

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON



**MEMOIR OF
FLEEMING JENKIN**

EXTENDED ANNOTATED EDITION

Memoir Of Fleeming Jenkin

Robert Louis Stevenson

Contents:

[Robert Louis Stevenson - A Biographical Primer](#)

[Memoir Of Fleeming Jenkin](#)

[Preface To The American Edition.](#)

[Chapter I.](#)

[Chapter II. 1833-1851.](#)

[Chapter III. 1851-1858.](#)

[Chapter IV. 1859-1868.](#)

[Chapter V.—Notes Of Telegraph Voyages, 1858 To 1873.](#)

[Chapter VI.—1869-1885.](#)

[Chapter VII. 1875-1885.](#)

[Appendix.](#)

[Footnotes](#)

Memoir Of Fleeming Jenkin, R. L. Stevenson
Jazzybee Verlag Jürgen Beck
86450 Altenmünster, Loschberg 9
Germany

ISBN: 9783849642570

www.jazzybee-verlag.de
www.facebook.com/jazzybeeverlag
admin@jazzybee-verlag.de

Frontcover: Based on a work by Kim Traynor, licenced under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported license. More information on this licence and re-usage of the work can be obtained at <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/deed.en>.

Robert Louis Stevenson - A Biographical Primer

By Sidney Colvin

The Scottish novelist, essayist, poet, and traveller was born at 8 Howard Place, Edinburgh, on 13 Nov. 1850. He was baptised Robert Louis Balfour, but from about his eighteenth year dropped the use of the third christian name and changed the spelling of the second to Louis; signing thereafter Robert Louis in full, and being called always Louis by his family and intimate friends. On both sides of the house he was sprung from capable and cultivated stock. His father, Thomas Stevenson [q. v.], was a member of the distinguished Edinburgh firm of civil engineers [see under Stevenson, Robert; Stevenson, David; and Stevenson, Alan]. His mother was Margaret Isabella (d. 14 May 1897), youngest daughter of Lewis Balfour, for many years minister of the parish of Colinton in Midlothian, and grandson to James Balfour (1705–1795) [q. v.], professor at Edinburgh first of moral philosophy and afterwards of the

law of nature and of nations. His mother's father was described by his grandson in the essay called 'The Manse.' Robert Louis was his parents' only child. His mother was subject in early and middle life to chest and nerve troubles, and her son may have inherited from her some of his constitutional weakness as well as of his intellectual vivacity and taste for letters. His health was infirm from the first. He suffered from frequent bronchial affections and acute nervous excitability, and in the autumn of 1858 was near dying of a gastric fever. In January 1853 his parents moved to No. 1 Inverleith Terrace, and in May 1857 to 17 Heriot Row, which continued to be their Edinburgh home until the father's death in 1887. Much of his time was also spent in the manse at Colinton on the water of Leith, the home of his maternal grandfather. If he suffered much as a child from the distresses, he also enjoyed to the full the pleasures, of imagination. He was eager in every kind of play, and made the most of all the amusements natural to an only child kept much indoors by ill-health. The child in him never died; and the zest with which in after life he would throw himself into the pursuits of children and young boys was on his own account as much as on theirs. This spirit is illustrated in the pieces which he wrote and published under the title 'A Child's Garden of Verses,' as well as in a number of retrospective essays and fragments referring with peculiar insight and freshness of memory to that period of life ('Child's Play,' 'Notes of Childhood,' 'Rosa quo locorum,' and others unpublished).

