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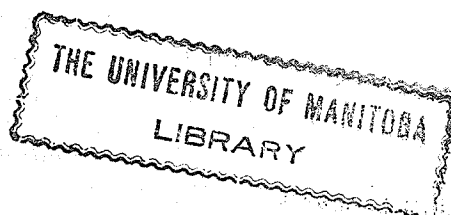
Stevenson, a Short-Story Artist.

by

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Stevenson, a Short-Story Artist.

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Stevenson, a Short-Story Artist.

Introduction.

I.

Story-telling, the progenitor of story-writing, is as old as the human race. Long before printing had made the written story easy of access, oral tradition, extending away back to prehistoric times, had handed down tales that the first presses were eager to convey to paper, in order to preserve them for future generations.

A deep study of these ancient stories shows how universal is the instinct for story-telling; how the man of those days took delight in hearing tales of adventure, and how they would gather either by a camp fire or in caves to hear of the wonderful deeds of prowess of some great giant of strength that became endowed with supernatural powers. Sometimes, also the glories of their ancestors were celebrated in poem or in song, and by stirring tales were they incited to follow in their glorious footsteps. Furthermore, one sees on perusing these ancient tales that the primitive man, like the man of modern times, was gifted with a vivid imagination, a great sense of clanship, honor and pride in warfare. But above all was he filled with an intense curiosity, together with an insatiable love of excitement and novelty which craved expression in action and in song.

All tribes and nations have their cycles of stories, and it is interesting to note that the same elements are to be found in all; the desire of self expression in the recounting of their heroic and almost preternatural deeds of valor, or of the mysterious struggle with the strange creatures with whom they had to contend.

Primitive man was but a grown-up child, and to him as to the child a

story was always welcome. Doubly honored were those who could satisfy their cravings for exciting and stirring tales. One can easily understand why the bard, the story-teller, and the minstrel drew crowds around them. For the primeval man who knew little besides the doings of his own immediate surroundings, the unknown held a fascination hard to define but keenly felt; for him "experience preceded reflection, the story of life began to unroll itself before there were any glossaries or commentaries and when the imagination began to open the windows and look out on the landscape of life, it saw everything from the standpoint of what had already happened." (1)

When one reads, for instance, fables like Beowulf, one wonders at the credulity of the listening crowds, who could gulp down these preternatural incidents without the least hesitation. How did the bards come to concoct such fabulous tales? How could the listening crowds hearken to them without a murmur? To answer these questions, one must remember that Science was a blank page to our primitive forefathers, and that the phenomena so easily explained to-day were subjects of mysterious import to them. To their untutored minds, nature was filled with divinities placable and implacable, and the forces and demonstrations of nature were but the manifestations either of pleasure or of anger of these gods and goddesses of wood, forest, stream, earth, and sky. No wonder that the supernatural and the preternatural would link themselves together as the most natural outcome of the phenomena witnessed .

The

(1) (Hamilton mable, "Stories New and Old Page XV, quoted by Caennocin in his "Writings on the Short Story".)

chiefs, to while away tedious hours of leisure, would spur the valor of their followers by tales of heroism. These handed down from generation to generation, increased in bulk and magnitude until it was impossible to attribute them to the leader whose feats were fairly well known. Then came the bard with his more versatile powers of narration who enhances on the theme, but finding it impossible to attribute these deeds to a contemporary hero, relates these tales as of one of their chiefs long gone to rest. As distance lends enchantment, the deeds take on gigantic proportions, the natural, supernatural, and the preternatural blended into one to make the tale one of heroic valor.

II.

Precious as this oral tradition may be, it is to the first recorded tales that we must turn, however, to find the less remote ancestors of the short-story, and coming down through the ages, we find around 4000 B.C. concrete representations of crude tales preserved, to this day, on Egyptian papyrus, and here the first the first recorded tale no doubt dates. But when the Phoenicians had with their alphabet made graphic representations more vivid, the Hebrews, Greeks, and the Orientals gave to the world some of their richest store of tales and it is in these stories that we find the links that bind story-telling to the modern short-story.

The stories which the Greeks left us were tales which, for richness of description and imagination have hardly found their match. Poetry was the ordinary medium of expression, for it was only after their fall that they resorted to prose. Still, Herodotus and others have left us works which deserve to form a special link in our chain of evidence, on

account of the simplicity, clearness, and harmony of style, and the charm and naivness of detail. The subtlety and power of their works is worthy of note, since they have served as models for successive generations.

The Renaissance also gave forth a new type of story which greatly affected England's fiction of the same period. The Decameron exemplifies this new type, and although all the stories in it are not short-stories, they have the essentials of the short-story, that is, brevity and point.

But the short-story as it is conceived to-day is a nineteenth century production, and it was only then, that it was recognized as a special form of literature, having characteristics which distinguish it from other types of literature, and placed in a class by itself, though it is closely allied in form to the larger and fuller development called the novel. It is curious to note how from the times stories began to be written we can notice them coming nearer to our modern standards, "to the level of the ordinary man."

III.

What are the chief characteristics of this nineteenth century production which gives a distinctly individual life to this type of literature and differentiates it from all other contemporary forms? Menwein in his work on this subject defines the short-story as a "brief imaginative narrative unfolding a predominant incident and a single character; it contains a plot, the details of which are so compressed and the treatment so organized as to produce a single impression." Others are more explicit and state that the short-story should be the turning point of a single character, but we find that some of the best stories are a violation

of this rule. James Cooper Lawrence's definition is somewhat more broad, although one finds on closer analysis the same characteristics insisted upon. For him the short-story "is a brief tale which can be told or read at one sitting, but which should possess coherence sufficient to hold the reader's or the listener's attention from the beginning to the end. Like the spoken story it must produce a single effect." (1)

In these statements one main trait stands out prominently, the unity of impression, the single narrative effect which should be brought about with as much economy of detail as possible, and obtained by a dominating and selective emphasis on a particular phase of a man's life; or an incident which helps out the development of his character.

It is due to this quality of unity that the range of subject-matter is limited, and that the general aim consists in tracing the "causal relations of but one circumstance so that it may be intensified." The choice is generally a determining crisis in which the struggle of the soul over good or evil is made manifestly the turning-point of a life-history. But many of them deal with minor phases and struggles, and are full of merit and interest on account of their fidelity in reproducing the thoughts and feelings which we have over and over again experienced.

In developing still further Benwein's definition, we find another point insisted upon which is that of characterization. The character study is as limited as the subject-matter. One special phase is chosen and fully utilized whether in struggle or in complication; the character being revealed at the crucial moment. Therefore, a deep study and first-hand

(1) (Theory of the Short-Story, Bellman and Lawrence, *No. American*, Feb. '17.)

knowledge of human nature is necessary, if a faithful reproduction is to be given of the mental processes or of the personality of the character in its struggle between right or wrong. The short-story to be true in its portraiture must "body forth its conceptions concretely and with variety of true detail." The author, then, must be intimately acquainted with, and must know fully, the facts with which he deals, and this knowledge will amply provide him with concrete material with which to clothe his characters. He may also in his selection and combination, keeping in due proportion traits, elements, or qualities, make it consistent with fundamental human nature.

This same "unity of narrative effects" bears along with it the absolute necessity of simplicity of plot. In fact, the plot may be exceedingly slight, for complexity is generally detrimental to unity. More is gained and a stronger impression is made on the mind by the concentration upon one action.

"Stories of original and striking incident, strong emotional appeal, and unadorned simplicity of style will endure." (1) has said an author, and in the short-story, the qualities of style which are most appropriate are those of brevity, directness, and simplicity.

IV.

It is too soon, perhaps, to say emphatically what place the Short-Story will occupy in our literature. However, the rapid strides it has made in the favor of the public, in the last one hundred years, with the perfection to which it has been brought, are good auguries that it will live and eventually be classed as one of our most cherished forms of

(1) (A Handbook on Story Writing, Blanche Colton Williams, page 50.)

literature. The short-story lends itself too easily to subtle and penetrating analysis to be relegated as of no importance.

If the place which the Short-Story will in the future occupy is still a matter of conjecture, its influence and the power it is able to wield cannot be overestimated. To know and evaluate any literary product which, in any serious sense, can claim consideration as a work of art, we must learn first to study it in its relation to life. Without this vital aspect literature becomes merely an ornamental thing. The real short-stories are portraits and interpretations of life, and are, therefore, a constructive force. Its field of influence is limited by no external bound, for all questions of interest to the individual, be they social, aesthetic, or idealistic, can be treated adequately and in a most convincing manner by the short-story method. Mr. M. E. Black in "The Future of the Short-Story", shows its scope and wide possibilities: "The short-story is the most powerful antidote to the most dangerous tendencies in the life of the present day, than any elaborate scheme of social reform can be. The short-story writers are vindicating the ideal element in fiction, for they are painting life as it is, and painting it from a point of ethical and ideal insight. They are showing that, after all, human nature is a great gift; that lowly folk bowed with labor and surrounded by stern enough conditions of time and place may be like the King's daughter all glorious within. They are bringing man nearer to man by revealing to him the identity of human nature." (1)

(1) (The Future of the Short-Story, M.E.Black. page 10)

Chapter I.

Stevenson's personal characteristics as shown
in his short-stories.

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Chapter I.

I.

Undoubtedly, Stevenson's natural genius lay in the compact short-story, and to him belongs the honor of having placed on a firm basis in England, this form of modern literature, which before lacked the polish and perfection of construction required to make it true literature. Indeed, he was one of the first to show its rich possibilities as to style, form, and purport. And to-day, after twenty-five years, the ever widening circle of his readers is a testimony as to the durability of his work.

Sydney Colvin places these readers into two distinct classes: those who delight only in the stories, and those who, probing to greater depths, seek the genial creative artist. The latter are filled with respect and admiration for this man who, notwithstanding ill health and adverse circumstances, never lost his almost boyish outlook on humanity. He said, somewhere, that he would do nothing he could not do smiling; and it is this buoyant optimism which critics point out as being the chief characteristics of his writings and the dominant trait of his character.

This attitude towards life is "merely the free joyous erectness of an undismayed soul: to approach life with fearless confidence that it means intensely and good; to bear full weight upon it, never letting encroaching doubts or disillusionings chill the youthful spirit." (1) A further quotation by the same author amplifies still more this same thought, "Life is a thing to be lived, not brooded over; that the net results of it as its problems are met, should be joy and confidence, not introspection or fear. Life is not a thing to buy, but to enjoy as an ultimate fact." (2)

Dwelling as he did in a time of social and religious unrest and unbelief, his optimistic philosophy came as a boon to his countrymen who, long saddened and disquieted by the uncertainty and enigma concerning life's most serious problems, found some solace in the joyous atmosphere of rest and trust which he ever endeavored to create. Thus was Stevenson's

(1) (2) *Stevenson's Attitude to Life, J. Kenning, pages 227-10*

life a mission in which he preached his one doctrine," expand the fine and enjoyable part of your own nature." (1) Indeed, this creative optimism has so pervaded his whole life, that its influence can be perceived in all his works, even in the most whimsical; as, "The Treasure of Franchard" and "Providence and the Guitar" in which it is most romantically set forth.

