January 1900:

First Published Writings.

Stevenson's first appearance in type was in a little pamphlet, 'The Pentland Rising.' It consists of twenty pages, numbered from three to twenty-two, enclosed in a green cover, upon which the title is printed. It is dated at end 'Edinburgh, 28th Nov. 1866,' and was probably written before he was sixteen years of age, his birthday being November 13. This birthday of his that year was the two hundredth anniversary of the rising of the Scots in the Pentland Hills against the inhuman laws of their English rulers. The circumstances of the writing and printing seem to be nowhere chronicled, but it may be surmised that the boy, full of love of his own Scotland and its history, his own birthday falling on the anniversary of an event so momentous in its after consequences, wrote this little sketch, which his proud relatives had printed. The little book was evidently treasured carefully, as at the sale of books belonging to his own and his mother's estate last April there were twenty copies of 'The Pentland Rising.'

This little sketch has never been reprinted. When Colvin was editing the Edinburgh Edition, Stevenson was appealed to for permission to reprint some of his juvenile pieces and contributions to magazines. After giving a list of some of the latter, he says: 'I have no objection to any of these being edited, say with a scythe and reproduced. But I heartily abominate and reject the idea of reprinting "The Pentland Rising." For God's sake let me get buried first.' There can, however, be no objection to reprinting here the paragraph giving an account of the beginning of the revolt. The boyish character of the language is apparent in this extract:

'Upon Tuesday, November 13, 1666, Corporal George Deanes and three other soldiers set upon an old man in the clachan of Dalry and demanded the payment of his fines (for not attending church, etc.). On the old man's refusing to pay, they forced a large party of his neighbours to go with them and thresh his corn. The field was a certain distance out of the clachan, and four persons, disguised as countrymen, who had been out on the moors all night, met this mournful drove of slaves, compelled by the four soldiers to work for the ruin of their friend. However, chilled to the bone by their night on the hills, and worn out by want of food, they proceeded to the village inn to refresh themselves. Suddenly some people rushed into the room where they were sitting, and told them that the soldiers were about to roast the old man, naked, on his own girdle (*sic*, probably a misprint for gridle).[1] This was too much for them to stand, and they repaired immediately to the scene of this gross outrage, and at first merely requested that the captive should be released. On the refusal of the two soldiers who were in the front room, high words were given and taken on both sides, and the other two rushed forth from an adjoining chamber and made at the countrymen with drawn swords. One of the latter, John M'Lellan of Barskob, drew a pistol and shot the corporal in the body. The pieces of tobacco pipe with which it was loaded, to the number of ten at least, entered him, and he was so much disturbed that he never appears to have recovered, for we find him long afterward in a petition to the Privy Council requesting a pension for him. The other soldiers then laid down their arms, the old man was rescued, and the rebellion was commenced.'

Stevenson afterwards wrote under the same title what he describes as a 'bulky historical romance without a spark of merit,' the manuscript of which he long ago destroyed.

Before the influx upon the market of the twenty copies belonging to Stevenson's mother, 'The Pentland Rising' was very rare, and copies had sold for upward of one hundred dollars. At present, however, it does not command quite so high a price.

[1] The misplacing of the vowel in this word is common in Scotland. —Ed.

In 1868 he wrote 'The Charity Bazaar,' a boyish skit, filling four pages quarto, and which was privately printed. His next appearance in print seems to have been in the pages of a college paper, the *Edinburgh University Magazine*, which he and three fellow-students edited, and which lived through four numbers only. These numbers were issued from January to April 1871. He says:

'A pair of little active brothers—Livingstone[1] by name, great skippers on the foot, great rubbers of the hands, who kept a bookshop over against the University building—had been debauched to play the part of publishers.'

The first number was edited by all four associates, the second by Stevenson and James Walter Ferrier, the third by Stevenson alone, and of the last he says: 'It has long been a solemn question who it was that edited the fourth,' and then: 'It would perhaps be still more difficult to say who read it. Poor yellow sheet, that looked so hopefully in the Livingstones' window! Poor, harmless paper, that might have gone to print a Shakespeare on, and was instead so clumsily defaced with nonsense! And, shall I say, Poor Editors? I cannot pity myself, to whom it was all pure gain. It was no news to me, but only the wholesome confirmation of my judgment, when the magazine struggled into half-birth, and instantly sickened and subsided into night.'

Stevenson contributed six articles to the four numbers, one of which, 'An Old Scotch Gardener,' he revised and reprinted in 'Memories and Portraits.'

Stevenson's father and grandfather had been civil engineers and famous as lighthouse builders. Had he been of a more robust constitution, he would have been brought up to the same calling, that being his father's wish. As it was, several summers were passed with his father in assisting with the work at various points on the coast of Scotland. In 1869 he made the tour of the Orkneys and Shetlands on board the steam yacht of the Commissioners of Northern Lights, and in 1870 a similar tour of the Western Islands. He was, however, more a lover of the sea from the standpoint of the artist than that of the civil

[1] The death of Mr. S. M. Livingstone was reported in the *Westminster Gazette* of 24th May 1902.

engineer. 'I can't look at it practically; however, that will come, I suppose, like grey hair or coffin nails,' he says in a letter to his mother while absent on one of these expeditions.

He, however, gave the family calling considerable study, and on March 27, 1871, read a paper before the Royal Scottish Society of Arts, a 'Notice of a New Form of Intermittent Light for Lighthouses,' for which he received the Society's silver medal, value three sovereigns. This paper was printed separately from the transactions of the Society in a thin pamphlet, consisting of five pages of text only, beside the title-leaf. It has the head-line, 'Mr. L. Stevenson on a New Form of Light for Lighthouses,' and contains five illustrations in the text. The invention or idea in its simplest form consisted of a permanent hemispherical mirror behind the light with a smaller hemispherical mirror revolving in front of it. The thing aimed at was to produce an intense, full-power light alternating immediately, without gradations with absolute darkness.

This little pamphlet, four leaves only, without cover, is the author's first book with his name on the title-page.

Stevenson at Edinburgh University.

Mr. Charles Lowe, M.A., many years the *Times* correspondent in Berlin, was a contemporary of Stevenson's at the Edinburgh University, and has given us in 'Robert Louis Stevenson: A Reminiscence' (the *Bookman*, November 1891), a valuable addition to the rather lean budget of personal recollections of the novelist at this most interesting period of his life.

Mr. Lowe describes how he had noted Stevenson 'by the possession of exterior qualities which marked him off strongly from the rest of his comrades' before he knew who he was, his first meeting with him arising out of a poetical effusion which Mr. Lowe had submitted to the editors of the short-lived *Edinburgh University Magazine* —R. L. S. and James Walter Ferrier. Stevenson tapped him on the shoulder one day in Professor Kelland's class-room, mentioned the poem, and so to an after gathering at 'The Pump,' 'there to continue our

discussion over Edinburgh ale and cold meat pies; and I cannot remember that I ever spent a more pleasant, or, indeed, a more inspiring hour in Auld Reekie than the first one I thus passed with Robert Stevenson.'

From that single hour's conversation with the embryo author of 'Treasure Island,' I certainly derived more intellectual and personal stimulus than ever was imparted to me by any six months' course of lectures within the walls of 'good King James's College.' He was so perfectly frank and ingenuous, so ebullient and open-hearted, so sunny, so sparkling, so confiding, so vaulting in his literary ambitions, and withal so widely read and well-informed—notwithstanding his youth, for he could scarcely have been out of his teens then—that I could not help saying to myself that here was a young man who had commended himself more to my approval and emulation than any other of my fellow-students. . . .

Young Stevenson devoted much more of his time to the fortunes of his *Magazine* than to the attainment of merit-marks in his lecture-rooms, where, indeed, his appearance was less the rule than its exception. He had a supreme contempt for plodding and prize-taking, of which he writes in his 'Apology for Idleness': 'They have been to school or college, but all the time they have had their eye on the medal.' Stevenson himself never had his eye on the medal. He scorned the medal, and another sentence in the same essay is a pure bit of personal autobiography, as far as his academic career was concerned. 'Extreme busyness,' he writes, 'whether at school or college, kirk or market, indicates a system of deficient vitality; while a faculty for idleness implies a catholic appetite and a strong sense of personal identity.' Stevenson, I say, despised the medal; he was none of your examination crammers and competition wallahs; but, on the other hand, he was as omnivorous a general reader—if chiefly, perchance, in the lighter pastures of literature—as was young Teufelsdröckh in the university library of Weissnichtwo; and he has already reaped his reward for thus having followed the bent of his own tastes in spite of the spirit and formulas of his time.

A gentleman who was at the university with Stevenson said he was 'always supposing.' 'If you were walking along the street with him, and the most trivial thing struck his eye, he would start supposing—supposing that was something else, supposing this, that, or the other thing had never happened, supposing you were he under such circumstances—in fact there was no end to his supposing; and,' adds his old fellow-student, 'I suppose that's how he got to the top of the tree in fiction.'—*Edinburgh Dispatch*, 19th December 1894.

'Always Supposing.'

At college he describes himself as 'a lean, ugly, idle, unpopular student,' whose shiverings on wet, east-windy morning journeys up to class, infinite yawnings during lecture, and delight in truantry, gave little promise of devotion to book-learning. But there happened to be a brace of books, not in the university curriculum, which Master Louis kept by him, and in one of which he read, in the other wrote, with unflagging zeal. Thus he would get some practice, by effort and imitation, in rhythm, in harmony, in the fitting of part to part. He played 'the sedulous ape' to Hazlitt, to Lamb, to Wordsworth, to Sir Thomas Browne, to Hawthorne, to Montaigne, to Baudelaire, to Obermann—a perplexing mosaic of colours, but with this common to them all, that, in their highest touches, the expression is nothing short of unique. —*Quarterly Review*, April 1895.

'The Sedulous Ape.'

In his valuable 'Personal Memories of Robert Louis Stevenson,' contributed to the *Century*, July 1895, and published in revised form in 'Critical Kit-Kats,' 1896, Mr. Edmund Gosse thus describes his first meeting with Stevenson:

It is nearly a quarter of a century since I first saw Stevenson. In the autumn of 1870, in company with a former school-fellow, I was in the Hebrides. We had been wandering in the Long Island, as they name the outer archipelago, and our steamer, returning, called at Skye. At the pier of Portree, I think, a company came on board—'people of importance in their day,' Edinburgh acquaintances, I suppose, who had accidentally met

in Skye on various errands. At all events, they invaded our modest vessel with a loud sound of talk. Professor Blackie was among them, a famous figure that calls for no description; and a voluble, shaggy man, clad in homespun, with spectacles forward upon nose, who, it was whispered to us, was Mr. Sam Bough, the Scottish Academician, a water-colour painter of some repute, who was to die in 1878. There were also several engineers of prominence. At the tail of this chatty, jesting little crowd of invaders came a youth of about my own age, whose appearance, for some mysterious reason, instantly attracted me. He was tall, preternaturally lean, with longish hair, and as restless and questing as a spaniel. The party from Portree fairly took possession of us; at meals they crowded around the captain, and we common tourists sat silent, below the salt. The stories of Blackie and Sam Bough were resonant. Meanwhile, I knew not why, I watched the plain, pale lad who took the lowest place in this privileged company.

First meeting with Edmund Gosse.

The summer of 1870 remains in the memory of western Scotland as one of incomparable splendour. Our voyage, especially as evening drew on, was like an emperor's progress. We stayed on deck till the latest moment possible, and I occasionally watched the lean youth, busy and serviceable, with some of the little tricks with which we were later on to grow familiar—the advance with hand on hip, the sidewise bending of the head to listen. Meanwhile darkness overtook us, a wonderful halo of moonlight swam up over Glenelg, the indigo of the peaks of the Cuchullins faded into the general blue night. I went below, but was presently aware of some change of course, and then of an unexpected stoppage. I tore on deck, and found that we had left our track among the islands, and had steamed up a narrow and unvisited fiord of the mainland—I think Loch Nevis. The sight was curious and bewildering. We lay in a gorge of blackness, with only a strip of the blue moonlit sky overhead; in the dark a few lanterns jumped about the shore, carried by agitated but unseen and soundless persons. As I leaned over the bulwarks, Stevenson was at my side, and he explained to me that we had come up this loch to take away to Glasgow a large party of emigrants driven from their homes

in the interests of a deer-forest. As he spoke, a black mass became visible entering the vessel. Then, as we slipped off shore, the fact of their hopeless exile came home to these poor fugitives, and suddenly, through the absolute silence, there rose from them a wild keening and wailing, reverberated by the cliffs of the loch, and at that strange place and hour infinitely poignant. When I came on deck next morning, my unnamed friend was gone. He had put off with the engineers to visit some remote lighthouse of the Hebrides.

From an article by Mrs. J. E. H. (Alice) Gordon in the *Bookman*, January 1895 :

Sometime in the seventies Robert Louis Stevenson came with his mother and took up his abode for a summer at the romantic little inn at the foot of Box Hill, known as the Burford Arms. At that time we were living about ten minutes' walk from the little hostel, and among our most honoured and best beloved friends was the sage of Box Hill, George Meredith. A publisher friend wrote to us from London and begged my mother to make the acquaintance of Mr. Louis Stevenson, requesting her if possible to invite him to meet George Meredith. Thus it came to pass that Robert Louis Stevenson, then entirely unknown to fame, would occasionally drop into our garden and sit at the feet of the philosopher and listen with rapt attention and appreciative smiles to his conversation.

First meeting with George Meredith.

I well remember the eager, listening face of the student Stevenson, and remember his frank avowal that from henceforth he should enrol himself 'a true-blue Meredith man.' He was an inspiring listener, and had the art of drawing out the best of Mr. Meredith's brilliant powers of conversation, so that those were halcyon days. Though preferring to listen, Mr. Stevenson would speak of Dumas, Hazlitt, Defoe, Congreve, and a host of other writers and creators of fiction with enthusiasm and with that artistic appreciation of their various and differing qualities which is only possible to a workman in the same craft. . . .