Such a child was naturally a greedy reader, or rather listener to reading; for it was not until his eighth year that he learned to read easily or habitually to himself. He began early to take pleasure in attempts at composition: a 'History of Moses,' dictated in his sixth year, and an account of 'Travels in Perth,' in his ninth, are still extant. Ill-health prevented his getting much regular or continuous

schooling. He attended first (1858–61) a preparatory school kept by a Mr. Henderson in India Street; and next (at intervals for some time after the autumn of 1861) the Edinburgh Academy. For a few months in the autumn of 1863 he was at a boarding-school kept by a Mr. Wyatt at Spring Grove, near London; from 1864 to 1867 his education was conducted chiefly at Mr. Thompson's private school in Frederick Street, Edinburgh, and by private tutors in various places to which he travelled for his own or his parents' health. Such travels included frequent visits to health resorts in Scotland; occasional excursions with his father on his nearer professional rounds, e.g. to the coasts and lighthouses of Fife in 1864; and also longer journeys—to Germany and Holland in 1862, to Italy in 1863, to the Riviera in the spring of 1864, and to Torquay in 1865 and 1866. From 1867 the family life became more settled between Edinburgh and Swanston cottage, a country home in the Pentlands which Thomas Stevenson first rented in that year, and the scenery and associations of which inspired not a little of his son's work in literature (see especially *A Pastoral* and *St. Ives*).

In November of the same year, 1867, Louis Stevenson was entered as a student at the Edinburgh University, and for several winters attended classes there with such regularity as his health and inclinations permitted. According to his own account (essay on *A College Magazine*; *Life of Fleeming Jenkin, &c.*), he was alike at school and college an incorrigible idler and truant. But outside the field of school and college routine he showed eager curiosity and activity of mind. 'He was of a conversable temper,' so he says of himself, 'and insatiably curious in the aspects of life; and spent much of his time scraping acquaintance with all classes of man and woman kind.' At the same time he read precociously and omnivorously in the belles-lettres, including a very wide range of English poetry, fiction, and

essays, and a fairly wide range of French; and was a genuine student of Scottish history, and to some extent of history in general. He had been intended as a matter of course to follow the family profession of engineering; and from 1868 his summer excursions took a professional turn. In that and the two following years he went to watch the works of the firm in progress at various points on the mainland and in the northern and western islands. He was a favourite, though a very irregular, pupil of the professor of engineering, Fleeming Jenkin [q. v.]; and must have shown some aptitude for the calling hereditary in his family, inasmuch as in 1871 he received the silver medal of the Edinburgh Society of Arts for a paper on a suggested improvement in lighthouse apparatus. The outdoor and seafaring parts of the profession were in fact wholly to his taste, as in spite of his frail health he had a passion for open-air exercise and adventure (though not for sports). Office work, on the other hand, was his aversion, and his physical powers were unequal to the workshop training necessary to the practical engineer. Accordingly in this year, 1871, it was agreed that he should give up the hereditary profession and read for the bar.

For several ensuing years Stevenson attended law classes in the university, giving to the subject some serious although fitful attention, until he was called to the bar in 1875. But it was on another side that this 'pattern of an idler,' to use his own words, was gradually developing himself into a model of unsparing industry. From childhood he had never ceased to practise writing, and on all his truantries went pencil and copybook in hand. Family and school magazines in manuscript are extant of which, between his thirteenth and sixteenth years, he was editor, chief contributor, and illustrator. In his sixteenth year he wrote a serious essay on the 'Pentland Rising of 1666' (having already tried his hand at an historical romance on

the same subject). This was printed as a pamphlet, and is now a rarity in request among collectors. For the following four or five years, though always writing both in prose and verse, he kept his efforts to himself, and generally destroyed the more ambitious of them. Among these were a romance on the life of Hackston of Rathillet, a poetical play of 'Semiramis' written in imitation of Webster, and 'Voces Fidelium,' a series of dramatic dialogues in verse. A few manuscript essays and notes of travel that have been preserved from 1868 to 1870, together with his letters to his mother of the same period, show almost as good a gift of observation and expression as his published work of five or six years later. Less promising and less personal are a series of six papers which he contributed in 1871 to the 'Edinburgh University Magazine,' a short-lived periodical started by him in conjunction with one or two college friends and fellow-members of the Speculative Society.

