

INTRODUCTION TO THE SWANSTON EDITION

by

Andrew Lang

So much has been written on R. L. Stevenson, as a boy, a man, and a man of letters, so much has been written both by himself and others, that I can hope to add nothing essential to the world's knowledge of his character and appreciation of his genius. What is essential has been said, once for all, by Sir Sidney Colvin in "Notes and Introductions" to R. L. S.'s "Letters to His Family and Friends." I can but contribute the personal views of one who knew, loved, and esteemed his junior that is already a classic; but who never was of the inner circle of his intimates. We shared, however, a common appreciation of his genius, for he was not so dull as to suppose, or so absurd as to pretend to suppose, that much of his work was not excellent. His tale "Thrawn Janet" "is good," he says in a letter, with less vigour than but with as much truth as Thackeray exclaiming "that's genius," when he describes Becky's admiration of Rawdon's treatment of Lord Steyne, in the affray in Curzon Street. About the work of other men and novelists, or poets, we were almost invariably of the same mind; we were of one mind about the great Charles Gordon. "He was filled," too, "with enthusiasm for Joan of Arc," says his biographer, "a devotion, and also a cool headed admiration, which he never lost." In a letter he quotes Byron as having said that Jeanne "was a fanatical strumpet," and he cries shame on the noble poet. He projected an essay on the Blessed Maid, which is not in "the veniable part of things lost."

Thus we were so much of the same sentiments, in so many ways, that I can hope to speak with sympathy, if not always with complete understanding, of Stevenson. Like a true Scot, he was interested in his ancestry, his heredity; regarding Robert Fergusson, the young Scottish poet, who died so young, in an asylum, as his spiritual forefather, and hoping to attach himself to a branch of the Royal Clan Alpine, the MacGregors, as the root of the Stevensons. Of Fergusson, he had, in early youth, the waywardness, the liking for taverns and tavern talk, the half-rueful appreciation of the old closes and wynds of Old Edinburgh, a touch of the recklessness and more than all the pictorial power which, in Fergusson, Burns so magnanimously admired.

But genealogical research shows that Stevenson drew nothing from the dispossessed MacGregors, a clan greatly wronged, from Robert Bruce's day, and greatly given to wronging others. Alan Breck did not like "the Gregara," apart from their courage, and in Alan's day they were not consistent walkers.

Stevenson, as far as one can learn, had no Celtic blood; none, at least, of traceable infusion: he was more purely Lowland than Sir Walter Scott. His paternal line could be traced back to a West Country Stevenson of 1675; probably a tenant farmer, who was contemporary with the Whig rising at Bothwell Bridge, with the murder of Archbishop Sharp, with Claverhouse, and Sir George Mackenzie, called "the bluidy Advocate." An earnest student of Mr. Wodrow's "History of the Sufferings," Louis did not find "James Stevenson in Nether Carsewell" among the many martyrs who live in the *Libre d'Or* of the Remnant. But he had "a Covenanting childhood;" his father, Mr. Thomas Stevenson, was loyal to the positions of John Knox (the theological positions); and, brought up in these, Louis had a taste, when the tenets of Calvin ceased to convince his reason, of what non-Covenanters endured at the hands of the godly in their day of power.

Every little Presbyterian, fifty years ago, was compelled to be familiar with the Genevan creed, as expressed in "The Shorter Catechism," but most little Presbyterians regarded that document as a necessary but unintelligible evil—the sorrow that haunted the Sabbath. I knew it by rote, Effectual Calling and all, but did not perceive that it possessed either meaning or actuality. Nobody was so

unkind as to interpret the significance of the questions and answers; but somebody did interpret them for Stevenson, or his early genius enabled him to discover what it is all about, as he told me once, and it seems that the tendency of the theology is terribly depressing. A happier though more or less theological influence on his childhood he found in the adventures and sufferings of the Covenanters. It is curious (and shows how much early education can do) that he never was a little Royalist: always his heart, like Lockhart's, which is no less strange, was with the true blue Remnant. I can remember no proof that he was fascinated by the greatness of Montrose.

As is well known, at about the age of sixteen he perverted a romance of his own making, "Hackston of Rathillet" (a fanatic of Fife), into a treatise: "The Pentland Rising, a Page of History," published in 1866. One would rather have possessed the romance.

Stevenson came from the Balfours of Pilrig, and was of gentle blood, on the spindle side. An ancestress of his mother was a granddaughter of Sir Gilbert Elliot (as a "law lord," or judge, Lord Minto), and so he could say: "I have shaken a spear in the debatable land, and shouted the slogan of the Elliots": perhaps "And wha dares meddle wi' me!" In "Weir of Hermiston" he returns to "the auld bauld Elliots" with zest. He was not, perhaps, aware that, through some remote ancestress on the spindle side, he "came of Harden's line," so that he and I had a common forebear with Sir Walter Scott, and were hundredth cousins of each other, if we reckon in the primitive manner by female descent. Of these Border ancestors, Louis inherited the courage; he was a fearless person, but one would not trace his genius to "The Bard of Rule," an Elliot named "Sweet Milk" who was slain in a duel by another minstrel, about 1627.

Genius is untraceable; the granite intellect of Louis's great engineering forefathers, the Stevensons, was not, like his, tuneful: though his father was imaginative, diverting himself with daydreams; and his uncle, Alan Stevenson, the builder of Skerryvore, yielded to the fascinations of the religious Muse. A volume of verse was the pledge of this dalliance. His mother, who gave him her gay indifference to discomfort and readiness for travel, also read to him, in his childhood, much good literature; for not till he was eight years of age was he an unreluctant reader—which is strange. The whole record of his life, from his eighteenth month, is a chronicle of fever and ill-health, borne always with heroic fortitude. His dear nurse, Alison Cunningham, seems to have been a kind of festive Cameronian. Her recitation of hymns was, though she hated "the playhouse," "grand and dramatic." There is a hymn, "Jehovah Tsidkenu," in which he rejoiced; and no wonder, for the refrain "Jehovah Tsidkenu was nothing to me," moves with the galloping hoof-beats of

""Tis up wi' the bonnets o' Bonny Dundee!"

I have, however, ascertained that this theological piece is not sung to the tune, "The cavalry canter of Bonny Dundee." When the experiment is made, the results are unspeakably strange.

It need not be said, Stevenson has told us in verse and prose, that in childhood "his whole vocation was endless imitation." He was the hunter and the pirate and the king—throwing his fancy very seriously into each of his *rôles*, though visualizing never passed with him, as with some children it does, into actual hallucination. He had none of the invisible playmates that, to some children, are visible and real. He was less successful than Shelley in seeing apparitions: but the dreams which he communicated to Mr. Frederic Myers were curious illustrations of his subconscious activities—his Brownies, as he called them. They told him stories of which he could not foresee the end; one led up to a love affair forbidden even by exogamous law (with male descent and the sub-class system), and thus a fine plot was ruined.

Throughout life, he always played his part, as in childhood, with full conscious and picturesque effect, as did the great Montrose and the English Admirals, in whom he notes this dramatic trait. He was not a *poseur*; he was merely sensitively conscious of himself and of life as an art. As a little boy with curls and a velvet tunic, he read "Ministering Children," and yearned to be a ministering child. An opportunity

seemed to present itself; the class of boys called "keelies" by the more comfortable boys in Edinburgh, used to play in the street under the windows of his father's house. One lame boy, a baker's son, could only look on. Here was a chance to minister! Louis, with a beating heart, walked out on his angelic mission.

"Little boy, would you like to play with me?" he asked.

"You go to ——!" was the answer of the independent son of the hardy baker.

It is difficult to pass from the enchanted childhood of this eternal child, with its imaginative playing at everything, broken only by fevers whereof the dreams were the nightmares of unconscious genius. He has told of all this as only he could tell it.

As a boy, despite his interrupted education, he laid the foundations of a knowledge of French and German, acquired Latin, and was not like that other boy who, *Euclide viso, cohorrui et evasit*. He was a mathematician! He never played cricket, I deeply regret to say, and his early love of football deserted him. He was no golfer, and a good day's trout-fishing, during which he neglected to kill each trout as it was taken, caused remorse, and made him abandon the contemplative boy's recreation. Boating, riding, and walking were his exercises. He read the good books that never lose their charm—Scott, Dumas, Shakespeare, "The Arabian Nights"; when very young he was delighted with "The Book of Snobs"; he also read Mayne Reid and "Ballantyne the Brave," and any story that contained *Skeltica*, cloaks, swords, wigs on the green, pirates and great adventures. He lived in literature, for Romance.