My sister, I remember, was much interested in Stevenson, and even in those early days expected great things from him in

the future. And I well remember her satisfaction one afternoon, when, after he had taken his departure from our circle, and one of us was idly wondering why our friend, the publisher, was so hopeful about young Stevenson's future, Mr. Meredith trumpeted down our feeble utterances by informing us that some day he felt sure we should all be proud to have known him, and prophesied success and fame for him in the future. I was not so discriminating, and remember when 'Treasure Island,' 'Virginibus Puerisque,' and his other masterpieces appeared, feeling surprised that they should be the work of the silent and, truth to tell, rather dejected-looking youth who had lodged with his mother in our neighbourhood for a short space of time, and whose highest merit in my eyes had been his enthusiastic appreciation of George Meredith's writings and conversation.

Yet I can remember two of Mr. Stevenson's sayings that struck me at the time, and have in consequence remained in my memory ever since. One day he wandered in, and with a desolate expression of countenance remarked that he was having a bad time with his heroine. He said, 'She is turning ugly on my hands. It is no use my saying she is beautiful and charming and fascinating, and that everybody in the book is falling in love with her—it is unconvincing, and I feel the reader won't believe it, and I don't know what to do.' The exact words, I fear, I do not accurately remember, but that, at any rate, was the substance of his observation. And I remember how delighted he was when his confession drew from George Meredith a treatise on heroines in general, and his own in particular. . . .

One other day, I remember, we were talking of our dislike to prigs as heroes in books, and Mr. Stevenson said, 'An aspirant novelist should always comprehend that if in the first two or three chapters of books readers are convinced that the hero cannot by any possibility do or think anything wrong, or commit even the smallest indiscretion, the authors have given themselves away, and by no possibility can readers be any more interested in the adventures and fortunes of such immaculate but unattractive characters.'

Mr. Will Low, the painter, told recently a story of the Latin

Quarter days of Robert Louis Stevenson. Low and Stevenson were great friends in their youth; their friendship, indeed, continued up to the time of the writer's death.

'Louis,' said the artist, 'was no less diplomatic than brave. He could be fiery, and he could also be gracious and pacific. One night, I remember, we sat in a garden in Montmartre. The red wine had been flowing pretty freely, and one of our party got heated and aggressive.

A Latin Quarter Reminiscence.

'Finally some one said a thing that a fighting chap disliked. As soon as the words were spoken, he grabbed up a bottle and hurled it at the other's head. It was a strong, true shot, and would have hit the mark had not Stevenson sprung to his feet and caught the missile.

'"Tut, tut, George," he said to the thrower, "tut, tut. If the bottle is passed so quickly, none of us will be able to stand out the evening."'—*New York Tribune*, January 1903.

Mr. Edmund Gosse, who was introduced to R. L. S. at the Savile Club by Mr. Sidney Colvin about the end of 1876, was an intimate friend of Stevenson to the end of his life, and thus knew him in his days of literary obscurity as well as in the time of his fame and fortune. Stevenson when in London was a constant visitor at the home of Mr. Gosse, and the latter visited him in Scotland, though he never managed to see him at Bournemouth nor, like most of his European friends, did he ever enjoy the rare good fortune of shaking hands with him again after he had sailed away from his native land in the *Ludgate Hill*. Mr. Gosse thinks that those who have written of Stevenson in his later days do not give sufficient prominence to the gaiety of the man.

'Life at Twenty-five.'

It was his cardinal quality in those early days (says Mr. Gosse in the 'Critical Kit-Kat' paper already quoted). A childlike mirth leaped and danced in him; he seemed to skip upon the hills of life. He was simply bubbling with quips and

jests; his inherent earnestness or passion about abstract things was incessantly relieved by jocosity; and when he had built one of his intellectual castles in the sand, a wave of humour was certain to sweep in and destroy it. I cannot, for the life of me, recall any of his jokes; and written down in cold blood, they might not be funny if I did. They were not wit so much as humanity, the many-sided outlook upon life. I am anxious that his laughter-loving mood should not be forgotten, because later on it was partly, but I think never wholly, quenched by ill-health, responsibility, and the advance of years. He was often, in the old days, excessively and delightfully silly—silly with the silliness of an inspired schoolboy; and I am afraid that our laughter sometimes sounded ill in the ears of age. . . .

Stevenson was not without a good deal of innocent oddity in his dress. When I try to conjure up his figure, I can see only a slight, lean lad, in a suit of blue sea-cloth, a black shirt, and a wisp of yellow carpet that did duty for a necktie. This was long his attire, persevered in to the anguish of his more conventional acquaintances. I have a ludicrous memory of going, in 1878, to buy him a new hat, in company with Mr. Lang, the thing then upon his head having lost the very semblance of a human article of dress. Aided by a very civil shopman, we suggested several hats and caps, and Louis at first seemed interested; but having at last hit upon one which appeared to us pleasing and decorous, we turned for a moment to inquire the price. We turned back, and found that Louis had fled, the idea of parting with the shapeless object having proved too painful to be entertained. . . .

In those early days he suffered many indignities on account of his extreme youthfulness of appearance and absence of self-assertion. He was at Inverness,—being five or six and twenty at the time,—and had taken a room in a hotel. Coming back about dinner-time, he asked the hour of *table d'hôte*, whereupon the landlady said, in a motherly way: 'Oh, I knew you wouldn't like to sit in there among the grown-up people, so I 've had a place put for you in the bar.' There was a frolic at the Royal Hotel, Bathgate, in the summer of 1879. Louis was lunching alone, and the maid, considering him a negligible quantity, came and leaned out of the window. This outrage on the proprieties

Age 21, 1871

Age 25, 1875

Age 26, 1876

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON AS A YOUNG MAN

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was so stinging that Louis at length made free to ask her, with irony, what she was doing there. 'I 'm looking for my lad,' she replied. 'Is that he?' asked Stevenson, with keener sarcasm. 'Weel, I 've been lookin' for him a' my life, and I 've never seen him yet,' was the response. Louis was disarmed at once, and wrote her on the spot some beautiful verses in the vernacular. 'They 're no bad for a beginner,' she was kind enough to say when she had read them.

III

HIS FIRST VISIT TO AMERICA, AND HIS MARRIAGE

On August 7, 1879, Stevenson sailed from the Clyde in the steamship 'Devonia' to New York. He had met in France an American lady, and fallen in love with her. His father objected to the proposed marriage; but the young author was resolute and went away shadowed by his father's disapproval. His early days in America were full of trial and hardship. On May 19, 1880, he was married to Fanny Van de Grift, in California. From this point Stevenson's literary career may be said properly to have begun.

The following article is reprinted from the New York *Bookbuyer* of February 1896. The name of the writer is Louis Evan Shipman:

First Landing in New York.

In some recent memories Mr. Gosse recalls the showery April[1] day Stevenson passed in London just previous to setting forth for the first time on his journey to the West; and Stevenson himself has recorded the dreary wetness of the day of his arrival at Castle Garden. It was on a Sunday afternoon, late in April, that he and his fellow-passengers of the second cabin were allowed to disembark from the old *Devonia*. 'It rained miraculously,' he says, 'and from that moment, till on the following night I left New York, there was scarce a lull and no cessation in the downpour.' Stevenson placed himself under the tutelage of one of

[1] The writer is obviously mistaken as to the season of the year when Stevenson landed in New York. August is the month given by Mr. Graham Balfour in the 'Life.'—ED.

his ship companions named Jones, and shortly after six o'clock found himself issuing into West Street, on some straw in the bottom of an open baggage-wagon. The character of this vehicle and its owner need no description; there are numberless such at every steamship pier waiting to prey upon the unwary. The Amateur Emigrant in his innocence says: 'It took us but a few moments, though it cost a good deal of money, to be taken along West Street to our destination, Reunion House, No. 10.' From personal observation I should say that from Castle Garden to No. 10 West Street is very little over a hundred yards; and it would give me much personal satisfaction to meet the freebooter who had the audacity to charge the simple Scotsmen 'a good deal of money' for carting them in so ridiculous a manner so ridiculous a distance.

Stevenson has told of the reception given him by Michael Mitchell, then the proprietor of Reunion House; and he speaks of it with such feeling that it is not hard to conceive of the pleasure it gave to so desolate a landing in a strange land. There is a bit of irony, though, in the fact that the only welcome and God-speed Stevenson had on his first visit to us was given him by a kindly Irish lodging-house keeper. Three years after entertaining the angel unawares, Mitchell left Reunion House, which was then leased by one Michael Bullins; and it is still owned nominally by him, though in reality by a stepson, Patrick O'Halloran, to whom has also descended the house's tradition of cordiality.

One day early last spring I pushed my way down West Street from Cortlandt, through the noonday groups of longshoremen and dock idlers, past numberless warehouses, seamen's furnishing shops, markets, fishstands and groggeries, and at last came to a halt before No. 10, 'an humble hostelry' indeed, as it impressed Stevenson, with its two stories of brick and unpretentious entry. I went through the open door, down two or three steps, and found myself in the bar-room; a sandy floored apartment, with a small counter on one side, and a settle and chairs on the other. The walls were given up to the lithographs of rival breweries, lists of steamship sailings; and in a conspicuous corner, a target proclaimed itself the property of the P. J. O'Halloran Rifles of the First Ward. Mr. O'Halloran himself

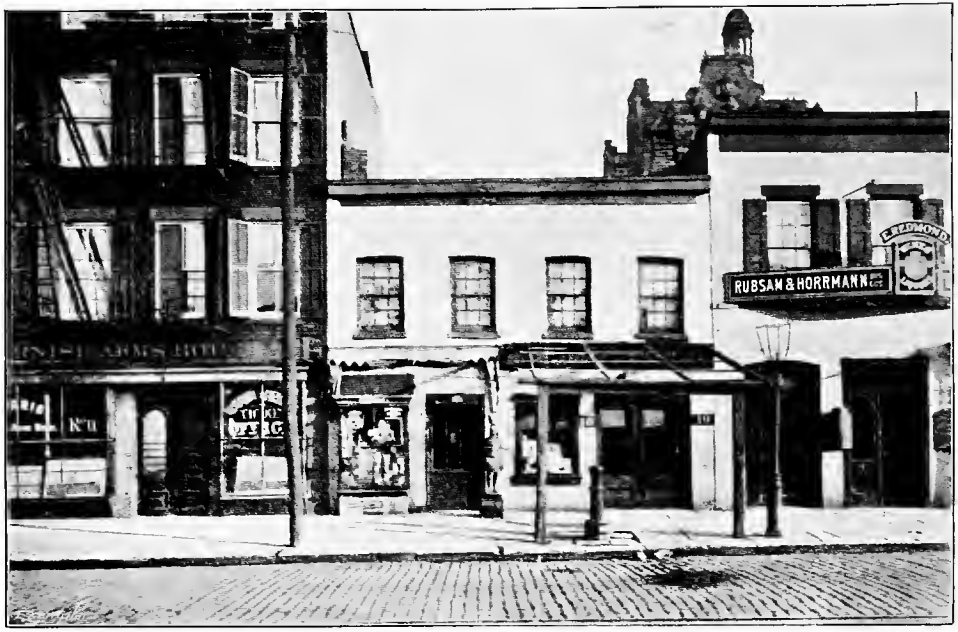
stood at his counter, and after he comprehended what I wished to see, and why, he did all the honours of his house like 'an honest and obliging landlord,' as Stevenson has written down his predecessor, Mitchell.

He led the way, first, up a pair of steep, narrow stairs to the room where Stevenson passed so uncomfortable a night. I recognised it by its 'borrowed lights; one looking into the passage, and the second opening, without sash, into another apartment'; no other room in the house having this peculiar mode of ventilation. It was nothing more than a closet, but the bed looked comfortable, the linen fresh, and cleanliness dominated everything. Yet it was a sorry place for the gentle young Scot to pass his first lonesome night among strangers in a strange city. O'Halloran led the way downstairs again, and into a crowded storeroom piled high with nondescript luggage, one corner of which was given up to a washstand and its accessories. Among them I am sure I recognised the 'pair of questionable combs.'

We retraced our steps to the bar-room, and thence went two rooms back into the kitchen, where, with a heavy heart, Stevenson had left his wet clothes 'a pulp in the middle of a pool' on the floor, after his tramp around town through the rainy streets. I half expected to see them lying there, limp, mute testimonials of their owner's visit (he himself wrote, 'I wonder if they are dry by now?') but no trace of them was to be seen, and soon after I took my leave.

To all lovers of Stevenson who have the opportunity, I recommend a visit to the little house that entertained him on that stormy Sunday night in '79. It brings to one, perhaps more than anything else could, a pervading sense of the man's simplicity and contentment with simple things, and his complete independence of the non-essentials of life.

'An Unpublished Chapter in the Life of Robert Louis Stevenson' was the heading of a paper by Mr. Howard Wilford Bell in the *Pall Mall Magazine* of June 1901. After telling the story of Stevenson's passionate pilgrimage to the West in the autumn of 1879, his illness at an Angora goat-ranche, eighteen miles from Monterey,



NO. 10 WEST STREET, NEW YORK
Where Stevenson stayed on his first landing in America

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and his subsequent stay at that little mountain town in the late autumn of the year, Mr. Bell writes:

In a desultory fashion Stevenson became a 'reporter' on the Monterey *Californian*, at a salary of two dollars a week. An issue or two of this precious paper was sent to his most intimate English friend, with the comment that 'the works of R. L. S.' were on their way from California. The package never reached its destination. 'On the whole, his work was not thought up to Californian standards,' says Mr. Colvin, with cutting irony.

Dark Days in California.

Late in December, Stevenson arrived in San Francisco, and in the spring of the following year he was given a 'job'—the transaction did not even rise to the dignity of 'obtaining a position'—in the city department of the San Francisco *Chronicle*. With this he began a brief but hardly promising reportorial career, which was to be numbered by days. His first assignment was to 'cover' a holiday jollification arranged by the Salvation Army for the entertainment of the very poor and their children.