With high social spirits and a brilliant, somewhat fantastic, gaiety of bearing, Stevenson was no stranger to the storms and perplexities of youth. A restless and inquiring conscience, perhaps inherited from covenanting ancestors, kept him inwardly calling in question the grounds of conduct and the accepted codes of society. At the same time his reading had shaken his belief in Christian dogma; the harsher forms of Scottish Calvinistic Christianity being indeed at all times repugnant to his nature. From the last circumstance arose for a time troubles with his father, the more trying while they lasted because of the deep attachment and pride in each other which always subsisted between father and son. He loved the aspects of his native city, but neither its physical nor its social atmosphere was congenial to him. Amid the biting winds and rigid social conventions of Edinburgh he craved for Bohemian freedom and the joy of life, and for a while seemed in danger of a

fate like that of the boy-poet, Robert Fergusson [q. v.], with whom he always owned a strong sense of spiritual affinity.

But his innate sanity of mind and disposition prevailed. In the summer of 1873 he made new friends, who encouraged him strongly to the career of letters. His first contribution to regular periodical literature, a little paper on 'Roads,' appeared in the 'Portfolio' (edited by Philip Gilbert Hamerton) for December 1873. In the meantime his health had suffered a serious breakdown. In consequence of acute nervous exhaustion, combined with threatening lung symptoms, he was ordered to the Riviera, where he spent (chiefly at Mentone) the winter of 1873-4. Returning with a certain measure of recovered health in April 1874, he went to live with his parents at Edinburgh and Swanston, and resumed his reading for the bar. He attended classes for Scots law and conveyancing, and for constitutional law and history. He worked also for a time in the office of Messrs. Skene, Edwards, & Bilton, of which the antiquary and historian, William Forbes Skene [q. v.], was senior partner. On 14 July 1875 he passed his final examination with credit, and was called to the bar on the 16th, but never practised. Since abandoning the engineering profession he had resumed the habit of frequent miscellaneous excursions in Scotland, England, or abroad. Now, in 1875, began the first of a series of visits to the artistic settlements in the neighbourhood of Fontainebleau, where his cousin, Mr. R. A. M. Stevenson, was for the time established. He found the forest climate restorative to his health, and the life and company of Barbizon and the other student resorts congenial. In the winter of 1874-5 he made in Edinburgh the acquaintance of Mr. W. E. Henley, which quickly ripened into a close and stimulating literary friendship. In London he avoided all formal and dress-coated society; and at the Savile Club (his favourite haunt) and elsewhere his own Bohemian oddities of dress and

appearance would sometimes repel at first sight persons to whom on acquaintance he soon became endeared by the charm of his conversation. Among his friends of these years may be especially mentioned Mr. Leslie Stephen, Mr. James Payn, Dr. Appleton (editor of the 'Academy'), Professor Clifford, Mr. Walter Pollock, Mr. Cosmo Monkhouse, Mr. Andrew Lang, and Mr. Edmund Gosse. In 1876 he went with Sir Walter Simpson on the canoe tour in Belgium and France described in the 'Inland Voyage.' In the spring of 1878 he made friends at Burford Bridge with a senior whom he had long honoured, Mr. George Meredith; and in the summer had a new experience in serving as secretary to Professor Fleeming Jenkin in his capacity of juror on the Paris Exhibition. In the autumn of the same year he spent a month at Monastier in Velay, whence he took the walk through the mountains to Florac narrated in the 'Travels with a Donkey in the Cevennes.'

During these years, 1874-8, his health, though frail, was passable. With his vagrant way of life he combined a steady and growing literary industry. While reading for the bar in 1874-5, much of his work was merely experimental (poems, prose-poems, and tales not published). Much also was in preparation for proposed undertakings on Scottish history. His studies in Highland history, which were diligent and exact, in the end only served to provide the historical background of his Scottish romances. Until the end of 1875 he had only published, in addition to essays in the magazines, an 'Appeal to the Church of Scotland,' written to please his father and published as a pamphlet in 1875. In 1876 he contributed as a journalist, but not frequently, to the 'Academy' and 'Vanity Fair,' and in 1877 more abundantly to 'London,' a weekly review newly founded under the editorship of Mr. Glasgow Brown, an acquaintance of Edinburgh Speculative days. In the former year, 1876, began the brilliant series of essays on life and