His doings at Edinburgh University, and as a budding engineer, he has chronicled; he took part in snowball rows, in the debates of the Speculative Society, and in private dramatic performances, organized by his senior and friend, Professor Fleeming Jenkin. To "dress up" in old costumes always pleased him. He happened to praise the acting of a girl of fourteen, who, in her family circle, said, "Perhaps when I am old, like the lady in Ronsard, I will say 'R. L. Stevenson sang of me.'" His gambols "with the wild Prince and Poins" are not unrecorded. These were his Fergussonian years. Perhaps he might have expressed Burns's esteem for the "class of men called black-guards," as far as their unconventionality is concerned. He saw a great deal of life in many varieties; like Scott in Liddesdale, "he was making himself a' the time." With his cousin R. A. M. Stevenson, Walter Ferrier, Mr. Charles Baxter, and Sir Walter Simpson (a good golfer and not a bad bat), he performed "acts of Libbelism," and discussed all things in the universe. He was wildly gay, and profoundly serious, he had the earnestness of the Covenanter in forming speculations more or less unorthodox. It is needless to dwell on the strain caused by his theological ideals and those of a loving but sternly Calvinistic sire, to whom his love was ever loyal.

These things bred melancholy, of necessity, and melancholy was purged by an almost unexampled interest, not in literature alone, but in the technique of style, and the construction of sentences and periods. Few of his confessions are better known than those on his apprenticeship in style to the great authors of the past. He gave himself up to the schools of Hazlitt, Lamb, Wordsworth, Sir Thomas Browne, Defoe, Hawthorne, Montaigne, Baudelaire, William Morris, and Obermann (De Senancour).

This he did when he was aged about eighteen, when other lads are trying to write Latin prose like Cicero, or Livy, or Tacitus (Tacitus is the easiest to ape, in a way), and Latin verse like Ovid, or Horace, or Virgil. This they do because it is "part of the curricoolum," as the Scottish baronet said, of school and college. But I do not remember anecdotes of other boys with a genius for English prose who set themselves to acquire style before they deemed that they had anything in particular to say.

In English essays at college a young fellow may be told by his tutor not to imitate Carlyle or Macaulay: the attempt to repeat the tones of Thackeray is most incident to youth. But to aim, like Stevenson while a student of Edinburgh University, at "the choice of the essential note and the right word," in exercises

written for his own improvement, is a thing so original that it keeps me wondering. Like most of us, I have always thought, with Mr. Froude, when asked how he acquired his style, that a man sits down and says what he has to say, and there is an end of it. We must not write like Clarendon now, even if we could; our sentences must be brief. It would be affectation to write like Sir Thomas Browne, if we could; or like de Quincey; and nobody can write like Mr. Ruskin, when he is simple, or like the late Master of Balliol, Mr. Jowett.

How far and how early Stevenson succeeded in the pursuit of style may be seen in his "Juvenilia": for example, in the essay on the Old Gardener. But one is inclined to think that he succeeded because he had a very keen natural perception of all things, was a most minute observer, knew what told in the matter of words, in fact, had a genius of his own; and that these graces came to him, though he says that they did not, by nature. He tells us how often he wrote and rewrote some of his chapters, some of his books. His *prima cura* we have not seen; perhaps it was as good as his most polished copy. "Prince Otto" has even seemed to me, in places, over-written. He now and then ran near the rock of preciousness, though he very seldom piled up his barque on that reef. His style is, to the right reader, a perpetual feast, "a dreiping roast," and his style cannot be parodied. I never saw a parody that came within a league of the jest it aimed at, save one burlesque of the deliberately stilted manner of his "New Arabian Nights." This triumph was achieved by Mr. Walter Pollock.

Stevenson's manner was too appropriate to his matter for parody: for nobody could reproduce his matter and the vividness of his visualization. When his characters were Scots, Lowlanders or Highlanders, it seems to me that their style has no rival except in the talk of Sir Walter's countrymen. A minute student who knew Stevenson, has told me that he once suggested "chafts," where Louis had written "cheeks" or "jaws," and that the emendation was accepted, but his Scots always use "the right word," and never (in prose) say "tae" for "to," I think. Theirs is the good Scots.

Perhaps I am biased in my doubt concerning the usefulness of his persistence in re-writing, by my regret that he destroyed so many of his romances, as not worthy of him. "King's chaff is better than other folk's corn" says our proverb. In his day, I bored him by pressing him to write more, and more rapidly; he never could have been commonplace, he never could have been less than excellent. But his conscience was adamant: no man was less of an improviser, as, fortunately, Scott was; had he *not* been, there would not be so many Waverley Novels.

Stevenson was hard on Scott, who wrote much as he himself did in boyhood. "I forgot to say," remarks the early Stevensonian hero, after describing a day full of adventures with Red Indians, "that I had made love to a beautiful girl." There is a faint resemblance to this over-sight in a long sentence of "Guy Mannering," which Stevenson criticized; but "Guy Mannering" was written in about six weeks, "to refresh the machine." Fastidious himself, conscientious almost to a fault in style, Stevenson's joy was in the romances of Xavier de Montépin and Fortuné du Boisgobey, names which suggest

"Old crusading knights austere, That bore King Louis company."

When Dumas and Scott, and perhaps Mrs. Radcliffe, had been read too recently, Louis went to Fortuné and Xavier, and, doubtless, to the father of them, Gaboriau. None of these benefactors of the race was a student of style, but they gave him what Thackeray liked, stories "hot, *with*," as he says, briefly but adequately.

All of us are led, like that ancient people Israel, like all humanity, by a way we know not, and a path we do not understand. If some benevolent genie, who understood Stevenson's qualities and genius, could have directed his career, how would that spirit have educated him?

For some reason not intelligible he was put on an allowance of five shillings weekly, for his *menus plaisirs*, till he was twenty-three years of age. He never was an expensive man (except in giving, wherein he

knew no stint); his favourite velvet coats, his yellow shoes, his black shirts, with a necktie of a scrap of carpet, he said (I failed to guess its nature), were not extravagant. (The last occasion on which I saw him in the legendary velvet coat was also the only moment in which I viewed the author of his being. The circumstances were of the wildest comedy, but the tale can never be told; though in all respects it redounds to the credit of everybody concerned. Not one of us let a laugh out of himself.)

But a young man in his position likes to do many harmless things which cannot be done on five shillings a week, and so he sought the haunts of "thieves and chimney sweeps!" he says, and wrote sonnets in those shy retreats, which are known, perhaps, in Scotland, as "shebeens." Why "shebeens"? Is the word Gaelic misspelled? Cases of "shebeening" are tried before the Edinburgh magistrates, and as "my circle was being continually changed by the action of the police magistrates" (he says) conceivably his was a shebeening circle.

Another lad of his age, some eighty years earlier, was partial, like him, to taverns and old clothes. "They be good enough for drinking in," said Walter Scott, when Erskine, or some other friend, ventured to remonstrate. Scott, like Stevenson, knew queer people, knew beggars—but had not one of them shaken hands with Prince Charles? Certainly, after Scott met Green Mantle, and sheltered her, as she came from church, under his umbrella (a piece of furniture which Stevenson can never have possessed), he left off his old clothes, and went into the best company. But R. L. S. did not delight in the good company of his native town; nor did he suffer gladly the conventional raiment of the evening hours. Green Mantle there was none, as far as we learn. He was not popular with the young Scots of his age, his biographer says so candidly; candidly have they said as much to me, yet they were good fellows.

From childhood he had enjoyed all the indulgences of an only son, and an invalid; now he was "brought up short," and there were the religious disputes with a sire to whom he was devoted. The climate of his own romantic town (the worst in the world) was his foe; the wandering spirit in his blood called him to the south and the sun; he tells of months in which he had no mortal to whom he could speak freely, his cousin Bob being absent; he was unhappy; he was out of his *milieu*.

What would the genie have done for him? Neither of the English Universities would have been to his taste; the rebel in him would have kicked at morning chapel, lectures, cap and gown, Proctors, the talk of "oars" and "bats"; manifestly Balliol was not the place for R. L. S., though he might have been happy with his contemporary John Churton Collins. He, I remember—even to the velvet coat—was like Stevenson, and was a rebel. Grant Allen, too, would have been his contemporary—the only man in Oxford who took to Herbert Spencer, whom Stevenson also read with much edification.

