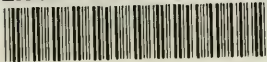
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

00005070569

THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

POEMS
BY ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON
Hitherto Unpublished

EXIMIUM OPUS
EXIMIE ORNETUR
THE·BIBLIOPHILE·SOCIETY
INCORPORATED 1901.
·EXIMIUM·OPUS·EXIMIE·ORNETUR·
·THIS·
·EDITION·
·IS·LIMITED·TO·450·COPIES·
·PRINTED·FOR·MEMBERS·ONLY·
·BOSTON·
B·S
·MDCDXXI·

POEMS

BY

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

HITHERTO UNPUBLISHED

WITH

INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY

GEORGE S. HELLMAN

AND

WILLIAM P. TRENT

THE BIBLIOPHILE SOCIETY

PRINTED FOR MEMBERS ONLY

BOSTON – MCMXXI

A N M. 1916

PR5489
.A3
1921

Copyright, 1921, by
THE BIBLIOPHILE SOCIETY
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

AUG 11 '21

©Cl.A617916

Life's winds and billows, hoarse and shrill,
Could ne'er his minstrel-ardor still;
He sailed and piped until his breath
Went out within the grip of death;
And now, upon his island home,
Fringed with the far Pacific foam,
He lies at peace, beloved, renowned
The sympathetic world around.

W. P. T.

INDEX OF TITLES AND FIRST LINES IN THIS VOLUME

A Summer Night 39
All influences were in vain 43
All night through, raves or broods . . . 102
At morning on the garden seat 109
Aye, mon, it's true 130
Eh, man Henley, you're a Don . . . 100
Far over seas an island is 132
Gather ye roses while ye may 86
Good old ale, mild or pale 113
Her name is as a word of old romance . . 82
Here he comes, big with statistics . . . 75
Here lies Erotion 126
Hopes 69
I am a hunchback, yellow-faced . . . 139
I am like one that has sat alone . . . 57
I have a friend; I have a story 65
I look across the ocean 141
I saw red evening through the rain . . . 92
I sit up here at midnight 58
If I could arise and travel away . . . 111
If I had wings, my lady 98

In autumn when the woods are red . . . 78
Last night we had a thunderstorm, etc. . . 94
Light as my heart was long ago . . . 84
Link your arm in mine, my lad 61
Love is the very heart of spring . . . 107
My wife and I, in one romantic cot . . . 117
Nay, but I fancy somehow, etc. 114
Of schooners, islands and maroons . . . 122
O lady fair and sweet 96
On the gorgeous hills of morning . . . 134
Poem for a Class Re-union 89
Rivers and winds among the twisted hills . . 137
Since I am sworn to live my life . . . 87
Sit doon by me, my canty freend . . . 76
Take not my hand as mine alone . . . 41
The look of Death is both severe and mild . 80
The Mill-House 29
The moon is sinking, etc. 50
The old world moans and topes . . . 54
The rain is over and done 104
The Well-Head 35
The whole day thro', etc. 52
There where the land of love 105
To Priapus 128
To A Youth 72
We are as maidens, one and all 47
Yes, I remember, etc. 119

THE STEVENSON MANUSCRIPTS

At the time when the great mass of manuscripts, books, and other personal belongings of Robert Louis Stevenson were dispersed through a New York auction room in November 1914, and January 1915, the whole of civilization was being shaken to its very foundations, and the exigencies of the times were such that people were concerned with more important matters than the acquisition of manuscripts and relics. Therefore the sale, which in ordinary times would have attracted widespread attention among editors, critics, publishers and collectors, went comparatively unnoticed amid the general clamor and apprehension of the time. There was, however, one vigilant Stevenson collector, in the person of Mr. Francis S. Peabody, who bought a large part of the unpublished manuscripts at the sale, and has since acquired most of

the remainder which went chiefly to various dealers. Mr. Peabody has generously offered to share the enjoyment of his Stevenson treasures with his fellow bibliophiles, and we are indebted to him for the privilege of issuing the first printed edition of many precious items, without which no collection of Stevensoniana can ever be regarded as being complete.

It will be remembered that the last years of Stevenson's life were spent at Samoa, which became the only permanent home of his married life, where he kept his great collection of manuscripts and note books, the accumulation of his twenty-odd years of work; and where, being far removed from the centers of civilization, he came very little in contact with editors or publishers who, during his lifetime or subsequently, would have been interested in ransacking his chests for new material. When his personal effects were finally packed up and shipped to the United States they were sent to the auction room and disposed of for ready cash, and thereafter it became impossible for publishers to acquire either the possession or the publication rights

of the manuscripts without great expense and inconvenience.

From events that have transpired since the publication in 1916 of the two-volume Bibliophile edition of Stevenson's unpublished poems, we are led to believe that the literary importance of the manuscripts was not appreciated by the Stevenson heirs. It is neither necesssary nor advisable to comment or speculate further upon the circumstances which led to the sale of the manuscripts before being published; whatever they may have been, they are of far less importance to the public than the established fact that the manuscripts were dispersed before being transcribed or published, and the further fact that they ultimately came into the possession of an owner who now permits them to be printed.

If it be regrettable that the distribution of the present edition, in which there is destined to be a world-wide interest, is confined to the relatively limited membership of a book club, the circumstances are made inevitable by certain fundamental rules, without which no cohesive body of booklovers can long exist. And these restrictive measures are not in-

spired by selfish motives, but purely as a matter of necessity in preserving the organization.

Some of the manuscripts printed in the four separate volumes now issued were not available at the time when the two-volume edition was brought out by The Bibliophile Society in 1916, and it was thought best to defer their publication until such time as we could bring together the major part of the remaining inedited material, which we believe has now been accomplished.

H. H. H.

INTRODUCTION

The present collection of hitherto unpublished poems gathered from the manuscripts of Robert Louis Stevenson will be found to contain much that is of keen interest to readers and of both sentimental and practical value to collectors. Nor is it likely that this interest and value will prove to be transitory, since the volume now offered, like its notable predecessors issued by The Bibliophile Society in 1916, must afford very important aid to future biographers and critics of a writer who has taken a high and secure place in the literature of the English-speaking peoples. Although the books of verse issued under the supervision of Stevenson himself and of his representatives may contain a larger number of finished, artistic products along with the few poems in which his genius found perfect expression, such as the best pieces of "The

Child's Garden," "Requiem," and "In Memoriam F. A. S.," the poems here and lately published from his manuscripts may fairly be held to do more than the earlier volumes of his verse could ever have done towards establishing his reputation as a poet born, not made; as a writer who could probably have won fame through poetry had he not turned to prose, as a child of song not unworthy to be remembered with those Scotch forerunners whom he so delighted to honor, Robert Fergusson and Robert Burns.

Like Fergusson and Burns, Stevenson is not less interesting as a man than he is as a poet, and it is therefore proper to consider first the biographical importance of the poems here collected. One piece in particular calls for attention. The lines assigned provisionally to the year 1872, "I have a friend; I have a story," if Mr. Hellman be right, as he doubtless is, in connecting them with the verses first published in 1916 entitled "God gave to me a child in part," offer hints of a love tragedy of intense passion and suffering enacted in Edinburgh in the opening years of Stevenson's manhood. It is neither necessary nor

prudent, where all is as yet shadowy, to venture upon speculations specific in character, but it seems permissible to wonder whether in the two poems just named we have not heard a rustling premonitory of the gradual lifting of the curtain that has appeared to screen phases at least of the youthful career of the poet and romancer.

That Stevenson was no saint in what Sir Sidney Colvin discreetly calls "his daft student days" has long been clear, despite the deft indefiniteness with which editors, biographers and friends have treated the period; but with the challenge these two poems, interpreted as they have been, fling down to reticence—loyal and commendable though this has surely been thus far—and with the supporting hints and implications that may be gathered from other verses of the same period of immaturity and effervescence, one feels that the legend-making against which Henley raised his much deprecated but unforgettable protest must soon be more or less a thing of the shamefaced past.

It was natural for Stevenson's contemporaries and for the immediately succeeding gen-

eration of readers to give themselves to the cult of a charming poet for children, a courageous mentor and fascinating companion of youth, a lay-preacher with a gospel of cheery optimism drawn from triumph over suffering and adapted to all human beings whatever their time and condition of life. It was equally natural for Stevenson's intimate friends, who believed that the side of his character which contemporaries admired was the best and truest side of the man they knew and loved, not to dwell upon another side of him, especially of his earlier self, which did not so justly and fully represent him, and called for no emphasis in those days when his fame was in the making. Yet, whatever Henley's lack of tact and his underlying promptings, conscious or unconscious, his protest, we cannot but feel, was one that had to be made sooner or later, and now that those most likely to be vitally affected by resolute biographical realism have passed away, it is not treasonable to Stevenson's memory to hope that the publication by The Bibliophile Society of manuscripts which he did not destroy and must consequently, in a sense, have destined to publication, will

mark the beginning of a period of minute scholarly investigation into each stage of his life. He would have been the last person to object to this, and his best admirers are surely those who serenely welcome every honest attempt at study of his life and works as well as all efforts to recover whatever scrap of his multifarious writings may appear to possess the slightest value.

To such scholarly investigation the present collection and the prior Bibliophile volumes will be indispensable. They show plainly that verse-making played a much larger part in Stevenson's training as a writer—a matter abundantly discussed—than there had formerly been reason even so much as to suspect. It is open to doubt whether Mrs. Stevenson herself, although her intelligence in all that concerned her famous husband was almost equal to her devotion to him and to his memory, ever fully comprehended the range of his poetic interests, or carefully examined the mass of his early experiments in verse. I am at least certain that when some twenty-one years ago I wrote an introduction to an American edition of a part of Stevenson's then

known poetry, I had no notion that what I then had before me did not represent even half of his accomplished work in that category of literature. There was then, for example, little ground for believing that the strictly lyrical impulse was strong in him from the beginning; that he had ever very seriously essayed the old French forms of verse in which his contemporaries like Lang and Dobson were so fluent, or that he had shown more than an amateurish interest in the work of such a poet as Martial.

It is true, of course, that his discussions of Villon and of Charles of Orleans might, without Mr. Graham Balfour's aid, have led one to suspect dabbling in French forms, and it is possibly true that for at least a considerable portion of his later life the writing of verse was, to quote the biographer just named, "almost always a resource of illness or of convalescence." He appears, according to the same authority, to have written "Requiem" when recovering from the drastic illness at Hyères in the early eighties, and in a letter to his mother he confirmed in a measure the view just cited, when he declared, "I do

nothing but play patience and write verse, the true sign of my decadence." But much the greater part of the present volume, and most of the first of the two Bibliophile volumes of 1916, must be assigned to the decade preceding the breakdown on the Riviera, and the verses they contain suggest "storm and stress" more than they do valetudinarianism.

It seems plain therefore that, although no longer than five years ago it might have been permissible to regard Stevenson as an exception to the rule that successful writers of prose often begin their careers with verse-writing which they later abandon, it is now necessary—and pleasant—to believe that in this respect, as in not a few others, the lines of his development run parallel with those followed in the case of many a distinguished predecessor. This is fortunate, since wider and more permanent fame is the portion of those who keep steadily to the broad highways of literature than seems to come to those who to any appreciable extent are diverted into its by-ways. The more Stevenson's career as a man of letters is studied, the less, it is to be hoped, will it appear eccentric. As poet,

essayist, romancer, correspondent, and writer of travels, he keeps step with his great peers, and like them he has arrived at the bourne of permanent and large renown.