literature in the 'Cornhill Magazine' which were afterwards collected with others in the volumes called severally 'Virginibus Puerisque' and 'Familiar Studies of Men and Books.' They were continued in 1877, and in greater number throughout 1878. His first published stories were: 'A Lodging for the Night' (Temple Bar, October 1877); 'The Sire de Malétroit's Door' (Temple Bar, January 1878); and 'Will o' the Mill' (Cornhill Magazine, January 1878).

The year 1878 was to Stevenson one of great productiveness. In May was issued his first book, 'The Inland Voyage,' containing the account of his canoe trip, and written in a pleasant fanciful vein of humour and reflection, but with the style a little over-mannered. Besides six or eight characteristic essays of the 'Virginibus Puerisque' series, there appeared in 'London' (edited by Mr. Henley) the set of fantastic modern tales called the 'New Arabian Nights,' conceived in a very spirited and entertaining vein of the realistic-unreal, as well as the story of 'Providence and the Guitar;' and in the 'Portfolio' the 'Picturesque Notes on Edinburgh,' republished at the end of the year in book form. During the autumn and winter of this year he wrote 'Travels with a Donkey in the Cevennes,' and was much engaged in the planning of plays in collaboration with Mr. Henley, of which one, 'Deacon Brodie,' was finished in the spring of 1879. This was also the date of the essay 'On some Aspects of Burns.' In the same spring he drafted in Edinburgh, but afterwards laid by, four chapters on ethics (a study to which he once referred as being always his 'veiled mistress') under the name of 'Lay Morals.' In few men have the faculties been so active on the artistic and the ethical sides at once, and this fragment is of especial interest in the study of its author's mind and character.

By his various published writings Stevenson had made little impression as yet on the general reader. But the critical had recognised in him a new artist of the first promise in English letters, who aimed at, and often achieved, those qualities of sustained precision, lucidity, and grace of style which are characteristic of the best French prose, but in English rare in the extreme. He had known how to stamp all he wrote with the impress of a vivid personal charm; had shown himself a master of the apt and animated phrase; and whether in tale or parable, essay or wayside musing, had touched on vital points of experience and feeling with the observation and insight of a true poet and humourist.

The year 1879 was a critical one in Stevenson's life. In France he had met an American lady, Mrs. Osbourne (née Van de Grift), whose domestic circumstances were not fortunate, and who was living with her daughter and young son in the art-student circles of Paris and Fontainebleau. At the beginning of 1879 she returned to California. In June Stevenson determined to follow. He travelled by emigrant ship and train, partly for economy, partly for the sake of the experience. The journey and its discomforts proved disastrous to his health, but did not interrupt his industry. Left entirely to his own resources, he stayed for eight months partly at Monterey and partly at San Francisco. During a part of these months he was at death's door from a complication of pleurisy, malarial fever, and exhaustion of the system, but managed nevertheless to write the story of 'The Pavilion on the Links,' two or three essays for the 'Cornhill Magazine,' the greater part of a Californian story, 'A Vendetta in the West' (never published), a first draft of the romance of 'Prince Otto,' and the two parts of the 'Amateur Emigrant' (not published till some years later). He also tried to get work on the local press, and some contributions were printed in the 'Monterey Independent;'

but on the whole his style was not thought up to Californian standards. In the spring of 1880 he was married to Mrs. Osbourne, who had obtained some months before a divorce from her husband. She nursed him through the worst of his illness, and in May they went for the sake of health to lodge at a deserted mining station above Calistoga, in the Californian coast range. The story of this sojourn is told in the 'Silverado Squatters.'

Later, Stevenson brought his wife home in August 1880. She was to him a perfect companion, taking part keenly and critically in his work, sharing all his gipsy tastes and love of primitive and natural modes of life, and being, in spite of her own precarious health, the most devoted and efficient of nurses in the anxious times which now ensued.