After we have studied Stevenson very minutely, we are ready to repeat again with Walter Raleigh that, "His attitude towards the surprising and momentous gifts of life was one prolonged passion of praise and of joy. There is none of his books that reads like the meditations of an invalid. He has the readiest sympathy for all exhibition of impulse energy: his heart goes out to all. A high and simple courage shines through all his writings." (2)

II.

To this buoyant optimism, we may add a second characteristic, the faculty of romance with which he seems lavishly endowed from his very birth. As a child of Scotland, a country rich in romantic and legendary associations, and as an inheritor of the inexhaustible store of weird-romance of his devoted nurse, he received his ample share of this romantic spirit which was to make him, on account of his numerous and successful incursions into the realm of fancy, the modern representative of the romantic school of fiction.

The "literary fabric of Stevenson's romance was built mostly on dreams", (3) and this element of pure fancy, together with the entirely subjective nature of his conceptions, gave to his tales their purely

(1) (Stevenson, How to Know Him, Rice, page .)

(2) (Robert Louis Stevenson, Walter Raleigh, page 22.)

(3) (A Handbook of Literary Criticism, William Henry Sheran, page 347.)

individualistic character, for Stevenson is essentially a romantic egotist. The outward manifestation of his inmost thoughts and feelings is one of the main sources from which we derive our pleasure. It was this field that was most exploited, and to it, again and again, he turned, after he had launched his genius into the career of a romancer. It is always the genial personality of the man which looms up before us in these tales, whether they be fanciful, or whether they be made to convey his message to mankind, and which moreover, gives to his work its compelling freshness and originality.

It is, however, in the romantic tale of horror that Stevenson's excellence as a short-story writer consists. No doubt the recollection of many a ghostly and blood-curdling tale told by a tender and devoted nurse to while away the sleepless nights, and to lighten the confinement to a sick room in his youth, might have been instrumental in directing the tastes of the future writer and also might have laid the foundation of this particular phase of his genius. So much of the boy remained in Stevenson, the man, that we are not surprised to see this love or fascination of the horrible, a dominant trait of childhood, survive in him in maturity. Certain it is that those who have read his "Thrane Janet", "Treasure Island", "Herry Men" and other stories, are mightily impressed with the author's uncanny powers of description. Here is an extract to prove the statement I have just made. It is from "The Body Snatcher." Mr. Gray has been murdered and his body turned over to the dissecting room. Already the different parts of his body have been apportioned to the students and fresh supplies were wanted. Fettes and Macfarlane are at the work again.

is felt as an undercurrent in all his best-known plots. During many long and wearisome hours of confinement was he brought face to face with life's great ethical and moral problems, and the ideas then conceived, he gave us in his many stories. These all contain some moral, from the fanciful tale of "Providence and the Guitars" with its joyous outlook on life to the stern realities of this same life depicted in "The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde". This moral, however, is not unduly prominent, but diffused throughout with incident, character portrayal, and analysis, and is indeed, often overlooked by the superficial reader. But he who seeks may find hidden therein rich stores of wholesome thoughts.

Among the many moral themes to be found in Stevenson's works, that of the "dual nature of Man" seems to have greatly fascinated him and repeatedly did he endeavor to embody his idea with suitable illustrations. "Markheim" evidently did not satisfy him, for he saw that he needed a still clearer example to bring home the moral with greater force. Fortunately, the "Brownies" furnished him with the two principal scenes from the "Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde". The story was an immense success and made Stevenson's fame both at home and abroad, but especially in America. Many nations made it theirs by translation, whilst everywhere it was being made use of in the pulpit and on the stage as giving a lesson of deep significance.

"Markheim", as an able critic has pointed out, abounds in romantic interest to which is superadded a strengthening and vital interest in man. It was the publication of the two above named stories that firmly established Stevenson's reputation as a romantic moralist. "For the appreciation of morality in a wide sense, high gifts of the imagination

are necessary.. These gifts belong to Stevenson in a high degree; in all his romances there are gleams from time to time of wise and subtle reflections upon life, from the eternal side of things, which shine the more luminously that they spring from the events and situations with no suspicion of humbly." (1)

Stevenson was a profoundly sincere moralist, intimately acquainted with the soul's most hidden struggles, but determined to develop the best that was in him. Young as he was, he seems to have lived a long life, to have filled out a long career. His aims were always high, and the clean wholesome moral he ever preached wins for him our deepest respect.

IV.

"Stevenson's stories exhibit a double union, as admirable as it is rare. They exhibit the union of thrilling events with a remarkable power of psychological analysis". What produced the charm so evident in all his works is the wonderful insight of his active mind into the spiritual realm, made keener, no doubt, by his many hours of serious meditations during his forced confinements, and which suffering has helped to chasten and elevate. He was quick to seize those traits and characteristics by which passions and emotions are swayed in the human soul. His wide range of acquaintances, from the lowest to the highest order in the social scale, gave him also an ample field of study, and the results of his close and first-hand scrutiny of man's life and his problems have been transmitted to us in delightful stories, which though framed in a romantic setting, nevertheless, reveal the serious if not the deep psychological analyst.

(1) (R.L.S., Walter Raleigh, page 64.)

(2) (Essays on Modern Novelists, W.L.Phelps, page 80.)

W.J. Dawson says: " There is a subtlety of insight in his presentation of character which is rare even in the greatest novelist. It goes to the very roots of motives, it touches the secret coils of conduct, it exhibits man not as they appear to the world, but as they appear to themselves and to their Maker." (1)

Still, his is not a relentless psychology wearisome to the readers because of the lengthy analyses of motives. On the contrary, like a powerful artist whose pictures stand out clear and impressive by a few bold strokes of the brush, he makes his characters, whether attractive or repulsive, teem with life and spontaneity.

If we take, for instance, the author's masterpiece, " the Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde " are we not completely taken up with the more or less closely interwoven incidents in this strange transformation, before we realize the deep significance which underlies it all; the vast power of character-analysis of the author, who reveals so deftly the inner workings of a soul in its gradual degeneration from what was best in Dr. Jekyll to what was most loathsome in Mr. Hyde ? Does not the denouement seem but the natural outcome of a life of wickedness ? The truth that man cannot at will yield a voluntary surrender to evil without deteriorating or lessening his power for good is manifestly shown, but, it is not by a direct narration or discussion of motives, or by a deep introspective analysis, but by the clear dramatic presentation of incidents in which the character in its passage through a psychological experience is portrayed.

(1) (Makers of English Fiction, W.J.Dawson, page 247.)

"Marheim" also gives us an insight into a soul tainted with guilt and struggling with remorse, as his better nature seeks once more to assert its mastery over the evil passions which hold his soul in bondage. How skillfully is detail linked to detail forming a chain of apparently insignificant incidents in themselves, but which grouped together reveal the interplay of motives to such an extent that we are not too much surprised at the sudden climax, the final triumph of good over evil.

Even his stories of South Sea setting like "The Bottle Imp", "The Isles of Voices", and "The Beach of Faleasa" display an extended knowledge of human nature, for in them he shows how elemental a thing is the human being. These uncouth Malay islanders evince the same tendencies as those of more civilized peoples; they are guided by somewhat the same emotions and impulses as their cultured contemporaries.

"Life, its phases and its problems is his never-ending study, and the justice of his comments comes home to most men's experience, and touches responsive chords. Perplexed by the mysteries of life, its inconsistencies, its injustice, and its awful weight of sin, yet his faith in Divine mercy remained constant. He says 'He who shall pass judgment on the record of our life, is the same that formed us in frailty.' "(1)

Chapter II.

Some influences that have helped to mould Stevenson as a Short-Story Writer.

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Chapter II.

I

All the elements of Stevenson's life, lineage, surroundings, circumstances, contributed in a very marked degree to the moulding of the young artist. On the paternal side, for several generations back, his ancestors were sea-faring, adventurous Scotchmen, whose achievements in engineering have made their names an authority in that particular branch of science, to which they devoted their talents, I mean the building of lighthouses. The daring and enterprise required to conquer or subdue the forces of nature against which they had to contend, in their determination to protect sea-farers from the treachery of shore, rock, and shoal, in the mighty waters of their native land, together with the many dangerous expeditions undertaken, had bred in them a courage and bravery that nothing could daunt. Besides, a deep love and fascination for the sea, the scene of so many struggles and triumphs, filled the soul of these hardy scientific explorers.

To the last scion of his family, a weak and sickly boy, was transmitted, nevertheless, in abundant measure this love of the deep, their spirit of romance and adventure, and those robust qualities, one expects to find only in strong and healthy children.

Moreover, on the maternal side, he was descended from men who showed great literary qualities, and if we add to this that many of them were noted churchmen with a deep sense of morality and a penetrating power of analysis, we will not be surprised that these literary and moral qualities were possessed to such a remarkable extent by their offspring.

How much he owes to environment can be easily surmised when we

consider his highly imaginative temperament. The rugged scenery of Scotland, so symbolic of the strength he so sadly lacked, appealed to him, by way of contrast, as it might never have done had he been blessed with health. The mountains, the fierce billows, the hills, the peaceful valleys, all were sources of constant delight to this "vagabond of nature" as he playfully calls himself. In fact, Nature was ever his best teacher and during the many hours of truancy when, apparently, he was allowing to slip by many golden opportunities of winning distinction and fame in the beaten paths of knowledge, he was absorbing in great draughts the deep and wholesome lessons which Nature hides from the careless and indifferent observer. This accurate knowledge of God's creation gave a fresh and exhilarating charm to his descriptions in later life.

Notwithstanding the inhospitable climate which oblige him to live an exile's life from his native land, this ardent patriot loved every inch of its soil. He was proud of her past glory, proud of her culture, proud of the achievements of her sons. A earnest study of the annals of his country, brought him, as it were, into a close personal touch with the heroes of old who struggled in the cause of freedom, and whose many deeds of valor have secured for them the remembrance of posterity. Their tasks seemed so gigantic compared to the triviality of modern life, that Stevenson ever turned with increasing fascination to a more intense study of their lives. His many stories with historical facts as foundation, as, "Catriona", "Kidnapped", and others show that he was part and parcel of dear old Scotland.