Of more specific comment upon the present new poems there seems to be little need, since Mr. Hellman has covered the important points in his introductory notes. Still it may be desirable to call attention here to the strong influence exerted on the early and notable poem, "The Mill House," by one of Stevenson's favorite poets — now dead just a century — John Keats. The curious individuality of "The Well-Head," the note of poetic intensity in the poem beginning, "I am like one that has sat alone"—due, perhaps, to the influence of Heine, who was one of Stevenson's early masters despite a repugnance to the German language sometimes expressed in the correspondence—the singular wealth of poetical material dissociated from the needed technical skill in handling to be observed in "To a Youth," the courage with its touch of bravado, attributable in part to frail health, displayed in "Since I am sworn to live my life," —one of the experiments in French forms

which constitute perhaps the most important contribution made by the present collection, although not necessarily the most attractive—on all these points one might dwell at some length with pleasure and possible profit were one writing a formal essay. Even in a brief foreword it seems incumbent to forestall the notes in emphasizing the daring unconventionality of "Last night we had a thunderstorm in style," the humor of "Eh, man Henley, you're a don," the curious anticipation of Kipling in "If I could arise and travel away," the poignant note of "The rain is over and done,"—not exceptional in the verses of this fermenting epoch of Stevenson's life—and, last but not least, the rather extraordinary quality of certain individual lines. Evidences of immaturity in respect to details of literary training are everywhere to be found, but who, save a poet of authentic utterance, would have been likely to achieve such initial verses as—

"I saw red evening through the rain,"
or "Love is the very heart of spring,"
or "Of schooners, islands, and maroons,"
or "Far over seas an island is,"

whether or not he was able to continue the poetic flight so auspiciously begun?

But it is time to let the reader judge of these matters for himself.

W. P. T.

POEMS
BY ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON
HITHERTO UNPUBLISHED

THE MILL-HOUSE—1866

This impressive poem antedates any piece included in any previous volume of Stevenson's verse, and appears to be the longest of his early attempts at poetry. Written presumably at Swanston, it is very successful in many of its descriptive passages, both in its sense of actuality, as where "great horses strain against the load of the sack-laden wagons," and in that imaginative atmosphere created by chivalrous knights and phantom castles. It is permissible to believe that the verses are merely the opening portion of some long composition which Stevenson had in mind; yet in themselves they give a sense of completeness, because the poet, after having let his thought wander into the fields of romance and of faery, ends his manuscript with a mental and spiritual return to those problems of life, those "grim questionings of heart," which were just beginning to absorb the thoughtful and passionate boy.

THE MILL-HOUSE

(A SICK-BED FANCY)

An alley ran across the pleasant wood,
On either side of whose broad opening stood
Wide-armed green elms of many a year, great
bowers
Of perfect greenery in summer hours.
A small red pathway slow meandered there
Between two clumps of grapes, [both] lush
and fair,
Well grown, that brushed a tall man past the
knee.
No summer day grew therein over hot,
For there was a pleasant freshness in the spot
Brought thither by a stream that men might
see
Behind the rough-barked bole of every tree—
A little stream that ever murmured on
And here and there in sudden sunshine shone;
But for the most part, swept by shadowy
boughs,
Among tall grass and fallen leaves did drowse,
With ever and anon, a leap, a gleam,
As some cross boulder lay athwart the stream.

The Mill-house:
A sick-bed fancy.

—

An alley ran across the pleasant wood,
On either side of whose broad opening, stood
Wide-armed green elms of many a year; great towers
Of perfect greenery in summer hours.
A small reed pathway slow meandered there
Between two clumps of grasses, lush and fair,
~~Well grown, that brushed a tall man past the knee~~
No summer day grew therein over hot,
For there was a pleasant freshness in the spot
Brought thither by a stream that men might see
Behind the rough-barked bole of every tree —
A little stream that ever murmured on
And there and there in sudden sunshine shone;
But for the most part, swept by shadowy boughs,
Among tall grass and fallen leaves did drowse,
With ever and anon a leap, a gleam,
As some cross boulder lay athwart the stream.

Close following down this alley, one came
near
The place where it descended sudden, sheer,
Into a dell betwixt two wooded hills,
Where ran a river made of many rills.
Near where to this the little alley stream
Lapsed in a turmoil, stood as in a dream
A lone, small mill-house in the vale aloof
With orange mosses on a grey slate roof
And all the walls and every lintel stone
With water mosses cunningly o'ergrown.
Its four-paned windows looked across a pool
By shadow of the house and trees kept cool;
Pent by the mossy weir that served the mill,
Its little waters lay unmoved and still,
Save for a circular, slow, eddy-wheeling
That on its bubble-spotted breast kept stealing
And now and then the sudden, short wind-
sway
Of some elm branch or beachen, that all day
Trailed in the shadowed pool; but far below
The enfranchised waters, in tumultuous flow,
Splashed round the boulders and leapt on in
foam
Adown the sunshine way that led them home.

There was no noise at all about the mill
And the slope garden, like a dream, was still.
There came no sound at all into the glade,
Save when the white sack-laden waggons
made
Wheel-creaking in the shadowy, slanting road
And the great horses strained against the load;
Or when some trout would splash in the pool
perhaps,
Or my old pointer from his pendulous chaps
Bayed at the very stillness. In the house
It was so strangely quiet that the mouse
Held carnival at midday on the floor.
The hearths were lined with Holland picture
tiles
Of olden stories of enchanters' wiles;
And knights, stiff-seeming, upon stiffer steeds
Hasting to help fair ladies at their needs;
And bible tales, of prophets and of kings;
And faery ones, of midnight, meadow rings
Whereon, at mild star-rise, the wanton elves
Dance, having cleared the grass blades for
themselves
As we men clear a forest; and besides
Of phantom castles and of woodland rides,
Of convent cloisters and religious veils

And all such like, were drawn a hundred
  tales;
And therein was the swinging censer showed,
And therein altar candles feebly glowed
And the bent priest upraised the sacred host.
And when the dusk drew on, in times of frost,
And new fires sparkled on the clean swept
  hearth
And with pale tongues and laughing sound of
  mirth
Licked the dry wood and carven iron dogs
Whereon was piled the treasure of the logs,
In the red glow that rose and waned again
The pictured figures writhed as if in pain,
Elijah shook his mantle, and the knight
His spear, and 'mong the elves of foot-fall
  light
One saw the dance grow faster, till the flame
Once more drew in, and all things were the
  same.

Nor were there wanting fleshlier joys than
  these;
For as the night grew closer and the trees
Hissed in the wind, before the ruddy fire
Was spread the napkin, white to a desire,

Laid out with silver vessels and brown bread
And some hot pasty smoking at the head
With odorous vapour, and the jug afloat
With bitter, amber ale that stings the throat
Or figured glasses full of purple wine.
Or should one ask for pleasures more divine,
Then let him draw toward the pleasant blaze
And in the warm still chamber, let him raise
Blue wreaths of pungent vapor from the
bowl,
That glows and dusks like an ignited coal
At every inhalation of sweet smoke.
So shall he clear a stage for that quaint folk,
The brood of dreams, that faëry puppet race
That will not dance but on a vacant space;
And purge from every prejudice or creed
His easy spirit, that with greater speed,
He may outrun the boundaries of art
And grapple with grim questionings of heart.

THE WELL-HEAD—1869

The "Prayer," which was the opening poem in the 1916 Bibliophile edition of Stevenson manuscripts, was written in October, 1869; and to the month of March of that year belongs the present poem, composed also in a spirit of religious reverence, yet with an interesting element of doubt as to the superiority of a future life over man's "dear world of hill and plain."

The "mottoes for the beginning," jotted down by Stevenson and here retained,[1] show the source of the theme, and incidentally establish the identity of the "Ayrshire peasant" who might otherwise have been mistaken for Robert Burns. But the young Stevenson is unable to follow Sir Thomas Browne, or

[1] MOTTOES FOR THE BEGINNING

"To thoughtful observators the whole world is a philactery and everything we see an item of the wisdom, power or goodness of God." Sir T. Browne's *Christain Morals,* Part III.

"And (God) gradually manifested Himself to me more and more when viewing His works, till at last I saw His glorious being and perfections shine forth brightly in a refreshing drink of water which I took"—"A rare-Soul-strengthening and Comforting Cordial, by John Stevenson, Land Labourer in the Parish of Daily in Carrick, who died in the year 1728"—*Select Biographies*: Woodrow Society.

the eighteenth century John Stevenson, in finding in Nature, or in Nature's creatures, God the Creator. The closing stanzas show his passionate desire for such consummation, but the poem as a whole does not follow the Hebraic attitude, adopted by Christianity, of perceiving God in his works. Stevenson distinctly states how difficult it is with him; how

> The creatures will not let me see
> The great creator of them all;

and the poem reveals the quandary of one caught up in religious yearning, who is yet preeminently a Pagan in his devotion to Nature in itself. The very title suggests the duality of the young Stevenson's mental struggle, the "well-head" being both the natural source of physical waters, and the divine source of life's spiritual stream.

THE WELL-HEAD

The withered rushes made a flame
  Across the marsh of rusty red;
The dreary plover ever came
  And sang above the old well-head.

About it crouch the junipers,
  Green-black and dewed with berries white,
And in the grass the water stirs,
  Aloud all day, aloud all night.

The spring has scarcely come, 'tis said;
  Yet sweet and pleasant art thou still,
'Mong withered rushes, old well-head,
  Upon the sallow-shouldered hill.

The grass from which these waters came,
  These waters swelling from the sod,
Had been a bible unto some,
  A grave phylactery of God.

The Ayrshire peasant, years ago,
  Drank down religion in a cool
Deep draught of waters such as flow
  From out this pebbly little pool.

But different far is it with me,
  Here, where the piping curlews call;
The creatures will not let me see
  The great creator of them all.

And I should choose to go to sleep,
  With Merlin in Broceliande,

To hear the elm boughs hiss and sweep,
  In summer winds on either hand.

To cling to forest-trees and grass
  And this dear world of hill and plain,
For fear, whatever came to pass,
  God would not give as good again.

And some may use the gospel so,
  That is a pharos unto me,
And guide themselves to hell, although
  Their chart should lead them unto Thee.

Lord, shut our eyes or shut our mind,
  Or give us love, in case we fall;
'Tis better to go maim and blind
  Than not to reach the Lord at all.

A SUMMER NIGHT—1869

While these verses, dated October 25, 1869, have a formal similarity to the March poem of the preceding pages, beginning as they do with a description of Nature and ending on the religious note, they differ essentially, inasmuch as here Stevenson finds in the glow of the sky the symbol of the promise of Heavenly light.

A SUMMER NIGHT

About us lies the summer night;
  The darkling earth is dusk below;
But high above, the sky is bright
  Between the eve and morning glow.

Clear white of dawn, and apple green,
  Sole lingering of the evening's hue,
Behind the clustered trees are seen,
  Across dark meadows drencht in dew.

So glow above the dusk of sin,
  Remembrance of Redemption vast,
And future hope of joy therein
  That shall be shed on us at last.

Each haloed in its husk of light,
  Atoms and worlds about us lie;
Though here we grope awhile in night,
  'Tis always daylight up on high.

TAKE NOT MY HAND AS MINE ALONE—1871

While in various poems of this year Stevenson thinks of himself as one who shall be a leader in recruiting humanity for endeavors towards fairer goals than the past has for the most part set, he here writes in a more modest vein, and emphasizes the fact that his hand is but one in a chain of helpfulness, and that the real debt is to those great bygone leaders from whom he has caught his inspiration.

TAKE NOT MY HAND AS MINE ALONE

Take not my hand as mine alone—
  You do not trust to me—
I hold the hand of greater men
  Too far before to see.

Follow not me, who only trace
  Stoop-head the prints of those
Our mighty predecessors, whom
  The darknesses enclose.

I cannot lead who follow—I
Who learn, am dumb to teach;
I can but indicate the goals
That greater men shall reach.