Stevenson wrote a gorgeous story, in which all the information bearing on the local aspect of the festival was carefully ignored. It was just such a piece of work as might have been expected from the man who was to write 'Virginibus Puerisque.' It treated of the theory of giving and of the blessedness of giving to children, it was a special pleading for the virtue of unselfishness, it was a rhapsody on the Beatitudes, it was everything desirable, but it was not 'a newspaper story.' It was a hopeless tissue of platitudes, so far as the requirements of the city editor were concerned; and that proverbially fretful person acrimoniously asked his new reporter, who stood before him, long, gangling, ill-dressed, starved-looking, if he knew where the festival had been held, who the committee-men in charge were, and if he had a list of the merchants who had provided the presents for the children. To these reasonable questions Stevenson replied that he had not thought such details at all worth while. A brisk young police reporter was hurriedly sent out for a few facts concerning the matter, and Stevenson was told

that his 'copy' would probably prove available for a Sunday 'special.'

Stevenson's second reportorial 'detail' proved even less fortunate. He was told one evening by the city editor that he should go to the Presidio (a military post) next morning and secure the facts relative to the installation of a new and extensive system of waterworks. The reporter replied with much ease of manner, that he had an engagement for the next day which would prevent him from going to the Presidio. The city editor thereupon exercised his well-worn prerogative by incontinently discharging the young man, accompanying his edict with a running fire of editorial profanity. It does not appear that Stevenson ever again undertook the *rôle* of reporter. He continued to write articles for the Sunday edition of the *Chronicle*, but there is no indication that he thought affectionately of them, for he never rescued them from the files.

The young Scotchman's life in San Francisco covered a period of four months, and embraced perhaps the most miserable days of his life. Physically he was in a distressing condition. Financially he was on the dismal edge of despair. He went from doctor to doctor, seeking treatment on credit, and was turned away by all. During the winter he was reduced by these refusals to the humiliation of asking for medicine and advice at the municipal free dispensary. The illness which overtook him in the spring of 1880 almost 'doused his faint glim.'

The grim horror and irony of the cruel circumstances are accentuated when one recalls that at this very period Stevenson was toiling like a worker in fine metals over several of those rare verbal fabrics which were to delight his race. The 'Amateur Emigrant' had been sent in manuscript to his friend and counsellor, Mr. Sidney Colvin, only to be returned, riddled with merciless criticism. Some of the best and most characteristic work which was to come from his pen was either actually under way or shaping itself in his mind; and the stress of composition was supported by a diet which would have been the death of any man not sustained by an inexhaustible nervous force. . . .

The exile's lodging was in a workman's resort in a mean section of the city. For this he paid six shillings the week. He worked by candle-light, and ate when he could eat anywhere, at

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

The House where Stevenson lived from September to December 1879

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'Joe's coffee-house,' an eating-stall kept by an Italian, and now patronised—at least once—by all lovers of Stevenson who visit San Francisco. His breakfast was a roll, a cup of coffee, and a pat of butter, which cost him fivepence. Dinner, when he was prosperous, cost two shillings, and was a *table d'hôte*. Supper was a repetition of breakfast; the cup of coffee being sometimes replaced by a bowl of soup. As poverty pinched closer he experimented with his viands. A doughnut was tried in the place of the rolls, and when the *table d'hôte* dinner was beyond his means, a bowl of soup was made to serve the purpose of the midday dinner. . . .

He was a touching sight in those piteous days. His face was ghastly in its pallor, his clothes seemed to have been flung upon him, and his trousers and shoetops disagreed by at least two inches. Men were seen to jump at the sound of his cough and to rub their eyes at the first sight of him. His manner towards his equals betrayed a conscious superiority—or, perhaps, it was only a lack of sympathy—and he was awkward to a degree. It is evident that association with a sympathetic man-friend would have meant a great deal to him; but he did not seek friends, and the newspaper men, who, as a class, are apt to become calloused by their disillusions, avoided the queer, silent Scotchman, who was, unless all signs were at fault, a stranded fakir. . . .

San Francisco failed to help Stevenson in his hour of bitterest need, but since his death it has raised a pretty monument to his memory in Portsmouth Square, where he loved to lounge on sunny days. 'Joe's coffee-house' is haunted daily by people who feel a belated and vinous grief for him. Many persons can tell pleasant stories about him—all but 'Joe,' who frankly confesses he hasn't the least remembrance of the gentleman, and wonders why people should be so keen to learn at just what table a forgotten patron used to sit.

In the darkest days came parental forgiveness for this wilful flight westward, expressed in the trite cablegram: 'Count on £250 annually.' The sunnier month of June brought to Stevenson the happiness of marriage with the woman of his choice. Setting their faces towards the mountains, they bade farewell to the fogs and chill winds of the seaport. Their new home was at Juan Silverado, a deserted mining-camp on Mount

Saint Helena. Through the grape-ripening months of June and July, Stevenson and his wife and stepson lived in the old brown house so affectionately described in 'Silverado Squatters.'

From the *Times*, July 2, 1901 :

San Francisco Editor's Story.

We have received from Mr. John P. Young, managing editor of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, a letter with reference to an article in the *Pall Mall Magazine* for June, called 'An Unpublished Chapter in the Life of Robert Louis Stevenson,' written by Mr. Howard Wilford Bell. Mr. Young says:—'The part of Mr. Bell's article regarding which I am able to speak with positiveness is that in which he states with some circumstantiality that Robert Louis Stevenson, late in December 1879, arrived in San Francisco, and in the spring of the following year was "given a job" in the city department of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, which he performed in such an unsatisfactory manner that the item he was assigned to write had to be given to another reporter to put into English suitable to the readers of the paper and the latitude of California; and that later "he continued to write articles for the Sunday edition of the *Chronicle*, but there is no indication that he thought affectionately of them, for he never rescued them from the files." Both these statements are absolutely false. I was managing editor of the *Chronicle* at the time, and personally knew every reporter, whether on the regular staff or doing merely detail work. I also read and accepted all the manuscripts published in the *Chronicle* during the period mentioned, and can assert with positiveness that the *Chronicle* was never honoured by the offer of one from Mr. Stevenson. I do not trust to my memory solely on this point, but have caused the account-books of the *Chronicle* to be carefully examined, and no trace of Mr. Stevenson's name can be found in them. Had he worked a single day for the paper, or contributed an article or articles, there would be a record of the fact, for the affairs of the *Chronicle* are methodically managed. To make assurance doubly sure, however, I have questioned the then city editor of the *Chronicle* and others who were on the staff of the paper in 1879 and

1880, and they all unite in saying that there is absolutely no foundation for the statements I am here denying, as they have already been denied in the columns of the *Chronicle*. I wish to add something that should be conclusive on this point. The *Chronicle*, like most journals, tries to make the most of such facts as the connection of distinguished writers. Does any one suppose for a moment that if Robert Louis Stevenson had been a contributor to the paper that we should not have been proud to dwell on the fact?'

An Impression by C. Warren Stoddard.

Mr. Charles Warren Stoddard, Professor of English Literature at the Catholic University of Washington, D.C., U.S.A., since 1887, was one of the American friends whom Stevenson found during his first visit to the United States. Professor Stoddard wrote several papers in *Kate Field's Washington* at the time of Stevenson's death. From one of these this description of the impression made on him by his first meeting with the young writer is taken:

Soon after Stevenson's arrival in California we met. The happy hour brought us together in the studio of an artist friend. There, with a confusion of canvases for a background, and an audience as clever as limited, all things were possible save only the commonplace, and, in the prevailing atmosphere—an atmosphere not unpleasantly tinged with Bohemianism—the situation easily became spectacular.

There I heard him discourse; there I saw him literally *rise* to the occasion and, striding to and fro with leonine tread, toss back his lank locks and soliloquise with the fine frenzy of an Italian improvisatore. We were all on our mettle. I am inclined to think that every one was at his best—I mean that he was keyed up to concert-pitch—while in the presence of that inspiring man. He was so entirely master of himself and of the situation that each listener was on the alert, and thus unconsciously assumed his pleasantest expression. It is not unlikely that the exceptional brilliancy of the rhetorical Stevenson dared his guest to unaccustomed efforts, and that in consequence he

achieved an intellectual spurt that, though brief, was brave enough, and astonished no one so much as himself when he came to weigh it complacently in comfortable recollection. I wonder how many entirely harmless people have been led to think very pleasantly of themselves after an interview with such a man as was Robert Louis Stevenson? I don't believe that he ever wilfully belittled any one who didn't richly deserve it; no, not even in an irritable moment. Let us hope for all our sakes that he was tempted alike as we are.

At the time I first knew him, Stevenson's itinerary was very limited; he usually travelled from his couch to his lounge, possibly touching at the arm-chair on the way. Those who are acquainted with 'A Child's Garden of Verses' will see the delightful possibilities of this prescribed journey in such company. I am writing of a period now nearly seventeen years past. For a long time his tours were not greatly varied; with him it was nearly the same daily routine with an occasional change of horizon. His familiars grew to think of him and to look upon him as being but a disembodied intellect; his was the rare kind of personality that inspires in the susceptible heart a deep though passionless love. I take him to have been the last man in the world to awaken or invite passion.

In his own select circle, necessarily a very limited one, he was reverenced, and it does not seem in the least surprising that there should have been found those who were glad to gather at his knee in worshipful silence while he, in an exalted state of spirituality, read and expounded the Scriptures with rabbinical gravity.

I have visited him in a lonely lodging—it was previous to his happy marriage—and found him submerged in billows of bedclothes; about him floated the scattered volumes of a complete set of Thoreau; he was preparing an essay on that worthy, and he looked at the moment like a half-drowned man—yet he was not cast down. His work, an endless task, was better than a straw to him. It was to become his life preserver and to prolong his years. I feel convinced that without it he must have surrendered long since.

I found Stevenson a man of the frailest physique, though most unaccountably tenacious of life; a man whose pen was

indefatigable, whose brain was never at rest, who, as far as I am able to judge, looked upon everybody and everything from a supremely intellectual point of view. His was a superior organisation that seems never to have been tainted by things common or unclean; one more likely to be revolted than appealed to by carnality in any form. A man unfleshy to the verge of emaciation; and, in this connection, I am not unmindful of a market in flesh-pots not beneath the consideration of sanctimonious speculators; but here was a man whose sympathies were literary and artistic; whose intimacies were born and bred above the ears.

Romance of his Marriage.

The following pages appear in a little volume of 'Stevensoniana' issued by Mr. M. F. Mansfield of New York in 1900. They are here given as they stand, although only in part do they naturally come within the scope of the present chapter. This little note from R. L. S. to Miss M. C. Smith, the writer of the article, is very characteristic:

DEAR MADAM,—It is impossible to be more gracefully penitent: I give you leave to buy ——'s triple piracy in the —— library; and this permission is withheld from all other living creatures, so that you alone will possess that publication without sin.—I am, dear Madam, yours truly,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

March 1887.

When Mr. Stevenson was at Saranac in the Adirondacks, I sent him a short editorial on his Brownies that I had written for the Boston *Daily Advertiser*, and also a letter, saying that I owed him one dollar. I professed penitence for having bought a pirated copy of 'Dr. Jekyll' for 25 cents, and promised to make good the deficit if I ever met him. He sent me the letter above.

In May, eleven years later, Miss Louise Imogen Guiney invited me to meet her friend, Mrs. Virgil Williams, to be told—for print—the true story of the Stevenson marriage. I was unable to go to meet Mrs. Williams at the time appointed, but a day or two later she came by Miss Guiney's introduction to an

editorial desk where I had been for eight years in the office of the Boston *Evening Transcript*, and gave me certain facts, from which the article below was written. It appeared in the *Transcript*, May 18, 1898. MINNA CAROLINE SMITH.

BOSTON, *June* 5, 1900.

Mrs. Robert Louis Stevenson, who has been ill in New York, has recovered, and has gone to England for an indefinite stay. It is, however, her purpose to make her home again ultimately in San Francisco. Her presence in England is necessary, as Mr. Sidney Colvin is now engaged in writing the 'Life of Stevenson,' and depends upon Mrs. Stevenson for aid in compilation, and in deciding what shall be said and what shall be left out. A great deal has been said about the Stevensons which might much better have been left unsaid, for the simple reason that it is not true. Like the old story of Phillips Brooks and the boy with the 'Episcopalian Kittens,' some of the truthless tales are harmless. Others are less innocuous than the imaginative yarns which are always likely to be current about any bright personality, any 'shining mark,' like Stevenson and his accomplished wife.