Finally, his secluded life gave him ample opportunities to roam freely into the realm of thought. So that trained by that huge volume of English literature about him, filled with English as well as Scottish

traditions, he came into the inheritance of English lore and English ideas." (1)

II.

Next to Scotland, France was most instrumental in moulding Stevenson as a writer of short-stories. To the former he owes his romanticism, to the latter, his style. It seems that French is the only foreign language he ever mastered and to this mastery is due the polish and perfection of that style which places him foremost in the ranks of prose writers of his time, and perhaps of all times. Forced as he was to live in France the greater part of the year, he became almost identified with his surroundings, learned its literature, attained proficiency in its language and gave us delightful essays in which he displays not only a keen insight into the literature and history of the country, but also a profound knowledge of the daily life of these congenial neighbors who made his stay among them so pleasant.

The fifteenth century especially interested him, and the historical characters of that time gave him material for many of his essays but above all, supplied the subject-matter for the first and perhaps the finest of his short stories, "Alooding for the Night."

As Canby says, "regarded as an artist in narrative it was undoubtedly to his admiration for all things French that he is indebted for the influences which made him cope so successfully with the artistic problems presented by the short-story. It can be traced through his artistic conscience, and still more in his conception of what should be done in the telling of the story. French literature leaves a sense of perfect finish and a complete satisfaction with the way the thing has been done, irrespective of what that thing may be. Something of this grace appears in every story long or short." (2)

(1) (Stevenson, a Short-Story Writer, Academia, 1920, page 88.)

(2) (Studying the Short-Story, S. Canby, page 323.)

This influence lies especially in his ability in handling his plot constructions so that each little detail is made to converge towards a climax rendered more intense by the dramatic situations and events apparently so easily succeeding each other with such perfection of fitness. In "A Lodging for the Night" how well does each incident fit into the last, how simply does he make each detail the natural consequence of the character-play in the story. From the cemetery of St. John with its own share of snow, the little peep from the lamp swinging in the church choir, the murdered man contemplating a corner of the roof, the sleeping city absolutely still, to the old Seigneur of Brisetout, we are naturally lead on to the conclusion where the villain in his parallel between thieves and soldiers, gives out his philosophy of life.

This power of dovetailing incident into incident with the most natural facility to a logical conclusion, he obtained by a close study of the French masters, who also taught him to be untiring in his efforts to obtain perfection of expression.

Again in "The Sire de Maletroit's Door" how skillfully does he lead a Denis de Beaulieu to find either death or a bride behind a trap-door. This influence, however, has "increased the delicacy and clearness of his style, but left his originality unimpaired." (1) For thoroughly Anglo-Saxon is he in his romance, and character portrayal, and also in the choice of situation.

III.

It is hard to say just how America influenced Stevenson as a short-story writer, but we find so many points of contact, and so many traits

(1) (Robert Louis Stevenson, Balfour, page 128.)

of resemblance in the stories of Hawthorne, Harte, James, and Poe and those of Stevenson that we are led to believe that if he was not directly responsible to America, indirectly these forces may have contributed to the shaping and the development of his talents along certain lines.

Stevenson, however, is undoubtedly indebted to America for having paved the way for the short-story and for the artist who was to place romanticism once more upon a pedestal, for the enjoyment of thousands of readers tired of the realism, of which Zola was a type, and upon which they had fed for so many years.

If we study Hawthorne, we find in him "not the delineator of New England manners, customs, vernacular, so much as of the spirit, the soul, and the mind of certain New England sections." (1) Has not Stevenson in his essays and stories, like "Herry Man", "Thrown Janet", "Markheim" brought us into closer knowledge of the inner spiritual life of man? His "Markheim" is a great deal like Hawthorne's "Scarlet Letter". In both are revealed the same deep seriousness, the same great moral sense, the same hatred of sin and crime. Both heroes, Dimmesdale and Markheim seek by open confession to stay the tortures inflicted by relentless remorse. Hawthorne's fame largely rests on his ability to depict sin and crime and its effects. Stevenson also has shown us in this story, in a very skillful way, the consequences of evil deeds on the mind of the perpetrator. Is it a case of sympathetic vibrations? Could the older writer have touched responsive chords in the flexible soul of the younger one? Certain it is, the theme so dear to the earnest American moralist was also an oft recurring one to the Scottish Romanticist. Furthermore, in his determination to make his stories verge towards a moral issue, he is strikingly like his predecessor.

(1) (American Writers, J.E. Kayser, page 106.)

But the purposes of the two men were widely different. With Hawthorne, the conveying of a principle was paramount, with Stevenson, ethical teaching was subordinate to literary form and plot interest.

An author has also found "Will of the Mill" to be like a "Twice Told Tale" not only in theme but also in spiritual insight.

James' fine skill in characterization and his exquisite precision were subjects of wonder and admiration on the part of Stevenson and he often deplored his inability to reach such heights in the art of story-telling. While we do not altogether agree with the author in this denunciation of his creative powers, we see how great must have been the spell which this brilliant writer cast upon him.

If we next consider Poe with relation to Stevenson, we again find striking analogies. In the first place, both held that a unified impression must at all cost be secured, and every thing else must converge towards it and be subordinate to it. With Poe, this was almost a creed, and his successors have seen the wisdom of this doctrine he so openly preached. This unified impression gives strength and virility to a tale, making easier the linking of incidents leading to a striking climax. Secondly, their manner of appealing to the intellect by exciting romantic enthusiasm is again another point of resemblance. In the choice of their subject-matter, there is also a similarity for both delighted in the tale of horror, though Stevenson is less fantastical than Poe. Lastly, in the serious stories of both we find the same power of imagery and beauty in the rhythmic flow of style, the same appropriate settings, and a like judicious fitting of expression to the idea.

To sum up everything, I suppose this indebtedness might be more in the mode of procedure than in the strictly fundamental character of his works which is strictly individualistic and can be summed up only in the word Stevensonian.

IV.

Over an imagination as fertile as that of Stevenson, the South Sea Isles, with their redolent beauty, tropical luxuriance, and strange race of men, so different in their customs and creed, till civilization was forced upon them, would exert a deep and subtle influence. In fact, although comparatively speaking he made little use of the vast wealth of material at his command, he has given us some brilliant work of foreign setting, in which a new element enters into play. In his other stories, we find a romanticism full of life and vigour, but in his "Bottle Imp", "Beach of Falesa", and "Isle Of Voices" the languid and dreamy magic of the Pacific, rich in local color, filters into and permeates its very romanticism, while over it broods an atmosphere of Oriental beauty.

Chapter III.

Main sources of Stevenson's Short-Stories.

(1) Natural scenery, and legends of his native land.	Page 23
(2) Thoughts on the dual nature of man.	" 24
(3) The " Brownies ".	" 26
(4) Wide French reading and Paris experiences.	" 27
(5) Natives of Seneca and of the surrounding islands.	" 29

Chapter III.

I

Stevenson's love for the rugged natural scenery and the legendary lore of his native land has furnished a fertile source for many of his spirited tales, for although he spent little time in Scotland, and wrote very little there, yet he returned to it, again and again, for the themes and settings of his stories, essays, and novels. To mention only one of the longer tales or essays; " Kidnapped " is distinctly Scottish, while " The Pentland Rising " introduces us to the religious troubles in Scotland between Presbyterianism and the Church of England in the time of Charles II.

Stevenson was always fascinated by the sea whether at rest or in a storm. The lone and wild moorland also had great attractions for this rambling boy, and when we consider the bent of his mind towards everything Scotch, we can easily understand how the power and mystery of sea and mountain would appeal to him. This strong and vivid impression made on his mind in youth, became more intensified by his subsequent visits with his father in the Western Seas. There, the wildness of sea and rock in Sanding Bay suggested the creation of the " Merry Men ", and in 1881 appeared this masterpiece of sea interpretation. The power of description was heightened by the strange device employed, that of presenting the fury of the sea as seen through the eyes of the crazed islander, Charles Darroway. " In the fresh salt breeze that blows as it were keen from the sea in " Merry Men ", we recognize the magic weaving of the mighty ocean that made of the Stevenson's builders of lighthouses." (1)

(1) Life of Robert Louis Stevenson, Jacqueline Overton, page 82.]

Soon after the appearance of " Merry Men ", was published " Ravilion on the Links ", a powerful description of a lone bit of wild bleak shore of Scotland's coast, familiar to Stevenson from his youth, which formed a dreary background for the weirdest tale.

In the same year appeared also a tale of Scottish superstition, written in the dialect of the country. " Thrawn Janet " is based upon the popular belief that Satan in his visible visitations to our earth assumes the form of a black. Very effective is the author's way of dealing with this gruesome material, and more appropriate is the climax in which the poor minister is left paralyzed with fear, after what remains of poor Janet, his housekeeper, has been spirited away by the Evil One.

The " Body Snatcher " written also in 1881 is another story based on Scottish material. Among the Edinburgh legends of the early nineteenth century is found that one of a certain anatomist whose dissecting rooms were daily supplied by fresh murders in which the anatomist himself sometimes took part. These facts form the network of the tale.

II

To all serious minds, the war, which is waged in the soul between good and evil, is a subject of ever-recurring surprise and wonder. Man's frailty, his continued propensity to evil are matters which occupy the great psychologists who make it their life study. Stevenson with the serious trend of his imagination was likewise taken up with the same phenomenon. Two of his great stories seemed based on this dualism in man's innermost being. In both " Markheim " and " The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde " the author meant to convey " that there is

in all of us a lower self which, if encouraged, will dominate and then destroy the other." "No man can serve two masters, said the Saviour, " for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will serve the one and neglect the other."

" *Mackheim* " represents the power of good over evil in a soul, that, although it has accepted evil as it came, has still some residue of good left. The final triumph of grace over sin is exemplified, but with the warning note that he who enters to sin weakens and paralyzes his will for good.

Although the theme is one of Stevenson's own choosing, in Mr. Edward Knowlton's opinion,,the subject-matter might be traced back to the Russian novel " *Crime and Punishment* " by Dostoevski. To show the analogy, I shall quote his somewhat lengthy extract on the subject:

" Both begin with murder and pawnbroker and end with surrender. In both the story and the novel, the incitement of mental states are elaborated by a wealth of seemingly trivial physical impressions of sight, sound, and so on, with the result that an effect of an overwhelming mental existence is given, a feeling of tremendously crowded action, producing by its very abundance the idea of great progress in the narrative, together with eager suspense as to the outcome and a sense of reality and fullness of the darker life. In the two cases a criminal changes his course of life by something like moral regeneration." (1)

" *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* " embodies the same idea as that of " *Mackheim* " but in a more elaborate and graphic treatment of material. The imagination is given a wider scope to develop and reveal the author's vivid sense of the reality of sin, and the great responsibility lying

(1) (Russian Influence on Stevenson, *Modern Philology*, Edward Knowlton, page 449, *17.)

with every one of us to conquer our evil passions and make better the good in us. Man cannot thus separate his individuality; at one time turn to the filth of sin and crime and then when wearied to seek rest in the pure atmosphere of virtue. Very forcibly has he brought home the fact that man has but one life to live and on him depends whether Mr. Hyde or Dr. Jekyll will come out victorious.