ALL INFLUENCES WERE IN VAIN
1871

In this poem written in that mixed mood of dejection and of high resolve so characteristic of Stevenson at this period, the metaphors are decidedly interesting. The picture of Stevenson walking with his shadow and his regret, a trio on the sand; the "thought-wheels galloping through the night into the morning tide;" the thoughts that he seeks to convoke for a plebiscite; the band of wandering thoughts falling into rank for the serious march onward — are all notable and in keeping with the spirit of the poem. But at the very end his sense of humor leads him to a witty touch not quite worthy of the lines that precede it; and while one rejoices that the regret which accompanied him so closely in the second stanza has been dissipated by the time the final stanza has been reached, its plight might have been phrased in a manner more in keeping with the tenor of the earlier lines.

ALL INFLUENCES WERE IN VAIN

All influences were in vain,
  The sun dripped gold among the trees,
The fresh breeze blew, the woody plain
  Ruffled and whispered in the breeze.

All day the sea was on one hand,
  The long beach shone with sun and wet—
We walked in trio on the sand,
  My shadow, I and my regret!

Eve came. I clambered to my bed,
  Regret lay restless by my side,
The thought-wheels galloped in my head
  All night into the morning tide.

The thought-wheels span so madly quick,
  So many thousand times an hour,
Thought after thought took life, as thick
  As bats in some old belfry tower.

My mind was in *émeute!* each thought
  Usurped its individual right.
In vain, I temporised—I sought
  In vain to hold a plebiscite!

Thoughts jostled thoughts—By hill and glade
  They scattered far and wide like sheep,
I stretched my arms—I cried—I prayed—
  They heard not — I began to weep.[1]

My head grew giddy-weak—I tried
  To drown my reason. All in vain.
I lay upon my face and cried
  Most bitterly to God again.

God put a thought into my hand,
  God gave me a resolve, an aim.
I blew it trumpet-wise—the band
  Of scattered fancies heard and came.

They heard the bugle tones I blew—
  The wandering thoughts came dropping in;
They took their ranks in silence due—
  One hour, and would the march begin?

The march began; and once begun
  The serious purpose, true design
Has held my being knit in one—
  My being kept the thoughts in line.

[1] Later in life, Stevenson in looking over this poem drew a pencil mark under the last half of this line, and wrote "Bah!" after it.

Since then, the waves are still. The tide
  Sets steadily and strongly out.
The sea shines tranquil, far and wide,
  My mind is past the surf of doubt.

The pole-star of my purpose keeps
  The constant line that I should steer.
At night my weary body sleeps,
  My brain works orderly and clear.

All things are altered since I set
  The steady goal before my face;
All things are changed; and my regret
  Is advertising for a place!

"Companion for an invalide—
  The René-sort preferred—genteel
And orthodox." I wish it speed—
  The creature kept so well to heel!

WE ARE AS MAIDENS ONE AND ALL—1871

When Stevenson, in later years, was going over his youthful manuscripts, copying many of them, unquestionably with the intention of having them sooner or later find their way into print, he annotated the present manuscript with the significant ejaculation, "pooh-pooh!" This trenchant criticism, presumably due to the effeminate note in the imagery of the verses, strongly inclined us at first to follow the author's lead, and omit the poem from the present volume. But on further consideration it was thought best to let the verses take their place with the other compositions of their period; for while some readers may marvel at lines where human beings, it would seem, are compared to convent maidens, and Stevenson himself to a bashful bride, the poem has many appealing qualities, both in its phraseology and in its thought.

Especially notable is the picture of Death, who, cantering on his "great gray horse," suggests the engravings of Dürer and other old masters. In referring to Death as "that splen-

did acred Lord," Stevenson has found an original description, whether we interpret the phrase as referring to cemeteries—or "God's acres," as they used to be called—or whether we think of Death as master of all the earth.

The concluding stanza in which Stevenson disavows fear of the kiss of Death is of special interest, since, from early childhood he was always consciously within its shadow.

DEATH

We are as maidens one and all,
  In some shut convent place,
Pleased with the flowers, the service bells,
  The cloister's shady grace,

That whiles, with fearful, fluttering hearts,
  Look outward thro the grate
And down the long white road, up which,
  Some morning, soon or late,

Shall canter on his great grey horse
  That splendid acred Lord
Who comes to lead us forth—his wife,
  But half with our accord.

With fearful fluttered hearts we wait—
  We meet him, bathed in tears;
We are so loath to leave behind
  Those tranquil convent years;

So loath to meet the pang, to take
  (On some poor chance of bliss)
Life's labour on the windy sea
  For a bower as still as this.

Weeping we mount the crowded aisle,
  And weeping after us
The bridesmaids follow—Come to me!
  I will not meet you thus,

Pale rider to the convent gate.
  Come, O rough bridegroom, Death,
Where, bashful bride, I wait you, veiled,
  Flush-faced, with shaken breath;

I do not fear your kiss. I dream
  New days, secure from strife,
And, bride-like, in the future hope—
  A quiet household life.

THE MOON IS SINKING—THE TEMPESTUOUS WEATHER—1871

This fragment proceeds far enough to show Stevenson at work on the same theme—the onward march despite difficulties—that first engrossed him in 1871 and afforded the material for numerous verses of that year. The lines have little in themselves to recommend them, and Stevenson after having laid aside his mediocre beginning comes back to it later just long enough to add the amusing comments of the last four words of his manuscript. This touch of humor would seem to warrant the inclusion of the fragment, being characteristic of the detached critical attitude which Stevenson took towards his own work.

THE MOON IS SINKING—THE TEMPESTUOUS WEATHER

The moon is sinking—the tempestuous weather
Grows worse, the squalls disputing our advance;
And as the feet fall well and true together
In the last moonlight, see! the standards glance!

One hour, one moment, and that light forever.
Quite so.
Jes' so.

.THE WHOLE DAY THRO', IN CON-. TEMPT AND PITY—1871

The poem entitled "Prelude," previously printed by The Bibliophile Society, was accompanied by a manuscript note of Stevenson's to the effect that it was then that he first began to take interest in the poor and sorrowful. In that poem he beats his drum in search of recruits to make life happier. The present poem shows the same metaphor, and throughout is similar in theme and purpose,—its fine note of optimism coming to a climax in the closing stanza where Stevenson, full of his new sympathy with humanity, likes to think of all men as heroes in a common cause.

THE WHOLE DAY THRO', IN CONTEMPT AND PITY

The whole day thro', in contempt and pity,
I pass your houses and beat my drum,
In the roar of people that go and come,
In the sunlit streets of the city.

Hark! do you hear the ictus coming,
Mid the roar and clatter of feet?

Hark! in the ebb and flow of the street
Do you hear the sound of my drumming?

Sun and the fluttering ribbons blind me;
But still I beat as I travel the town,
And still the recruits come manfully down,
And the march grows long behind me.

In time to the drum the feet fall steady,
The feet fall steady and firm to hear,
And we cry, as we march, that the goal is near,
For all men are heroes already!

THE OLD WORLD MOANS AND TOPES—1871

Intellectually and politically, the period when this poem was written was for all Europe a time of restlessness. The war of 1870 had upset the old order of things in continental affairs, and religious belief had, for many, not as yet reconciled itself to the disturbing influence of the new thought of Darwin and Spencer. In the present poem Stevenson offers as a prescription to cure the ills of the time a renewed faith in the nobility of mankind itself, thus coming into accord with the conviction of that ruggedly fine old Scotsman to whom, politically, he was opposed, but who still so greatly aroused his admiration. For was it not Stevenson's compatriot, Thomas Carlyle, who said: "There is one godlike thing, the essence of all that ever was or ever will be godlike in this world: the veneration done to Human Worth by the hearts of men."

THE OLD WORLD MOANS AND TOPES

The old world moans and topes,
  Is restless and ill at ease;
And the old-world politicians
  Prescribe for the new disease.

I have stooped my head to listen
  (Its voice is far from strong)[1]
For the burthen of its moanings
  As it topes all night long.

I have watched a patient vigil
  Beside its fever bed,
And I think that I can tell you
  The burthen of what it said:—

"As sick folk long for morning
  And long for night again,
So long for noble objects
  The hearts of noble men.

"They long and grope about them,
  With feverish hands they grope

[1] In a hand, written much later, Stevenson penciled three exclamation marks after this line, then added, "Bully for you, L. Stevenson!"

For objects of endeavour,
 And exercise for hope.

"And they shall be our heroes
 And be our Avatar,
Who shall either reach the objects
 Or tell us what they are."

I AM LIKE ONE THAT HAS SAT ALONE—1871

The influence of Heine — an influence we have previously had occasion to comment upon—is again evident in these verses written at Swanston, where the poet likens the rearising of hopeful life after a period of dejection to a glorious sunset after a day of storm and gloom.

I AM LIKE ONE THAT HAS SAT ALONE

I am like one that has sat alone
  All day on a level plain,
With drooping head and trailing arms
  In a ceaseless pour of rain—

With drooping head and nerveless arms
  On the moorland flat and gray,
Till the clouds were severed suddenly
  About the end of day;

And the purple fringes of the rain
  Rose o'er the scarlet west,
And the birds sang in the soddened furze,
  And my heart sang in my breast.

I SIT UP HERE AT MIDNIGHT
1871-1872

Here again, were it not for the word "Inchcape" in the third stanza, we should at first glance feel almost convinced that the present verses are a translation from Heine, so closely both in style and in spirit does the Scottish poet follow the German master. "Inch," meaning an island, is so unmistakably an index of Scottish local nomenclature that it saves us the trouble of going through the works of Heine to find the supposed original; but we can never come upon a more convincing evidence of the intensity of Stevenson's study of the great German lyrist. The metre is the one that Heine most used; the simplicity of the sentences is in his vein, only one simile in the first stanza and one metaphor in the fifth interrupting the sheer directness of description. And if this were truly a Stevenson poem, and not a Heine-Stevenson poem, the subject would be treated in a more personal manner, and would lack the dramatic objectivity which is so often a striking element in Heine's poems of this nature. Then, at the

end, how altogether Heine the closing line, "The foolish fisher woman!" Stevenson never would have thought of calling her that, unless he were unconsciously writing with Heine's mind. After picturing two scenes—the skipper husband in the storm, and the terrified wife at home—after arousing our sympathy for a loving woman in anguish, Heine alone, of all poets it would seem, would have ironically inwoven the note of tenderness in the "foolish fisherwoman," mocking himself and his own experiences, in thus regarding, with a wry smile of ridiculing pity, the misery of human love.

I SIT UP HERE AT MIDNIGHT

I sit up here at midnight,
  The wind is in the street,
The rain besieges the windows
  Like the sound of many feet.

I see the street lamps flicker,
  I see them wink and fail;
The streets are wet and empty,
  It blows an easterly gale.

Some think of the fisher skipper
  Beyond the Inchcape stone;
But I of the fisher woman
  That lies at home alone.

She raises herself on her elbow
  And watches the firelit floor;
Her eyes are bright with terror,
  Her heart beats fast and sore.

Between the roar of the flurries,
  When the tempest holds its breath,
She holds her breathing also—
  It is all as still as death.

She can hear the cinders dropping,
  The cat that purrs in its sleep—
The foolish fisher woman!
  Her heart is on the deep.