For the next seven or eight years Stevenson's life seemed to hang by a thread. Chronic lung disease had declared itself, and the slightest exposure or exertion was apt to bring on a prostrating attack of cough, hæmorrhage, and fever. The trial was manfully borne; and in every interval of respite he worked in unremitting pursuit of the standards he had set before himself.

Between 1880 and 1887 he lived the life of an invalid, vainly seeking relief by change of place. After spending six weeks (August and September 1880) with his parents at Blair Athol and Strathpeffer, he went in October, with his wife and stepson, to winter at Davos, where he made fast friends with John Addington Symonds (1840-1893) [q. v.] and his family. He wrote little, but prepared for press the collected essays 'Virginibus Puerisque,' in which he preaches with captivating vigour and grace his gospel of youth, courage, and a contempt for the timidities and petty respectabilities of life. For the rest, he amused himself with verses playful and other, and with supplying humorous text

and cuts ('Moral Emblems,' 'Not I,' &c.) for a little private press worked by his young stepson. Returning to Scotland at the end of May with health somewhat improved, he spent four months with his parents at Pitlochry and Braemar. At Pitlochry he wrote 'Thrawn Janet' and the chief part of 'The Merry Men,' two of the strongest short tales in Scottish literature, the one of Satanic possession, the other of a conscience and imagination haunted, to the overthrow of reason, by the terrors of the sea. At Braemar he began 'Treasure Island,' his father helping with suggestions and reminiscences from his own seafaring experiences. At the suggestion of Mr. A. H. Japp, the story was offered to, and accepted by, the editor (Mr. Henderson) of a boys' periodical called 'Young Folks.' In the meantime (August 1881) Stevenson had been a candidate for the vacant chair of history and constitutional law at Edinburgh. In the light of such public reputation as he yet possessed, the candidature must have seemed paradoxical; but it was encouraged by competent advisers, including the retiring professor, Dr. Æneas Mackay. It failed. Had it succeeded, his health would almost certainly have proved unequal to the work. A cold and wet season at Braemar did him much harm; and in October he was ordered off to spend a second winter (1881-2) at Davos. He here finished the tale of 'Treasure Island,' began, on the suggestion of Mr. George Bentley, a life (never completed) of William Hazlitt, and prepared for press the collection of literary essays 'Familiar Studies of Men and Books.'

In the summer of 1882 he again tried Scotland (Stobo Manse in Upper Tweeddale, Lochearnhead, and Kingussie), and again with bad results for his health. As his wife was never well at Davos, they determined to winter in the south, and settled before Christmas in a cottage near Marseilles (Campagne Defli, St. Marcel). Thence being presently driven by a fever epidemic, they moved in

January 1883 to a châlet in a pleasant garden on a hill behind Hyères (Châlet la Solitude). Here Stevenson enjoyed a respite of nearly a year from acute illness, as well as the first breath of popular success on the publication in book form of 'Treasure Island.' In this story the force of invention and vividness of narrative appealed to every reader, including those on whom its other qualities of style and character-drawing would in themselves have been thrown away; and it has taken its place in literature as a classic story of pirate and mutineer adventure. It has been translated into French, Spanish, and other languages. Partly at Marseilles and partly at Hyères he wrote the 'Treasure of Franchard,' a pleasant and ingenious tale of French provincial life; and early in 1883 completed for 'Young Folks' a second boys' tale, 'The Black Arrow.' This story of the wars of the Roses, written in a style founded on the 'Paston Letters,' was preferred to 'Treasure Island' by the audience to whom it was first addressed, but failed to please the critics when published in book form five years later, and was no favourite with its author. Stevenson's other work at Hyères consisted of verses for the 'Child's Garden;' essays for the 'Cornhill Magazine' and the 'Magazine of Art' (edited by Mr. Henley); the 'Silverado Squatters,' first drafted in 1880, and finally 'Prince Otto.' In this tale, or fantasy, certain problems of character and conjugal relation which had occupied him ever since his boyish tragedy of 'Semiramis' are worked out with a lively play of intellect and humour, and (as some think) an excessive refinement and research of style, on a stage of German court life and with a delightful background of German forest scenery. The book, never very popular, is one of those most characteristic of his mind. It was translated into French in 1896 by Mr. Egerton Castle.