III.

Stevenson's sensitive and nervous temperament continued its operations even in his sleep. In childhood, his dreams partook of the nature of those of other children, whose vivid imaginations furnished vague and terrifying experiences, but as the years rolled by and he reached maturity, these confused sights and sounds assumed definite shape, in which background, characters, and events stood out with life-like reality. In his "Chapter on Dreams" he has assured us that such was the case, and that to the "Brownies," as he called his little nightly visitors, he owed many of his most dramatic scenes, episodes, and characters.

It was in a dream at Skerryvore that the two most important scenes of "The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" were presented to him. The "Brownies" brought him the magic powders which were to effect the much desired transformation; also the central idea of a voluntary change becoming involuntary; the incident at the window where a fleeting glimpse might be obtained of the despair of the inmate, at the inability of his drug to respond to his will.

"Olalla" is also mostly a dream, for the court, the mother, the mother's niche, Olalla, Olalla's chamber, the meeting on the stairs, the broken window, the scene of the bite were all the gifts of the nightly

fairies. These disconnected events he has woven into a marvellous whole, a tissue of great beauty of sensuous description.

After we have read Stevenson's " Chapter on dreams " in which he quotes some of his most realistic dreams, we understand the reason for the particular charm and quality of his romantic stories; the dreamlike character of most of his productions; and we should not wonder if " Treasure Island " did not owe some of its many extraordinary scenes to the influence of dreams.

I V.

In his French stories, Stevenson held aloof from the tale of horror which was more or less characteristic of his Scottish tales, and turned to history and actual experiences for his subject-matter. Three of these stories, " Providence and the Guitar ", " Treasure of Franchard ", " The Story of a Lie " are studies from life the characters being men and women in whose company Stevenson ever delighted.

The wife of the painter, Mr. de la Chevere, at whose house our author was often a guest, served as a model for Anastasia, the quiet faithful wife of Dr. Despres in the "Treasure of Franchard ". In this story he succeeded perhaps better than in any other in creating a distinctly French atmosphere, in which its life and spirit are faithfully reproduced.

" Providence and the Guitar " is a delightful story in which the adventures of a poor strolling second-rate musician are pathetically set forth. Notwithstanding the many rebuffs endured, the slight encouragement received, he still turns undismayed and with buoyant faith to new fields, in the hope of meeting congenial spirits who share his exalted idea of art. Here again was live material taken and moulded into the characters of Leon Bartholini and his wife, the originals being an artist who with his

Bulgarian wife lodged at Barbizon Inn at the same time that Stevenson was there.

"The Story of a Lie" occupies a rather important place in Stevenson's writings, as it forms the connecting link between his essays and his stories, it being the first one that could claim any plot construction. The main character, another study from life, was that of a dissolute artist, surnamed the Admiral, who lived abroad making use of his art to sponge on his friends and acquaintances to eke out a living at their expense, while his daughter, a high spirited girl made of him an idol in her heart only too soon shattered when she came face to face with the reality.

In his stories based on historical fact, Stevenson has gone back to the fifteenth century, a period of literature he seemed deeply interested in. His essays on historical characters of the time like that of "Charles of Orleans", "François Villon" have thrown into wonderful relief the life and manners of the people of that age. The latter, especially, was a veritable searchlight thrown on certain phases of Parisian society during the life of the poet. The attitude of the author towards the poet, however, is not a very sympathetic one, for, no doubt, his sense of morality was deeply shocked at the shameless depravity the other so brazenly displayed to the world. Still the romantic element in his character was of a nature to attract him, for he made a passage of the same poet's life the theme of his first and perhaps of his best short-story in "A Lodging for the Night," which is a masterpiece of foreign setting, showing the versatility of the author in his power of choosing motives and themes to embody the conceptions of his art.

In "The Sire de Maletroit's Door", we are drawn away from the sordid realism of a libertine's life, though we are still led into the fertile fields of the fifteenth century romanticism for a background and a purer atmosphere, which the chivalrous attitude of the Middle Ages provides. The story is a romantic comedy in which almost all the events are of pure invention, but in which the tone, setting, and characters are so much in harmony with the spirit of the age they represent, that an impression of reality is conveyed which even the highly improbable incidents cannot entirely dissipate.

V.

A further proof of Stevenson's ability to use with perfect mastery foreign material for his stories is given in this last set of tales, which for convenience' sake we might group together and class as the South Sea Stories. These differ as widely from the French as the latter, from those over which the spirit of his native land seems to hover.

In a "Gossip on Romance", the author has pointed out how certain places fascinate us; some appearing most naturally as the appropriate scenes for foul deeds, while others, the fitting abode of fairies and angels. Such was the influence of the South Seas on Stevenson, for to him it was a land full of romantic possibilities. If he made but little use of so abundant a source of material, it was not that his sensitive imagination did not respond to the magical power at his command, but rather that his sense of responsibility in his new sphere, bent almost all his energies into a new channel. He became identified with the cause of the natives over whom he ruled, and became their champion in their efforts at self-government.

However, he still indulged in his old pastime and we are grateful that he gave to the world those three delightful stories, which for originality of theme, beauty of setting, and pictorial power of description have ever scarcely been surpassed.

For the first tale, published in Samoan language, "The Bottle Imp" he drew his material from the German story of the same name, but he adapted it to the natives, to which he appealed by the rich local color thrown over the many incidents and by the element of mystery and superstition to which they cling. The owner of the "Bottle Imp" was to have his every wish fulfilled, and such was the good fortune which attended Stevenson in his Vailima home, that these natives who could not imagine a story not founded on fact, conceived the idea that his own success was due to the presence of the dreaded but all-powerful imp.

"The Beach of Falesa" illustrates the author's power "of creating a whole series of romantic incidents which he drew from some natural scenery." (1) The story deals with the native's superstitious dread and awe of the "devil-spirits of the woods" but is more than the mere stringing together of episodes. It is an intensely realistic story of South-Sea life, in which characters and details of the island life detach themselves very vividly through the reflections and course of action of a stranger who has just arrived in the capacity of trader.

Finally, in "The Isle of Voices", Stevenson let loose the reins of his vivid imagination into the realms of tropical magic, and gave us a tale of fairy-like beauty in which both sight and sound blend to produce an harmonious whole suggestive of the dreamy atmosphere of the Pacific Isles.

(1)(Robert Louis Stevenson, Jacqueline Overton, page 25.)

Chapter IV.

Stevenson's literary characteristics.

(1) Deep poetic sense of nature.	Page 31
(2) Character delineation.	" 33
(3) Perfection of style.	" 36
(4) Versatility of mind.	" 39
(5) Descriptive power.	" 40

Chapter IV.

I.

A deep poetic sense of nature is another quality in Stevenson's writings which critics admire. In fact, some consider it as one of the outstanding features of his work. Love of nature was always a passion with him. His vivid imagination and poetic temperament responded eagerly to the beauties of God's creation in which he ever found a fresh and wholesome delight. He always lived in close touch with out-door nature, and became so intimately acquainted with its different phases and moods, that his descriptions of natural scenery have the charm of faithful representation. Like Tennyson, he viewed the universe with all its wonders, "with the simple joy and curiosity of an open-eyed child when eye and ear were alive to the natural objects around." (1) But it was especially the wild scenery of crag and mountain or the surging of the sea that appealed to him. He used to call Nature "God's open house" and fain would have dwelt there always, so that when the climate was favorable he would forego the comforts of modern dwellings to return to his loved abode, where he was amply repaid by the wealth of treasure he found stored therein. Such a close companionship resulted in a largeness of leisure and a quiet dignity apparent in all his works.

But there is more in his descriptions than a strict fidelity to truth. Something of his personality, intimate and spiritual is infused into it, by the use he makes of those felicitous phrases, his very own, the charm of which is readily felt by the sympathetic reader. Here is an

(1) (Tennyson, How to Know Him, Alden, page 93.)

extract from the "Merry Men" to show how well he can enliven by suitable comparisons the most barren scenery:

"On all this part of the coast, and especially near Aros these great granite rocks that I have spoken of, go down together like troops into the sea, like cattle on a summer's day. There they stand, for all the world like their neighbors ashore; only the salt water sobbing between them instead of the quiet earth and clots of sea pink blooming on their side instead of heather; and the great sea cumber to wreath about the base instead of the poisonous viper of the land. On calm days you can go wandering up and down between them in a boat for hours; but when the sea is up, then Heaven help the man that hears that cauldron boiling." (1)

In "Will of the Mill", how well has he represented the influence which nature produces on us according to our varying moods. Will is happy in his new found love, Marjory; nature too, is at her best.

"The river ran between the stepping stones with a pretty whimple; a bird sang merrily in the wood, the hilltops looked immeasurably high..... but seemed to contemplate his movements with a beneficent curiosity. The plain lay abroad with its cities and silver river inviting him to partake of its pleasures." (2)

But in "Glaila" we have as poetic a description of mid-day quiet, as can be found anywhere.

".....the pigeons dozed below the eaves like snowdrifts; the house was under the spell of the noon-tide quiet; and only a wandering and gentle wind stole from the mountain round the galleries, rustled among the pomegranates, and pleasantly and languidly stirred the shadows." (3)

In the "Fire de Maletroit's Door" is also found a description of dawn depicted with great charm and fidelity to which is added also, the most delicate poetic touch.

"The hollow of the sky was full of essential daylight, colorless and clean; and the valley was flooded with a gray reflection. A few thin vapors

(1) ("Merry Men", Stevenson, Pub. Scribner's Sons, 1910, page 7.)

(2) ("Will of the Mill", Stevenson, Pub. Scribner's Sons, 1910, page 94.)