LINK YOUR ARM IN MINE, MY LAD
1872

While this poem is, as its title indicates, a song doubtless sung by Stevenson and his student companions as they quaffed their glasses in the Edinburgh winter of 1871-1872, it is possible that the "lad" who appears in the first line may have been, not any companion in general, but his cousin, the artist and critic of art, Robert Alan Stevenson. The point of view here shown as to the value of endeavor and the relative unimportance of the individual's place in the social scheme, is one that both in verse and in conversation frequently appears in the exchange of thoughts between the two cousins. However this may be, the poem considered merely as a student song presents so unusual a juxtaposition of ideas as to render it unique. If, for a moment, we omit consideration of the chorus, and study the first four stanzas, we find Stevenson closely following the model of student drinking songs such as may be read by the score in the anthology of John Addington Symonds. The linking of the arms of boon companions, the animadversions

against Fortune, the advice deeply to drain the cheering glass, the carefree wish that

> Devil take Posterity
> And present people too, lad!

are all in the vein of convivial youth, and might be a translation from the Latin of mediaeval days. With such a beginning, we might assuredly expect a ringing chorus with the glowing bowl for its theme; but instead, we have in the chorus itself the unadulterated note of human fraternity, and the only specific suggestion as to conduct has to do, not with the cheer of wine, but with fraternal cheer in the larger sense. And similarly, in the concluding stanzas, immediately following the adjuration to the devil to take both posterity and the present, an appeal implying the futility of all endeavor, the poet devotes himself to the thought of the value of work. There never was a more curious revelation in a drinking song, of cross currents where tendencies towards the easy and the pleasant, the serious and the arduous, are, in their conjunction, expressed in a manner so revelatory of the inner life of the writer.

LINK YOUR ARM IN MINE, MY LAD

Link your arm in mine, my lad —
  You and I together,
You and I and all the rest
  Shall face the winter weather.

Chorus

Some to good, and some to harm,
Some to cheer the others,
All the world goes arm in arm,
And all the men are brothers.

Fortune kicks us here and there,
  Small our rôle in life, lad.
Better paltry peace, howe'er,
  Than hero-laurelled strife, lad.

While there's liquor to be had,
  Deeply drain the bickers.
Ocean plays at marbles, lad,
  With men of war for knickers.

Who will ever hear of me?
  Who will hear of you, lad?
Devil take posterity
  And present people too, lad!

I have work enough to do,
  Strength enough to do it—
I have work and so have you,
  So put your shoulder to it!

Some do half that I can do,
  Some can do the double,
Some must rule for me and you,
  To save ourselves the trouble!

Who would envy yonder man
  Decorated thus, lad?
We are workingmen for him,
  And he's an earl for us, lad!

I HAVE A FRIEND; I HAVE A STORY (1872?)

While Stevenson's remarkable poem beginning "God Gave to Me a Child In Part" first published in the Bibliophile edition, was placed in the section entitled "Poems of Uncertain Date," the suggestion was made that it belonged to the early seventies. It was during that same period (presumably 1872, though possibly 1871) that the present kindred poem was doubtless written. The internal evidence is too strong for any other assumption, since there was apparently only one woman in Stevenson's life who, although he was devoted to her, might yet have had reason to hate him. We know her merely as "Claire," the name inscribed marginally by Stevenson on the manuscript of "Swallows Travel To and Fro,"—verses which in 1873 were composed with her in mind. She was the Edinburgh girl who was in all probability the prospective mother of that unborn child lamented by Stevenson in the poem, "God Gave To Me a Child in Part," referred to above. The depth of his affection for

her is shown in many of his early lyrics; but when (we must believe because of parental objection), he was forced to break with this girl whose status and antecedents may have justified his family's opposition, and when in 1872 he was sent by his parents to the continent, her love may well have changed to the hatred prophesied in the closing lines of the following verses.

Analyzing the poem from the point of view here taken we are confronted in the first stanza with a quarrel between the lovers. It is barely possible that a misunderstanding, due to some cause no longer ascertainable, led to the break in relations; but far more probably the approaching separation was the cause of a scene in which Stevenson was upbraided and misjudged. The second stanza leads to the surmise that although agreeing to a temporary separation, Stevenson had promised loyalty to the girl if she would remain true to him. In the third stanza, with the passionate expression of his love for her, appears one of those sentences that belong only to his early days – even then very rarely, for later in life he never attributed the baf-

fling cruelty of existence to God. The phrase he used is that of a desperate mood; and how little hope he had of regaining the affection of his beloved is set forth in the last line of the closing stanza where he says, "A while, and she will only hate."

I HAVE A FRIEND; I HAVE A STORY

I have a friend; I have a story;
  I have a life that's hard to live;
I love; my love is all my glory;
  I have been hurt and I forgive.

I have a friend; none could be better;
  I stake my heart upon my friend!
I love; I trust her to the letter;
  Will she deceive me in the end?

She is my love, my life, my jewel;
  My hope, my star, my dear delight.
God! but the ways of God are cruel,--
  That love should bow the knee to spite!

She loves, she hates,—a foul alliance!
  One King shall rule in one estate.
I only love; 'tis all my science;
  A while, and she will only hate.

In its subject matter—its insistence on the "hopeful heart"—the kinship of these verses with so many others of Stevenson's is obvious; but both the date and the place of this composition have a rather special interest, inasmuch as 1871, that vital year when turbulent thoughts and emotions first calmed down sufficiently to permit a clear outlook upon life, has now been left behind. Scotland is replaced by Germany, and at Frankfort, in 1872, we find Stevenson writing in that vein of determined hope which was thenceforth to be his greatest source of strength. It is perhaps the only poem that he wrote in Germany, and one wonders whether the words in his autograph at the bottom of the manuscript and in the German script, recording that "Today for the first time I spoke to Elise," establish so pleasant a meeting with some attractive young girl as to suggest an additional reason for the cheerful tenor of the poem.

From the first to the last stanza Stevenson adheres to a line of imagery effective in itself, and characteristic of the introspective youth

whose thoughts and hopes are so much a part of his daily life as to take on the aspect of personified companions. In such verses as "And new hopes whisper sweetly new delight," and "A troop of shouting hopes keep step with me," he gives voice and form to these creatures of the mind, in a manner that appealingly intensifies our realization of the intimate communion between the poet and his faithful troop of thoughts and aspirations.

HOPES

Tho' day by day old hopes depart,
  Yet other hopes arise
If still we bear a hopeful heart
  And forward-looking eyes.

Of all that entered hand in hand
  With me the dusty plains—
  Look round!—not one remains,
Not one remains of all the jovial band.

Some fell behind, some hastened on;
  Some, scattered far and wide,
  Sought lands on every side;
One way or other, all the band are gone.

Yes, all are gone; and yet, at night,
  New objects of desire
  People the sunken fire
And new hopes whisper sweetly new delight;

And still, flush-faced, new goals I see,
  New finger-posts I find,
  And still thro' rain and wind
A troop of shouting hopes keep step with me.

Tho' day by day old hopes depart,
  Yet other hopes arise
If still we bear a hopeful heart
  And forward-looking eyes.

TO A YOUTH—1872

The "youth" to whom this poem was written, probably in 1872, was almost certainly Stevenson's cousin "Bob," who was later to become noted in fields of art and art criticism. Robert Louis and Robert Alan Stevenson had much in common, both in taste and temperament; and of his elder cousin, Stevenson, in a letter to Sidney Colvin, written in January 1874, said: "He has all the same elements of character that I have: no two people were ever more alike, only that the world has gone more unfortunately for him, although more evenly." The two cousins exchanged verses, counsels and encouragement; and the present poem shows the younger and more famous of the pair offering his friend a message of cheer, based on the philosophy of the all-sufficing value of courageous endeavor.

TO A YOUTH

See, with strong heart O youth, the change
Of mood and season in thy breast.
The intrepid soul that dares the wider range
Shall find securer rest.

7262/9

To a youth.

See, with strong heart O youth, the change
Of mood and season in thy breast.
The intrepid soul that dares the wider range
Shall find securer rest.

The variable moods they breed
Are but as April sun and shower,
That only seem to hinder – truly speed
Against the harvest hour.

Thy ~~line~~ rest in all rough waters cast.
In all fair pasturelands rejoice.
Thee, shall such wealth of trials lead at last
To thy true home of choice.

So shalt thou grow, O youth, at length
Strong in endeavour, strong to bear
As having all things borne, thy lease of strength
Not perishable hair;

The variable moods they breed
Are but as April sun and shower,
That only seem to hinder—truly speed
Against the harvest hour.

Thy net in all rough waters cast,
In all fair pasturelands rejoice,
Thee shall such wealth of trials lead at last
To thy true home of choice.

So shalt thou grow, O youth, at length
Strong in endeavor, strong to bear
As having all things borne, thy lease of
strength
Not perishable hair.

Not the frail tenement of health,
The uneasy mail of stoic pride
(A Nessus-shirt indeed!) the veer of wealth
In strong continual tide.

Not these, but in the constant heart,
That having all ways tried, at last
Holds, stout and patient, to the eternal chart,
Well tested in the past.

O, more than garlands for our heads,
Than drum and trumpet sounding loud,

As the long line of fluttering banners threads
The many-coloured crowd;

That sense of progress won with ease,
Of unconstrained advance in both,
Of the full circle finished—such as trees
Feel in their own free growth.

So shall thy life to plains below,
O not unworthy of the crown!
Equal and pure, by lives yet purer, flow
Companionably down.

HERE HE COMES, BIG WITH STATISTICS —1874

Stevenson took his law studies seriously enough to get his degree as Advocate after creditably passing his examinations for the Bar in 1875; but in the course of taking notes at law lectures he would now and then indulge in verse as a pastime; and the present lines are a very amusing example of his skill in such unacademic performances. We do not know the name of the professor who is here lampooned, but we do know the type, and can well understand Stevenson's contemptuous pity so deftly worded in the last two lines.

HERE HE COMES, BIG WITH STATISTICS

Here he comes, big with statistics,
  Troubled and sharp about fac's.
He has heap of the *Form* that is thinkable—
  The *stuff* that is feeling, he lacks.

Do you envy this whiskered absurdity,
  With *pince-nez* and clerical tie?
Poor fellow, he's blind of a sympathy!
  I'd rather be blind of an eye.

SIT DOON BY ME, MY CANTY FREEND—1874

This drinking song in the Scots dialect is associated with those convivial nights when Stevenson, with some of his fellow students, frequented the taverns of Edinburgh after days generally spent in serious study. It is, of course, the characteristic student drinking song of all ages, with the insistence on the value of tasting the delights of wine, especially in view of the shortness of life.

SIT DOON BY ME, MY CANTY FREEND

Sit doon by me, my canty freend,
  Sit doon, an' snuff the licht!
A boll o' bear 's in ilka glass
  Ye'se drink wi' me the nicht!

Chorus

Let preachers prate o' soberness
  An' brand us ripe for doom,
Yet still we'll lo'e the brimmin' glass,
  And still we'll hate the toom.

There's fire an' life in ilka glass,
  There's blythesomness an' cheer,
There's thirst an' what'll slocken it,
  There's love and laughter here.

O mirk an' black the lee lang gate
  That we maun gang the nicht,
But aye we'll pass the brimmin' glass
  An' aye we'll snuff the licht.

We'll draw the closer roond the fire
  And aye the closer get.
Without, the ways may thaw or freeze,
  Within we're roarin' wet!

IN AUTUMN WHEN THE WOODS ARE RED—1875

The romantic attachment which runs through so much of his verse in the early seventies was not much more than a sentimental memory for Stevenson, when, in 1875, in the company of Walter Simpson he was spending some weeks in France. While early joys are referred to as gone, "A touch of April not yet dead," followed by the picture of Cupid hunting, shows Stevenson's thoughts turning towards past days in Edinburgh. Yet less on the personal side, than as an attempt at French forms of verse, is this poem deserving of special comment. Those days in France, when Stevenson first came into close contact with French authors, ancient and modern, left their valuable impress on his style. English and Scotch literature he already knew well, and he had sat at the feet of the German masters, Goethe and Heine; but not until the date of this poem was his interest marked in French form, and to this continuing interest and expanding study is doubtless due, to no small extent, Stevenson's stylistic development.

IN AUTUMN WHEN THE WOODS ARE RED

In autumn when the woods are red
And skies are gray and clear,
The sportsmen seek the wild fowls' bed
Or follow down the deer;
And Cupid hunts by haugh and head,
By riverside and mere.
I walk, not seeing where I tread
And keep my heart with fear.
Sir, have an eye, on where you tread
And keep your heart with fear,
For something lingers here;
A touch of April not yet dead,
In Autumn when the woods are red
And skies are gray and clear.