Yet it is clear that Stevenson should not have been domiciled in the paternal mansion of Heriot Row. The genie might have transported him to a German University, perhaps to Heidelberg.

Dis aliter visum, and the result, for us, is his matchless book on Edinburgh. To see a copy thereof is to take it up, and read through it again; it is better at every reading.

In 1871 he broke to his father the news that the profession of engineering was not for him. The Scottish Bar (1874-1875) was not more attractive, and in 1873 his meeting with Mr. (now Sir) Sidney Colvin (then Slade Professor of Fine Art at Cambridge, and already well known as a critic), and with a lady, Mrs. Sitwell, to whom many of his most carefully written early letters are addressed, probably sealed Stevenson into the profession of literature.

He has left this note on his prospects:

"I think now, this 5th or 6th of April, 1873, that I can see my future life. I think it will run stiller and stiller year by year; a very quiet, desultorily studious existence. If God only gives me tolerable health, I think now I shall be very happy; work and science calm the mind and stop gnawing in the brain; and as I am glad to say that I do now recognise that I shall never be a great man, I may set myself peacefully

on a smaller journey; not without hope of coming to the inn before nightfall.

O dass mein Leben Nach diesem Ziel ein ewig Wandeln sey!

DESIDERATA

I. Good Health II. 2 to 3 hundred a year III. O du lieber Gott, *friends!* AMEN
Robert Louis Stevenson"

He wrote an article, this born wayfarer, on "Roads," which was accepted by P. G. Hamerton for the "Portfolio," but in November, 1873, "nervous exhaustion, with a threatening of phthisis," caused him to be "Ordered South" to Mentone—a lonely exile. Here he was joined by Mr. Colvin, and in Mr. Colvin's rooms, for I also was "ordered South," I first met this surprising figure. Our schooldays had just overlapped; he was a "gyte" (a child in the lowest form; "class" we called it), when I was in the highest, but I had never seen him, nor heard of him.

In some rhymes of his later years, when Count Nerli was painting his portrait, Louis wrote:

"Oh, will he paint me the way I like, and as bonny as a girlie,
Or will he make me an ugly tyke; and be d—— to Mr. Nerli?"

When first we met, he really was "as bonny as a girlie"; with his oval face, his flushed cheeks, his brown eyes, large and radiant, and his hair of a length more romantic than conventional. He wore a wide blue cloak, with a grace which hovered between that of an Italian poet and an early pirate.

It was impossible not to discover, in a short conversation, that he was very clever, but, as a girl said once of her first meeting with another girl, "We looked at each other with horny eyes of disapproval." I thought that he was affecting the poet, and in me he found a donnish affectation of the British sportsman. He said later that I complained, concerning Monsieur Paul de St. Victor, that he was "no sportsman," though his style was effulgent.

We seldom met again, unhappily, for I was then with a family in whose company he would have been happy: all young, all kind, simple, and beautiful, and all doomed. Stevenson was then seriously ill, certainly a short walk fatigued him.

The next news I had of him was in his essay, "Ordered South," concerning the emotions, apathies, and pleasures, on that then fairy coast, of a young man who thinks that his days are numbered. After reading this paper, I was absolutely convinced that, among the writers of our generation, Stevenson was first, like Eclipse, and the rest nowhere. There was nobody to be spoken of in his company as a writer. It was not his style alone—Pater's style had bewitched me in his first book—but it was the life that underlay the style of Stevenson.

He came home, and found peace at home, and a less inadequate allowance, and he put up a brazen plate, "R.L. Stevenson, Advocate," on the door in Heriot Row. But his practice was a jest. Some senior men sought his society, his old friends were with him; his articles were welcomed by Mr. Leslie Stephen in "The Cornhill Magazine," and were eagerly expected by a few. Directed by Mr. Stephen, he found Mr. Henley in the Edinburgh Infirmary, and that friendship began which was of such considerable influence in his life and work.

Mr. Henley's "maimed strength," his impeded vigour, even his blond upstanding hair and "beard all tangled," his uncomplaining fortitude under the most cruel trials, and the candid freshness of his conversation on men and books, won Stevenson's heart.

In London, Stevenson appeared now and again at the Savile Club, then tenanted a rather gloomy little house in Savile Row. The members were mostly connected with science, literature, journalism, and the stage, and Stevenson became intimate with many of them, especially with the staff and the sub-editor

(in those days) of "The Saturday Review," Mr. Walter Pollock; and with Mr. Saintsbury, Mr. Traill, Mr. Charles Brookfield, Sir Walter Besant; a little later with Mr. Edmund Gosse, who was by much his favourite in this little society. In addition to the chaff of the "Saturday" reviewers, he enjoyed the talk of Prof. Robertson Smith, Prof. W. H. Clifford, and Prof. Fleeming Jenkin.

Stevenson never wrote, to my knowledge, in "The Saturday Review"; journalism never "set his genius." For one reason among many, his manner was by far too personal in those days of unsigned contributions. He needed money, he wished to be financially independent, but, in the Press, his independence could not be all that he desired. He did not wield the ready, punctual pen of him whom Lockhart most invidiously calls "the bronzed and mother-naked gentleman of the Press."

His conversation at luncheon, and after luncheon, in the Club was the delight of all, but, for various reasons, I was seldom present. I do remember an afternoon when I had him all to myself, but that was later. He poured out stories of his American wanderings, including a tale of a murderous lonely inn, kept by Scots, whose genius tended to assassination. He knew nothing of their exploits at home, but, then or afterwards, I heard of them from a boatman on Loch Awe. Their mother was a witch!

At this period Stevenson was much in Paris, and alone, or with his cousin Bob dwelt at Barbizon and other forest haunts of painters. The chronicle of these merry days is written in the early chapters of "The Wrecker."

In literature he was "finding himself," in his Essays, but the world did not find him easily or early.

History much attracted him, as it did Thackeray, who said, "I like history, it is so gentlemanly." But it can only be written by gentlemen of independent means. Stevenson's favourite period was that of the France of the fifteenth century, and he studied later some aspects of that time in essays on Charles d'Orleans, in his admirable picture of Villon as a man and poet, and especially in "A Lodging for the Night," and "The Sieur de Malétoit's Door," shut on a windy night in the month after the Maid failed at Paris (September, 1429).

These unexcelled short stories really revealed Stevenson as the narrator, his path lay clear before him. But even his friends were then divided in opinion; some preferring his essays, and his two books of sentimental travel, "An Inland Voyage" (1878) and "Travels with a Donkey" (1879). These were, indeed, admirable in style, humour, description, and incident, but the creative imagination in the stories of Villon's night and of the Sieur de Malétoit's door, the painting of character, the romance, the vividness, were worth many such volumes. They were well received by the Press, these sketches of travel, but, as Monsieur Got says in his "Journal" (1857), "Les succès des délicats sont, même quand ils s'établissent, trop lents à s'établir. La foule s'est tellement démocratisée qu'il n'a pas de salut si l'on ne frappe brutalement." The needful brutality was not employed till Stevenson "knocked them" with "Jekyll and Hyde."

"The world is so full of a number of things," that a few essays, two or three short stories in a magazine, a little book of sketches in prose, may be masterpieces in their three several ways, but they escape the notice of all but a few amateurs. Mr. Kipling's knock was much more insistent; he could not be unheard. It was not by essays on Burns and Knox, however independently done, that Stevenson could make his mark.

Concerning these heroes, Scotland has a vision of her own, and no man must undo it; no man must tell, about Knox, facts ignored by Professors of Church History. Indeed, to study Knox afresh demands research for which Stevenson had not the opportunity. The Covenanting side of his nature appeared in his study of the moral aspect of Burns; his feet of clay. It is agreed that we must veil the feet of clay. As Lockhart says, Scott infuriated Mr. Alexander Peterkin by remarking that Burns "was not chivalrous." Stevenson went further, and annoyed the Peterkins of his day. His task required courage: it was not

found wanting.

In 1877, Stevenson had a new, if very narrow, opening. A friend of his at Edinburgh University, a young Mr. Caldwell Brown (so Stevenson named him to me; his real name seems to have been Glasgow Brown), came to the great metropolis to found a Conservative weekly journal. "London" was its name, but Edinburgh was its nature, and base, if a base it had. The editor was "in the air"; he knew nothing of his business and its difficulties; nothing of what the Conservative public, with sixpences to spend, was likely to want. He approached some of Stevenson's friends, and he gave the Conservative party scores of lively *ballades*, *villanelles*, and *rondeaux*. They were brilliant. Stevenson would not tell me the author's name; he proved to be Mr. Henley, who came to town, and, on the death of Mr. Brown, edited this unread periodical. There were "Society" notes, although Mr. Henley's haunts were not those of that kind of society, and one occasional contributor ventured to remonstrate about the chatter on the "professional beauties" of that distant day.