(3) ("Glaila", Stevenson, Pub. Scribner's Sons, 1910, page 194.)

clung in the coves of the forest or lay along the winding course of the river. The scene disengaged a surprising effect of stillness..... A little wind went bustling and eddying among the tree-tops underneath the windows. And still the daylight kept flooding insensibly out of the east, which was seen to grow incandescent and cast up that red-hot cannon-ball, the rising sun." (1)

Dawson shows an intimate knowledge not only of Stevenson but of the poetic instincts which come to the surface in every soul that is deeply moved, when he said, " It is in passages like these, that Stevenson moves and holds his readers. Nature still remains, in spite of cities, the open Bible towards which God's creatures turn with undying interest and curiosity, and no writer is truly great who cannot read afresh and teach us to read that Bible. Stevenson has spoken to the poet that exists in every man." (2)

II.

" Portrayal of character change is a legitimate field for the short-story, although within the briefer limits of the short-story only the stationary might with success be handled. " (3) Stevenson has been most successful in representing character in its two phases, stationary and in development. The latter, through the interplay of motives and emotions, lends itself better to subtle analysis, in which Stevenson excelled. Sometimes, the change is sudden and then the character is made to pass through a psychological crisis in a swift determining moment.

Such is the case with Markheim. In a few decisive moments, scarcely an hour, his soul passed through its purgative way to come out chastened

(1) (Sire de Maletroit's Door, Stevenson, Pub. Scribner's Sons, 1910, page 299.)
 (2) (Makers of English Fiction, W.J.Dawson, page 252.)

and at peace with the world and with himself. How was the swift transformation brought about? And how has Stevenson produced the impression of complete conversion on the mind of the reader? By surrounding the character by such forces and agents as to stir up the dormant springs of his soul to self-confession. A series of apparently insignificant details are chosen with the object of bringing out the various passions and emotions of a guilty soul, terror, horror, resolve, repulsion, remorse, and finally surrender. The sweet notes of the music heard form a link between the display of the baser passions and that of the nobler ones. His past, with its innocence, joy, and happiness, appears before him, a vivid contrast to his present degeneration. This softening influence prepares the way for the wavering voice of conscience to make itself heard, and leads the soul to repentance and forgiveness.

In the "Sire de Maletroit's Door", the character of Sir Alain is clearly revealed by a full and lengthy description of his person. No analysis of character has been made, but so minutely has each detail of his personal appearance been set down with its accompanying reflections, that we have seized to the full, the qualities and defects of this man of iron, who seems to have so little of the human touch.

With Blanche de Maletroit, he has dealt differently. It is in her actions that she reveals herself; at first, proud and imperious; then humble and entreating; finally, winning, gentle, and loving.

Denis de Beaulieu, on the other hand displays his noble qualities by his conversations. Throughout he is always the same, brave, tender, and chivalrous.

In "Olalla" a different method has been used. The characters have been disclosed by means of an appropriate setting which forms a suitable background for character play. In this light the mother is shown to us as irresponsible, sensuous; while Olalla appears as the perfection of maidenhood.

Dr. Despres in "The Treasure of Franchard" is a supremely humorous character, a blending of sense and nonsense, a sublime theorist but a weakling when put to the test. His young pupil, as quaint as he, has this to his credit that as an apt student he has not only absorbed the master's fine theories of contempt of wealth, etc., but has actually applied in practical experiences the lessons he has received, thereby saving his kind though rather eccentric patron and adopted father.

It is thus, by choosing and asserting, in just measure, these characteristics, traits, and qualities forming a whole character, always essentially human, and then placing it in a critical phase of its existence, or in a suitable background that a striking and original effect is secured. Stevenson better than any other knew how to create this atmosphere in which his characters can play their parts freely and display the impulses, the passions which guide them. His creations are alive, spontaneous, free, and it is because he is never objective that he has succeeded in painting men as they are.

This quality of just balance is found in his most romantic cast of characters. We never for a moment forget that we are dealing with men such as one might meet any day, men who have their due share of good and evil, their greatness and their pettiness, their nobility of character and their little idiosyncracies; for in the worst of them there is a shred of goodness left.

However, Stevenson seems lacking in the elements necessary for the depicting of true womanhood. He has given us beautiful descriptions

of women like Glialia, but they seem accessory figures, not real living beings capable of deep emotions and nobler instincts, fit to be man's mate and helper. Was it inability to handle his material artistically that led him to dispense almost altogether with the female element in his stories? Perhaps, her intricate nature baffled his masculine mind, but I would rather believe that the fine noble women who influenced his life set such a stamp of love and respect upon his soul that he feared that the least injudicious touch might be a desecration.

III.

"In charm, in dash of style, in sense of form, in pure romantic spirit, Stevenson ranks among the ten greatest short-story writers of his era."(1) Out of all the qualities and characteristics enumerated in the foregoing quotation, the one that has attracted the attention of and commendation of all the critics is the exquisite, inimitable style of the author, and it is in this very style that lies his chief greatness. From his earliest years, Stevenson's one wish was to become a writer. It was this that kept him from following in his father's footsteps, from choosing a career so dear to him. Even in his youth he began his preparation for his future work.

This style was not a free gift, but the result of infinite pains and conscientious labor, "elbow grease", he calls it. For he admits very frankly that he does not write fluently. It was only by polishing and rewriting it over and over again till it expressed the idea in his

(1)(Studying the Short-Story, J. S. Leavell, page 30.)

mind that he succeeded in showing to the world how supple and elastic is the English language.

It was by a serious study of the English stylists, Lamb, Wordsworth, Ruskin, Keats, and others, and more particularly so of the French masters such as Dumas, Flaubert, Montaigne, that he became so well versed in the precise use of words. By repeated trials did he learn the value of concrete and picture words and specific phrases in settings, narratives and descriptions. Words for him "were something more than the mere counters of speech, they had root and bloom, color and fragrance; they were histories and biographies; they embalmed the thoughts of dead generations, and had an association which linked them with an immeasurable past; they had also the secret of music in them and were capable of endless modulation and harmony under the touch of a deft hand, and by the regulation of a quick ear." (1)

We have only to pick up any one of his works to find it abounding in harmonious and resonant expressions. In one paragraph of "Martheim" we note ever so many of these felicitous expressions which convey such a wealth of meaning. It was after Martheim had murdered the pawnbroker.

"Time has some score of small voices in that shop, some stately and slow as was becoming their great age; others garrulous and hurried. All these told out the time in an intricate chorus of tickings..... The candle stood on the counter, its flame solemnly wagging in a draught and by that inconsiderable movement, the whole room was filled with noiseless bustle and kept heaving like a sea; the tail

(1) Makers of English Fiction, W.J. Dawson, page 344.

shadows nodding, the gross blots of darkness swelling and
grindling as with respiration, the face of the portraits
and the china dogs changing and wavering like images in
the water. The inner door stood ajar, and peered into that
league of shadows with a long slit of daylight like a
pointing finger." (1)

How successfully and with what apparent ease has he made use of
 " the small voices ", " the wagging candle ", " the blots of darkness ",
 " the nodding shadows ", " the pointing finger ", to create this atmos-
 phere of alarm in which the culprit finds himself. A shudder creeps over
 us at the thought of the terror awakened in the guilty soul of Markheim
 by these insignificant agents who have become on account of his troubled
 state of mind, the accusing and pursuing ministers of God's justice.

In " Olalla " we come across such happy expressions as " an empty
 desert of hours ", " the death cry of love ", " love..... swelled like a
 storm of sweetness ", " those who learn much do but skin the face of
 knowledge ",. Again in " The Sire de Maletroit's Door " we find such
 suggestive phrases as " a flighty piping wind ", " a faint sobbing rustle ",
 while his descriptions in " Merry Men " are heightened by such appropriate
 terms as " the rain falling black like crepe upon the mountain ", the sea
 combing up..... ", the ragged cloud ", " the homelessness of men ",
 " hovering within in sun-glints and netted shadows ", scowling clouds ",
 and " the streaming tangles appear in the hollow of the wave ". One
 might go on indefinitely, taking every one of his works in turn, and

(1) (Markheim, Stevenson, Pub. Scribner's Sons, page 122.)

show how Stevenson succeeded in giving a sense of richness to his words and constructions, found nowhere else.

I have mentioned elsewhere, another characteristic of this perfection of style, in his ability to construct his plots, to build incident by incident in a clear order of events, which he acquired from his French masters.

So easily do the words and phrases flow from his charmed pen, in sonorous accents, that they convey an ease, grace, suppleness, and limpidity, which conceals the earnest painstaking effort required to bring about the desired effect. This makes Dawson say, "Of no author of our day is the saying truer that his is the art which conceals art, the ease and flexibility which are the disguises of eternal labor." (1)

IV.

If we look beyond the short-story for a few moments to consider the other fields of literature which have been exploited by Stevenson, we are amazed at the wide range and versatility of his mind. For, besides being a great writer of short stories, he is an essayist, playwright, novelist, fabulist, a lyrist, a delightful correspondent, and a pleasant writer of memoirs; and, because he has won some distinction and fame in all these different forms of literature, he has deserved to become one of the few writers of marked versatility who rank well in the literary world. "This versatility gives him a freedom and a grace of movement which is

(1) (Makers of English Fiction, W.J. Dawson, page 246.)

more taking than the fidelity of those wrapt over in their surging robes or prophetic mantles to one literary domain. "(1)

To come back to the limited scope of the short-story and make a similar comparison is an easy matter, for something of this wide range is manifest in the multiplicity of his themes and settings. He has dealt successfully with the psychological tale, the moral fable, the atmosphere story, the character study, the descriptive narrative, dramatic episodes, the tale of horror, the mediæval romance, fairy-tale, supernatural legends and the folk-lore.

Of course, many of his stories are combinations of these different varieties, but some bear a distinctly unique stamp. For instance "The Waif Woman" belongs undoubtedly to the Icelandic folk-lore; the "Sire de Maletroit's Door" is typically a mediæval romance; "Hurdheim" and "The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" are essentially psychological tales; while "Thrown Janet" is evidently a tale of supernatural agency beyond human power.

V.

I have said a few words on Stevenson's poetic sense of form which gave to his descriptions a great beauty of expression, but there is, moreover, to be found a vivid, graphic power of representation, appealing both to mind and heart, a vigour and richness at which we marvel, wondering how this man came by the great gift of entralling hundreds of readers by his masterly way of treating scenes, events, and characters.

(1) (Robert Louis Stevenson, R.L. Baidon, page 117.)

It is not only in his descriptions of nature at her most solemn moments or in her most awful phases, which he is able to depict with such realistic tremendousness, nor is it in his ability to portray characters in the intensely crucial tests of their lives, that we recognize the master's hand, but in his perception of how to deal with trivial particulars moulding them into passages that one can never forget.

One instance of his power of transfusing life into ordinary scenes and actions has been referred to in "Martheim" on pages 37 and 38. A second example may be had in "Olalla". It is only an accidental meeting on the stairs, but what a strong impression that first meeting makes on the mind of the reader, and what light is thrown on the characters which are affected by it.