In September 1883 Stevenson suffered a great loss in the death of his old friend Mr. James Walter Ferrier (see the

essay *Old Mortality*). In the beginning of 1884 his hopes and spirits were rudely dashed by two dangerous attacks of illness, the first occurring at Nice in January, the second at Hyères in May. Travelling slowly homewards by way of Royat, he arrived in England in July in an almost prostrate condition, and in September settled at Bournemouth. In the autumn and early winter his quarters were at Bonallie Tower, Branksome Park; in February 1885 his father bought and gave him the house at Westbourne which he called (after the famous lighthouse designed by his uncle Alan) Skerryvore. This was for the next two years and a half his home. His health, and on the whole his spirits, remained on a lower plane than before, and he was never free for many weeks together from fits of hæmorrhage and prostration. Nevertheless he was able to form new friendships and to do some of the best work of his life.

In 1885 he finished for publication two books which his illness had interrupted, the *'Child's Garden of Verses'* and *'Prince Otto,'* and began a highway romance called *'The Great North Road,'* but relinquished it in order to write a second series of *'New Arabian Nights.'* These new tales hinge about the Fenian dynamite conspiracies, of which the public mind was at this time full, and to the old elements of fantastic realism add a new element of witty and scornful criminal psychology. The incidental stories of *'The Destroying Angel'* and *'The Fair Cuban'* were supplied by Mrs. Stevenson. During the same period he wrote several of the personal and literary essays afterwards collected in the volume *'Memories and Portraits;'* a succession of Christmas stories, *'The Body Snatcher'* in the *'Pall Mall Gazette,'* 1884; *'Olalla'* in the *'Court and Society Review,'* and *'The Misadventures of John Nicholson'* in *'Cassell's Christmas Annual,'* both for 1885; and *'Markheim'* in *'Unwin's Christmas Annual,'* 1886; as well as several plays in collaboration with Mr. Henley, viz. *'Beau Austin,'*

'Admiral Guinea,' and 'Robert Macaire.' Stevenson, like almost every other imaginative writer, had built hopes of gain upon dramatic work. His money needs, in spite of help from his father, were still somewhat pressing. Until 1886 he had never earned much more than 300l. a year by his pen. But in that year came two successes which greatly increased his reputation, and with it his power to earn. These were 'The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde' and 'Kidnapped.' The former, founded partly on a dream, is a striking apologue of the double life of man. Published as a 'shilling shocker,' a form at that time in fashion, it became instantly popular; was quoted from a thousand pulpits; was translated into German, French, and Danish; and the names of its two chief characters have passed into the common stock of proverbial allusion. In 'Kidnapped'—a boys' highland story suggested by the historical incident of the Appin murder—the adventures are scarcely less exciting than those of 'Treasure Island,' the elements of character-drawing subtler and farther carried, while the romance of history and the sentiment of the soil are expressed as they had hardly been expressed since Scott. The success of these two tales, both with the critics and the public, established Stevenson's position at the head of the younger English writers of his day, among whom his example encouraged an increased general attention to technical qualities of style and workmanship, as well as a reaction in favour of the novel of action and romance against the more analytic and less stimulating types of fiction then prevailing.