Now that he is dead, and Mrs. Stevenson has gone to his native Britain, it is well to deny authoritatively the absurd story, which has often been revived during the past twenty years, that Mrs. Stevenson's first husband, Mr. Osbourne, gave her away in marriage on the day of her wedding to Robert Louis Stevenson, and that Stevenson afterwards fraternised with his predecessor. As a matter of fact, Stevenson never in his life even saw the father of Lloyd Osbourne, who was about fourteen years of age at the time of his mother's marriage to the famous Scot. The father of Stevenson, an old-time Presbyterian gentleman, made Lloyd Osbourne his heir, thus wholly welcoming his beloved daughter-in-law in the family, where she and her children have found happiness, and where they gave so much. It is advisedly said that the elder Stevenson made Lloyd Osbourne his heir, his property to be that of his son's stepchild after the death of his son and that son's wife. It is well known that Stevenson's mother was with his family in Samoa, and this dignified and conservative lady also followed the custom of the

[*Mendelssohn*

MRS ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

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country, which the family followed, in homely phrase, 'going bare-footed' at home. Pictures of Stevenson in his Samoa home, enjoying the freedom of this native fashion, have been common enough. This Samoan custom seemed simple and natural to any one who saw the Stevensons in Samoa going without shoes and stockings, quite as summer girls on the Massachusetts shore have gone about without gloves or hats during recent years, an unconventionality which would once have shocked thousands. The matter would not be worth mentioning, but a curious myth about Mrs. Stevenson has sprung from it. A paragraph has been floating through contemporaries in several cities of late, to the effect that Mrs. Stevenson went out to dine in London, when first introduced there by her husband, without shoes and stockings. This little yarn really denies itself on the face of it. As a matter of fact, Mrs. Stevenson's conformity to social customs has never been found insufficient wherever she has been. She is a woman of original talents and great adaptability of talent who, for many years, was the nurse, the 'guide, philosopher, and friend,' as well as the beloved wife of the child of genius whose name she bears. She was studying art in Paris, where she had gone with her three children, when she first met Robert Louis Stevenson, who was among the artists and literary folk at Barbizon. She returned to America with her daughter and her son—one son had died while she was in France—and readily got a divorce from Mr. Osbourne. No word concerning the father of her children has ever been uttered for publication by Mrs. Stevenson, nor ever will be. He married a second time and, after a while, left his wife and disappeared. He has since been seen in South Africa. It is here repeated that Robert Louis Stevenson never saw him. Mrs. Stevenson wished to delay her second marriage for a year, but Stevenson had travelled over land and sea to California, and was ill and homesick. So, by the advice of a close friend, the marriage was not long postponed. This friend was Mrs. Virgil Williams, wife of the well-known teacher of painting in San Francisco, the founder of that pioneer art school of the West, which, since Mr. Williams's death, was munificently endowed by Mr. Searles as the Hopkins Institute. Mrs. Williams went with the pair to the house of Dr. Scott, a

Presbyterian minister of San Francisco, who married Mr. and Mrs. Stevenson. Nobody else was present at the private wedding, except Mrs. Scott, the wife of the minister. This divine made Stevenson a present of a religious book of his own writing to read on the journey to Scotland, and the whimsical fear of Stevenson that he might not read it all while crossing the continent and the Atlantic was characteristic. But if he felt that this was not sufficiently light reading for a steamer journey he appreciated the gift, and in return sent Dr. Scott a book on a like topic written by his father in Scotland.[1]

'People are very much like folks'; the fairy tales which are told about the famous are very likely to need large grains of salt in the taking. The simple truth about the Stevensons was that theirs was a peculiarly fortunate and happy marriage, and that if they lived in Bohemia it was 'on the airy uplands' of that land, where freedom of personal action never meant wilful foolish eccentricity or lack of conformity to the canons of true courtesy and kindness.

[1] Probably *Christianity confirmed by Jewish and Heathen Testimony and the Deductions of Physical Science.* Edinburgh, D. Douglas, 1879.

IV

STEVENSON'S FIRST NOVEL

Anticipating our chronology a little, it will be well to introduce here a series of important items touching the writing of 'Treasure Island' and Stevenson's life at Braemar during August and September 1881.

Mr. W. E. Henley wrote on 'Some Novels of 1899' in the *North American Review*, February 1900, and in the course of his article made this reference to Stevenson's first long story:

Mr. Henley's Version.

The late R. L. Stevenson began, as we all remember, as a kind of literary cherub: he wrote delightful essays on morals; he was responsible for books of sentimental travel, which are a joy to the memory and to the mind; he had a public of his own, which believed and rejoiced in him, and said so. But he felt that he was, as I have said, a literary cherub—a head and a pair of wings, with nothing to sit down upon; he hated the idea; he longed to be something more than the darling of a literary set; and in the end, a good genius appearing in the person of Dr. Japp, he got his chance, and he planted 'Treasure Island' on a journal called (if I mistake not) *Young Folks' Paper*. 'Twas a capital print of its kind, and its editor and proprietor (his name was Henderson: a Scotchman and a radical: I rather think that he is dead; but, dead or alive, he is a person for whom I have a very great respect) was a very able and intelligent man; but the public to which it was addressed was inconceivably larger and less lettered than any to which Stevenson had hitherto appealed.

But 'Treasure Island' suited his journal—so he thought—to a nicety; he did his best for it; and when Billy Bones, and Pew, and Captain Silver had 'done their pitch,' he commissioned 'The Black Arrow' for it; and when that had gone the way of all serials, he gave to it the first of David Balfour and Alan Breck. The result was at once illuminating and strange. I do not know that Stevenson, the story-teller, ever did better than he did in at least two of these three tales. Yet his public would none of him; his public, drenched and drugged with imitations of Marryat and Mayne Reid—with 'Jack Harkaway the Mid,' and 'Miguel the Marksman,' or 'The Gitano of Puerto del Sol'—received his advances with a chastened air of doubt, and considered his effects with a most 'austere regard of control.' In brief, he was but a *succès d'estime*; and you would have thought that he had worked in vain. But he had not. The masters who wrought for *Young Folks' Paper* were (so Stevenson told me) in no wise model citizens; they had their weaknesses, and (on his editor's report) were addicted to the use of strong waters, so that they had to be literally hunted for their copy. But, being writers, they were a level or two above the public for which they wrote. That public had seen little or nothing in Stevenson; it saw a great deal in his imitators, and, in the long-run, Stevenson had, I believe, a very considerable success with a circle of readers which began by politely disdaining him. He had paid in gold, and his gold was not recognised as current coin until it was turned into copper. The currency was debased? Of course it was; and if it had not been—here is my point—it would never have passed with that public which Stevenson tried, and failed, to win. And this is the way in which publics are, not made but, affected and influenced by talent. In Stevenson's case, the provocation was unusually direct, the effects were unusually gross.

The above note by Mr. Henley called forth the following letter from Mr. Robert Leighton to the *Academy*, March 3, 1900:

SIR,—The following notes on the original publication of 'Treasure Island' may help to resolve Mr. Henley's doubts.

The editor and proprietor of *Young Folks' Paper*, to whom

Mr. Henley refers in his article in the *North American Review*, was Mr. James Henderson. Mr. Henderson is not dead, as Mr. Henley 'rather thinks,' although *Young Folks' Paper* is long since defunct. The paper was started some thirty years ago as a juvenile offshoot from the same proprietor's prosperous *Weekly Budget*, and it bore originally the title *Our Young Folks' Weekly Budget*. At the time when 'Treasure Island' appeared in its columns it had become known as *Young Folks*. In subsequent stages of its career it passed successively under the names of *Young Folks' Paper* and *Old and Young*.

Editor of 'Young Folks'' Version.

It was Dr. Japp, I believe, who introduced Stevenson to Mr. Henderson. This was early in the year 1881. Mr. Henderson offered to take a story from the young Scotsman, and, as indicating the kind of story he desired for *Young Folks*, he gave to Stevenson copies of the paper containing a serial by Charles E. Pearse—a treasure-hunting story, entitled 'Billy Bo's'n.' In his 'My First Book' article in the *Idler*, Stevenson seems to suggest that 'Treasure Island' was already formed and planned in his mind prior to the time at which it was thought of as a serial for *Young Folks*; but there is evidence that in 'Billy Bo's'n' he found and adopted many suggestions and incidents for his own narrative.

As a result of his introduction to Mr. Henderson, Stevenson wrote his story of Jim Hawkins and Long John Silver, and sent it in with the title of 'The Sea Cook.' Mr. Henderson did not like the name 'The Sea Cook,' and took an editor's privilege of altering it to 'Treasure Island.' The first instalment was published on October 1, 1881. Stevenson's name was not on it: it was set forth as being by Captain George North, to convey the idea that it was the work of a mariner. It was not considered of great importance in the paper, for it occupied a second place to a serial called 'Don Zalva the Brave,' by Mr. Alfred R. Phillips, one of the 'masters' whom Mr. Henley refers to as being 'in no wise model citizens.' Only the first instalment was illustrated—by a rude woodcut representing Billy Bones chasing Black Dog out of the 'Admiral Benbow.' The subsequent seventeen instalments were foisted into the paper in driblets of two or three columns of small type.

Mr. Henley is right in his belief that 'Treasure Island' was as a serial a comparative failure. It certainly did not raise the circulation of *Young Folks* by a single copy. Far different, however, was the effect of 'The Black Arrow.' This story was written designedly, and again at the suggestion of Mr. Henderson, in the style of historical narrative which had proved so popular in the stories of Mr. Alfred Phillips. It appeared in *Young Folks* from June 30 to October 30, 1883, by 'Captain George North' again, and was enormously successful with boy readers, raising the circulation of the paper by many hundreds of copies a week.

I had myself the privilege of being editor of *Young Folks' Paper* at the time when Stevenson was living at Bournemouth, and I remember writing asking him for a new serial story in 1885. He agreed to write one, but demanded higher terms than those which had satisfied him in the cases of 'Treasure Island' and 'The Black Arrow.' 'You must pay me not less than thirty shillings a column,' he wrote. The columns, I may say, contained each about 1200 words. There was no haggling over terms such as these. Mr. Henderson, indeed, at once offered a considerably higher price for the work. The required story was frequently delayed, but at last it appeared as 'Kidnapped,' and ran serially in *Young Folks* from May to July 1886.

In preparing 'Treasure Island' for book publication, Stevenson did not alter much. Here and there he struck out a paragraph, here and there he added one. He softened down the boastfulness of Jim Hawkins's personal narrative, and Dr. Livesay, who was originally somewhat frivolous and familiar in his language, he made more staid, as became one of his profession. In only one instance was a chapter heading altered—'At the Sign of the Spy-Glass' being substituted for 'The Sea Cook.'—I am, etc.,

ROBERT LEIGHTON.

Dr. Alexander H. Japp, the veteran author and journalist, at the request of Mr. Sidney Colvin, wrote for publication in the *Academy* of March 1900 his account of the transaction. It was, in effect, a repetition of a contribution by him to the *Argosy* of

February 1895, but lacking some of the more personal touches which distinguished that article. For that reason the *Argosy* article is here quoted. It should be explained that Dr. Japp's connection with R. L. S. sprang from his taking exception to Stevenson's study of Thoreau when it appeared in the *Cornhill*, and Stevenson in his preface to 'Men and Books' refers to the incident in this graceful way: 'The Study, indeed, raised so much ire in the breast of Dr. Japp ('H. A. Page'), Thoreau's sincere and learned disciple, that had either of us been men, I please myself with thinking, of less temper and justice, the difference might have made us enemies instead of making us friends.' As it fell out, Stevenson invited his critic to visit him at Braemar, where he was staying in the autumn of 1881, and Dr. Japp describes his visit as follows:

Dr. Japp's Account of 'Treasure Island.'

I accordingly did go to Braemar, and for a little I was one in a delightful circle, where rare freedom was found, yet where rarest courtesy was practised. His wife and her son by a former marriage were also staying there with his father and mother. These were red-letter days in my calendar, alike on account of pleasant intercourse with his honoured father and himself. I threw down a little pen-portrait of Stevenson then, and fear I could hardly better it by elaboration. Here it is:—

'Not so tall, probably, as he seems at first from his *thinness*; the pose and air could not be otherwise described than as distinguished. Head of fine type, carried well on the shoulders, and in walking with the impression of being a little thrown back; long brown hair falling from under a broadish-brimmed Spanish form of soft felt hat, Rembrandtesque; loose kind of Inverness cape when walking, and invariable velvet jacket when inside the house. Face sensitive, full of expression, longish—especially when seen in profile; features a little irregular; brow high and broad. A hint of vagary, and just a hint in the expression, qualified by the eyes, frank and clear, but piercing, yet rest clearly on you with a kind of gentle radiance and

animation as he speaks. Romance, if with a *soupçon* of whimsicality, is marked on him—sometimes he has a look as of the Ancient Mariner, and would fix you with his glittering eye, as he points his sentences with a nervous movement of his thin, white forefinger, even when it holds the incessant cigarette. Faint suggestion of a hare-brained sentimental trace on his countenance, though controlled by Scotch sense and shrewdness. A favourite and characteristic attitude with him was to put his foot on a chair or stool and rest his elbow on his knee with his chin on his hand, as he listened; and to sit, or rather half sit, half lean, on the corner of a table or desk, one of his legs swinging freely, and when anything that tickled was said, he would laugh in the heartiest manner, despite, the risk of exciting his cough, which then much troubled him.'

And then the picture-gallery! This was the room devoted to Sam Lloyd Osbourne, his stepson, where we wrote and drew and painted—its walls covered with the most extravagant and grotesquely funny bits of work. On first entering it, I was putting some constraint on myself to restrain a laugh, when Stevenson, with his usual quickness, noting this, said, with a sly wink and a gentle dig in the ribs—'It 's laugh and be thankful here.' On Lloyd's account, simple engraving materials, types, and a printing-press had been procured, and books of the oddest character were produced—all the family having more or less a hand in them. It was Stevenson's delight to work for hours together here with Lloyd, becoming a boy himself for the nonce. He drew and coloured a map, which he called 'Treasure Island,' and out of this grew the famous story. He had written the greater half of it when I went; and a chapter or so was read in the family circle every day, his father becoming deeply interested in it.

Delightfully suggestive and highly enjoyable were the meetings in the little drawing-room after dinner, when the contrasted traits of father and son came fully into play, when Louis would sometimes draw out a new view of things by bold half-paradoxical assertion, or compel advance on the point from a new quarter by a question casuistically couched, or reveal his own latent conviction finally by a few sentences as neatly-rounded as though they had been written, while he rose and gently

moved about as his habit was in the course of these more extended remarks. The greatest treat of all was the reading of 'The Sea-Cook.' It is one thing to read the printed page; it was quite another to hear Stevenson as he stood reading it aloud, with his hand stretched out, and his body gently swaying as a kind of rhythmical commentary. Mr. Stevenson, in his article in 'My First Book,' has told the whole story; how I carried off with me the first half of it and showed it to my friend Mr. James Henderson, who also was much taken with it, and published it in *Young Folks*.