"The Senora was lying leaped in slumber on the threshold of the recess;..... Something in the stillness moved me to imitation, and I went very lightly across the court and up the marble staircase. My foot was on the topmost round, when a door opened, and I found myself face to face with Olalla. Surprise transfixed me; her loveliness struck to my heart; she glowed in the deep shadow of the gallery, a gem of color; her eyes took hold of mine and clung there, and bound us together like the joining of hands; and the moments we stood face to face, drinking each other in, were sacramental and the wedding of souls. I know not how long it was before I awoke out of the deep trance, and hastily bowing, passed on into the upper stair. She did not move, but followed me with her great thirsting eyes; and as I passed out of sight, it seemed to me she paled and faded." (1)

There is about his pictures of the sea an elemental grandeur, a vastness that grips one with the same sensation as is felt when one glances for the first time on the wide expanse of the ocean. But in his descriptions of the sea in fury, we live again those awful moments

(1)(Olalla, Stevenson, Pub. Scribner's Sons, page 194.)

when terrified by wind or storm, we found no place a refuge from the vague fears that assailed us. The "Merry Men" contains some of his best interpretations of the sea in anger;

"Intervals of a groping twilight alternated with spells of utter blackness; and it was impossible to trace the reason of these changes in the flying horror of the sky. The wind blew the breath out of a man's nostrils; all the heavens seemed to thunder overhead like one huge sail; and when there fell a momentary lull on Aros, we could hear the gusts dismally sweeping in the distance. Over all the lowlands of the Ross, the wind must have blown as fierce as on the open sea; and God only knows the uproar that was raging around the head of Ben Kyah. Sheets of mingled spray and rain were driven in our faces. All around the isles of Aros the surf, with an incessant, hammering thunder, beat upon the reefs and beaches, now louder in one place, now lower in another, like the combination of orchestral music, the constant mass of sound was hardly varied for a moment. And loud above all this hurly-burly, I could hear the changeful voices of the Roost and the intermittent roaring of the Merry Men. At that hour there flashed into my mind the reason of the name they were called. For the noise of them seemed almost mirthful, as it out-topped the other noises of the night; or if not mirthful, yet instinct with a portentous joviality. Nay, and it seemed human. As when savage men have drunk away their reason, and discarding speech, hawl together in their madness by the hour." (1)

If the "Merry Men" emphasizes at his highest level, Stevenson's power of painting the sea in a storm, "Pavilion on the Links" shows his skill in presenting in a similar and drastic way, and with the same energy of touch, the dreariness of the same sea, with its long stretch of wind-beaten shore of moss covered surf, which in Scotland receives the name of link. There, on the barren sands with the sea as a background, is enacted one of the gloomiest tragedies, made more tragic still by the dismal atmosphere in which the characters go through their very mysterious parts.

(1) (Merry Men, Stevenson, Pub. Scribner's Sons, page 53.)

In drawing upon the superstitious lore of Scotland, he has entered upon a field which lends itself to forceful expression and dramatic presentation. "Thrawn Janet" is, within a small compass, and in a quaint and picturesque dialect, the treatment of a weird theme with the greatest of human daring.

Figuratively speaking, in "The Bottle Imp" Stevenson has used both brush and pen to paint in a vivid manner, for the benefit of the natives, the deep misfortunes of a life given over to the lust of gold, and the inability of ill-gotten riches to produce happiness. Great ingenuity was required, on the part of the author, in the matter of the transfer of the famous bottle, and it is with an amused smile that we follow the adventures of the Imp and its possessors who, at first so desirous of securing such a treasure, are equally anxious to part with it, at whatever sacrifice to themselves. The speeches strikingly told, so direct and simple in their terseness of expression, acquire a force of a nature to produce a strong impression on the minds of the untutored islanders, incapable of long and subtle reasoning. The wedding scene is a model of terseness of phrase. Still a sense of reality is given to this most unrealistic of themes by the intense seriousness of all the characters concerned.

"But here is the plain truth. I have met you here at the roadside, and I saw your eyes, which are like the stars, and my heart went to you as swift as a bird. And so now, if you want none of me, say so, and I will go on to my own place; but if you think me no worse than any other young man, say so, too, and I will turn aside to your father's for the night, and to-morrow I will talk with the good man." (1)

(1) (The Bottle Imp, Stevenson, Pub. Scribner's Sons, page 576.)

"Clalla", a gleamy picture of hereditary insanity, is relieved by a brilliant setting of Spanish scenery. The descriptions in their smoothness of finish and warmth of tone and color appeal to both ear and eye, and reflect the luxuriant atmosphere of a tropical climate. One description especially, that of a portrait on the wall is very beautiful, and because of its softness of shade, rich coloring, and choice comparisons is worthy of mention.

"After I had supped, I drew up the table nearer to the bed and began to prepare for rest; but in the new position of the light, I was struck by a picture on the wall. It represented a woman still young. To judge by her costume and the mellow unity which reigned over the canvas, she had long been dead; to judge by the vivacity of the attitude, the eyes and the features, I might have been beholding in a mirror the image of life. Her figure was very slim and strong, and of a just proportion; her tresses lay like a crown over her brow; her eyes, of a very golden brown, held mine with a look; her face which was perfectly shaped, was yet marred by a sullen, cruel and sensual expression. Something in both face and figure, something exquisitely intangible, like the echo of an echo, suggested the features of my guide; and I stood awhile, unpleasantly attracted and wondering at the oddity of the resemblance....."

The first light of the morning shone full upon the portrait, and, as I lay awake, my eyes continued to dwell upon it with growing complacency; its beauty crept about my heart, indiduously silencing my scruples one after another; and while I knew that to love such a woman were to sign and seal one's own sentence of degeneration. I still knew that, if she were alive, I should love her. Day after day the double knowledge of her wickedness and of my weakness grew clearer. She came to be the heroine of many day-dreams, in which her eyes led on to, and sufficiently rewarded crimes. She cast a dark shadow on my fancy; and when I was out in the free air of heaven, taking vigorous exercise and healthily renewing the current of my blood, it was often a glad thought to me that my enchantress was safe in the grave, her wand of beauty broken, her lips closed in silence, her philtre spilt." (1)

(1) ("Clalla, Stevenson, Pub. Scribner's Sons, page 171.)

Chapter V.

Classification of Stevenson's Short-Stories.

(1) Character Studies.	Page 45
(2) Plot Stories.	" 55
(3) Atmosphere Tales	" 60

Chapter V.

Stevenson considers that there are only three ways of developing the short-story. In the first case, you take a character and then incidents and situations are chosen to bring it out into greater relief. Or, you may select a plot and fit the characters to it. Lastly, you may seek to portray an atmosphere by getting action and persons to realize it.

I.

Discussed from this point of view, many of his stories would come under the first class, for notwithstanding the blending of plot and atmosphere in all his tales, "Markheim", "The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde", "A Lodging for the Night", "Olalla", "Story of a Lie", "Providence and the Guitar", and "The Treasure of Franchard" are essentially character studies.

Markheim is, from the opening of the story to its close, the center of our attention. It is his thoughts, his emotions, his inward struggles that are revealed to us. The dealer and the subsequent events are merely foils contributing in a large measure to the development of his character, in this most decisive psychological moment of his life. His degradation and his moral weakness are evident in his abdication of his "free will" to pursue crime which he tries to palliate, by casting upon circumstances the responsibility of his misdoings. Thus he speaks

to his visitor.

"I am worst than most; myself is overlaid; my excuse is known to me and God. But, had I time, I could disclose myself."

"To me?" inquired the visitant.

"To you before all," returned the murderer, "I supposed you were intelligent. I thought---since you exist--- you would prove a reader of hearts. And yet you would propose to judge me by my acts! Think of it; my acts! I was born in a land of giants; giants have dragged me by the wrists since I was out of my mother--- the giants of circumstance. And you would judge me by my acts! But can you not look within? Can you not understand that evil is hateful to me? Can you not see within me the clear writing of conscience, never blurred by any wilful sophistry, although too often disregarded? Can you not read me for a thing that surely must be as common as humanity--- the unwilling sinner?" (1)

But there is a shred of goodness left, and when brought face to face with his whole life, whose downward course in evil has been so rapid and so fatal, shame, remorse, a noble indignation fill his guilty soul and make him cry out:

"If I be condemned to evil acts, there is still one door of freedom open--- I can cease from action. If my life be an evil thing, I can lay it down. Though I be as you say truly at the beck of every small temptation, I can yet, by one decisive gesture, place myself beyond the reach of all. My love of good is doomed to barrenness; it may, and let it be! but I have still my hatred of evil; and from that to your galling disappointment, you shall see that I can draw both energy and courage." (2)

The victory is complete, and right has triumphed over wrong. In this one moment the transformation swift and entire was accomplished, and the will has at last taken its rightful place to the perfect satisfaction of the

"visitor whose features began to undergo a wonderful and lovely change; they brightened and softened with a tender triumph." (3)

(1) (Markheim, Stevenson, Fab. Scribner's Sons, page 135.)

(2) (" " " " " 142.)

(3) (" " " " " 142.)

In the complicated "Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" we have a symbolic representation of the gradual degradation of a character that tries to compromise between good and evil. In a very allegorical manner are the sinner and the just man depicted. Sin is odious, loathsome, therefore, its human embodiment is "clothed with the detestable attributes of a demon." (1) Mr. Hyde stands for all that is evil in man's nature, and the depths of debasement to which a guilty passion can lead, is exemplified in the successive acts of wickedness increasing in magnitude, as the passion grows in strength. It is at first only the treading under foot of a slight duty, figured by the trampling of the child; then more weighty obligations are thrust aside, till finally, the soul disregarding all responsibilities wallows in the mire of sin typified by the murder of Sir Danvers Carew.

If we seek on the other hand, the pendant to this picture, we have a beautiful description of virtue in the good, amiable, gentle, philanthropic physician. It is significant, however, that the two personalities cannot at the same time realize their life in the one character. Where true goodness is, there is wickedness thrust out. Good and evil are irreconcilable foes. Moreover, the continued performance of the one weakens the power of the other. Righteousness cannot be cast off and resumed like a discarded mantle as Dr. Jekyll was soon aware, when the evil personality of Mr. Hyde persisted in spite of his efforts to bring about a change. Finally, when evil has completely taken hold of the soul, despair, the ultimate evil triumphs over virtue.

(1) (1) The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, Stevenson, Pub. Scribner's Sons, page 336.)