THE LOOK OF DEATH IS BOTH SEVERE AND MILD—1875

In commenting, in the previously published Bibliophile edition of Stevenson's poems, on the poem beginning—

> Death, to the dead forevermore,
> A King, a God, the last and best of friends,

the editor fell into an error in calling it the earliest of the poems devoted exclusively to the theme of Death "as the ultimate and fulfilling peace." It was indeed the earliest of such published poems, but the present verses, reflecting the same point of view, antedate the others by at least a brief time, evidence of which is found in the original draft of the previously published poem, where Stevenson used the line, "And comfortably welcomes weary feet," one of the best verses in the present rondeau.

The opening stanza of this poem gives Stevenson's most successful presentation of his conception of Death. In the adjective "severe" is the intimation of the joys of life, forgotten when death appears; while in the antithetical adjective "mild," Death is shorn of its terror.

THE LOOK OF DEATH IS BOTH SEVERE AND MILD

The look of Death is both severe and mild,
And all the words of Death are grave and sweet;
He holds ajar the door of his retreat;
The hermitage of life, it may be styled;
He pardons sinners, cleanses the defiled,
And comfortably welcomes weary feet.
The look of Death is both severe and mild,
And all the words of Death are grave and sweet.

And you that have been loving pleasure wild,
Long known the sins and sorrows of the street,
Lift up your eyes and see, Death waits to greet,
As a kind parent a repentant child.

The bugle sounds the muster roll,
The blacksmith blows the roaring coal;
The look of Death is both severe and mild,
And all the words of Death are grave and sweet.

HER NAME IS AS A WORD OF OLD ROMANCE—1875

This rondeau may very possibly have been written by Stevenson with Mrs. Sitwell in mind. That talented woman, who later became the wife of Sidney Colvin, one of the nearest and most loyal of all of Stevenson's friends, was long the recipient of Stevenson's confidences, and among the persons whom he most admired.

[illegible] is a word [illegible]
[illegible] thrills a careless reader out of sleep
Fine and old art and all things fine and deep
And all things [illegible] and [illegible], the glance
The [illegible] old towns where [illegible] leaded [illegible] houses [illegible] once,
The [illegible] that quaint [illegible] treasures keep –
[illegible] as [illegible]
[illegible] come in English [illegible] in France
[illegible] all the [illegible]
[illegible] delight [illegible] content [illegible] keep
And first [illegible] thoughts and content in a glance
[illegible]

[Was as of God the Father [illegible] shown plain
– Flight after flight, God [illegible]
from grey [illegible].

The [illegible] of armed knights, [illegible]
[illegible].

In the pleasant land of France.
When the grapes are gathered in

The [illegible] is both severe & mild,
And all the words of [illegible] are grave & sweet;
[illegible] retreat;
The [illegible] of life, it may be [illegible];
[illegible]
And [illegible] perfect.
[illegible]

HER NAME IS AS A WORD OF OLD ROMANCE

Her name is as a word of old romance
That thrills a careless reader out of sleep.
Love and old art, and all things pure and deep
Attend on her to honour her advance,—
The brave old wars where bearded heroes
    prance,
The courtly mien that private virtues keep,—
Her name is as a word of old romance.
Peer has she none in England or in France,
So well she knows to rouse dull souls [from
    sleep]
So deftly can she comfort those that weep
And put kind thought and comfort in a glance.
Her name is like a [word of old romance.]

LIGHT AS MY HEART WAS LONG AGO—1875

The same form shown in the verses beginning, "In Autumn When the Woods are Red," is followed here in a poem that comes close to the spirit of some of François Villon's lyrics. Stevenson's story, "A Lodging for the Night," based on Villon's life, and his essay on that inspired and interesting reprobate, are among his most sympathetic works in the fields of the short story and of criticism. And it is curious to reflect that while Thoreau, the ascetic New Englander, was the American to whom Stevenson most instinctively reacted, the licentious Villon was, we fancy, his favorite hero in French literature.

But an even more interesting thought that arises from the present verses and from those that belong to their little group of the year 1875, is that just as Stevenson's apprenticeship as a man of letters in Scotland began with attempts at verse writing, so similarly when, on the continent, he sought to improve his workmanship by the study of French forms, it was to poetry that he first turned, and in poetry that he continued his training.

LIGHT AS MY HEART WAS LONG AGO

Light as my heart was long ago,
Now it is heavy enough;
Now that the weather is rough,
Now that the loud winds come and go,
Winter is here with hail and snow,
Winter is sorry and gruff.
Light as last year's snow,
Where is my love? I do not know;
Life is a pitiful stuff,
Out with it—out with the snuff!
This is the sum of all I know,
Light as my heart was long ago.

GATHER YE ROSES WHILE YE MAY

1875

This is another one of Stevenson's poems written in France, and a charming bit of verse experimentation, where Stevenson weaves the famous lines of Robert Herrick into a more concrete form of old French poetry.

GATHER YE ROSES WHILE YE MAY

Gather ye roses while ye may,
  Old time is still a-flying;
A world where beauty fleets away
  Is no world for denying.
Come lads and lasses, fall to play
  Lose no more time in sighing.

The very flowers you pluck today,
  Tomorrow will be dying;
  And all the flowers are crying,
And all the leaves have tongues to say, —
Gather ye roses while ye may.

SINCE I AM SWORN TO LIVE MY LIFE—1875

Of all the poems belonging to the little group of experimentations in the French style these verses, written at Nemours, are the most successful in their succinct combination of the French spirit and of Stevenson's own attitude towards life, especially in his youth. Not only in form, but likewise in the phrase drawn from the terminology of duelling, or in such an adverb as "gaily,'" we have the French animation, while such lines as "I bear a banner in the strife," and "prudence brawling in the mart," are intimately akin to earlier verses written in Scotland. Then, too, if there is one statement that can always incontrovertibly be made of Stevenson, it is, that he was sworn to lead his life, for all his weakness in health, and his minor weaknesses in character, and that he always carried through, at whatever cost, his main purposes, whether, as in making—against the wishes of his father—literature his profession, or, against the advice of all his friends, in setting forth with little strength and less money on the great adventure of his marriage.

SINCE I AM SWORN TO LIVE MY LIFE

Since I am sworn to live my life,
And not to keep an easy heart,
Some men may sit and drink apart,—
I bear a banner in the strife.

Some can take quiet thought to wife,—
I am all day at tierce and carte;
Since I am sworn to live my life
And not to keep an easy heart.

I follow gaily to the fife,
Leave wisdom bowed above a chart
And prudence brawling in the mart,
And dare misfortune to the knife,
Since I am sworn to live my life.

POEM FOR A CLASS RE-UNION – 1875

Mr. D'Arcy Wentworth Thompson, himself an author and a man described as charming in his personality, was the Master referred to in the third line of this poem. It was at his private school in Frederick Street, Edinburgh, that Stevenson during the years 1864-1867 had formed the friendships that led him, some years later, to attend the class re-union for which this poem was written.

POEM FOR A CLASS RE-UNION

Whether we like it, or don't,
  There's a sort of bond in the fact
That we all by one master were taught,
  By one master were bullied and whackt.
And now all the more when we see
  Our class in so shrunken a state
And we, who were seventy-two,
  Diminished to seven or eight.

One has been married, and one
  Has taken to letters for bread;
Several are over the seas;
  And some I imagine are dead.

And that is the reason, you see,
  Why, as I have the honour to state,
We, who were seventy-two,
  Are now only seven or eight.

One took to heretical views,
  And one, they inform me, to drink;
Some construct fortunes in trade,
  Some starve in professions, I think.
But one way or other, alas!
  Through the culpable action of Fate
We, who were seventy-two
  Are now shrunken to seven or eight.

So, whether we like it or not,
  Let us own there's a bond in the past,
And, since we were playmates at school,
  Continue good friends to the last.
The roll-book is closed in the room,
  The clackan is gone with the slate,
We, who were seventy-two
  Are now only seven or eight.

We shall never, our books on our back,
  Trudge off in the morning again,
To the slide at the janitor's door,
  By the ambush of rods in the lane.

We shall never be sent for the tawse,
  Nor lose places for coming too late;
We shall never be seventy-two,
  Who now are but seven or eight!

We shall never have pennies for lunch,
  We shall never be strapped by Maclean,
We shall never take gentlemen down,
  Nor ever be schoolboys again.
But still for the sake of the past,
  For the love of the days of lang syne
The remnant of seventy-two
  Shall rally together to dine.

I SAW RED EVENING THROUGH THE RAIN—1875

This Edinburgh poem of the year 1875 is another of an unhappy mood, when even the memory of delight has in it a bitter touch. The verses are an original draft, showing the writer groping after the finished form, and thus the second and fourth stanzas should be regarded as varying attempts to phrase the same emotion, rather than as separate finished stanzas of a completed poem.

In the final verse we have again, in the phrase, "the forward way," an indication of Stevenson's characteristic insistence upon the value, however difficult the circumstances of the moment, of continuing towards the goal.

I SAW RED EVENING THROUGH THE RAIN

I saw red evening through the rain
Lower above the steaming plain;
I heard the hour strike small and still,
From the black belfry on the hill.

Thought is driven out of doors tonight
By bitter memory of delight;

The sharp constraint of finger tips,
Or the shuddering touch of lips.

I heard the hour strike small and still,
From the black belfry on the hill.
Behind me I could still look down
On the outspread monstrous town.

The sharp constraint of finger tips,
Or the shuddering touch of lips,
And all old memories of delight
Crowd upon my soul tonight.

Behind me I could still look down
On the outspread feverish town;
But before me, still and grey,
And lonely was the forward way.

LAST NIGHT WE HAD A THUNDER-STORM IN STYLE—1875

This draft of a rondeau written in France in the summer of 1875, seems to be the only one of Stevenson's poems where he patently attempts to incorporate into his verses the spirit of Voltaire. The conception of the thunder as the voice of God is an old one, and the thunderbolts of Jove echo through Greek and Roman literature; but it has remained for Stevenson, in ironic mood, lying in bed "with a Voltairean smile," and while others are praying—to think of the thunder as the noise made by God falling down a flight of stairs. It is the most daring bit of ridiculous imagery in all his writings, and however greatly some may be shocked thereby, its success can hardly be questioned in view of its attainment of its object—the smile that it almost inevitably arouses.

[illegible] in style
[illegible] thrilled the [illegible]
[illegible] ~~my God~~ fell down a pair of stairs
[illegible] thunder ~~boomed and~~ landed all the [illegible]

All mud sat by waterside and steps
To which our boat had been anchored [illegible]

[illegible] in head with a [illegible] smile
[illegible]
The terror of [illegible] quite [illegible]
And [illegible] in [illegible] style
[illegible]

2/4

Our God the golden fell down stairs
The dark [illegible] lightning [illegible]
[illegible]

The [illegible] you might have heard a [illegible]
trickled
I ~~could hear~~ The streaming [illegible]
~~[illegible]~~ dear [illegible] pages

Come Billy stopping both your ears
And then drying with your bandages

LAST NIGHT WE HAD A THUNDER-STORM IN STYLÆ

Last night we had a thunderstorm in style.
The wild lightning streaked the airs,
As though my God fell down a pair of stairs.
The thunder boomed and bounded all the
    while;
All cried and sat by waterside and stile,—
To mop our brow had been our chief of cares.
I lay in bed with a Voltairean smile,
The terror of good, simple guilty pairs,
And made this rondeau in ironic style.
Last night we had a thunderstorm in style.

Our God the Father fell down stairs,
The stark blue lightning went its flight the
    while,
The very rain you might have heard a mile,—
The strenuous faithful buckled to their
    prayers.