The "New Arabian Nights," with all their humour, and horror, all their intellectual high spirits, and reckless absurdity, were poured by Stevenson into this outcast flutterer of a Tory paper, to the great joy of some of the very irregular contributors. (It was an honest flutterer—its contributors received their wages.)

Then "London" died, and then seriousness enough came into the life of our Arabian author. In August, 1879, he disappeared; he went to America to marry the lady whom he had first met at Fontainebleau, whom he wedded at San Francisco (1880), and loved with all his heart.

Reconciled to his father, he returned to Scotland. His health had been anew impaired by troubles and privations, and the rest of his life in the Old World was occupied by a series of maladies, vain roamings in search of climate, and hard work constantly interrupted.

From his early childhood onwards, an army of maladies surrounded him, invested him, cut him off if, in an hour of health, he ventured on any sally; but they never overcame his invincible resolution. He was, as one of his favourite old authors says about I forget what emperor, "an entertainer of fortune by the day," making the most of every sunny hour, and the best of every hour passed under the shadow of imminent death. I remember that, soon after his marriage, he was staying in London at the house of a friend. Going to see him, I noted in him a somewhat anxious look, and I did not wonder at it! Mr. Henley was seated in a great chair, the whole of his face, from the eyes downwards, muffled in a huge crimson silk pocket handkerchief, of which the point covered his aureate beard.

The room was a large room, and as Louis flitted about it, *more suo*, he managed to tell me privily that Henley had a very bad cold, and that he himself caught every cold which came within a limited radius. He *did* catch that cold, I heard, and when once such an invader entered his system, nobody knew what the end of it might be. His lungs usually suffered; hemorrhage was frequent and often alarming. In one of these accesses, unable to speak, he wrote, "Do not be frightened. If this is the end it is an easy one."

Many scraps written by him in circumstances like these used to exist; some of them, though brief, were rich in the simple eloquence of indignation.

Almost no climate did him any good: in 1880-1881, he chiefly suffered at Davos, and in the tempests of September, in Braemar. At Davos he had few consolations except the society of Mr. J. A. Symonds (the Opalstein of his essay on "Talk and Talkers") and his family. He was still attached to the indigent Muse of History: meditating a "History of the Highlands," and another book on that much trampled topic, the Union of 1707. When one thinks of the commercial statistics necessary to the student of the Union—to take that grim aspect of it alone—*enfin*, "I have been there, and would not go." In the nature of things the History of the Union would have become a romance, with that impudent, entertaining rogue, Ker of Kersland, and his bewildered Cameronians, for the heroes: with Hamilton the waverer,

and the dark, sardonic Lockhart of Carnwath, and Daniel Defoe as the English looker-on. The study of Highland history led to the reading of the Trial of James of the Glens, and the vain hunt for Alan Breck, and so to "Kidnapped."

Stevenson felt and described the exhilaration of Alpine mornings, but his style was as sensitive as his bronchial apparatus, and he declares that when he tried to write, the style suffered from "yeasty inflation," while his nights were haunted by the nightmares of his childhood.

The next change carried him to a cottage near Pitlochry, whence he wrote that he was engaged in the composition of "crawlers." The first and best of these, "Thrawn Janet," was (with his "Tod Lapraik" in "Kidnapped") the only pendant to Scott's "Wandering Willie's Tale," in the northern vernacular. The tale has a limited circle; no Southern can appreciate all its merits, the thing is so absolutely and essentially Scots; especially the atmosphere. He said that it was "true for a hill parish in Scotland in old days, not true for mankind and the world." So it is fortunate to be a native of a hill parish in Scotland!

"The Merry Men," as "a fantasia or vision of the sea," is excellent; the poor negro never was, to myself, "convincing." However, knowing Stevenson's taste in art, I designed for him, in Skeltic taste, an illustration (coloured) of the negro pursuing the wicked uncle (in the philabeg) over the crests of Ben Mor, Mull.

Descending from these heights, Stevenson, like every bookish Scot, "ettled at" a professorial chair—that of "History and Constitutional Law," in the University of Edinburgh.

The election was in the winter, the legist and historian occupied the autumn in composing the first half of "Treasure Island" (originally "The Sea Cook").

Everyone knows the story: how, playing with his stepson, Stevenson drew a map of an island—an island like a *dragon seyant*; considered the caves and hills and streams, and thought of the place as a haunt of these serviceable pirates, who always dumped down their hard-earned swag on distant and on deadly shores, which they carefully abstained from revisiting. The legends of Captain Kidd's *caches* have long haunted the imagination; the idea of Hidden Treasure has its eternal charm, and the story thereof was told, once for all, by Poe. Soon after "Treasure Island" appeared there was a real treasure hunt. The deposit, so I was informed, was "put down by a Fin," and Mr. Rider Haggard and I were actually paying (at least Mr. Haggard sent me a cheque) for shares in this alluring enterprise, when I learned that the Fin (or Finn? a native of Finland), had looted the church plate of some Spanish cathedral in America. Knowing this, I returned his cheque to Mr. Haggard; happily, for the isle was the playroom of young earthquakes, which had upset the soil and the landmarks to such a degree that the gentleman adventurer returned—*bredouille*! I hope Stevenson had nothing on.

In the Highland cottage, during the rain eternal, he amused himself with writing his story, as Shelley, Byron, Polidori, and Mary Godwin had diverted themselves in Swiss wet weather, with their ghost stories, "Frankenstein," and Byron's good opening of a romance of a vampire.

Visitors came—Mr. Colvin, Mr. Gosse, and Dr. Japp—they liked the tale as chapter by chapter was read aloud, and it was offered to a penny periodical for boys. A much better market might easily have been found; indeed, Stevenson "wasted his mercies." He was paid like the humblest of unknown scribblers; not even illustrations were given to the obscure romance running in dim inner pages of the periodical, and it appears that, as Théophile Gautier's editor said about one of *his* narratives, "the *abonné* was bored with the style."

It was an audacious thing for a man of Louis's health, and intermittent inspiration, to send in half the "copy," meaning to send the rest later from Davos. He might not be able, physically, to write—the inspiration might vanish—and there was John Addington Symonds, eager for him to write on the "Characters" of Theophrastus! He might as well have written, or better, on the "Characters" of Sir

Thomas Overbury, which are rather less remote from the ken of the British public than those of the Greek.

If any young man or woman, not in possession of independent means, reads these lines of mine, let him or her take warning, and deserting history, morals, the essay, biography, and shunning anthropology as they would kippered sturgeon or the devil, cleave only to fiction!

Biography also allured Stevenson—his literary tastes were nearly his ruin; he wanted, at Davos, to write a "Life of Hazlitt," and at Bournemouth a biography of Arthur, Duke of Wellington. But time and strength were lacking; nor have we R. L. S.'s mature opinion of the strategy and tactics of the victor of Assaye. The Muse of piratical enterprise returned, and "Treasure Island" reached its haven, with no applause, in the paper for boys.

In the following May, Messrs. Cassell proposed to publish "Treasure Island" in book form, being spirited up, I suppose, by Mr. Henley, who was editing for them "The Magazine of Art," in which Stevenson wrote two or three articles. (I remember that a letter of my own to "The Editor," as Mr. Henley had proudly signed himself, came automatically into the hands of the General Editor, a clergyman, if I do not err, and that my observations on the Art of Savages, lighting on the wrong sort of ground, sprang up and nearly choked Mr. Henley.) Stevenson was already the victim of the Yankee pirate, whose industry, at least, made his name, though wrongly spelled, known to the community which later paid him so well for his work, and displayed for him an enthusiasm of affectionate admiration.