In the "Story of A Lie", Stevenson gives us his theory on character study:

"There is no science in the personal study of human nature. All comprehension is creation. To love a character is the only heroic way of understanding it. When we merely study an eccentricity, the method of our study is but a series of allowances. To begin to understand is to begin to sympathize; for comprehension comes only when we have stated another's faults in terms of our own. Hence the proverbial toleration of artists for their own evil creations." (1)

Such must have been the case with the creation of Stevenson's most eccentric character, Mr. Peter Van Tromp, surnamed the Admiral, and a one-time artist. We recognize a great deal of the author's own vagabondishness in the portrayal. Our hero presents the picture of a man of sufficiently intellectual ability, but marred by an intense self-conceit together with a deep propensity to idleness which has caused him to degenerate into a "parasite upon the foreigner in Paris." (2) His aptitude for exploiting character to extract the maximum results with the minimum efforts, is shown in a number of comic-comic incidents, and is whimsically set forth in the following paragraph:

"..... Dick had never found any one take a fancy to him so readily, nor show it in an easier or less offensive manner. He seemed tickled with him as an elder fellow about town might be tickled by a pleasant and witty lad; he indicated that he was no precisian, but in his wildest times had never been such a blade as he thought Dick. Dick protested, but in vain. This manner of carrying an intimacy at the bayonet's point was Van Tromp's stock-in-trade. With an elder man he insinuated himself; with youth he imposed himself, and in the same breath imposed an ideal on his victim, who saw that he must work up to it or lose the esteem of this old and vicious patron." (3)

IN "The Treasure of Franchard", we have again to deal with another

- (1) (Story of a Lie, Stevenson, Pub. Scribner's Sons, page 521.)
 (2) { " " " " " " " " " " 522. }
 (3) { " " " " " " " " " " 524. }

humorous character-study. Dr. Despres appears to us as one of those highly strung natures, who dwell in a world of unreality; byronic in his lofty attitude of scorn and disdain for the gross and material world, unable to understand the fine perceptions of his elevated philosophic mind. Entirely filled with his own personality, he uses every means to air his optimistic views on life, his noble contempt of wealth. But this is somewhat amusing, when we discover that this philosophy is a forced one, based on straightened circumstances which force the Doctor and his amiable wife to live away from the Parisian fetes they both enjoy so much. However, their determination to make the best of things and to be pleased with their condition and surroundings, and the enthusiasm they succeed in maintaining strikes a pleasant note in their favor. His belief in the sincerity of his convictions and theories on wealth, which I here set down in his own words

".... Precisely," returned the Doctor; "so do I. And in the same way I prefer my present moderate fortune to my former wealth. Golden mediocrity I cried the adorable ancients; and I subscribe to their enthusiasm. Have I not good wine, good food, good air, the fields and the forest for my walks, a house, an admirable wife, a boy whom I protest I cherish like my own son? Now, if I were still rich, I should indubitably make my residence in Paris---You know Paris---Paris and Paradise are not convertible terms. This pleasant noise of the wind streaming among the leaves changed into the grinding Babel of the street, the stupid glare of plaster substituted for this quiet pattern of greens and grays, the nerves shattered, the digestion falsified--- picture the fall! Already you perceive the consequences; the mind is stimulated, the heart steps to a different measure, and the man is himself no longer. I have passionately studied myself---the true business of philosophy. I know my character as the musician knows the ventages of his flute. Should I

return to Eric, I should ruin myself gambling; nay, I go further—I should break the heart of my Anastasia with infidelities." (1)

is affecting, when we consider the alacrity with which he returned to all he professed to despise. When the treasure of Franchard comes into his hands, he quickly rushes to Paris with Jean, to destroy in a few minutes the work of so many months. Fortunately for him, his adopted son has done more than merely to skim the surface of the principles of his kind benefactor, but has absorbed deeply the lessons he has received. Full of gratitude and love for his master, he is determined to save him at any cost to himself, and by hiding the treasure, pretending that it was stolen, he brings back the state of affairs to their normal condition.

Another enthusiast, Mr. Leon Berthelini, unfolds his character in "Providence and the Guitar" and his enthusiasm has in it a contagious element of good humor, which completely wins us over as it has already conquered his wife. For, while we deplore the lack of mental equilibrium in his artistic make-up, we do not, nevertheless, lose our patience with his vagaries and extravagances of speech and action, but with a keen relish we follow the incidents succeeding each other with dramatic intentness. But it is not so much for the plot, which is, indeed, slight that we eagerly step after the strolling pair in their ventures, but rather to see what effect they produce on the central figures of the story.

These characters who firmly believe that they have a high mission to fulfill, have elevated and noble aspirations, but are blind to the fact that they have not the necessary qualifications to effectuate it, are pathetic figures, indeed. It is this union of incompatibility and

(1) (Treasure Of Franchard, Stevenson, Pub. Scribner's Sons, page 255.)

In "A Lodging for the Night" also, the plot is subordinate to the character portrayal. The many dramatic incidents and the well-sketched secondary characters serve the double purpose of heightening the interest of the tale, but especially of bringing out more vividly the primary actor on this stage of life. In the different scenes of this short and striking drama, he fulfills many parts.

Villon first appears in the role of a light and frivolous man, given over to mirth and revelry, so little in keeping with the dignity which knowledge and fine arts are supposed to convey. But, the atrocious murder committed by one of his boon companions, and under his very eyes, has a most sobering effect, and we see him for a moment, overcome even to tears. The moment is a propitious one for his comrades, who rob him of what he has won even from the dead man.

The next scene presents him as fleeing from the scene of horror, realizing as he does the deep and terrible consequences of the deed, for himself as well as for the others. The gallows looms up before him in the dead of night, while the look of the murdered man follows him with dreadful persistency. A guilty conscience makes him see ministers of justice in every moving object within his sight. But he is still, nevertheless, far from experiencing any remorse or shame that he should have consorted with such consummate villains. On the contrary, overcoming his fear, he returns at the first opportunity to his life of meanness, this time by robbing a poor dead woman of two insignificant little whites. No sense of pity fills the soul of the callous youth, at the sight of the tragedy, only a vain regret that he cannot reap more benefit from the event.

The last scene leads, to use Macaulay's description of Steele, "this rake among scholars and this most scholarly of rakes" (1) to the door of the *Seigneur de Brisetout*. There, though he still with dignified and brazen impudence, displays for the benefit of his host, his shameless libertinism, yet, a spark of something like greatness flashes to the surface, showing that all is not lost in this man so apparently dead to noble feeling. A little honor still remains which causes him to refrain from adding more guilt to an already overloaded conscience and thus to leave in perfect security the undefended property and person of his host.

So intense and atmosphere has been created in the horrible tale of insanity "Olalla, that one would hesitate to classify it as a character study. It seems to belong to the atmosphere story, were it not for the suggestiveness of the title, which makes us transfer our attention from the surroundings to the central figure which has given its name to the tale. Her slowness in making her appearance only whets our curiosity all the more, for we feel that surprises are in store for us, since the author has been at such pains to prepare a suitable environment in which to present her to his readers. The other two important character have been elaborately detailed long before we even get a glimpse of "Olalla.

The impression which Felipe, the son of the house, makes upon us at first acquaintance is that of a

"diminutive, leutish, well-made country lad, mighty quick, lithe and strong of body, but devoid of any culture; a child in intellect; his mind like his body active and swift, but stunted in development." (2)

But on closer intimacy, he proves shrewd, cunning, secretive, resentful,

(1) Joseph Addison, Macaulay, The MacMillan Co, page 74.)

"capable of flashes of causeless anger and fits of sturdy sullenness." (1)

He was more like a graceful animal than a sensible human being.

By quoting quite fully from the text, the scene of the first meeting of the stranger and his hostess, one can form an adequate picture of the almost bestial disposition and mental aberration of the mother.

".... At the ground level there was, however, a certain pillared recess, which bore the marks of human habitation. Though it was open in front upon the court, it was yet provided with a chimney, where a wood fire would always be prettily blazing; and the tile floor was littered with the skins of animals.

It was in this place that I first saw my hostess. She had drawn one of the skins forward and sat in the sun leaning against a pillar. It was her dress that struck me first of all, for it was rich and brightly colored, and shone out in that dusty courtyard with something of the same relief as the flowers of the pomegranates. At a second look it was her beauty of person that took hold of me. As she sat back --- watching me. I thought though with invisible eyes --- and wearing at the same time an expression of almost imbecile good-humor and contentment, she showed a perfectness of feature and a quiet nobility of attitude that were beyond a statue's. but the sudden disclosure of her eyes disturbed me. They were unusually large, the iris golden like Felipe's but the pupil at that moment so distended that they seemed almost black; and what affected me was not so much their size as the singular insignificance of their regard. A look more blankly stupid I never saw.

From that day forth, whether I came or went, I was sure to find the Senora seated in the sun against a pillar or stretched on a rug before the fire; only at times she would shift her station to the top round of the stone staircase, where she lay with the same nonchalance right across my path. In all these days, I never knew her to display the least spark of energy beyond what she expended in brushing and rebrushing her copious tresses, but the rest of the day she lay luxuriously folded on herself and sunk in sloth and pleasure." (2)

Stevenson has very aptly drawn his own conclusions as to the cause of this degeneration found so often in once noble families, and lays it at the door of long in-breeding, a common occurrence among the upper *classes*.

(1) (Glalla, Stevenson, Pub. Scribner's Sons, page 172.)

(2) (" " " " " " 176.)

"No decline was to be traced in this body, which had been handed down unimpaired in shapeliness and strength..... But the intelligence was degenerate; the treasure of ancestral memory ran low." (1)

With this picture of mother and son, it is not surprising if we have some misgivings as to the daughter's traits and character. So adroitly ^{Stevenson} ~~handed~~ his material, that we are totally unprepared for the vision of beauty and holiness which bursts upon us at the moment we least expected it. I have already referred to the impression she created on the mind of their visitor and lodger. Here, nature seemed capriciously to have set aside the laws of heredity and to have diverted into another channel this tainted stock; so that it might pass her and leave her free to inherit the virtues without the vices of ancestors who had been cousins to kings. Only in her features could we trace her lineage, for she was as good as she was beautiful; as noble in mind and body as she was good.

II.

In the stories belonging to this second class, the characterization is slight but the plot is of paramount importance. "The Sire de Maletroit's Door", "The Bottle Imp", "The Beach of Falesa", and "The Body Snatcher" are the best examples.

In "The Sire de Maletroit's Door", from the very first paragraph in this one sentence, "He would have done better to stay at home beside the fire, or go decently to sleep", we feel that something is going to happen, and we are curious as to what that something will be. So that

(1)(Clalla, Stevenson, Pub. Scribner's Sons, page 181.)

we are more interested in the events that follow than in the personality of the hero. The characters are well drawn and greatly appeal to us, but not so much for their intrinsic value as for their share and influence on the plot, which is an all-absorbing one, on account of the mystery and romance with which it is surrounded. The material, incidents, and events have been so well chosen that they fit naturally into one another, with a decided unity of impression which is marvellous.