In his letter to the *Academy*, Dr. Japp adds:

I had no connection whatever with Mr. James Henderson, whom I knew as coming from my own district in Scotland. I took the story to him—very proud, I confess, to be able to tell him that I had brought him 'a work of genius.' . . . Almost all the story passed through my hands to Mr. Henderson, who was never introduced to Stevenson by me in any formal sense; but getting, of course, into correspondence with Mr. Henderson about proofs, R. L. S. naturally called to see him early in the following summer as he passed through London to Bournemouth; when, on special terms offered by Mr. Henderson, he agreed to write 'The Black Arrow.' . . . Mr. Leighton, therefore, is quite wrong in his statement that Mr. Henderson offered to take a story from the young Scotsman, 'and gave him papers indicating the kind of story he wanted.' 'Treasure Island' was written absolutely for the sake of writing it, and in conformity with the map which R. L. S. had elaborately drawn and coloured in sympathetic competition with his clever stepson, as he himself tells in the *Idler* article; so that the statement that he found and adopted many incidents from 'Billy Bo's'n' is thus wholly met and disposed of. The alterations on the final book-form of 'Treasure Island' were really slight.

Mr. James Henderson wrote to the *Academy* of March 17, 1900, to endorse Dr. Japp's version of the transaction, 'as a correct statement of his connection with the original publication of "Treasure Island."' He also said:

Before the story commenced (October 1, 1881) in *Young Folks*,

Stevenson called on me, bringing the corrected proofs of the opening chapters, and it was at that interview—my first with him—I expressed my dislike to the title, 'The Sea Cook,' and suggested 'Treasure Island' (the name of the map), which he readily agreed to. The latter part of the story was written at Davos, Switzerland.

Mr. Edmund Gosse was one of the few friends who visited Stevenson at Braemar. In the chapter of personal memories in 'Critical Kit-Kats,' already quoted, he writes:

Mr. Gosse's Memory of Braemar.

To the Cottage, therefore, . . . I proceeded in the most violent storm of hail and rain that even Aberdeenshire can produce in August, and found Louis as frail as a ghost, indeed, but better than I expected. He had adopted a trick of stretching his thin limbs over the back of a wicker sofa, which gave him an extraordinary resemblance to that quaint insect, the praying mantis; but it was a mercy to find him out of bed at all. Among the many attractions of the Cottage, the presence of Mr. Thomas Stevenson—Louis's father—must not be omitted. He was then a singularly charming and vigorous personality, indignantly hovering at the borders of old age ('Sixty-three, sir, this year; and, deuce take it! am I to be called "an old gentleman" by a cab-driver in the streets of Aberdeen?') and, to my gratitude and delight, my companion in long morning walks. The detestable weather presently brought all the other members of the household to their beds, and Louis in particular became a wreck. However, it was a wreck that floated every day at nightfall; for at the worst he was able to come down stairs to dinner and spend the evening with us.

We passed the days with regularity. After breakfast I went to Louis's bedroom, where he sat up in bed, with dark, flashing eyes and ruffled hair, and we played chess on the coverlid. Not a word passed, for he was strictly forbidden to speak in the early part of the day. As soon as he felt tired—often in the middle of a game—he would rap with peremptory knuckles on the board as a signal to stop, and then Mrs. Stevenson or I

would arrange his writing materials on the bed. Then I would see no more of him till dinner-time, when he would appear, smiling and voluble, the horrid bar of speechlessness having been let down. Then every night, after dinner, he would read us what he had written during the day. I find in a note to my wife, dated October 3, 1881: 'Louis has been writing, all the time I have been here, a novel of pirates and hidden treasure, in the highest degree exciting. He reads it to us every night, chapter by chapter.' This, of course, was 'Treasure Island,' about the composition of which, long afterward, in Samoa, he wrote an account in some parts of which I think that his memory played him false. I look back to no keener intellectual pleasure than those cold nights at Braemar, with the sleet howling outside, and Louis reading his budding romance by the lamp-light, emphasising the purpler passages with lifted voice and gesticulating finger.

V

WORK AND PLAY AT DAVOS AND HYÈRES

Stevenson, accompanied by his wife and stepson, left California in July 1880, *and arrived on* 17*th August at Liverpool, where they were met by Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Stevenson and Mr. Sidney Colvin. Stevenson was in very poor health as the result of his rough life in California, and in October had to hasten to Davos Platz for the winter, where his little party remained at the Hotel Belvedere until April* 1881. *June and July were spent at Pitlochry in Perthshire, and, as we have seen, the two following months at Braemar. They were back at Davos by October* 18*th, hiring a chalet for the winter. In May of the next year they returned to Edinburgh, and paid visits to different Scottish resorts during the summer, but in October they had taken a country house five miles from Marseilles—an unlucky move as it turned out—and by March of* 1883 *were settled in a villa of their own—La Solitude—at Hyères. They returned to England on the* 1*st of July* 1884.

'Stevenson among the Philistines' was the happy title which Mr. Harold Vallings gave to an article published in *Temple Bar*, February 1901, describing his meeting with Stevenson during a visit to Davos. The greater part of Mr. Vallings's paper is here reproduced:

One winter's night, some twenty years ago, the diligence, which in those days used to change its wheels for runners at Klosters, brought us through pitch darkness and a blinding snowstorm to the doors of the Belvedere Hotel at Davos. That same night, as it chanced, a small function took place in the hotel: to wit, the presentation of a birthday gift by two little children to a certain Mrs. Stevenson.

'Among the Philistines' at Davos.

Who was this Mrs. Stevenson? To that inquiry the Philistines made answer: 'She is the wife of a Mr. Stevenson, who has written something or other.'

The now famous Robert Louis Stevenson was then, it will be seen, simply 'a Mr. Stevenson.' . . . How did he impress us, the simple Philistines among whom he was sojourning for a space?

I believe he struck us, to begin with—for it is as well to confess one's sins openly and at once—as a rather odd, exotic, theatrical kind of man; a man framed somewhat on the model of one of Du Maurier's æsthetes. His personality had a tinge of that picturesqueness and Bohemianism which seldom fail to sharply impinge upon the prejudices of a true-born Briton. It is possible, too, that even his un-British courtesy of manner may have caused some misgivings. A want of bluntness on the part of one who addresses us for the first time, if he speaks our own tongue, is apt to cause qualms; a tendency to put any suavity into the curt commonplaces that we bark out half resentfully at each other, with a view to promoting an acquaintanceship, is to many of us an alarming symptom. . . .

One knew at once that he was, in Davosian parlance, 'lungy' —more 'lungy' even than the majority; but, though so obviously a member of the crock-company, he would, whenever he had an ounce of strength to spare, insist upon a place with the robust brigade. The latter were doing their tobogganing, the season being already far advanced, in the early morning, down slopes perfected by the action of a hard night-frost upon the sun-thaw of the previous day, and with them, often enough, went Stevenson—to the detriment of his feeble health, I fear, for I have a most vivid recollection of a first view of him homeward-bound from one of these before-breakfast expeditions. He was

dragging himself wearily along, towing a toboggan at his heels, his narrow hunched-up figure cut clear against the surpassing brilliance of the white Davosian world. With that pathetic, half-broken figure making so dominant a note in one's recollection, one marvels indeed at the fortitude that made possible his later achievements.

Through the closing weeks of that winter season it was my hap, through sheer good luck, fostered in some measure by a nascent enthusiasm for Art—to foregather pretty frequently with the courageous invalid, and only once do I remember his uttering a despondent word. 'I can't work,' he said to me one day. 'Yet now that I've fallen sick I've lost all my capacity for idleness.'

That one brief plaint of a chained genius has echoed long and sadly in one's memory.

The man was an artist to the marrow; it is a satisfaction to know that one appreciated so much at least at the first touch. His outlook all round was that of an artist, an ingrained Bohemian.

As he sat on the verandah of a morning in the sunshine of early March, with Hamley's 'Operations of War,' his study of the moment, on his knees, he would talk paint-and-canvas to one's heart's content; commenting vividly upon his Bohemian experiences in France, touching regretfully more than once upon that idyllic barge excursion which he had planned—abortively, as it turned out—in conjunction with half a dozen ardent brothers of the brush. Upon art questions, as upon any other, he was a delightful opponent; always keenly enthusiastic, always hotly eloquent, yet unfailingly tolerant and good-tempered. Between the friendly wrangles, the jargonings and anecdotes, he would stop to flatter a mere youngster, deprived by Fate of a beloved profession, by asking for his eminent judgment upon one of Hamley's maps or some technical point in the text.

He was reading 'Our Mutual Friend' at this time, and here again the core of genuine modesty that underlay his superficial vanities and apparent posings, was clearly evidenced. By misreading, as I ventured to assert, certain passages in the relations between Bella Wilfer and the Boffins, he had been led to inveigh unjustly against the author; but in this, as in all cases he

proved himself the pleasantest of 'opposites'; ending by re-reading the controverted portion of the book and frankly acknowledging the error of his first interpretation. He admitted, too, the excellence of the riverside scenes in 'Our Mutual Friend,' though on the whole he was certainly severe on Dickens.

Esther Summerson was a pet aversion of his, and he scoffed most fervently at the Cheeryble brothers, as at other figures especially redolent of Dickensian sentiment.

Failing the hotel verandah, one could often chance upon Stevenson in the billiard-room, though not often with a cue in his hand. Once only do I remember seeing him play a game, and a truly remarkable performance it was. He played with all the fire and dramatic intensity that he was apt to put into things. The balls flew wildly about, on or off the table as the case might be; but seldom indeed even threatened a pocket or got within a hand's-breadth of a cannon. 'What a fine thing a game of billiards is,' he remarked to the astonished on-lookers,—'once a year or so!'

But the after-dinner hour when the menkind got together in that same room was the right one for Stevenson. A crowd would always kindle him; and one man in particular, whom I will call the Professor, had an especial knack of stirring his mettle.

The Professor was jovial, loud-voiced, and as vehement as Stevenson himself. The rallies between those two were full of life and entertainment. On a certain evening, I remember, the Professor, with one hand clutching his long straw-coloured beard, was holding forth in his violent knock-me-down fashion upon the subject of Englishwomen.

'I don't care a rap for them,' he ejaculated. 'They are a poor, tame-spirited lot, not worth conquering. Your milk-and-water Englishwoman falls in love with you before you've had time to say ten words to her,' and so on and so forth. 'Now German women,' he continued, after thus demolishing those of his own country, 'are very different——'

'What!' cried Stevenson, with a theatrical outfling of both hands. 'Do you talk of German women? I tell you, this neck is wet with the tears of German women!'

'Well, all I can say is,' the Professor grunted sulkily, 'I haven't found them like that myself.'

'Haven't you?' shouted Stevenson, whose opponent was far from being a beauty-man. 'Then, by Jupiter Ammon, it only shows how heavily handicapped you are in the race!' And with that he fell back into a corner, and clasping his lean body in both arms literally hugged himself; the Professor meanwhile glaring sullenly at him through a mist of unparliamentary monosyllables. . . .

On one occasion during those weeks at the Belvedere, Stevenson played a part in which, to my deep regret, I missed seeing him. He read, at an entertainment given in the hotel drawing-room for the amusement of the invalids, Tennyson's 'Lucknow.' His reading did not greatly impress, so far as I could gather, the bulk of his audience. 'Too theatrical,' 'rather stagey,' those were the criticisms offered to the inquirer by the average Philistine. Perhaps they were sound, perhaps he had the temperament of a reciter rather than that of a reader, and was a trifle too impassioned and histrionic for the sober-minded British matron; but—but one would have liked to judge for oneself.

'Robert Louis Stevenson, Illustrator.'

The winter number of the *Studio* for 1896 was especially interesting to Stevenson collectors, by reason of the previously unpublished paper from the pen of R. L. S. on Le Monastier, which had been intended for the introductory chapter to 'Travels with a Donkey.' It was printed in the *Studio* under the title of 'A Mountain Town in France,' and along with this was given a set of plates reproduced in the same size as the originals from lead-pencil drawings made by Stevenson in the neighbourhood of Le Monastier. Concerning these sketches and also the well-known series of woodcuts executed by R. L. S. for family amusement at Davos Platz, and printed on the toy press of his stepson, Lloyd Osbourne, Mr. Joseph Pennell contributed to the same issue of the *Studio* a note on 'Robert Louis

Stevenson, Illustrator.' From Mr. Pennell's entertaining paper the following selections are taken:

There have been in the past authors who wished to be illustrators. There was Thackeray, for example, and Victor Hugo and Rossetti; the first a very commonplace draughtsman, who imagined that he was very distinguished; the second a distinguished draughtsman who never bothered, save for his own pleasure, about this form of expression; and the third, both a great writer and a great illustrator. To-day, as must be well known, there are authors who are illustrators, and illustrators who are authors. Thackeray, like most authors who cannot draw but think they can, took himself seriously as an artist. But this is a crime of which Stevenson could not have been guilty. Thackeray, in the end, despite his own ambition, was well illustrated by Fred Walker. But, though we have now a magnificent edition of Stevenson—that is, magnificent so far as type and paper and binding go—he stills remains, curiously enough, his own most amusing illustrator. No modern author probably gives so fine an opportunity for striking illustration, and yet none, it seems to me, has been so neglected in this respect. Mr. Walter Crane designed frontispieces for 'In the Cevennes' and 'An Inland Voyage.' Mr. William Hole has produced many drawings and etchings for different Stevenson books. But far the most sympathetic illustrations to Stevenson, from my point of view, were made by Mr. Metcalf for 'The Wrecker,' while others were done by Mr. Hartrick for 'The Body-Snatcher,' and Mr. A. W. Henley for the articles on Fontainebleau. Stevenson's own preferences were for work of a very different sort, and this is all the more strange because, in his life at Barbizon and Paris, he had associated with many of the most distinguished artists of the century. Yet I think it would be hard to find that they had had any apparent influence upon him. I remember on one occasion he published letters in praise of certain illustrations that had appeared in one of his stories, but, with the best will in the world, I have to admit myself incapable of sharing his admiration. Indeed, one might imagine that Stevenson did not understand, or possibly care for, graphic art in the least, if it were not for the little books, from which several

of the illustrations in this article are taken, as well as the original drawings here reproduced from a sketch-book which he carried with him to the Cevennes. These prove most decidedly that he had a great interest and delight in a certain form of art, and that he got an enormous amount of fun and amusement out of it. Thank Heaven, for him it was not serious, nor pompous, nor ponderous; not self-conscious nor precious. It was like all his work, gay and bright, full of life and go, and honest. . . .