About this time Stevenson was occupied with studies for a short book on Wellington (after Gordon his favourite hero), intended for a series edited by Mr. Andrew Lang. This was never written, and in the winter and spring 1886-7 his chief task was one of piety to a friend, viz. the writing of a life of Fleeming Jenkin from materials supplied by the

widow. In the spring of 1887 he published, under the title 'Underwoods' (borrowed from Ben Jonson), a collection of verses, partly English and partly Scottish, selected from the chance production of a good many years. Stevenson's poetry, written chiefly when he was too tired to write anything else, expresses as a rule the charm and power of his nature with a more slippered grace, a far less studious and perfect art, than his prose. He also prepared for publication in 1887, under the title 'Memories and Portraits,' a collection of essays personal and other, including an effective exposition of his own theories of romance, which he had contributed to various periodicals during preceding years.

His father's death in May 1887 broke the strongest tie which bound him to this country. His own health showed no signs of improvement; and the doctors, as a last chance of recovery, recommended some complete change of climate and mode of life. His wife's connections pointing to the west, he thought of Colorado, persuaded his mother to join them, and with his whole household—mother, wife, and stepson—sailed for New York on 17 Aug. 1887. After a short stay under the hospitable care of friends at Newport, he was persuaded, instead of going farther west, to try the climate of the Adirondack mountains for the winter. At the beginning of October the family moved accordingly to a house on Saranac Lake, and remained there until April 1888. Here he wrote for 'Scribner's Magazine' a series of twelve essays (published January-December 1888 and partly reprinted in 'Across the Plains'). Some of these ('Dreams,' 'Lantern Bearers,' 'Random Memories') contain his best work in the mixed vein of autobiography and criticism; others ('Pulvis et Umbra,' 'A Christmas Sermon') his strongest, if not his most buoyant or inspiring, in the ethical vein. For the same publishers he also wrote the ballad of 'Ticonderoga' and began the romance of 'The

Master of Ballantrae,' of which the scene is partly laid in the country of his winter sojourn. This tragic story of fraternal hate is thought by many to take the first place among its author's romances, alike by vividness of presentment and by psychologic insight. In April Stevenson came to New York, but, soon wearying of the city, went for some weeks' boating to Manasquan on the New Jersey coast. At this time (March-May 1888), by way of 'a little judicious levity,' he revised and partly rewrote a farcical story drafted in the winter by his stepson, Mr. Lloyd Osbourne, 'The Wrong Box,' which was published in the course of the year under their joint names. The fact that the farce turns on the misadventures of a corpse caused most readers to think the levity more apparent than the judgment; but the book cannot be read without laughter.

In the meantime the family had entertained the idea of a yachting excursion in the South Seas. The romance of the Pacific had attracted Stevenson from a boy. The enterprise held out hopes of relief to his health; an American publisher (Mr. S. S. McClure) provided the means of undertaking it by an offer of 2,000l. for letters in which its course should be narrated. The result was that on 26 June 1888 the whole family set out from San Francisco on board the schooner yacht Casco (Captain Otis). They first sailed to the Marquesas, where they spent six weeks; thence to the Paumotus or Dangerous Archipelago; thence to the Tahitian group, where they again rested for several weeks, and whence they sailed northward for Hawaii. Arriving at Honolulu about the new year of 1889, they made a stay of nearly six months, during which Stevenson made several excursions, including one, which profoundly impressed him, to the leper settlement at Molokai. His journey so far having proved a source of infinite interest and enjoyment, as well as greatly improved health, Stevenson determined to prolong it. He and his party started afresh from Honolulu

in June 1889 on a rough trading schooner, the Equator. Their destination was the Gilberts, a remote coral group in the western Pacific. At two of its petty capitals, Apemama and Butaritari, they made stays of about six weeks each, and at Christmas 1889 found their way again into semi-civilisation at Apia in the Samoan group. After a month or two's stay in Samoa, where the beauty of the scenery and the charm of the native population delighted them, the party went on to Sydney, where Stevenson immediately fell ill, the life of the city seeming to undo the good he had got at sea. This experience set him voyaging again, and determined him to make his home in the South Seas. In April 1890 a fresh start was made, this time on a trading steamer, the Janet Nicoll. Touching first at Samoa, where he had bought a property of about four hundred acres on the mountain above Apia, to which he gave the name Vailima (five rivers), he left instructions for clearing and building operations to be begun while he continued his voyage. The course of the Janet Nicoll took him during the summer to many remote islands, from Penhryn to the Marshalls, and landed him in September in New Caledonia. Returning the same month to Samoa, he found the small house already existing at Vailima to be roughly habitable, and installed himself there to superintend the further operations of clearing, planting, and building. The family belongings from Bournemouth were sent out, and his mother, who had left him at Honolulu, rejoined him at Vailima in the spring of 1891.