In 1884 he worked at the often rewritten "Prince Otto," and did a pot-boiler—"The Black Arrow"—which pleased the boy public of the paper much better than "Treasure Island." His time, from January, 1883, to May, 1884, was passed at Hyères. In the end of November, "Treasure Island" was published in book form, and was warmly welcomed by the Press and by such friends of the author as retained, at least in letters, any smack of youth. It was forced, as far as "You must read it, please," even on the friends of the friends, and so on in successive waves, yet it did not reach a wide circle: five or six thousand copies were sold in the first year. That is failure in the eyes of many of our novelists whose style does not bore the unfastidious *abonné*. Stevenson, in writing an article for a magazine on his "First Book," chose "Treasure Island," for books other than novels do not count as books. He spoke of terror as the motive and interest of the tale; the dread for each and all of a mutiny headed by his ruthless favourite, John Silver. Indeed, terror, whether caused by the eccentric furies of Mr. William Bones, mariner, or of the awful blind Pew with his tapping staff, runs through the volume as the dominant motive. But there is so much else: the many landscapes, so various and so vivid; the humour of the Doctor and the Squire, the variety of the seamen's characters; the Man of the Island, with his craving for a piece of cheese; above all, John Silver. He is terrible, this coldly cruel, crafty, and masterful Odysseus of the Pacific. His creator liked him, but I could have seen Silver withering on the wuddie at Execution Dock, or suspended from a yardarm, without shedding the tears of sensibility. "A pirate is rather a beast than otherwise," says a young critic in "The Human Boy," and I cannot get over Silver gloating on the prospect of torturing Trelawny. At all events, he is an original creation, and a miraculous portent in a boy's book.

Fiercer attacks of illness in various forms drove Stevenson to Bournemouth; he was engaged, when he had the strength, on those plays (in collaboration with Mr. Henley) which prove that he had not the mysterious gift of writing for the stage. "I hope Mr. Henley wrote most of it," said a lady, as she left the theatre where she had seen "Deacon Brodie" played. Had Deacon Brodie been Archdeacon Brodie, there would have been more piquancy in the contrast of his "double life."

This idea of the double life of each man had long haunted Stevenson. He told me once that he meant to write a story "about a fellow who was two fellows," which did not, when thus stated, seem a fortunate

idea. However, happily, he continued to think of Hyde and Jekyll, yet knew not how to manage them. One night, after eating bread and jam freely, he had a nightmare; he saw Hyde, pursued, take refuge in a closet, swallow "the mixture as before"—the mysterious powder or potion—and change horribly into Jekyll.

He set to work at once, and in three feverish days completed the first draft of his parable. In this the Hyde aspect was only Jekyll's unassuming disguise, adopted at hours when he wished to be a little gay. Stevenson burned his first draft, and rewrote the whole in three days.

He knew, it seems, that the magical powder was an error. One sees how the thing could be managed otherwise, with a slight strain on the resources of psychical research. But in no way could the story have attained "the probable impossible," which Aristotle preferred to "the improbable possible."

Stevenson sent the manuscript to my friend Mr. Charles Longman, who, in turn, sent it to me. I began to read it one night, in the security of a modest London drawing-room, and, naturally, it fascinated me from the first page. Then I came to a certain page, which produced such an emotion that I threw the manuscript on a chair, and scuttled apprehensively to the safety of bed. Later, a kinsman, who seldom read a book, told me that, living alone in a great Highland house, he had thrown down the printed book at the same passage, and made the same inglorious retreat. Anyone who knows the book, knows what the passage is.

The story was produced in a paper-covered volume costing a shilling, and was little heeded till a reviewer in *The Times* "caught this great stupid public by the ear," as Thackeray said.

The clergy of all denominations did the rest. As they had preached on "Pamela," a hundred and forty years earlier, so they called the attention of their flocks to Hyde and to Jekyll. "Who are Hyde and Jekyll, my brethren? *You* are Hyde and Jekyll. *I* am Jekyll and Hyde; each of us is Jekyll, and, alas, *each of us is Hyde!*"

Stevenson had long ago "found himself"; now he was found by the public. The names of his two rascally heroes (Dr. Jekyll is even less of a gentleman than Hyde) became proverbial.

The gruesome parable occupied an interval in the making of what I suppose is his masterpiece—"Kidnapped." The story centres on the Appin Murder of 1751, about which he had made inquiries in the neighbourhood of Rannoch, where Alan Breck skulked after the shooting of Campbell of Glenure in the hanging wood south of Ballachulish. Stevenson could not learn who "the other man" was—the real murderer in the romance. I know, but respect the Celtic secret. The fatal gun was found, very many years after the deed, by an old woman, in a hollow tree, and it was *not* the gun of James Stewart.

(I have a friend whose great-great-grandfather was standing beside James of the Glens, watching the digging of potatoes. A horse was heard approaching at such a pace that James said, "Whoever the rider is, the horse is not his own." As he galloped past, the rider shouted: "Glenure is shot!" "Who did it I don't know, but I am the man that will hang for it," said James, too truly.)

Of "Kidnapped," Stevenson said (as Thackeray said of Henry Esmond and Lady Castlewood, as Scott says of Dugald Dalgetty) that, in this book alone of his, "the characters took the bit in their teeth," at a certain point. "It was they who spoke, it was they who wrote the remainder of the story."

They are spontaneous, they are living. Balfour, in the *scenario* of the tale, was to have been kidnapped and carried to the American plantations. But he and Alan "went their ain gait." At the end, you can see the pen drop from the weary fingers; they left half-told the story of Alan, to be continued in "Catriona."

A love of Jacobite times, and of Alan Breck's country, Lochaber, Glencoe, Mamore, may bias me; but in "Kidnapped" Stevenson appears to me to reach the height of his genius in designing character and

landscape; in humour, dialogue, and creative power. As in his preceding stories, there is hardly the flutter of a petticoat, but the tale, like Prince Charles at Holyrood, can point to a Highland man of the sword, and say, "These are my beauties." I remember that Mr. Matthew Arnold admired the story greatly, and *he* had no Jacobite or local bias.

In May, 1887, Stevenson lost his father, and paid his last visit to his native country.

It was during this period, in 1886 probably, that I, for the first time, saw Stevenson confined to bed in one of his frequent illnesses, and then, also, I saw him for the last time. So emaciated was he (we need not dwell on what seemed that "last face of Hippocrates"), that we could not believe there remained for him some crowded years of life and comparatively healthy and joy-bestowing energy. If the ocean was henceforth to roll between us, at least he said that we were always best friends when furthest apart; though, indeed, we were never so intimate as to be otherwise than friendly. It was never the man that I knew best; but the genius that I delighted in, "on this side idolatry." Always, in verse or in prose, in Scots or in English, he made one reader happy; by a kind of pre-established harmony of taste which might not have prevailed in the intercourse of every day's life.

In August, 1887, Stevenson left England for ever, arriving at New York as a lion, hunted by reporters, whom, no doubt, he received with the majestic courtesy of his own Prince of Bohemia. Two versions of Jekyll and Hyde were being acted; all this was very unlike the calm indifference of his native land. It seems that in Jekyll, as "Terryfled" (in Scott's phrase), there is a "love interest"; love is alien to Dr. Jekyll, as to the shepherd before he found that Love was a dweller on the rocks. The Terryfication was, at least, an advertisement. To advertise himself, in the modern way, Stevenson was not competent. He never was interviewed as a Celebrity at Home, as far as I am aware. Indeed, he loved not society papers, and lit a bonfire and danced a dance around it in his garden, when some editor of a journal of that sort was committed to prison. His name is not mentioned, but Stevenson and I had against him a grudge of very old standing.

Dollars in sufficient profusion were offered for his works, and in the Adirondack Hills, beside a frozen river in the starlit night, he dreamed of "a story of many years and countries, of the sea and the land, savagery and civilization." He thought of that old Indian marvel, the suspended life of the buried fakir, over whose grave the corn is sown and grown. He thought of an evil genius on whom this method should be tried in frozen Canadian earth. Thus, what seems like the far-fetched idea of a wearied fancy in "The Master of Ballantrae" was, from the first, of the essence of that bitter romance. The new conception fitted in with a tale, already dreamed of on the Perthshire moors, about the dark adventurous years of the Jacobite eclipse. The Prince was hidden in a convent of Paris, or flashing for a moment in the Mall, or cruising, a dingy bearded wanderer, in Germany or the Netherlands; while his followers were serving under French colours, under Montcalm or Lally-Tolendal. Men who had charged side by side at Gledsmuir and Culloden, might meet as foes in Canada or Hindostan. There is matter enough, in 1750-1765, for scores of romances, but who now can write them? But the Master did not now begin his deeds of bale. Stevenson's stepson, Mr. Osbourne, then very young, himself wrote "The Finsbury Tontine; or The Game of Bluff," and I was informed at the time by Stevenson's devoted admirer, Mr. McClure, that the book was completed by Mr. Osbourne for the Press. Then Stevenson took up the manuscript, and, as Mr. Osbourne says, "forced the thing to live as it had never lived before." Indeed, the style of "The Wrong Box" throughout, is Louis's style in such romantic farces as "The New Arabian Nights," a manner of his own creation.