O LADY FAIR AND SWEET—1875

In this poem, another of Stevenson's rondeau experiments, does he again address the girl who is the subject of so many of his earlier lyrics? If so, with the succeeding poem, "If I had wings, my lady, like a dove," it forms a pair wherein for the first time she is addressed as "My Lady," a form of appellation in consonance with the formal nature of the old French poetry that was at the time providing Stevenson with models. The two poems, as their references to "winter air" and "blinding sleet" indicate, were presumably written in the winter months of 1875, after Stevenson's return from France, and the "noisy street," and "the doleful city row," point to Edinburgh.

O LADY FAIR AND SWEET

O lady fair and sweet
Arise and let us go
Where comes not rain or snow,
Excess of cold or heat,
To find a still retreat
By willowy valleys low

Where silent rivers flow.
There let us turn our feet
O lady fair and sweet,—
Far from the noisy street,
The doleful city row,
Far from the grimy street,
Where in the evening glow
The summer swallows meet,
The quiet mowers mow.
Arise and let us go,
O lady fair and sweet,
For here the loud winds blow,
Here drifts the blinding sleet.

IF I HAD WINGS, MY LADY, LIKE A DOVE—1875

This is one of the most successful results of Stevenson's studies in French verse, and none the less interesting in that it gives indication of the author's intimate knowledge of the seventeenth century English poets. Such sentences as "To kiss the sweet disparting of her hair," and "spend upon her lips my all of breath" bring up memories of Herrick, Marvell and Waller; and the whole argument of what he would do, if he were a dove, is an argument proper to the pages of that quaint and delightful group of English lyric writers.

IF I HAD WINGS, MY LADY, LIKE A DOVE

If I had wings, my lady, like a dove
  I should not linger here,
But through the winter air toward my love,
  Fly swift toward my love, my fair,
If I had wings, my lady, like a dove.

If I had wings, my lady, like a dove,
  And knew the secrets of the air,

I should be gone, my lady, to my love,
  To kiss the sweet disparting of her hair,
If I had wings, my lady, like a dove.

If I had wings, my lady, like a dove,
  This hour should see my soul at rest,
Should see me safe, my lady, with my love,
  To kiss the sweet division of her breast,
If I had wings, my lady, like a dove.

For all is sweet, my lady, in my love;
  Sweet hair, sweet breast and sweeter eyes
That draw my soul, my lady, like a dove
  Drawn southward by the shining of the
    skies;
For all is sweet, my lady, in my love.

If I could die, my lady, with my love,
  Die, mouth to mouth, a splendid death,
I should take wing, my lady, like a dove,
  To spend upon her lips my all of breath,
If I could die, my lady, with my love.

EH, MAN HENLEY, YOU'RE A DON!
1875

Discussion has been frequent upon Henley's attitude towards the Stevenson of later life, and the over-idealization of the Stevenson of posthumous fame. In the earlier days of their acquaintance, when both were struggling young poets, a very sympathetic friendship existed between them and their minds caught fire from the sparks of each other's conversations. Even their faults of temperament and character brought them closer together. It was only after the public began to set Stevenson on too high a pedestal of virtue that Henley's reaction found voice in expostulation and regret.

Here, in verses written several years before this friendship, from the point of view of literature, reached its consummation in various plays of collaboration, we have a witty and familiar little poem, full of all the tang of the vernacular, and of Stevenson's admiration for Henley; full, too, of encouragement. But in the retrospect, there is a touch of pathos in Stevenson's prophecy, never to be fulfilled, of the time when the whole world

would cheer on his friend Henley. Henley was a born poet, and it is not to be wondered that he was able—to use Stevenson's term—to spit out admirable lines, lines whose wisdom entitled him to the appellation of "Don." But life was cruel to Henley; the world never "patted" his shoulders, as towards the end it patted the shoulders of Stevenson, and these verses, thus faulty in prophecy, have their value mainly as a bright *jeu d'esprit* dating from the younger days of the two men.

EH, MAN HENLEY, YOU'RE A DON!

Eh, man Henley, you're a Don!
Man, but you're a deevil at it!
This ye made an hour agone—
Tht!—like that—as tho ye'd spat it,—
Eh, man Henley.

Better days will come anon
When you'll have your shoulders pattit,
And the whole round world, odd rat it!
Will cry out to cheer you on;
Eh, man Henley, you're a Don!

ALL NIGHT THROUGH, RAVES OR BROODS—1876

We have already called attention to the fact that the winter of 1876 was a period of such melancholy brooding for Stevenson, that he lacked the energy even for correspondence, two or three cheerless letters being the sum total of his efforts of that kind; while two poems of that winter, to be found in the Bibliophile edition of 1916, are among the most despondent that came from his pen.

The present poem belongs to the same month, March, as the pair just mentioned, and it was presumably written on the same day as the short poem entitled "Soon Our Friends Perish." The evidence for this is furnished by Stevenson's marginal comment on the previously published manuscript where, after asking why God has deserted him, he adds: "And why does the damned wind rave in my ears?" In the present poem the lines occur—

> All night through, raves or broods
> The fitful wind among the woods —

the same wind, presumably, as raved on that same night. But, as we so often find in Stev-

enson, even in his darkest moments, he here goes beyond the pessimism of the other poem, and lets his fancy stray into more hopeful fields of memory.

The verses are a first and never-to-be perfected draft, and their incompletion affords an added testimony of the unstrung condition of the poet's mind.

ALL NIGHT THROUGH, RAVES OR BROODS

All night through, raves or broods
The fitful wind among the woods;
All night through, hark! the rain
Beats upon the window pane.

And still my heart is far away,
Still dwells in many a bygone day,
And still follows hope with [rainbow wing]
Adown the golden ways of spring.

In many a wood my fancy strays,
In many unforgotten Mays,
And still I feel the wandering—
[*Manuscript breaks off here.*]

THE RAIN IS OVER AND DONE
(1876?)

The handwriting and context of these verses point to the winter of 1876, and the poem is emphatically in consonance with the moods of those months when Stevenson's outlook on life was darkest. The poem indicates that his despondency was partly due to the recognition of the lessening of his love for the Edinburgh girl who had aroused the great passion of his early manhood.

THE RAIN IS OVER AND DONE

The rain is over and done;
I am aweary, dear, of love;
I look below and look above,
On russet maiden, rustling dame,
And love's so slow and time so long,
And hearts and eyes so blindly wrong,
I am half weary of my love,
And pray that life were done.

THERE WHERE THE LAND OF LOVE—1876

As the winter of 1876 gave way to spring, Stevenson's spirits greatly improved. His letters to friends were far more numerous in the second half of that year than in the first half, and the charm of Nature reasserted its power over his spirits. In the present fragmentary poem, we find the first lyric indication of the re-appearance of Nature's appeal, though even here, in the comment in his autograph where the briefness of life is imaged forth as a flash between the past and the future, the poet is seen as still under the sway of the sombre thoughts that have darkened his winter.

THERE WHERE THE LAND OF LOVE

There where the land of love,
Grown about by fragrant bushes,
Sunken in a winding valley,
Where the clear winds blow
And the shadows come and go,
And the cattle stand and low

And the sheep bells and the linnets
Sing and tinkle musically.
Between the past and the future,
Those two black infinities
Between which our brief life
Flashes a moment and goes out.

LOVE IS THE VERY HEART OF SPRING—1876

In foregoing pages it has been shown how, in 1875, while in France, Stevenson had become interested in forms of poetry where the element of the refrain comes musically into play. The present verses are his most sustained attempt at this kind of poetry, and some may feel that the manner wherein he introduces a few lines in constant repetition is so tuneful that the poem becomes a really successful paean of love and springtime.

LOVE IS THE VERY HEART OF SPRING

Love is the very heart of spring;
  Flocks fall to loving on the lea
And wildfowl love upon the wing,
  When spring first enters like a sea.

When spring first enters like a sea
  Into the heart of everything,
Bestir yourselves religiously,
  Incense before love's altar bring.

Incense before love's altar bring,
  Flowers from the flowering hawthorn tree,
Flowers from the margin of the spring,
  For all the flowers are sweet to see.

Love is the very heart of spring;
  When spring first enters like a sea
Incense before love's altar bring,
  And flowers while flowers are sweet to see.

Bring flowers while flowers are sweet to see;
  Love is almighty, love's a King,
Incense before love's altar bring,
  Incense before love's altar bring.

Love's gifts are generous and free
  When spring first enters like a sea;
When spring first enters like a sea,
  The birds are all inspired to sing.

Love is the very heart of spring,
  The birds are all inspired to sing,
Love's gifts are generous and free;
  Love is almighty, love's a King.

AT MORNING ON THE GARDEN SEAT—1880

In his volume entitled "Literary Friends and Acquaintances," William Dean Howells quotes the saying of Lowell's "which he was fond of repeating at the menace of any form of the transcendental, 'Remember the dinner bell.'" There is always something comforting in the recognition on the part of philosopher or poet of man's interest in so universal and appealing a theme as that of food and drink. In the present delightful little poem, probably written at Silverado, Stevenson not only declares that he dearly loves to drink and eat, and relates how the morning star, the dew and perfumes, the sweet air of dawn all put him in the humor for food, but quaintly emphasizes his avowal by signing his name in full, as if to a credo.

AT MORNING ON THE GARDEN SEAT

At morning on the garden seat
I dearly love to drink and eat;
To drink and eat, to drink and sing,
At morning, in the time of spring.
In winter honest men retire
And sup their possets by the fire;
But when the spring comes round again, you
  see,
The garden breakfast pleases me.
The morning star that melts on high,
The fires that cleanse the changing sky,
The dew and perfumes all declare
It is the hour to banish care.
The air that smells so new and sweet,
All put me in the cue to eat.
  A pot at five, a crust at four,
  At half past six a pottle more.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

At morning in the garden seat
I dearly love to drink and eat.
To drink and eat, to drink and sing,
At morning, in the time of Spring.
In winter honest men retire
And sup their possets by the fire,
But when the Spring comes round again, you see,
The garden breakfast pleases me.
The morning star that meets our eyes
The fires that cleanse the changing sky,
The dews and birds, they all declare
It is the time to banish care.
The air that smells so new and sweet,
All put me in the cue to eat.
A pint at nine, a crust at four
At half past six a little more.

Robert Louis Stevenson

IF I COULD ARISE AND TRAVEL AWAY — (1880?)

In the previous two volumes of Stevenson poems issued by The Bibliophile Society, there was occasion to remark on the coincidence in metre (and a very unusual metre) in Stevenson's poem beginning "I Who All the Winter Through" and in Kipling's "Mandalay." The superlative advantage of Kipling's famous verses lies, of course, in the fact that Mandalay is a place where "there ain't no ten commandments, and a man can raise a thirst." Curiously enough, in the present poem, again antedating Kipling's, Stevenson longs for a land where all men can drink with "perfect zest," and where "we're done with the ten commandments." No charge of plagiarism, however remote, is imputed to Kipling; but the coincidence is certainly interesting. As to the date of the poem, here tentatively suggested as 1880, one cannot be sure; but the handwriting and context seem to point to the Californian days.

IF I COULD ARISE AND TRAVEL AWAY

If I could arise and travel away
Over the plains of the night and the day,
I should arrive at a land at last
Where all of our sins and sorrows are past
And we're done with the Ten Commandments.

The name of the land I must not tell;
Green is the grass and cool the well:
Virtue is easy to find and to keep,
And the sinner may lie at his pleasure and
  sleep
By the side of the Ten Commandments.

Income and honor, and glory and gold
Grow on the bushes all over the wold;
And if ever a man has a touch of remorse,
He eats of the flower of the golden gorse,
And to hell with the Ten Commandments.

He goes to church in his Sunday's best;
He eats and drinks with perfect zest;
And whether he lives in heaven or hell
Is more than you or I can tell;
But he's DONE with the Ten Commandments.