All of Stevenson's works are supposed to have been published in every possible form, from the penny print to the tall paper copy. But, though it may come somewhat as a surprise to collectors of Stevenson, there is a whole series of books which have been issued in but one edition, and even the British Museum has only two of them. . . .

This series of books, so far as I have been able to find out, consists of the following: 'Not I and other Poems,' by Robert Louis Stevenson, announced by the author, with distinguished modesty, to be a 'volume of enchanting poetry.' There are no illustrations to this. 'Moral Emblems': the First Series, which, the author says, 'has only to be seen to be admired'; and the Second Collection, of which I own the poster reproduced [in the *Studio*]. The book was published in two forms as an '*edition de luxe*, tall paper, extra fine,' and to this edition I imagine my copy belongs; and in a 'popular edition for the million, small paper, cuts slightly worn, a great bargain.' Was there ever such an honest publisher? These were issued about 1881 from the press, not so well known as it will be, of S. L. Osbourne and Co., Davos Platz, Switzerland, and were to be obtained from the 'publishers and all respectable booksellers.' Later on a third volume appeared: 'The Graver and the Pen, or Scenes from Nature with appropriate Verses,' illustrated by the author of 'Not I,' 'Moral Emblems,' 'Treasure Island,' etc. The printing office had by this time been moved to Edinburgh and established at No. 17 Heriot Row, and the poster reproduced . . . announces the volume with no uncertain voice, while the title-page explains, 'it was only by the kindness of Mr. Crerar of Kingussie that we are able to issue this little book, having allowed us to print it with his own press when ours was broken.' But either the printer or the press had been so much

improved that the typographical results in this volume are not so astonishing or amusing. 'The Blue Scalper,' by Stevenson, is also advertised, but I have never seen a copy of it. There is another volume by Mr. Osbourne, 'The Black Canyon.' A copy of this, I think, is in the possession of Mr. Gosse, who, by the way, was good enough to give me the volumes which I own. There are also, belonging to Mr. C. Baxter, some prints, apparently for an unpublished work, 'The Pirate and the Apothecary,' three designs—'three scenes' they are called—and an historical composition, 'Lord Nelson and the Tar,' reproduced . . . without any superfluity of text. The books were all written by Stevenson and Lloyd Osbourne, illustrated mainly by Stevenson, and engraved, it is announced in one of them, by the whole family. There is a charming conclusiveness in Stevenson's printed descriptions of the making of the volumes which will prevent any wild discussion by future bibliographers. For example, he says in 'Not I':

'The printer and the bard
In pressless Davos pray
Their sixpenny reward.

The pamphlet here presented
Was planned and printed by
A printer unindented,
A bard whom all decry.

The author and the printer,
With various kinds of skill,
Concocted it in Winter
In Davos on the Hill.

They burned the nightly taper,
But now the work is ripe;
Observe the costly paper,
Remark the perfect type.'

The work was begun in February and finished in October 1881, and, with great appropriateness, is dedicated to R. and R. Clark by S. L. Osbourne, the printer. The volume ends with an apology for

The smallness of the page
And of the printer.

Touching the lead-pencil drawings first mentioned, Mr. Pennell writes:

These original sketches are taken from a little book which he carried with him in the memorable trip 'In the Cevennes with a Donkey.' It will not be forgotten that, on that tramp, when he reached the convent of our Lady of the Snows and asked for shelter, he described himself as 'a literary man who drew landscapes.' And he could draw landscapes. One has only to look at this sketch-book, or at some of the backgrounds in the little engravings, to see that he was a close and intelligent observer of Nature, and that he knew how to record the results of his observations with a pencil. And more than this, he must have known what was going on in illustration about him. To turn up the illustrated magazines and books of that date is to find that there was a fashion for putting mourning borders around every drawing; and this Stevenson not only adopted, but carried to excess. However, funny as are the drawings, irresistibly funny as are the verses, primitive as is the printing, and humorous as is the incessant use of the two solitary ornaments which the firm seem to have possessed, one cannot escape from the fact that Stevenson had a wonderful, though untrained, eye for form. Every line that he puts down, that he cuts, especially, is full of meaning and of character.

On the British Museum acquiring a copy of a rare pamphlet containing testimonials in favour of Stevenson as candidate for the Chair of History at Edinburgh University, the *Daily News* published the following article on this episode of his career:

As a Professorial Candidate.

Very few readers of the brilliant story-teller have, we venture to affirm, ever associated his name with any kind of official position, and least of all with such a position as that of a professorial chair in a university. He does, indeed, appear actually to have held one office in the course of his curiously chequered and romantic career, and only one. He was for a time secretary to Professor F. Jenkin, when he was one of the jurors at the Paris Exhibition. Whether there is anything significant in the fact we do

not know, but Professor Jenkin was not one of those who gave the young man a testimonial. There were fourteen of his friends who did, and Stevenson had their testimonials privately printed in the form of the 8vo pamphlet now reckoned among the carefully guarded treasures of the British Museum.

These testimonials are dated 1881. The candidate was born in 1850. He was therefore about thirty-one years of age, and though he had been writing on and off ever since his boyhood, he had acquired little popularity. As the testimonials show, there were many who knew his work and knew him, and who had a very high appreciation of his powers. They recognised the subtlety of his fancy and the quaintness of his imagination and the lucidity and brilliancy of his style. They foresaw that he was destined to be famous, some of them, but as yet his genius had attracted no very general attention, and he had never had an income from his writing of more than about £300 a year, and a great part of his time, probably a great deal less. His income, small as it was, was in the last degree precarious, and on the title-page of his pamphlet is a brief intimation that is more pathetic than it appears—

'As Mr. Stevenson is at present on the Continent and cannot possibly meet with the electors, he has considered it advisable to submit the accompanying testimonials for their perusal.'

The fact appears to have been that poor Stevenson's health, which was even more precarious than his income, had broken down once more, and he had to hurry off for dear life, leaving behind him this little budget of praise which it must, one would think, have been rather a trying ordeal for one of his sensitiveness to have to get together and print and despatch, though Stevenson must have been more than human if he was not a little exalted by some of the flattering things said of him.

The first of these 'Testimonials in favour of Robert Louis Stevenson, Advocate,' is from Mr. [now Sir] Leslie Stephen. 'I have been,' says the author of a 'History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century,' 'familiar with Mr. Robert Louis Stevenson's writings for several years. Some of them have appeared in the *Cornhill Magazine*, of which I am editor.' Very remarkable literary talent, is Mr. Stephen's testimony, and he adds—'I know of no writer of Mr. Stevenson's standing

of whose future career I entertain greater expectations.' All his friends seemed confident about one thing, and that is, that whatever else the candidate might or might not do, he would certainly make his history interesting. 'Although,' says witness number one, 'I have not had any opportunity of forming a judgment of Mr. Stevenson's more specific qualifications for a Chair of History, I know that he has paid special attention to the history of Scotland; and from all that I have seen of him, I should think him admirably qualified to command the attention and respect of students, and to convey knowledge in the most interesting form.'

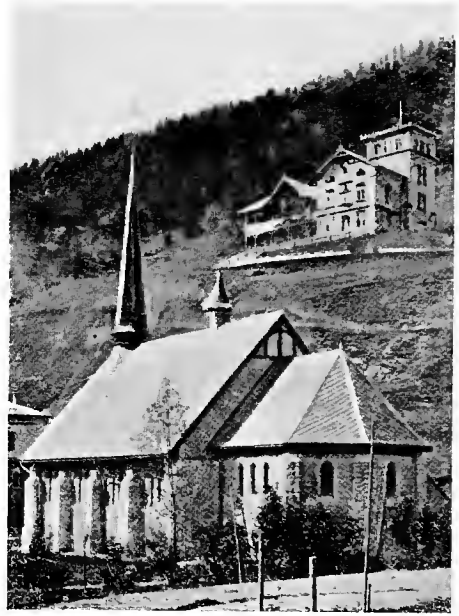
On this point of fitness for the specific post, Mr. Meiklejohn, Professor of the Theory, Practice, and History of Education, of St. Andrews, writes confidently. 'I believe,' he says, 'that Mr. Stevenson would do the work of that chair with real success. He possesses in a quite rare degree the most needful qualifications for a historian—a keen and true insight into the life of man, and a strong sympathy with all shapes and forms of it. Then he is both widely and deeply read in literature, and I am quite sure that he, more than any man I know of in Scotland, would make the past of our Scottish history live again, and be quickeningly present in our present life.'

Another St. Andrews professor, Dr. Lewis Campbell, Professor of Greek, thought the candidate admirably qualified, and believed he would do good work and adorn the office—

'His knowledge of the history of some periods, especially of Scottish history, is intimate and minute, and this, combined with his remarkable powers of imagination and expression, would enable him to kindle enthusiasm amongst the students, and incite them to investigation. His amiable facility of style must communicate grace and power to any subject which he handles with seriousness.'

Mr. Edmund Gosse, in a letter addressed to Stevenson, says: —'I have always considered that the retrospect and allusions to history which you have introduced into your books were among the most powerful of their attractions'; and Mr. John Addington Symonds speaks of him as having the temperament of an artist who cannot acquiesce in work that falls below his own standard. Mr. Sidney Colvin, Slade Professor of Fine Art

CHALET "LA SOLITUDE," HYÈRES
Where Stevenson lived from March 1883 to July 1884



STEVENSON'S CHALET, "AM STEIN"
On the hill above the English Chapel, Davos Platz

[*To face page* 72

at Cambridge, and now at the head of the Department of Prints and Drawings of the British Museum, says:—'By temperament and character you are made to influence and attract growing minds.' Though at that time known only as a brilliant essayist and a writer of tales and travels, Mr. Colvin nevertheless testifies to the 'solidity of your studies, and the luminousness of your insight in history; especially in the history of society and institutions.' Mr. Andrew Lang calls him the most ingenious and refined writer of his generation, and understands that he has for some years been occupied with the studies of the religious, social, and political history of Scotland and of the Highlands.

The Rev. Professor Babington, the Rev. Dr. Cameron, Professor Sellar, Dr. Whyte, Professor Baynes, Mr. P. G. Hamerton, and Vice-Chancellor Tulloch, all sing the candidate's praises in strains that might well have made a modest man pass on the testimonial and run away, even if nothing else had prompted his going. And it is noticeable that several of them speak of his 'talent for taking infinite pains,' his 'scrupulous industry,' 'incessant industry,' and so on—a thing that is not often associated with genius.

Mr. Edmund Gosse points out (*Century*, July 1895) in 'Critical Kit-Kats' that very little has been written about Stevenson's residence at Hyères in 1883. He writes:

Bright Days at 'La Solitude.'

I am inclined to dwell in some fulness on the year he spent at Hyères, because, curiously enough, it was not so much as mentioned by any of the writers of obituary notices at the time of Stevenson's death. It takes, nevertheless, a prominent place in his life's history, for his removal thither marked a sudden and brilliant, though only temporary, revival in his health and spirits. Some of his best work, too, was written at Hyères, and one might say that fame first found him in this warm corner of Southern France.

The house at Hyères was called 'La Solitude.' It stood in a paradise of roses and aloes, fig-marigolds and olives. It had delectable and even, so Louis declared, 'sub-celestial' views over a plain bounded by 'certain mountains as graceful as Apollo, as severe as Zeus'; and at first the hot mistral, which blew, and burned where it blew, seemed the only drawback. Not

a few of the best poems in the 'Underwoods' reflect the ecstasy of convalescence under the skies and perfumes of La Solitude. By the summer Louis could report 'good health of a radiant order.' It was while he was at Hyères that Stevenson first directly addressed an American audience, and I may record that, in September 1883, he told me to 'beg Gilder your prettiest for a gentleman in pecuniary sloughs.' Mr. Gilder was quite alive to the importance of securing such a contributor, although when the Amateur Emigrant had entered the office of the *Century Magazine* in 1879 he had been very civilly but coldly shown the door. (I must be allowed to tease my good friends in Union Square by recording that fact!) Mr. Gilder asked for fiction, but received instead 'The Silverado Squatters,' which duly appeared in the magazine.

It was also arranged that Stevenson should make an ascent of the Rhone for the *Century*, and Mr. Joseph Pennell was to accompany him to make sketches for the magazine. But Stevenson's health failed again: the sudden death of a very dear old friend was a painful shock to him, and the winter of that year was not propitious. Abruptly, however, in January 1884, another crisis came. He went to Nice, where he was thought to be dying. He saw no letters; all his business was kindly taken charge of by Mr. Henley; and again, for a long time, he passed beneath the penumbra of steady languor and infirmity. When it is known how constantly he suffered, how brief and flickering were the intervals of comparative health, it cannot but add to the impression of his radiant fortitude through all these trials, and of his persistent employment of all his lucid moments. It was pitiful, and yet at the same time very inspiriting, to see a creature so feeble and so ill-equipped for the struggle bear himself so smilingly and so manfully through all his afflictions. There can be no doubt, however, that this latest breakdown vitally affected his spirits. He was never, after this, quite the gay child of genius that he had previously been. Something of a graver cast became natural to his thoughts; he had seen Death in the cave. And now for the first time we traced a new note in his writings—the note of 'Pulvis et Umbra.'

VI

LAST YEARS IN ENGLAND

The remaining three years of Stevenson's life in England were passed at Bournemouth, first in lodgings, and from January 1885 *in a house presented by Thomas Stevenson as a gift to his daughter-in-law. The name of this house was altered to Skerryvore, in commemoration of Alan Stevenson's great achievement in lighthouse-building.*

Mr. William Archer contributed to the *Critic* (New York), November 5, 1887, a most intimate sketch of Stevenson's home-life. 'Robert Louis Stevenson at Skerryvore' was the title of the article, which occupied two and a half pages of the *Critic*, and was written on the lines of 'Celebrities at Home,' that popular feature of the *World*. The article is of peculiar interest, since it gives us a peep at the domestic life of the novelist during the last days of his life in England, for he had bidden farewell to all his old friends and the old country on August 22nd, or more than two months before Mr. Archer's article was published. Mr. Archer begins with an impression of Bournemouth as 'a colony of health hunters,' a home of 'British invalidism and British Philistinism.' Skerryvore is described as standing on the brink of Alum Chine, or gully, and as being 'an unpretending two-story house, its yellow brick peeping through rich growths of ivy, and its blue slate roof cooed over by the pigeons of which the poet has sung':

Home-Life at Bournemouth.