I seem to remember that I saw the finished manuscript, or perhaps an early copy of the book, and I did not care for it. Mr. Kipling rather surprised me by finding it so very amusing. Mr. Osbourne says that the story "still retains (it seems to me) a sense of failure," and that the public does not relish it. For my own part, on later re-readings, the little farce has made me laugh hysterically at the sorrows of Mr. William Pitman, that mild drawing-master, caught up and whirled away into adventures worthy of the

great Fortuné du Boisgobey. The scene in which he is described as the American Broadwood, a person inured to a simple patriarchal life, a being of violent passions; with the immortal John in the character of the Great Vance; and that joy for ever, Uncle Joseph, with his deathless thirst for popular information and instruction—these personages, this "educated insolence," never cease to amuse. Uncle Joseph is no caricature. But the world likes its sensational novels to be written with becoming seriousness; in short, "The Wrong Box" is aimed at a small but devoted circle of admirers.

People constantly ask men who have collaborated how they do the business? As a rule, so some French collaborator says, "some one is the dupe, and he is the man of genius." This was not true, too notably, in the case of Alexandre Dumas, nor was it true in Stevenson's case. As a rule, one man does the work, and the other looks on, but, again, this was not the way in which Stevenson and Mr. Osbourne worked. They first talked over the book together, and ideas were struck out in the encounter of minds. This practice may, very probably, prove unfruitful, or even injurious, to many writers; they are confused rather than assisted. After or during the course of the conversations (when he had an ally), after reflection, when he had not, Stevenson used to write out a series of chapter headings. One, I remember, was "The Master of Ballantrae to the Rescue," an incident in a tale which he began about the obscure adventures of Prince Charles in 1749-1750. "Ballantrae to the Rescue"—the sound was promising, but I do not know who was to be obliged by the Master.

After the list of chapters was completed, Mr. Osbourne used to write the first draft, "to break the ground," and then each wrote and rewrote, an indefinite number of times. The style, the general effect produced, are the style and the effect of Stevenson. "He liked the comradeship." More care was taken than on a novel of which I and another were greatly guilty. My partner represented Mr. Nicholas Wogan as rubbing his hands after a bullet at Fontenoy (as history and I made quite clear) had deprived Mr. Wogan of one of his arms. There is no such error in the "Iliad," despite the unnumbered multitude of collaborators detected by the Higher Criticism.

In June, 1888, Stevenson sailed out on the Pacific in search of health, and followed the shining shadow through the isles and seas till he made his last home at Samoa. It was a three years' cruise among "summer isles of Eden." Perhaps no book of Stevenson's is less popular than his narrative of storm and calm, of beachcombers and brown Polynesian princes. The scenery is too exotic for the general taste. The joy and sorrow of Stevenson was to find a society "in much the same convulsionary and transitional state" as the Highlands and Islands after 1745. He was always haunted, and in popularity retarded, by History. He wanted to know about details of savage custom and of superstitious belief, a taste very far from being universal even in the most highly cultivated circles, where Folklore is a name of fear. He found among the natives such fatal Polynesian fairy ladies as they of Glenfinlas, on whom Scott wrote the ballad. He found a medicine-man who hypnotized him from behind his back, which nobody at home had been able to do before his face. He exchanged stories with the clansmen—Scots for Polynesian; they were much the same in character and incident. He had found, in Polynesia, the way out of our own present. He met a Polynesian Queen—a Mary Stuart or a Helen of Troy grown old. "She had been passed from chief to chief; she had been fought for and taken in war"; a "Queen of Cannibals, tattooed from head to foot." Now she had reached the Elysian plain and a windless age, living in religion, as it were: "she passes all her days with the sisters."

She was not a white woman: none of these people, so courteous and kind, were white, were up-to-date. In London and New York amateurs did not want to be told about them in Stevenson's "Letters from the South Seas." Stevenson "collected songs and legends": fortunately he also worked at "The Master of Ballantrae," in spite of frequent illnesses, and many perils of the sea. "The Master of Ballantrae" was finished at Honolulu; the closing chapters are the work of a weary pen.

He had made tryst with an evil genius that was essential to the conception of the book, and with a hideous tale of fraternal hatred, told by a constitutional coward. Everything is under the shadow of

thunder and lit by lightning. A glimpse of Allan Breck, and the babblings of the Chevalier Bourke, are the only relief. But the life is as clearly seen as life in Stevenson's books always is, for example when the guinea is thrown through the stained window pane, or the old serving-man holds the candle to light the duel of brothers who are born foes; or as in the final scenes of desperate wanderings in the company of murderers through Canadian snows. But the book, as Sir Henry Yule said, is "as grim as the road to Lucknow"—as it was intended to be.

A fresh cruise, in the following year, bettered his health, and brought him the anecdote of a mystery of the sea which was the germ of "The Wrecker." He saw Samoa, and bought land there—Vailima—the last and best of his resting-places; and here he was joined, in 1891, by his intrepid mother. He was now a lord of land, a householder in his unpretentious Abbotsford, and "a great chief" among the natives, distracted as they were by a king *de facto*, and a king over the water, with the sonorous names of Malietoa and Mataafa. Samoan politics, the strifes of Germany, England, and the States, were labyrinthine: their chronicle is written in his "Footnote to History." My conjectures as to the romantic side of his dealings with the rightful king are vague and need not be recorded. "You can be in a new conspiracy every day," said an Irishman with zest, but conspiracies are better things in fiction than in real life; and Stevenson had no personal ambitions, and, withal, as much common sense as Shelley displayed in certain late events of his life. He turned to the half-finished "Wrecker" and completed it.

When the story began to appear in "Scribner's Magazine" it seemed full of vivacity and promise. The opening scenes in the Pacific were like Paradise, as the author said, to dwellers in Brixton, or other purlieus of London. The financial school at which Loudon Dodd was educated in Stock Exchange flutters was rather less convincing than any dream of Paradise, but none the less amusing. At home in Edinburgh, with the old Scottish master of jerry-building and of "plinths," the atmosphere was truly Scots, tea-coseys and all, while the reminiscences of Paris and Fontainebleau, and the *grandeurs et misères* of "the young Americo-Parisienne sculptor" were perfectly fresh to the world, though some of the anecdotes were known to Stevenson's intimates. Mr. James Pinkerton is a laudable creation, with his loyalty, his innocence, his total ignorance and complete lack of taste, and his scampers too near the wind of commercial probity. The spirit of hustle incarnate in a man otherwise so innocent, the ideals caught from heaven knows what American works for the young, and the inspired patriotism, the blundering enthusiastic affection, make the early Pinkerton a study as original as it is entertaining.

The sale by auction of the wreck, which, by arrangement, is to be Pinkerton's prey, the mysterious opposition of the other bidder, so determined to win an object apparently so worthless, is no less thrilling than the sale of the fur coat in Boisgobey's "Crime de l'Opéra." But the reader knows why the fur coat is so much desired, whereas I remember being driven so wild by curiosity about the value of the wreck that I wrote to Louis, desiring to learn the secret. He would not divulge it, and when, after the voyage to the island and the excitement of knocking the wreck to pieces were over—when the secret came out, it was neither pleasant nor probable. That a mild British amateur of water-colour drawing should have taken part in a massacre of men, shot painfully with cheap revolvers, was an example of "the possible improbable," and much more of a tax on belief than the transformation of Dr. Jekyll. When I mildly urged this criticism, I learned, by return of post, from a correspondent usually as dilatory as Wordsworth, that I was a stay-at-home person ignorant of the world, and of life as it is lived by full-blooded men on the high seas. That was very true, but the amateur in water-colour was also a mild kind of good being. "What would I have done with the crew who were such compromising witnesses, and were butchered?" I would have marooned them.

"The Beach of Falesá" is a revelation of unfamiliar life and character, and one is attached to the little brown heroine. There was to have been "a supernatural element," better, probably, than the device of the Æolian harps hung in the thicket. "I have got the smell and the look of the thing a good deal," he said, and he had got the style of his rough English narrator, who was, as he told the missionary, "what

you call a sinner, what I call a sweep," but repented in time.