If I could arise and ~~go~~ travel away
Over the ~~hills~~ plains of night and the day,
~~[illegible] the [illegible] of the morning~~

I should arrive at a land at last
Where all of our ~~dreams are [illegible] ended~~ sins and sorrows are past
~~[illegible]~~ And [illegible] with the ten command[illegible].

The name of the land I must not tell;
Green is the grass and cool the well;
Virtue is easy to find and to keep,
And the sinner may live at his pleasure [illegible]
By the side of the Ten Commandments.

[illegible] and [illegible], and glory and gold
Grow on the bushes all over the wold;
And if ever a man [illegible] of remorse,
He eats of the flower of the golden gorse,
And he lives within the Ten Commandments.

He goes to church in his Sunday's best;
He eats and drinks with perfect zest;
And whether he lives in heaven or hell
Is more than you and I can tell
But he's down in the Ten Commandments.

~~Good old ale, by green old lanes~~

When ~~through the summer dust we go~~ still pursue

~~The church spire and the distance~~ blue.

Good old ale, mild or pale,

India ale and Burton;

Give me a vat to swim a whale

When far along the ~~summer lanes~~ verdant dale,

The far off spire appears;

The mind reverts to Burton ale

And dreams of dif[fere]nt beers,

The sanded parlour cool and dark

~~The~~

~~in that dark corner~~

Come, we have played, and come let us all go home;

The fire is lit, the day begins to [wane]

The birds begin to roost ~~and~~ the stars begin to shine

The lamps along the city beckon home;

~~Come and let us all and all go home to dine~~

GOOD OLD ALE, MILD OR PALE—(1880?)

Again a point of interrogation must follow the date offered as the probable period of composition. At any rate, Stevenson was away from England or Scotland; and it is amusing to find his mind reverting not—as so often in other poems written in America or the South Seas—to home folks and sentimental aspects of early life, but to the ales and beers of his native land. The extent of his thirst is indicated in one of the most whimsical of all his lines, "give me a vat to swim a whale," which may echo the thoughts of not a few latter-day American readers.

GOOD OLD ALE, MILD OR PALE

Good old ale, mild or pale,
  India ale and Burton,
Give me a vat to swim a whale.
When far along the verdant dale
  The far off spire appears,
The mind reverts to Burton's ale
  And dreams of different beers.

NAY, BUT I FANCY SOMEHOW, YEAR BY YEAR—1880

The theme of this poem establishes its approximate date, and though it may possibly have been written in the summer of 1880, more probably it belongs to the little cluster of poems for Fanny Osbourne that were offered to her by Stevenson prior to their marriage in May.

The continuation and growth of their love was for Stevenson a fixed conviction that he incorporated into many of the poems written for his wife. Here it takes form in lines that are preceded by phrases referring directly to the hardships of Stevenson's present and his immediate past. The "my land" is California, and the sea, that Pacific which was to encompass the closing years of Stevenson's life. The poem ends with two lines, notable in their connotation. In "Till all the plain be quickened with the moon," there is the suggestion of romantic love, and in the final line we have in "the lit windows," the thought of domestic life, of the happiness of home.

The sonnet form here adopted is one that Stevenson had used, though not very often, in

UNPUBLISHED POEM

Nay; but I fancy year by year, [5/8]
An easy road beneath my feet,
Nay, but I fancy as the seasons fleet,
~~To all~~ grows ever dearer to my dear.
Hope is so strong ~~within me~~ that it has conquered fear;
~~Love is so strong that it~~
Love follows, crowned and glad for lust's defeat:
And the road wanders amid woodlands sweet;
~~And the road bears me ever nearer to my dear~~

Nay but I fancy somehow, year by year,
The hard road waxing easier to my feet;
Nay but I fancy, as the seasons fleet,
~~To all~~ [some] grows ever dearer to my dear.
Hope is so strong that it has conquered fear.
Love follows, crowned and glad for ~~lust's~~ [fear's] defeat;
Down the long afternoon that holds us, sweet,
Pass and grow ever dearer and more near.
Pass and go ~~[illegible]~~ [onward] into that wild land
Where the blonde harvests slumber all the noon,
And the ~~sand~~ [pale] sand-hills bend about the sea:
Pass, and go forward ever hand in hand,
Till all the plain be hallowed with the moon,
And the lit windows beckon ~~[illegible]~~
by the sea.

the days of his apprenticeship in verse some ten years earlier. During the Samoan period he now and then resorted to an irregular sonnet form; but this is as far as we know, the only exact sonnet of the intermediate period. Perhaps his acquaintance with French poetry led him to admit the two lines ending with the same sound — *feet, defeat* — a practice eschewed by the best English sonneteers.

NAY, BUT I FANCY SOMEHOW, YEAR BY YEAR

Nay, but I fancy somehow, year by year
  The hard road waxing easier to my feet;
  Nay, but I fancy as the seasons fleet
  I shall grow ever dearer to my dear.
Hope is so strong that it has conquered fear;
  Love follows, crowned and glad for fear's
    defeat.
  Down the long future I behold us, sweet,
Pass, and grow ever dearer and more near;
Pass and go onward into that mild land
  Where the blond harvests slumber all the
    noon,
  And the pale sky bends downward to the
    sea;

Pass, and go forward, ever hand in hand,
Till all the plain be quickened with the moon,
And the lit windows beckon o'er the lea.

MY WIFE AND I, IN ONE ROMANTIC COT—1880

The early months of Stevenson's married life were spent at Silverado, a deserted California mining camp; and it was there that he wrote this draft of a poem never brought to perfection. Its main interest lies in its revelation of the things that Stevenson and his wife were hoping someday to have—she, a horse and a garden, and he, a yacht and a cellar well stocked with wine. These wishes bring to mind Stevenson's sailing, among the islands of the South Sea, and Mrs. Stevenson's many hours of happy and arduous hoeing in the garden at Vailima. But the final wish, to have their friends share in the pleasures of their household, was not to be fulfilled in that far off island which was their only real home.

The well, knell, hell, dell, etc., in the margin of the manuscript, as shown in the accompanying facsmile, remind us of similar gatherings of ammunition by Stevenson for other poems.

MY WIFE AND I, IN ONE ROMANTIC COT

My wife and I, in one romantic cot,
The world forgetting, by the world forgot,
Or high as the gods upon Olympus dwell,
Pleased with what things we have, and pleased as well
To wait in hope for those which we have not.

She vows in ardour for a horse to trot;
I stake my votive prayers upon a yacht.
Which shall be first remembered, who can tell,—
My wife or I?

Harvests of flowers o'er all our garden plot,
She dreams; and I to enrich a darker spot,—
My unprovided cellar. Both to swell
Our narrow cottage huge as a hotel,
Where portly friends may come and share the lot
Of wife and I.

I saw the [illegible] up [illegible] down,

But the green meadows [illegible] [illegible],

well
[illegible]
tell
dell
bell
yell
sell
[illegible]

My wife and I, in our romantic cot,
The world forgetting, by the world forgot,
~~Behold the evening and the morning go~~
~~On~~ High as the gods upon Olympus dwell,
~~And what we have we like extremely well,~~
~~And what we can't obtain~~
Pleased with ~~the~~ what things we have; and pleased as well
To wait in hope for those which we have not.

She [illegible] in action [illegible] house to [illegible];
I strike my [illegible] fingers upon a [illegible];
Which shall be first remembered, who can tell,
~~[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] well [illegible]~~,

My wife or ~~and~~ I?

~~An excellent old red wine~~
Harvests diffusing o'er all our garden plot,
She dreams; and I to ~~[illegible]~~ enrich a darker closet
My unprovided cellar, ~~[illegible]~~ [illegible] to [illegible] ~~[illegible]~~
~~[illegible] [illegible] aspirations [illegible] as [illegible]~~
~~And [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]~~

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] as [illegible]
[illegible] ~~[illegible]~~ [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

My wife and I.

YES, I REMEMBER, AND, STILL REMEMBER WAILING—1881

The comment at the bottom of the manuscript page—

> Brown in his haste demanded this from me:
> I in my leisure made the present verse

would seem to establish the place, as well as the year of the composition of these verses, wherein the poet uses, for metrical experimentation, the memories of his first voyage to America. The discussions of John Addington Symonds, Horatio F. Brown and Stevenson—men interested in certain classical forms of verse—led Stevenson to various successful efforts in English Alcaics, a group of such poems being included in the two-volume Bibliophile edition of Stevenson's poems. With this group belong the present verses, written at Davos in 1881; and they are of special interest because the attempt in rhymeless verses in the first eleven lines is followed by a rhymed rendering of the same theme in the last eight lines.

We know of no other poem of Stevenson's, based on that adventurous sea trip when, after having left home without announcing his

plans or bidding his friends farewell, the young author, ill and almost penniless, travelled on an emigrant ship toward a strange land where the woman he loved was awaiting him. It was in 1879 that Stevenson embarked; and the closing months of that year and the early months of 1880, constitute the period when his fortune was at its nadir, with sickness, and moments almost of starvation and despair, very nearly pulling him under. But even so, numerous poems of those days give evidence of that will and courage which he never quite lost, and in the present verses we find the poor emigrant raising his voice in songs of home. By the time — two years later — when he recorded in these experimental verses the memories of that difficult ocean voyage, home associations had been renewed, and he was again in Europe, with a wife who had at once won her way into the affections of his parents.

YES, I REMEMBER, AND STILL REMEMBER WAILING

Yes, I remember, and still remember wailing
Wind in the clouds and rainy sea-horizon,

Yes I remember and, still remember wailing

[illegible] in the shrouds, and [illegible] sea horizon,
[illegible] and lit in the [illegible] glimmering:
[illegible] in the [illegible] singing, [illegible] [illegible]

ships
Emigrant [illegible] [illegible] songs [illegible].

P[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] the billows
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible].

[illegible] and [illegible] round the mighty [illegible] verse

[illegible] [illegible], endless contradiction;

[illegible] [illegible] rose [illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible] sea of [illegible]

Homes and [illegible], old, new [illegible] [illegible]

R. L. Stevenson. [illegible]

[illegible] the stormy deep [illegible] transatlantic,
[illegible] [illegible] gigantic,
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible],
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] and [illegible] from [illegible]-[illegible],
[illegible] across the [illegible] [illegible],
still [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] in [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] me.
[illegible] [illegible] made [illegible] [illegible]!

Though many
Though many
Though many

Empty and lit with a low nocturnal glimmer;
How in the strong, deep-plunging, transatlantic
Emigrant ship we sang our songs in chorus.
Piping, the gull flew by, the roaring billows
Jammed and resounded round the mighty vessel;
Infinite uproar, endless contradiction;
Yet over all our chorus rose, reminding
Wanderers here at sea of unforgotten
Homes and the undying, old, memorial loves.

R. L. STEVENSON, ESQ.

Here in the strong, deep-plunging transatlantic
Emigrant ship the waves arose gigantic;
Piping the gull flew by, the roaring billows
Rose and appeared before the eye like pillows.
Piping the gull flew by, the roaring waves
Rose and appeared from subter-ocean caves,
And as across the smoothing sea we roam,
Still and anon we sang our songs of home.

Brown in his haste demanded this from me;
I in my leisure made the present verse.