Though only a few paces from the public road, it is thoroughly secluded. Its front faces southward (away from the road), and overlooks a lawn and

> 'Linnet-haunted garden-ground,
> Where still the esculents abound.'

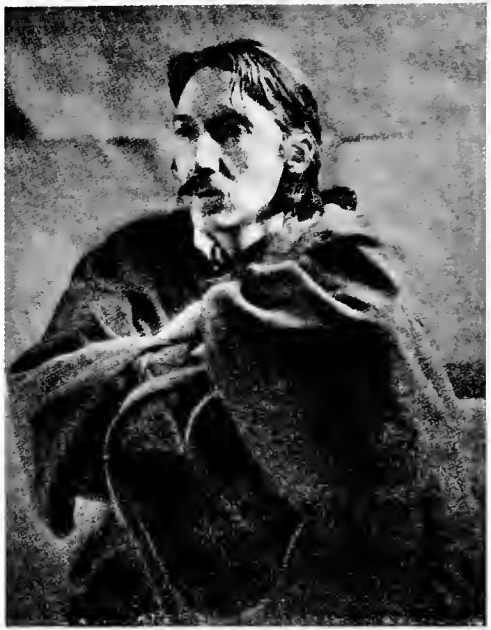
The 'demesne' extends over the edge, and almost to the bottom, of the Chine; and here amid laurel and rhododendron, broom and gorse, the garden merges into a network of paths and stairways, with tempting seats and unexpected arbours at every turn. This seductive little labyrinth is of Mrs. Stevenson's own designing. She makes the whole garden her special charge and delight, but this particular corner of it

> 'Is as a kingdom conquered, where to reign.

Mr. Archer mentions, that at the time of his visit several panels of a series in the entrance-hall had been painted by artist friends of R. L. S., and 'many spaces still await contributions.' The following picture of the dining-room is precise:

We are in the 'blue room' known to readers of 'Underwoods,' where hangs the Venetian mirror presented to the poet by that 'Prince of Men, Henry James.' It is an ordinary English dining-room of post-morrisian yet not ultra-æsthetic decoration, the work of the previous tenant, the Sheraton furniture, however, being introduced by the present owner. Over the fireplace is an engraving of Turner's 'Bell Rock Lighthouse,' built by Mr. Stevenson's grandfather. Another wall is adorned by two of Piranesi's great Roman etchings, between which hangs the conventional portrait of Shelley (a gift from his son, Sir Percy Shelley, who lives near Bournemouth), with under it a small portrait of Mary Wollstonecraft. A small armoury of buccaneering weapons is grouped under the Venetian mirror, some of which were presented to Mr. Stevenson as having belonged to Pew and Long John Silver—for the blind pirate of 'Treasure Island,' and he of the wooden leg, are (more or less) historic personages. Photographs of Mr. Sidney Colvin and of the late Sir Henry

MRS R. L. STEVENSON



R. L. STEVENSON
From a Photograph by Sir Percy Shelley

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Taylor, author of 'Philip van Artevelde,' an etching by Mr. Will H. Low, the American artist; a water-colour from the New Forest, by Mr. A. W. Henley; and a few specimens of blue china, in which Mr. Stevenson greatly delights, complete the decoration of the room.

Of the occupants of the 'blue room' Mr. Archer gives us this graphic sketch:

He now sits at the foot of the table rolling a limp cigarette in his long, limp fingers, and talking eagerly all the while, with just enough trace of Scottish intonation to remind one that he is the author of 'Thrawn Janet' and the creator of Alan Breck Stewart. He has still the air and manner of a young man, for illness has neither tamed his mind nor aged his body. It has left its mark, however, in the pallor of his long oval face, with its wide-set eyes, straight nose, and thin-lipped sensitive mouth, scarcely shaded by a light moustache, the jest and scorn of his more ribald intimates. His long dark hair straggles with an irregular wave down to his neck, a wisp of it occasionally falling over his ear, and having to be replaced with a light gesture of the hand. He is dressed in a black velvet jacket, showing at the throat the loose rolling collar of a white flannel shirt; and if it is at all cold, he has probably thrown over his shoulders an ancient maroon-coloured shawl, draped something after the fashion of a Mexican poncho. When he stands up you see he is well above the middle height, and of a naturally lithe and agile figure. He still moves with freedom and grace, but the stoop of his shoulders tells a tale of suffering.

Opposite to him sits Mrs. Stevenson, the tutelary genius of Skerryvore, a woman of small physical stature, but surely of heroic mould. Her features are clear-cut and delicate, but marked by unmistakable strength of character; her hair of an unglossy black, and her complexion darker than one would expect in a woman of Dutch-American race. I have heard her speak of a Moorish strain in her ancestry, whether seriously or in jest I know not. Beneath a placid though always alert and vivacious exterior, Mrs. Stevenson conceals much personal suffering and continual anxieties under which many a stronger woman

might well break down. Her personality, no less than her husband's, impresses itself potently on all who have the good fortune to be welcomed at Skerryvore.

A further 'interior' of this Bournemouth home shows us the drawing-room, which 'is stamped much more thoroughly than the dining-room with the Stevensonian individuality':

It is not encumbered with superfluous furniture, tables heaped with 'drawing-room books,' or what-nots burdened with Japaneseries. Half-way along one side of the room runs a low divan formed of a series of oak boxes covered with yellow silk cushions. Lounging chairs, mainly of light wicker-work, are scattered about, and a large oaken cabinet stands beside the door. It is surmounted by a beautiful group in plaster executed as an illustration to one of Victor Hugo's poems by the French sculptor Rodin, for whom Mr. Stevenson has the warmest admiration, having publicly defended him from the charge (if charge it can be called) of being 'the Zola of sculpture.' This group is flanked by a couple of grinning Burmese gods; and, perhaps to counteract the influence of these uncanny deities, a Catholic devotional image of ancient date stands in an opposite corner. Over the cabinet, again, hangs a beautiful 'Landscape with Horses,' by Mr. Arthur Lemon, with a photograph of the late Professor Fleeming Jenkin to the right of it and one of Mr. W. E. Henley to the left, both being, like the photograph of Mr. Colvin in the dining-room, the work of a private friend. From another wall, Mr. John E. Sargent's half-grotesque yet speaking portrait of Mr. Stevenson himself looks out at us livingly.

Mr. Archer gives us a hint of the conversation which took place during this visit. The talk seems to have begun with cats, and thence to Fleeming Jenkin and amateur acting, and so to the drama at large:

Soon the conversation flits across the Channel, and Mr. Stevenson redoubles his vivacity as he enlarges on the delightful humour of Labiche, or denounces the didactics of Dumas *fils*,

for whose literary talent, however, as shown in such a play as 'Monsieur Alphonse,' he entertains a great admiration. 'I remember,' he says, 'coming out of the Français after seeing "Le Demi-Monde." I was in a white heat of indignation—mind, at this distance of time, I admit there's a problem in the piece, but I saw none then, except a problem in brutality—and in my haste I trod on an old gentleman's toes. With that suavity of manner that so well becomes me, I turned to apologise, but at once repented me of that intention, and said (in French), "No, you are one of the *lâches* who have been applauding that play—I retract my apology." The old Frenchman laid his hand on my arm and said, with a smile that was truly heavenly in its temperance, irony, and good nature, "*Ah, monsieur, vous êtes bien jeune!*"'

But if the younger Dumas comes in for little of Mr. Stevenson's homage, the elder is the god of his idolatry. He will pace up and down the room, as in Mr. Sargent's portrait, consuming countless cigarettes, and proclaiming rapturously his delight in 'Olympe de Clèves,' 'La Dame de Montsoreau,' 'Vingt Ans Après,' and 'Le Vicomte de Bragelonne'—especially the last. Turning next to a writer who seems to be almost at the opposite pole, he will go over one by one the novels of George Meredith, bringing into relief the characteristic beauties of each. 'The Egoist' he numbers among the books which have most powerfully influenced him, and owns to having read it seven or eight times. 'Meredith read me some chapters,' he says, 'before it was published, and at last I could stand it no longer. I interrupted him, and said, "Now, Meredith, own up—you have drawn Sir Willoughby Patterne from *me*!" Meredith laughed, and said, "No, no, my dear fellow, I've taken him from all of us, but principally from myself."'

Mr. Archer's sketch is concluded with mention of a subsequent visit to Skerryvore shortly before his (Stevenson's) departure for America:

I found him one morning stretched on the study couch in dressing-gown and slippers, engaged in that terrible task, an overhauling of old papers. The floor was littered ankle-deep

with torn letters, manuscripts, and proofs. I picked up a shred of printed matter, and obtained a delightful foretaste of 'Underwoods,' then in the press. Most of our talk has faded from my memory. I remember how Stevenson startled me by expressing the opinion that Mrs. Oliphant's genius, well husbanded, might have gone further than George Eliot's—that the too industrious Scotch novelist possesses far more 'geniality' than her English sister. I remember, too, with what gusto he took down a volume of Wellington's Peninsular despatches (Wellington is one of his heroes) to give me instances of the grim humour in which the much-tried captain would now and then exhale his bitterness of spirit.

It was a pleasant hour, and grateful to the memory; yet only one out of many thousand pleasant hours for which the friends who have seen him face to face, and the friends who love him unseen, are beholden to this bright, unquenchable, indomitable spirit.

Mr. T. P. O'Connor wrote in *T. P.'s Weekly*, 14th November 1902:

Mr. C. H. E. Brookfield, in his interesting collection of stories, adds one to the many versions of the origin of 'Jekyll and Hyde.' Here is his version:

Origin of 'Jekyll and Hyde.'

'I was in his company at the moment that he conceived the germ of the idea of "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde." He was inveighing against a man with whom he had done business and with whose methods he was dissatisfied. The man's name was Samuel Creggan, or something like it. "He's a man who trades on the Samuel," Stevenson declared, in his rather finikin, musical Scots voice. "He receives you with Samuel's smile on his face; with the gesture of Samuel he invites you into a chair; with Samuel's eyes cast down in self-depreciation he tells you how well satisfied his clients have always been with his dealings; but every now and again you catch a glimpse of the Creggan peeping out like a white ferret. Creggan's the *real* man: Samuel's only superficial."'

I don't know whether Mr. Brookfield uses the name of

Creggan as a veil for the identity of the man who really suggested his 'mot' to Stevenson; as a matter of fact, it was said about the late Kegan Paul. The story has recently been told by Mr. Wilfrid Meynell in a notice he wrote of the dead publisher. Kegan Paul had been Stevenson's first publisher; indeed, had been among the very first to recognise the genius of the then unknown writer. But the books had not paid particularly, and Stevenson was dissatisfied, probably without reason; no author ever is satisfied with a publisher. Stevenson, when he had his next book ready, went with a letter of introduction from Walter Besant to another firm—Chatto and Windus. 'The early dissolution of the partnership,' writes Mr. Meynell, 'between the two as publisher and author was a little pang which had its instant expression.' 'Oh, yes,' said R. L. S., 'Kegan is an excellent fellow, but Paul is a publisher.' 'I have always,' adds Mr. Meynell, 'looked upon that distinction between the dual personality of the man and the publisher as the germ of Jekyll and Hyde.'[1]

Mr. Edmund Gosse writes of his last meeting with R. L. S. as follows in 'Critical Kit-Kats':

Farewell to England.

The last time I had the happiness of seeing Stevenson was on Sunday, August 21, 1887. He had been brought up from Bournemouth the day before in a wretched condition of health, and was lodged in a private hotel in Finsbury Circus, in the City, ready to be easily moved to a steamer in the Thames on the morrow. I was warned, in a note, of his passage through town, and of the uncertainty whether he could be seen. On the chance, I went over early on the 21st, and, very happily for me, he had had a fair night, and could see me for an hour or two. No one else but Mrs. Stevenson was with him. His position was one which might have daunted any man's spirit, doomed to exile, in miserable health, starting vaguely across the Atlantic, with all his domestic interests rooted up, and with no notion where, or if at all, they should be replanted. If ever a man of imagination could be excused for repining, it was now.

[1] See Stevenson's own account, page 85.

But Louis showed no white feather. He was radiantly humorous and romantic. It was church time, and there was some talk of my witnessing his will, which I could not do, because there could be found no other reputable witness, the whole crew of the hotel being at church. This set Louis off on a splendid dream of romance. 'This,' he said, 'is the way in which our valuable city hotels—packed, doubtless, with rich objects of jewellery—are deserted on a Sunday morning. Some bold piratical fellow, defying the spirit of Sabbatarianism, might make a handsome revenue by sacking the derelict hotels between the hours of ten and twelve. One hotel a week would suffice to enable such a man to retire into private life within the space of a year. A mask might, perhaps, be worn for the mere fancy of the thing, and to terrify kitchen-maids, but no real disguise would be needful to an enterprise that would require nothing but a brave heart and a careful study of the City Postal Directory.' He spoke of the matter with so much fire and gallantry that I blushed for the youth of England and its lack of manly enterprise. No one ever could describe preposterous conduct with such a convincing air as Louis could. Common sense was positively humbled in his presence.

The only book Stevenson was anxious to take with him on the voyage was 'The Woodlanders,' by Mr. Thomas Hardy, 'which we had to scour London that Sunday afternoon to get hold of.'