A period of many projects followed; one, "The Young Chevalier," had a germ in "The Letter of Henry Goring" (1749-1750), with which I brought him acquainted, not knowing then that it was merely a romance by the prolific Eliza Heywood. It was in this tale that the Master of Ballantrae was to come to the rescue, and I think that a Scottish assassin (who lurks obscure in real history) and Mandrin, the famed French robber, were to appear, but only a chapter is published among other fragments. As it stands, Prince Charles's eyes are alternately blue and brown; brown was their actual colour—they were like Stevenson's own.

Fortunately, the "Chevalier" was deserted for the continuation of "Kidnapped," a sequel which is as good as, or, thanks to the two heroines, Catriona and Barbara Grant, is even better than, the original. To think of it is to wish to take it from the shelf and read it again. It is all excellent, from the scenes where Alan is hiding under a haystack (suggested by an adventure of the Chevalier Johnstone after Culloden), and the first meeting with that good daughter of Clan Alpine and of James Mor, onwards.

Stevenson excited a good deal of odium among fiery Celts by his scoundrel Master of Lovat. There is no reason, as far as I am aware, to suppose that Simon was a scoundrel, but, as a figure in fiction, he is very firmly drawn. The abortive duel of Balfour with the Highland Ensign, who conceives high esteem of "Palfour," is in the author's best manner, as are the days of prison in that "unco place, the Bass," and he was justly proud of the wizard tale of Tod Lapraik. The bristling demeanour of Alan Breck and James Mor (a very gallant but distinctly unfortunate son of Rob Roy), seems a correct picture. Indeed, James Mor was correctly divined, probably from letters of his published in Scott's "Rob Roy." It does not appear that Stevenson ever saw a number of James's letters in the character of a spy (a spy who appears to be carefully bamboozling his employers), which exist in the Newcastle MSS. in the British Museum. But the James of these letters is the James of "Catriona." The scenes with the advocates of James of the Glens, at Inveraray, read as if they had been recorded in shorthand, at the moment. David himself is, of course, the Lowland prig he is meant to be, but Catriona, at last, was a moving heroine, though Stevenson, justly, preferred to her the beautiful Miss Grant, and entirely overcame the difficulty of making us realise her beauty. The Princess, in "Prince Otto," is a fair shadow, compared to Miss Grant, and Stevenson at last convinced most readers that if he had omitted the interest of womanhood, it was not from incompetence—though it may have been from diffidence.

At this time we used to receive letters from him not infrequently; he sent me the "Luck of Apemama," which he sacrilegiously purchased from its holder. This fetish, the palladium of the island, was in one point remarkable—a very ordinary shell in a perfectly new box of native make. Why it was thought "great medicine" and ignorantly worshipped, the pale-face student of magic and religion could not understand. However, it was the Luck of the island, and when it crossed the sea to Europe a pestilence of measles fell on the native population. There was no manifest connection of cause and effect.

Stevenson's letters to me were merely such notes as he might have written had we both been living within the four-mile radius; usually notes about books which he needed, always brightened with a quip and some original application of slang. Occasionally there were rhymes. One was about a lady:

"Who beckled, beckled, beckled gaily."

Another had the refrain:

"The dibs that take the islands
Are the dollars of Peru."

One long and lively piece was on the Achaean hero of a fantastic romance by Mr. Rider Haggard and myself: the Ithacan, the Stormer of the City. Stevenson exclaimed:

"Ye wily auld blackguard,
How far ye hae staggered,
Frae Homer to

HaggardAnd Lang."

How variously excellent he was as a letter-writer the readers of his correspondence know, and how vast, considering his labours and his health, that correspondence is! Often it is freakish, often it is serious, but except in some epistles of the period of his apprenticeship, it is never written as if he anticipated the publisher and the editor. Good examples are his letters to a reviewer, who, criticizing him without knowing him, wrote as if he were either an insensible athletic optimist, or a sufferer who was a *poseur*. "The fact is, consciously or not, you doubt my honesty.... *Any brave man may make out a life which shall be happy for himself, and, by so being, beneficent to those about him. And if he fail, why should I hear him weeping?*" Why, indeed? Think of Mr. Carlyle! "Did I groan loud, or did I groan low, Wackford?" said Mr. Squeers. Mr. Carlyle groaned loud, sometimes with fair reason. Stevenson did not groan at all. If he posed, if his silence was a pose, it was heroic. But his intellectual high spirits were almost invincible. If he had a pen in his hand, the *follet* of Molière rode it. Mr. Thomas Emmett, that famous Yorkshire cricketer, has spoken words of gold: "I was always happy as long as I was bowling." Stevenson, I think, was almost always happy when he was writing, when the instrument of his art was in his fingers.

Consider the deliberate and self-conscious glumness; the willful making the worst of things (in themselves pretty bad, I admit), that mark the novels of eminent moderns who thrive on their inexpensive pessimism, and have a name as *Psychologues! Ohé, les Psychologues!* Does anyone suppose that Stevenson could not have dipped his pencil in squalor and gloom, and psychology, and "oppositions of science falsely so-called," as St. Paul, in the spirit of prophecy, remarks? "Ugliness is only the prose of horror," he said. "It is when you are not able to write 'Macbeth' that you write 'Thérèse Raquin' ... In any case, and under any fashion, the great man produces beauty, terror, and mirth, and the little man produces——" We know what he produces, and though his books may be praised as if the little man were a Sophocles up to date, he and his works are a weariness to think upon. In them is neither beauty, mirth, nor terror, except the terror of illimitable ennui.

None the less, I believe that the little men of woe are happy; are enjoying themselves, while they are writing, while they are doing their best to make the public comfortably miserable. If these authors were as candid as Stevenson they would admit that they enjoy their "merry days of desolation," and that the world is not such a bad place for them, after all. But perhaps before this truth can be accepted and confessed by these eminent practitioners in pessimism, a gleam of humour must arise on their darkness—and that is past praying for. There is a burden of a Scots song which, perhaps, may have sung itself in the ear of Louis, when life was at its darkest:

"And werena my heart licht I wad die!"

Having finished "Catriona," at about the age that Scott had when he wrote his first novel, "Waverley," Stevenson thought of "Weir of Hermiston," ("I thought of Mr. Pickwick," says Dickens with admirable simplicity), and fell to that work furiously, as was his wont when a great theme dawned on him. But soon, as usual, came the cold fit; his inspirations being intermittent for some untraced reason, physical or psychological. Possibly he foresaw the practical difficulty of his initial idea: that the Roman Father should sit on the bench of Scottish Themis and try his own son on a capital charge. This would not have been permitted to occur in Scotland, even when "the Fifteen" were first constituted into a Court. If humane emotions did not forbid, it must have been clear that no Scottish judge (they were not "kinless loons") would have permitted his son to be found guilty. Conceivably this damping circumstance occurred to Stevenson. He dropped, for a while, the hanging judge, and began "St. Ives" as a short story. It was now that, early in 1893, under an attack of hemorrhage, Stevenson dictated his tale to his stepdaughter, on his fingers, in the gesture alphabet of the dumb. Perhaps this feat is as marvelous as Scott's dictating "The Bride of Lammermoor," *in tormentis*, to Will Laidlaw.

We see how his maladies hung on Stevenson's flank, even in Samoa, where his health had so remarkably improved, and permitted to him unwonted activities. After a visit to Sydney, he took up "The Ebb-Tide" in collaboration with Mr. Osbourne, whose draft of the first chapters he warmly applauded. It is not one of his central successes. His pencil was dipped in moral gloom, but even to the odious Cockney scoundrel, Huish, his Shakespearian tolerance accorded the virtue of indomitable courage. He could not help filling the book full with his abundant vitality and his keen observation of the islands and the beachcombers. The thing, to use an obsolete piece of slang, is *vécu*. There were other projects, many of them, which dawned rosily, and faded into the grey; and there was the rich and copious correspondence dated from Vailima. His friends, no doubt, hearing of his good health, now and then, hoped to see his face again; the grouse on the hills of home were calling their eternal *Come back! come back!*

Stevenson, who himself could live contentedly on so little, was the most open-handed of men, the most liberal and cheerful of givers; and whether to Samoans in distressful times, or to others who sought his aid, his purse was never closed; while his hospitality was like Sir Walter's. Probably, in his hour of greatest success, he never was among "the best sellers." But any financial anxieties which may have beset him were assuaged, and his heart was greatly held up, by the success of the beautiful "Edinburgh Edition" of his works, conceived and carried out by the energy of his friend of old Edinburgh days, Mr. Charles Baxter.