OF SCHOONERS, ISLANDS AND MAROONS—1881

Although *Treasure Island* was not published in book form until 1883, Stevenson had well-nigh completed it during his residence at Braemar in 1881, and his letter of the 25th of August of that year, addressed to Henley and signed, "R. L. S., Author of Boy Stories," shows what fun he was having in the writing of this tale. "The Sea Cook, or Treasure Island, A Story for Boys," was the title Stevenson had in mind for the book that was the first to bring him fame; and he wrote to Henley: "If this don't fetch the kids, why, then, they have gone rotten since my day." It is that thought which underlies the present poem, written assuredly as a sort of rhymed preface for his "ripping" novel of adventure among the Buccaneers. If boys have grown too wise to care for treasure islands and derelict ships, for villainous mariners singing "Yo ho ho! and a bottle of rum," why then let the tale remain unread, beside the writings of Kingston and Ballantyne and "Cooper of the land and wave." (This, by the way, is the only reference in Stevenson's verses to Coop-

er.) But the budding romancer probably had no misgivings, and the young lad, Lloyd Osbourne, owing to whom the book was written, and who gave orders that no women were to appear in the story, was there to indicate by his enthusiasm the reception that *Treasure Island* was to receive from the youth of the world. Like so many others of his prefaces, whether in verse or in prose, this one was not used when the book was published; and its present first appearance in type is an especially interesting contribution to Stevenson literature.

It is worth adding, perhaps, that when Stevenson, writing from the "*Schooner* Equator, *at sea, 190 miles off Samoa, Monday, December 2nd, 1889,*" gave his friend Colvin — later Sir Sidney — the plan of his proposed book, *The South Seas,* he began with the heading "Part I. *General. Of Schooner*s, *islands, and maroons*" — that is, with the first line of this poem.

OF SCHOONERS, ISLANDS AND MAROONS

Of Schooners, Islands and Maroons,
  And Buccaneers and Buried Gold,
And Torches red and rising moons,
  If all the old romance retold
Exactly in the ancient way,
  Can please, as me they pleased of old,
The wiser youngsters of today—
So be it, and fall on! If not,—
  If all the boys on better things
Have set their spirits and forgot—
So be it, and fall on! If not—
  If all the boys on solid food
Have set their fancies, and forgot
  Kingston and Ballantyne the brave
And Cooper of the land and wave,
  So be it also; and may I
And my late-born piratic brood
  Unread beside the ancients lie!
So be it and fall on! If not,—[1]
  If studied youth no longer crave,—
Their ancients' appetites forgot,—
  Kingston and Ballantyne the brave,

[1] The following eight lines were evidently intended by Stevenson as alternatives for the eight preceding lines.

For Cooper of the sea and wood—
  So be it also; and may I
And all my pirates share the grave
  Where these and their creations lie.

HERE LIES EROTION—1884

In connection with Stevenson's translations from Martial—included in the earlier Bibliophile edition,—translations that embodied two of the Roman poet's tributes to the little slave child and dearly loved playmate who died at the age of six,–it was natural to dwell on the fact that Martial's most winning poems were those concerning Erotion. The present verses show Stevenson attempting an imitation in couplets, rather than a verbal translation of Martial (Book V, No. 35), and with the previously printed poems, one beginning, "Here lies Erotion whom at six years old Fate pilfered," and the other, "This girl was sweeter than the song of swans," they constitute a modern poet's group of adaptations of an unusual theme of ancient literature.

The original poem, "De Erotio," has only ten lines. Stevenson follows them fairly closely, the changes of the actual names of Erotion's parents (Fronte and Flaccila), to "mother and sire," and the introduction of the line "Where the great ancients sit with reverend face," being the only departures from the original worthy of note.

At the bottom of his Ms. appear two alternate lines as follows:-

> That swam light-footed as the thistle-burr
> On thee O mother earth, be light on her.

HERE LIES EROTION

Mother and sire, to you do I commend
Tiny Erotion, who must now descend,
A child, among the shadows, and appear
Before hell's bandog and hell's gondolier.
Of six hoar winters she had felt the cold,
But lacked six days of being six years old.
Now she must come, all playful, to that place
Where the great ancients sit with reverend
  face;
Now lisping, as she used, of whence she came,
Perchance she names and stumbles at my
  name.
O'er these so fragile bones, let there be laid
A plaything for a turf; and for that maid
That ran so lightly footed in her mirth
Upon thy breast—lie lightly, mother earth!

TO PRIAPUS—(1884?)

In Martial's works (VI - 16) this poem appears under the title "Ad Priapum." Priapus, as the deity symbolizing the fruitfulness of nature, was the recipient of the first fruits and the first flowers, and his image with the significance of regeneration often appeared on the tombs of the ancient world. To him, therefore, Martial addresses himself in this invocation on behalf of the dead.

The entire tenor of the verses, the desire that none but children shall enter the "green enclosure," would seem to indicate that this too was a poem for the beloved "Erotion;" and although Stevenson has lengthened the four lines of the Latin into six lines of English, and has taken the liberty in the fifth line of naming a definite age, he nevertheless preserves the spirit and the sentiment of the original.

TO PRIAPUS

Lo, in thy green enclosure here,
Let not the ugly or the old appear,
Divine Priapus; but with leaping tread
The schoolboy, and the golden head
Of the slim filly twelve years old—
Let these to enter and to steal be bold!

AYE, MON, IT'S TRUE–1885

In a letter written from Bonallie Towers, Bournemouth, in February, 1885, to John Addington Symonds, Stevenson tells of "two thundering influenzas" that he had caught in the previous August and November. He had recovered with difficulty from the latter attack. His ill health had "painfully upset" Mrs. Stevenson, and he himself confesses to feeling "a little old and fagged." Yet, as always, his courage and his philosophical humor stood him in good stead; and even as he lay very ill on his sick bed he could write such a bright little poem as the following lines in the Scots dialect.

AYE, MON, IT'S TRUE

Aye mon, it's true; I'm no that weel.
Close prisoner to my lord the de'il,
As weak 's a bit o' aipple peel,
    Or ingan parin',
Packed like a codfish in a creel,
    I lie disparin'.

Mon, it's a cur-ous thing to think
How bodies sleep and eat and drink;
I'm no that weel, but micht be waur
An' doubt na mony bodies are.

FAR OVER SEAS AN ISLAND IS
(1889?)

The date of the manuscript is uncertain, but the contents would seem to indicate that it was written prior to Stevenson's setting forth upon his voyage to the islands of the Pacific. "Tossing palms" belong to the Southern Seas,[1] and Stevenson was indeed "done with all," when he took up his abode in the far off island of Samoa. His recognition of the modes of restlessness which would assail him in a place so distant from all the friends and scenes of his past life, here leads him to call upon those resources of the spirit and of the imagination that are the mainstay of man in whatever abode. And so, after asking himself, —

> Have I no castle then in Spain,
> No island of the mind?

he charges his soul to seek those enchanted islands and streams of desire that are not charted on any map.

[1] In Stevenson's description of the South Sea Island of Tutuila he says: "Groves of cocoanut run high on the hills;" and on entering the bay of Oa, he exclaims, "At the first sight, my mind was made up; the bay of Oa was the place for me!"

FAR OVER SEAS AN ISLAND IS

Far over seas an island is
  Whereon when day is done
A grove of tossing palms
  Are printed on the sun.
And all about the reefy shore
  Blue breakers flash and fall.
There shall I go, methinks,
  When I am done with all.

Have I no castle then in Spain,
  No island of the mind,
Where I can turn and go again
  When life shall prove unkind?
Up, sluggard soul! and far from here
  Our mountain forest seek;
Or nigh enchanted island, steer
  Down the desired creek.[1]

[1] To these lines, which Stevenson wrote in one of his note books, he added the following verses which, although in a different meter, seem to be a continuation of the same thought.

There, where I never was,
  There no moral laws,
Pleasures as thick as haws
  Bloom on the bush!
Incomes and honours grow
  Thick on the hills.
O naught the iron horse avails,
  And naught the enormous ship.

ON THE GORGEOUS HILLS OF MORNING

(SAMOAN PERIOD, 1890-1894)

This page of verse, unfinished though the poem is, has a very personal charm both in the actual picture that it presents (Stevenson, abed, in the forest storm, listening to the early symphony of the birds), and in showing the thoughts that stirred him despite "the merry piping." Though repining was not his way, his letters often indicate his longing for that Scotland which he was never to see again; and here, after the note of tropic beauty has been struck in the initial portion of his poem, he evokes the picture of the far-away Highlands with their "old plain men," and their "young fair lasses." And as cut off from all the activities and interests of his former life he reflects on the remoteness of the secluded island from which he can no longer fare, the great forests seem to him mere "empty places," mocked at not only by life but even by death.

ON THE GORGEOUS HILLS OF MORNING

On the gorgeous hills of morning
A sudden piping of birds,
A piping of all the forest, high and merry and
    clear,
I lay in my tent and listened;
I lay and heard them long,
In the dark of the moonlit morning,
The birds of the night at song.
I lay and listened and heard them
Sing ere the day was begun;
Sing and sink into
Silence one by one.
I lay in my bed and looked—
Paler than starlight or lightning
A glimmer . . .

In the highlands in the country places
Where the old plain men have rosy faces,
  And the young fair lasses
    Quiet eyes,
Light and heat begin, begin and strengthen,
And the shadows turn and shrink and
    lengthen,
As the great sun passes in the skies.

Life and death go by with heedful faces —
Mock with silent steps these empty places.

RIVERS AND WINDS AMONG THE TWISTED HILLS —1890-1894

Obviously a fragment of a poem written in the Samoan days, these verses show how entirely Stevenson has left behind him the active and intense emotional life of the past, and now, among the rivers and winds and twisted hills of his South Sea island, keeps the tranquil brow of reposeful thought, though well knowing that Death is not far off.

RIVERS AND WINDS AMONG THE TWISTED HILLS

Rivers and winds among the twisted hills,
Hears, and his hearing slowly fills,
And hearkens, and his face is lit,
Life facing, Death pursuing it.

As with heaped bees at hiving time
The boughs are clotted, as (ere prime)
Heaven swarms with stars, or the city street
Pullulates with passing feet;
So swarmed my senses once, that now
Repose behind my tranquil brow,
Unsealed, asleep, quiescent, clear;
Now only the vast shapes I hear—

Hear — and my hearing slowly fills —
Rivers and winds among the twisting hills,
And hearken — and my face is lit —
Life facing, Death pursuing it.

I AM A HUNCHBACK, YELLOW FACED

(UNCERTAIN DATE)

This little poem may possibly belong to that juvenile period when Stevenson was somewhat under the influence of Heine. But while the German poet might easily have depicted hunchback and harlot as being of one class with the fellow mortal whom they accost, the "friendly hand" that Stevenson holds out as the poem closes is extended without that ironical gesture which Heine would have been inclined to make.

I AM A HUNCHBACK, YELLOW FACED

I am a hunchback, yellow faced,—
  A hateful sight to see,—
'T is all that other men can do
  To pass and let me be.

I am a woman,—my hair is white—
  I was a drunkard's lass;
The gin dances in my head,—
  I stumble as I pass.

I am a man that God made at first,
  And teachers tried to harm;
Here hunchback, take my friendly hand,—
  Good woman take my arm.

I LOOK ACROSS THE OCEAN

(DATE UNCERTAIN)

The following verses show a poem not altogether complete, although it seems that another two lines might have rounded it out. In any case, it is unique among the manuscripts of Stevenson, in that it is addressed to America. It is written in a spirit of great faith in the future of our country and exhibits an almost mystic tensity in the hope it cherishes for what America shall achieve.

I LOOK ACROSS THE OCEAN

I look across the ocean,
  And kneel upon the shore,
I look out seaward — westward,
  My heart swells more and more.

I see the great new nation,
  New spirit and new scope
Rise there from the sea's round shoulder,—
  A splendid sun of hope!

I see it and I tremble —
  My voice is full of tears —
America tread softly,
  You bear the fruit of years.

Tread softly—you are pregnant
And growing near your time—
[*Manuscript breaks off here*]

Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date: May 2009

PreservationTechnologies
A WORLD LEADER IN COLLECTIONS PRESERVATION
111 Thomson Park Drive
Cranberry Township, PA 16066
(724) 779-2111

WERT BOOKBINDING
JAN 1989
Grantville, PA