VII

IN AMERICA

Stevenson's father having died on May 8, 1887, *Mrs. Thomas Stevenson was now free to accompany her son and his wife and stepson to America in his quest of health. They arrived at New York on September 7th. By the 3rd of October they were settled in winter quarters at a resort for consumptives near the shores of Saranac Lake, where they remained until the middle of April* 1888, *Stevenson busy all the time with literary work and projects. For the summer a yachting cruise was planned, and Mrs. R. L. Stevenson having gone to San Francisco, found a yacht that would suit for a trip to the South Seas. Stevenson's health was not improving; the trip was to be a last resource. The yacht Casco was chartered and fitted for the cruise. It was decided to make for the Marquesas Islands. On 28th June she was 'towed outside the Golden Gate, and headed for the south across the long swell of the Pacific. So with his household he sailed away beyond the sunset, and America, like Europe, was to see him no more.'*[1]

When Stevenson went to America in the autumn of 1887 in search of a congenial clime, his reputation, thanks mainly to 'Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde,' was already established across the Atlantic, and on debarking from the steamship *Ludgate Hill* at New York, he 'was met by a crowd of reporters, and—what was more to his taste —by his old friend Mr. Will H. Low,' says Mr. Graham

[1] The 'Life' of R. L. S., by Graham Balfour.

Balfour. Stevenson seems to have been very tractable in the hands of the interviewers. The following notes of his arrival are taken from the *Critic* of 10th September 1887:

Arrival at New York.

Mr. Robert Louis Stevenson arrived in New York on Wednesday last, intending, as we were told at the time of going to press, to proceed at once to Newport. He was accompanied by his wife. Mr. E. L. Burlingame, editor of *Scribner's Magazine*, who met him on his arrival here, was pleased to find the novelist and poet looking much better than recent reports of his severe illness had led one to expect.

A *Herald* reporter caught Mr. Stevenson at a favourable moment and subjected him to an interview, from which we glean much that is interesting.

In answer to the reporter's inquiry, 'What is your object in now visiting America?' Mr. Stevenson said: 'Simply on account of my health, which is wretched. I am suffering from catarrhal consumption, but am sanguine that my sojourn here will do much to restore me to my former self. I came round by the *Ludgate Hill* principally because I like the sea, and because I thought the long voyage would do me good. But I certainly did not expect to make the voyage with one hundred horses. These were taken on board at Havre. The company's agent at Havre was most impertinent to us, but the horses behaved themselves exceedingly well. And I feel pleased to add that the ship's officers were particularly nice, and everything was most pleasant after we got used to the stables.'

'Where do you propose to go?'

'Well, the Lord only knows; I don't. I intend to get out of New York just as fast as I can. I like New York exceedingly. It is to me a mixture of Chelsea, Liverpool, and Paris, but I want to get away into the country.'

'There is a great difference of opinion as to what suggested your works, particularly "The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" and "Deacon Brodie"?'

'Well, this has never been properly told. On one occasion I was very hard up for money, and I felt that I had to do something. I thought and thought, and tried hard to find a subject

to write about. At night I dreamed the story, not precisely as it is written, for of course there are always stupidities in dreams, but practically it came to me as a gift, and what makes it appear more odd is that I am quite in the habit of dreaming stories. Thus, not long ago, I dreamed the story of "Olalla," which appeared in my volume "The Merry Men," and I have at the present moment two unwritten stories which I likewise dreamed. The fact is that I am so much in the habit of making stories that I go on making them while I sleep quite as hard, apparently, as when I am awake. They sometimes come to me in the form of nightmares, in so far that they make me cry out aloud. But I am never deceived by them. Even when fast asleep I know that it is I who am inventing, and when I cry out it is with gratification to know that the story is so good. So soon as I awake, and it always awakens me when I get on a good thing, I set to work and put it together.

'For instance, all I dreamed about Dr. Jekyll was that one man was being pressed into a cabinet, when he swallowed a drug and changed into another being. I awoke and said at once that I had found the missing link for which I had been looking so long, and before I again went to sleep almost every detail of the story, as it stands, was clear to me. Of course, writing it was another thing.

'"Deacon Brodie!" I certainly didn't dream that, but in the room in which I slept when a child in Edinburgh there was a cabinet—and a very pretty piece of work it was, too—from the hands of the original Deacon Brodie. When I was about nineteen years of age I wrote a sort of hugger-mugger melodrama, which lay by in my coffer until it was fished out by my friend W. E. Henley. He thought he saw something in it, and we started to work together, and after a desperate campaign we turned out the original drama of "Deacon Brodie," as performed in London, and recently, I believe, successfully in this city. We were both young men when we did that, and I think we had an idea that bad-heartedness was strength. Now the piece has been all overhauled, and although I have no idea whether it will please an audience, I don't think either Mr. Henley or I are ashamed of it. We take it now for a good, honest melodrama not so very ill done.'

This from the New York *Critic*, 17th September 1887, is curious:

Mr. Stevenson sailed for the United States with the intention of remaining here for some time—a long time, possibly. The voyage seemed to do him so much good, however, that on the way over he resolved to linger in America but a short while, and then take ship for Japan. Almost the first letter he received after landing—a letter written after he left England, but before he decided upon this change of plan—contained a reference to his proposed trip to Japan! I refer this circumstance, with all respect, to the Society for Psychical Research.

Projected Visit to Japan.

Speaking of Mr. Stevenson, I am told that the cash receipts on the opening night of 'Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde' were almost unprecedented in the history of first nights at the Madison Square. Yet the impression still prevails that literature and stage-literature have nothing in common.

'Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde,' adapted to the stage by Mr. T. R. Sullivan, with Mr. Richard Mansfield in the dual *rôle*, was produced in New York, 10th September 1887.

Under the heading, 'A Writer about whom Critics Agree,' the New York *Critic* of March 12, 1887, quoted this passage from an article by Mr. R. H. Stoddard in the New York *Mail and Express*. It is printed here as illustrating the pitch of his literary popularity at the time of his arriving in America:

If there is any writer of the time about whom the critics of England and America substantially agree, it is Mr. Robert Louis Stevenson. There is something in his work, precisely what, it is not easy to say, which engages and fixes the attention from the first page to the last, which shapes itself before the mind's eye while reading, and which refuses to be forgotten long after the book which revealed it has been closed and put away. There are two stories in the volume containing his 'New Arabian

Literary Reputation in America.

Nights,' both night adventures, the more powerful one an adventure of that scoundrel and man of genius, the poet Villon, which seared themselves into our recollection years ago, and which are as vivid there now as some of the terrible things in Shakespeare. The quality by which Mr. Stevenson is chiefly distinguished, and which differentiates his writing from the story-writing of the period, is imagination—the power of creating characters which are as real as creatures of flesh and blood, and of devising and shaping events which are as inevitable as fate. Beyond all the writers of his time, he is remarkable for clearness and accuracy of vision; he seems to see, and we believe he *does* see, all that he describes, and he makes all his readers see likewise. How he accomplishes this last feat, which is a very uncommon one, we have never been able to discover, for on returning to a scene or a chapter which has impressed us deeply, which has sent the blood tingling through our veins, or has darkened our souls with foreboding, we have always failed to detect the secret of his power. It can hardly be in his language, which is always of the simplest, nor in the feeling that he depicts, which is always natural, and often common; but it is there all the same.

From the New York *Critic*, December 17, 1887:

A Portrait at Saranac Lake.

A correspondent of the *Sun* has peeped in upon Mr. R. L. Stevenson in his Adirondack retreat. He writes: Mr. Stevenson occupies a neat cottage on the Saranac River, at a point where the settlement begins to thin out into the forest primeval. His wife, mother, and stepson, Mr. Lloyd Osbourne, are living with him. I was glad to find him looking very much the better of his stay in the Adirondacks, which he means to prolong until spring. He is able to take a walk of about half a mile a day, and exceedingly enjoys his short tramps over the snow in Canadian moccasins To those curious to know what the creator of Dr. Jekyll, Alan Breck, and John Silver looks like, let me say that he is about five feet ten in height, fair and spare; he wears his light-brown hair long and loose; his broad, high forehead is illuminated by a piercing pair of eyes at a remarkable distance apart. He has the air of an artist who has been ill, and is now well advanced toward recovery. In conversation he is most animated and

cheery, speaking with a crisp Edinburgh accent. As we talked about one thing and another, it came out that he is a strong anti-Gladstonian. Surely it is natural that the author of 'Kidnapped' should be a sound Scott-like Tory. Mr. Stevenson spoke of American authors. He likes Stockton's stories very much, and among Mark Twain's volumes prefers 'Huckleberry Finn.' Mr. Stevenson is busy on a third article in the series he is writing for *Scribner's*, and never lets a day go by without some substantial work. I asked him which of his own books he liked best. 'Kidnapped,' he promptly replied. It is probable that he may write a sequel to it. It is his practice to drop a story in the middle and take it up a month or so afterwards, with interest revived. 'Treasure Island,' his quickest piece of work, was written in that way. Mr. Stevenson excels in telling pawky Scottish stories, a faculty evidently derived from his mother.

Mrs. M. G. Van Rensselaer had only 'a scanty hour' of Stevenson in the flesh, visiting him during his illness in New York; but the impression of the meeting, as set forth in her article in the *Century Magazine* of November 1895, is graphic and enduring. Mrs. Van Rensselaer writes:

As a Picturesque Invalid in New York.

He was ill when I saw him in New York in the spring of 1888, after he had come down from the Adirondacks. He was in bed, as he often used to be for days together—so often that the beautiful portrait which, in the previous autumn, St. Gaudens had made of him, backed by his pillows and covered by his blankets, must, I fancy, seem to many American friends the Stevenson whom they knew best. He was in a dismal hotel, in the most dismal possible chamber. Even a very buoyant soul might have been pardoned if, then and there, it had declined upon inactivity and gloom. But these were not the constituents of the atmosphere I found.

There were a great many things on Stevenson's bed—things to eat and to smoke, things to write with and to read. I have seen tidier sickbeds, and also invalids more modishly attired:

this one wore over his shoulders an old red cloak with a hole for the head in the middle (a *serape*, I supposed), which, faded and spotted with ink, looked much like a schoolroom tablecloth. But the untidiness seemed a proof of his desire to make the most of each passing minute; clearly, the littering things had been brought, not in case they might be wanted, but as answers to actual and eager needs. Ill as he was, Stevenson had been reading and writing—and smoking, as St. Gaudens shows; and in fact, I call him an invalid chiefly because, as I remember him, the term has such a picturesque unfitness. His body was in evil case, but his spirit was more bright, more eager, more ardently and healthily alive than that of any other mortal.

I find myself repeating the one word 'eager.' There is none which better befits Stevenson's appearance and manner and talk. His mind seemed to quiver with perpetual hope of something that would give it a new idea to feed upon, a new fact to file away, a new experience to be tested and savoured. I could read this attitude even in the quick cordiality of his greeting. The welcome was not for me, as myself, but for the new person—for the new human being who, possessing ears and a tongue, might possibly contribute some item to the harvest of the day. . . .

I should like to relate how he pounced upon every Americanism I chanced to utter, not deriding it, but shaking it in the teeth of a pleased curiosity as a bit of treasure-trove, a new fragment of speech with an origin, a history, a utility that must be learned; and in other ways to explain what a zest he had for those myriad little interests, little occupations, discoveries, and acquisitions, which make existence a perpetual joy to a fresh and questing mind, but which most adult minds have grown too stiff and dull to value. And of course I should like to record how he spoke about his own writings, and, with even quicker pleasure, talked about those of others. But to mummify beautiful, vivid speech is to do it deep injustice, and so I will not try to reproduce his words; and if I should try to paraphrase them, I should merely blur their meaning to myself and make it clear to no one else.

Miss Jeanette L. Gilder, the well-known American critic, has given this memory of R. L. S. It is taken

from her essay, 'Stevenson—and After,' which appeared in the American *Review of Reviews*, February 1895:

An Impression by Jeanette L. Gilder.

I never saw Robert Louis Stevenson but once, but I shall not soon forget the impression made upon me by the singular charm of the man. It was on the occasion of his second, or it may have been his third, visit to the United States, and he was staying at the Victoria Hotel with his wife and stepson, Lloyd Osbourne. I was a perfect stranger to him, and I wonder now how I ever had the temerity to beard this lion in his den. My only excuse was that we had had some correspondence, and that we also had some friends in common. Two of these friends came in soon after I had shaken hands with the romancer. They were Mr. and Mrs. Will H. Low, the well-known painter and his wife. The Lows and the Stevensons were old and dear friends, and they had not seen each other in a long time. It was a delightful meeting. Such handshaking and such embracing you would not expect to see outside of France. The men threw their arms around each other's necks with all the effusion of schoolgirls, but with infinitely more depth to their emotions. It was a great time, and rejoicing was general. I did not stay very long, for though they gave me no reason to suspect that they would not like to have me spend the day, I sympathised with their reunion too sincerely to intrude myself upon the scene any longer than ordinary civility permitted.

Mr. Stevenson was arrayed then as you see him in most of his pictures, in velvet sack-coat, turned-down collar and loose tie. He was smoking the inevitable cigarette, as was his stepson also. His dress suited his face, which was not that of an ordinary man. I have seldom seen eyes further apart or more striking, as they were coal-black, or, at least, had that appearance in contrast with his pale complexion. He was as lively and full of spirits as though he had never known what it was to have an ill day. His conversation—which was entirely unbookish, as befitted the occasion—bubbled over with fun, and altogether he suggested anything rather than an invalid in the vain search for health.

Ever since that lucky day when I accidentally came across a copy of 'Travels with a Donkey,' I have been an enthusiastic

admirer of Mr. Stevenson's genius—it is certainly more than talent—but it is his smaller books that I care for most: 'Travels with a Donkey,' 'An Inland Voyage,' 'The New Arabian Nights,' and his essays. 'The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde,' of course, interested me immensely, but it is hardly a book to enjoy. I bought a copy in Liverpool at the time of its first publication, just as I was taking the steamer for New York, and read it on the trip over. I had read 'An Inland Voyage' on the trip out, and so far as enjoyment goes I confess that the latter book gave me the most of it, though I am quite ready to acknowledge all the qualities that gave the former story its great success.