His latest work was "Weir of Hermiston"; the plenitude of his genius shines in every page. He himself thought that this was his best work; so far as we can judge by the considerable fragment that exists, he was in the right. There is nothing immature, nothing here of the boy; he is approaching, in his tale, a fateful point of passion and disaster; his characters, especially the elder woman, the nurse, are entirely human, with no touch of caprice; they all live their separate lives in our memories. Then the end came. One moment of bewildered consciousness—then unconsciousness and death. He had written to me, some months before, a letter full of apprehensions of the fate of Scott and Swift; whether warned by some monitory experience, or whether he had merely chanced to be thinking of the two great men who outlived themselves. To him death had come almost as a friend in the fullness of his powers; there was no touch of weakness or decay, and he was mourned like a king by his Samoans, by his family, by all who had known him, and by many thousands who had never seen his face. There was mourning at home in Scotland (where we hoped against hope that the news was untrue), in England, in Europe, in America, in Australia and the Isles. He who had been such "a friendly writer," who had created for us so many friends in his characters, had made more friends for himself, friends more and more various in age, race, tastes, character, and temper, than any British writer, perhaps, since Dickens. He was taken from us untimely; broken was our strong hope in the future gifts of his genius, and there was a pain that does not attend the peaceful passing, in the fullness of years and wisdom and honour, of an immortal like Tennyson.

Any attempt by a contemporary to "place" Stevenson, to give him his "class" in English literature, would be a folly. The future must judge for itself, and, if we may estimate the taste of the future by that of the present, the reading public will not often look behind the most recent publications of its own day. But *les délicats* will look back on Stevenson as they now look back on Fielding, who, to my simple thinking, remains unsurpassed as a novelist; and as they turn to Lamb and Hazlitt as essayists. The poet is, of course, at his best immortal—time cannot stale *Beowulf*, or the nameless lyrists of the fourteenth century, or Chaucer, or Spenser, and so with the rest, *la mort n'y mord*. But it is as a writer of prose that Stevenson must be remembered. If he is not the master British essayist of the later nineteenth century, I really cannot imagine who is to be preferred to him. His vivacity, vitality, his original reflections on life, his personal and fascinating style, claim for him the crown. Nobody, perhaps, places him beside Lamb, and he would not have dreamed of being equaled in renown with Hazlitt, while he is, I conceive, more generally sympathetic than Mr. Pater, whose place is apart, whose province is entirely his own. When

we think of Stevenson as a novelist, there is this conspicuous drawback, that he never did write a novel on characters and conditions in the mid-stream of the life that was contemporary with himself. He does not compete, therefore, with Thackeray and Dickens, Mr. Hardy and Mr. Meredith, but Scott is also no competitor.

"St. Ronan's Well" is Scott's only novel that deals with precisely contemporary life, and "St. Ronan's Well" is a kind of backwater; the story of a remote contemporary watering-place, of local squireens, and of a tragedy, mangled in deference to James Ballantyne. Scott did not often care to trust himself out of the last echoes of "the pipes that played for Charlie," and though his knowledge of contemporary life was infinitely wider than Stevenson's, we see many good reasons for his abstention from use of his knowledge. For example, it is obvious that he could not attempt a romance of the War in the Peninsula, and of life in London, let us say, while Wellington was holding Torres Vedras. Even among Stevenson's abandoned projects, there is not, I think, one which deals with English society in the 'eighties. His health and his fugitive life imposed on him those limitations against which his taste did not rebel, for his taste led him to the past, and to adventure in a present not English, but exotic. He is not in the same field, so to speak, as Richardson and Fielding, Dickens and Thackeray, Mr. Hardy and Mr. Meredith; and their field, the great living world of their time, is what the general reader wants the novelist to deal with as he best may.

Shakespeare, to be sure, wrote no drama on Elizabethan times in England; we must go to Heywood and Ben Jonson for the drama of his contemporary world. Many circumstances caused Stevenson, when at his best, to be a historical novelist, and he is, since Scott and Thackeray, the best historical novelist whom we have.

Add to all this his notable eminence in tales of shorter scope; in essays, whether on life or on literature, so various and original, so graceful and so strong; add the fantasies of his fables, and remember that almost all he did is good—and we must, I think, give to Stevenson a very high place in the literature of his century.

Of his verse I have hitherto said nothing, and I do not think that if he had written verse alone, his place would have been highly distinguished. His "Child's Garden of Verse" is a little masterpiece in a *genre* of his own invention. His verses in Scots are full of humour, and he had a complete mastery of the old Northern English of the Lowlands. His more serious poems often contain ideas and the expression of moods which he handled better, I think, in his prose. Even the story of "Ticonderoga" I would rather have received from him in prose than in his ballad measure. Possibly I am prejudiced a little by his willfulness in giving to a Cameron the part of the generous hero; true to his word, in spite of the desire to avenge a brother, and of the thrice-repeated monition of the dead. It is not that I grudge any glory to the children of Lochiel, a clan, in General Wolfe's opinion, the bravest where all were brave, a clan of constant and boundless loyalty. But in Stevenson's own note to his poem, the Cameron "swears by his sword and Ben Cruachan," and "Cruachan" is a slogan of the Campbells. The hero, as a matter of fact, was a Campbell of Inverawe. "Between the name of *Cameron* and that of *Campbell* the Muse will never hesitate," says Stevenson. One name means "Wry mouth," the other "Crooked nose"; so far, the Muse has a poor choice! But the tale is a tale of the Campbells, of Clan Diarmaid, and the Muse must adhere to the historic truth.

This essay must not close on a difference of opinion concerning historical events—a jarring note.

There are points enough in Stevenson's character and opinions which I have not touched; such as his religious views. He never mentioned the topic of religion in my hearing; it is to his printed words that the reader must turn, and he cannot but perceive that Stevenson's was a deeply religious nature. With his faith, whatever its tenets may have been, was implicated his uneasily active conscience; his sense of duty. This appears to have directed his life; and was practically the same thing as his sense of honour.

Honour, I conceive, is, in a phrase of Aristotle's, duty "with a bloom on it."

Readers of his Letters, and of his Biography by his cousin, Mr. Balfour; readers of his essays, and of his novels, must see that he was keenly interested in cases of conscience; in the right course to steer in an apparent conflict of duties. To say that his theory of the right course, in a hypothetical instance, was always the same as my own would be to abuse the confidence of the reader. As Preston-grange observes: "I would never charge myself with Mr. David's conscience; and if you could cast some part of it (as you went by) in a moss bog, you would find yourself to ride much easier without it"; and *not*, perhaps, always in the wrong direction. There is a case of conscience in "The Wrecker," something about opium-smuggling, and the conscience of Mr. Loudon Dodd (a truly Balfourian character), which I have studied, aided by other casuists, for a summer's day. We never could agree as to what the case really was, as to what was the moral issue.

Casuistry may not be my strong point. I have found myself between no less authorities than a Chancellor of England and a learned Jesuit, both of whom, I thought, would certainly accept my view of a very unusual case of conduct. A certain cleric, in his ecclesiastical duties, happened to overhear an automatically uttered remark by another person; who never meant to speak or to be overheard. The cleric acted on this information, with results distressing to a pair of true lovers. I maintained that he did wrong. "There was no appeal," I said, "to the umpire. Nobody in the field asked 'How's that?'" But the Chancellor and the learned Jesuit backed the clergyman.

Now, I never knew for certain how "Mr. David's conscience" would decide, but I think he would have been with me on this occasion, and with the Rules of the Game.

There was a very pleasant trait in Stevenson's character which, perhaps, does not display itself in most of his writings; his great affection for children. In "A Child's Garden of Verse," delightful as it is, and not to be read without "a great inclination to cry," the child is himself, the child "that is gone." But, in an early letter, he writes: "Kids is what is the matter with me ... Children are too good to be true." He had a natural infatuation, so to say, for children as children, which many men of the pen overcome with no apparent difficulty. He could not overcome it; little boys and girls were his delight, and he was theirs. At Molokai, the Leper Island, he played croquet with the little girls; refusing to wear gloves, lest he should remind them of their condition. Sensitive and weak in body as he was, Nelson was not more fearless. It was equally characteristic of another quality of his, the open hand, that he gave a grand piano to these leper children.

He says:

"But the nearest friends are the auldest friends, And the grave's the place to seek them."

Among the nearest and the oldest friends of his I never was, but to few friends, nearer and older, does my *desiderium* go back so frequently; simply because almost every day brings something newly learned or known, which would have appealed most to his unequaled breadth of knowledge and interest and sympathy.

ANDREW LANG.