During these Pacific voyages he had finished the 'Master of Ballantrae,' besides writing many occasional verses, and two long, not very effective, ballads on themes of Polynesian legend, the 'Song of Rahero' and the 'Feast of Famine.' He had also planned and begun at sea, in collaboration with Mr. Lloyd Osbourne, his one attempt at a long and sustained story of modern life, 'The Wrecker.' At

Samoa he had written the first of his Pacific stories in prose, 'The Bottle Imp.' This little tale of morals and of magic appealed strongly to the native readers to whom (in a missionary translation) it was first addressed (published in English in 'Black and White,' 1891, and reprinted in 'Island Nights' Entertainments'). At Sydney he had written in a heat of indignation, and published in pamphlet form, the striking 'Letter to Dr. Hyde' in vindication of the memory of Father Damien. Lastly, on board the Janet Nicoll, 'under the most ungodly circumstances,' he had begun the work of composing the letters relating his travels, which were due under the original contract to the Messrs. McClure. This and 'The Wrecker' were the two tasks unfinished on his hands when he entered (November 1890) on the four years' residence at Vailima which forms the closing period of his life.

In his new Samoan home Stevenson soon began to exercise a hospitality and an influence which increased with every year. Among the natives he was known by the name of Tusitala (teller of tales), and was supposed to be master of an inexhaustible store of wealth, perhaps even to be the holder of the magic bottle of his own tale. He gathered about him a kind of feudal clan of servants and retainers, whom he ruled in a spirit of affectionate kindness tempered with firm justice; and presently got drawn, as a man so forward in action and so impatient of injustice could not fail to do, into the entanglements of local politics and government. In health he seemed to have become a new man. Frail in comparison with the strong, he was yet able to ride and boat with little restriction, and to take part freely in local festivities, both white and native. The chief interruptions were an occasional trip to Sydney or Auckland, from which he generally came back the worse. From the middle of 1891 to the spring of 1893 his intromissions in politics embroiled him more or less

seriously with most of the white officials in the island, especially the chief justice, Mr. Cedercrantz, and the president of the council, Baron Senfft von Pilsach. The proceedings of these gentlemen were exposed by him in a series of striking letters to the 'Times,' and the three treaty powers (Germany, Great Britain, and the United States) ultimately decided to dispense with their services. At one period of the struggle he believed himself threatened with deportation. Whether all his own steps on that petty but extremely complicated political scene were judicious is more than can be said; but impartial witnesses agree that he had a considerable moderating influence with the natives, and that his efforts were all in the direction of peace and concord.

His literary industry during these years was more strenuous than ever. His habit was to begin work at six in the morning or earlier, continue without interruption until the midday meal, and often to resume again until four or five in the afternoon. In addition to his literary labours he kept up an active correspondence both with old friends and new acquaintances, especially with writers of the younger generation in England, who had been drawn to him either by admiration for his work or by his ever ready and generous recognition of their own. He had suffered for some time from scrivener's cramp, and in the last three years of his life was much helped by the affectionate services as amanuensis of his stepdaughter, Mrs. Strong, who had become a member of the household since 1889. In 1894 the plan devised by his business adviser and lifelong friend, Mr. Charles Baxter, of a limited *édition de luxe* of his collected works, under the title of the 'Edinburgh Edition,' afforded him much pleasure, together with a prospect of considerable gain. This experiment, without precedent during the lifetime of an author, proved a great success, but Stevenson did not live long enough to enjoy the