It is the plot construction which causes the real charm of this fine piece of work. A brief outline of the story will show how skillfully Stevenson has woven the details of his plot into this perfect whole. Denis de Beaulieu sets out to visit one of his friends, but not being well acquainted with the road, he loses his way, just reaching the porch of a pretentious property as a patrol is coming down the street. A previous paragraph has told us that the town was filled with Burgundians and English troops, so we naturally expect an encounter, but our young friend is in no mood for such a meeting, especially when he perceives the drunken condition of his would be assailants. It was most natural that he should seek the friendly shelter of the porch, till he is free to, start anew on his homeward journey; but

"he was reckoning without that chapter of incidents which was to make this night memorable above all others in his career." (1)

For his especial good fortune, it would seem, the door behind him yields to his touch and he finds protection and safety within. It is just at this time that the plot begins to thicken, for just as he fancies himself free, he has stepped into the snare set for another. Then succeed

(1) (The Bire de Maletroit's Door, Stevenson, Pub. Scribner's Sons, page 378.)

the series of romantic incidents, which though most highly improbable, are still accepted as almost plausible, by the reader who has been prepared for some romantic development. When our young friend finds that the door will no longer respond, as heretofore, to his touch, he seeks a way out, which only tightens the meshes of the net into which he has been ensnared. On coming to the house, he is met as if he had long been expected. No explanation, no reasoning, no threat will convince the master of the house, Sir Alain de Maletroit, that this is not the visitor in question. Our guest is made to realize his position in a few pointed remarks which, far from enlightening him, only increases the mystery of the situation. He sees that he is a prisoner, and only when Blanche de Maletroit comes in robed in bridal garments, does he begin to see how events are turning out. He then has presented to him the alternative of becoming the groom or of being hanged in the court below. The pair are then left together to decide upon their future relations. The mystery is unraveled, everything is made clear, and of course, the wedding takes place.

"The Bottle Imp" is also another example of the author's ability to handle his plot constructions. The tone is vastly different from the preceding one, and it is easily seen that the author had in mind the limited range of intellect of his Polynesian readers. There is no elaborate description of scenery or subtle analysis of character; the incidents are simply but vividly told.

The scene is laid in California, the land of treasures. Keano leaves his Hawaiian island to get a glimpse of the great cities of the world, and in a short time reaches the country of his dreams. He soon meets with

his first temptation when he discovers that he can possess splendid mansions ^{like} those he has seen and envied, if he could only obtain a certain Bottle, within which is concealed an Imp who is the cause of the possessor's good fortune. There is an immense drawback, however, to the owner, for

"if he die before he sell it, he must burn in hell forever." (1)

The temptation grows as he becomes weaker to resist it, and he finally purchases the Bottle. His most extravagant wishes are fulfilled but happiness is not forthcoming. A deep sorrow settles over him, and, in despair, he hastens to get rid of the cause of all his sorrow, and the Imp starts on his travels once more. Riches, pleasure, all but happiness attend it on its way.

Joy and contentment have returned, and Keawe rejoices in his new found happiness; in his prospects of a loving marriage. His hopes, however, are dashed to the ground by the appearance of the Chinese evil, a disease dreaded by all Orientals. Then does his mind return to the powers of the Bottle Imp, and he endeavors to obtain it once more. When his search is rewarded, he finds to his consternation, that the price of the Bottle is so low that he will scarcely be able to resellit; for one of the conditions is that it must be sold at a lower price than that at which it was bought. His marriage takes ^{place}, but peace and happiness are banished from the home. Kokuu, his wife, finds out the cause of his sorrow, and that it was his love for her which had prompted the deed; ^{she} resolves to solve the problem. In other countries there is a coin of less value than an American cent.; so they start on their travels, and succeed with great difficulty in getting rid of their hateful possession.

(1) (The Bottle Imp, Stevenson, Pub, Scribner's Sons, page 564.)

They are ever happy after that.

Such, in a few words, is the sum and substance of the story, told with dramatic intentness, concealed by the greatest simplicity of expression.

"The Beach of Palosa" is a combination of the atmosphere story and the plot story. Here, unlike "The Bottle Imp", Stevenson used his power of imagery to its utmost, and we have the most beautiful pictures interwoven between the incidents so gruesomely set down.

In the tale are narrated fully the adventures of a certain Mr. Wiltshire, a trader in the South Seas. The plot is more complicated than in "The Bottle Imp", for in the narrative are brought in many elements which bring to light in a most realistic way, not only the life of the trader sacrificed to the greed and duplicity of a capable and cunning rogue, but the means which the villain took to compass his end. How unscrupulously does he make use of the natives' superstitious tendencies, to foster in them an awe and dread of his of his personality, which give him the ascendancy over these islanders, whom he exploited to his own benefit, to the utter ruin of other traders who sought to make profit in the South Sea Island. But Nemesis was pursuing him, for in this newcomer he has found his match.

The rest of the story deals with the struggles of the two rivals for supremacy; the clever way in which the trader obtains his information and then follows up his clue; the unmasking of Case's fraudulent conduct; the final struggle resulting in the death of the villain; and the triumph of Mr. Wiltshire, who has now won the respect and the confidence of all.

Such are the details of the story, but on reading through the lines

ones sees much more than a mere altercation between two men determined to become master of the situation. It is the atmosphere of reality which is depicted, the presentation of the daily life of a people imposed upon by men of superior civilization, who instead of using their power to raise them to higher levels, keep them in their degrading superstitious beliefs.

III

We have now come to the last group of tales, types of which are seen in the following; "The Merry Men", "Thrown Janet", "Will of the Mill", "Isle of Voices", and "Pavilion on the Links". In this set of stories, we see how action and person are made to represent the atmosphere chosen. Indeed, in many of them the plot construction is weak, the characterization slight.

For instance, let us study "The Merry Men". "The sea naturally attracted Stevenson. The mingled sentiments of horror, fascination, mystery, with which the roaring waves inspired him, he wished to convey to his readers. The character of the master of Aros, the introduction of the mysterious creature he sees in the sea, the tempest, the wreck, all combine to produce the desired mystery and horror, while the skillful introduction of the howling waves called "The Merry Men" convey some of the fascination of the wild dancing waves. What could be more impressive of the diabolical glee which the breakers seem to feel when a ship goes down than the horrible fascination of the mad uncle for shipwrecks. He typifies

as it were the character of the sea." (1) In the paragraph already quoted on page 42 we have a fine illustration of this excellent atmosphere portrayal.

A different type of atmosphere story, that of terror caused by the means of supernatural agencies, is skillfully portrayed in "Thrawn Janet". A preliminary introduction to Janet M'Clour as a person given over to the Evil One, places us in the right frame of mind. The drastic measure, that of ducking, pursued by the women of the village as the suitable punishment for witchery, also heightens the situation. When a stroke of paralysis leaves Janet with a distorted face and an imperfect and indistinct voice articulation, great fear fell upon the people.

"There were many grave folk lang over their prayers that night; but when the morn cam' there was sic a fear fell upon a' Be'weary that the bairns hid theirsels, and even the men folk stood and keekit frae the doors. For there was Janet cavin' down the clackin'—her or her likeness, nane could tell—wi' her neck thrawn, and her head on ae side, like a body that has been hangit, and a girn on her face like an unstreakit cory. By an' by they got used wi' it, and even speered at her to ken what was wrong; but frae that day forth she could nae speak like a Christian woman, but slavered and played click wi' her teeth like a pair of shears; and frae that day forth the name o' God cam never on her lips. Whiles she wad try to say it, but it might nae be. Then that kenneid best said least; but the they never gied that thing the name o' Janet M'Clour; for the auld Janet, by their way o't, was in muckle hell that day. But the minister was neither to hand nor to bind; he preached about naething but the folk's cruelty that had gi'en her a stroke of the palsy; he skelpt the bairns that meddled her; and he had her up to the manse that same night, and dwalled there a' his lane wi' her under the Hangin' Shaw." (2)

Such was the impression produced on the minds of the simple rustics, but what shall I say of the effect which the appearance of the man

(1) (Stevenson, a Short-story Writer, Academie, 1920, page 91.)

(2) (Thrawn Janet, Stevenson, Pub, Scribner's Sons, page 150.)

" great of stature, an' black as hell an' his e'en was singular to see " (1)

had on the people of the village? The minister himself is affected by it. Thus do we find each incident deepening more and more the gloomy atmosphere and easily preparing the way for the spiriting away of what was left of Janet.

In " Pavilion on the Links ", the details serve to bring out in a vivid manner the dreariness of the barren coast, in some parts of Scotland. The scene is laid in Graden Easter and a more dismal stretch of land was never described.

" The mansion house of Graden stood in a bleak stretch of country some three miles from the shore.

The country, I have said, was mixed sand-hill and links; links being a Scottish name for sand which has ceased drifting and becomes more or less solidly covered with surf. The pavilion stood on an open space, a little behind it, the wood began in a hedge of elders huddled together by the wind; in front, a few tumbled sand Hills stood between it and the sea. An outcropping of rock had formed a bastion for the sand, so that there was here a promontory in the coast-line between two shallow bays; and just beyond the tides, the rock again cropped out and formed an islet of small dimensions. The quick sands were of great extent at low water, and had an infamous reputation in the country. Close in shore, between the islet and the promontory, it was said that they would swallow a man in four minutes and a half. ...at sundown in September, with a high wind, and a heavy surf rolling in close along the links, the place told of nothing but dead mariners and sea disasters. A ship beating to windward on the horizon, and a huge truncheon of wreck half buried in the sands at my feet, completed the impenetrable of the scene." (1)

The curious adventures of the owner of the Pavilion, outlined on this dark and sombre background intensify the atmosphere of solitude, barrenness, and dread which the author meant to convey.

(1) (Thrawn Janet, Stevenson, Pub. Scribner's Sons, page 152.)

(2) (Pavilion on the Links, Stevenson, Pub. Scribner's Sons, page 186.)

" Will of the Will " on the other hand, places us in a sunny, and joyful atmosphere of rest and quiet, that of an idealist, who fearing to see his idols shattered, leads a passive life remote from towns, living in his own world of dreams. This unsophisticated man, in his youth, had been a boy of many desires; one who on looking on the world from the height of his imagination, conceived it as rich in all kinds of delightful experiences.

" Bit by bit, he pieced together broken notions of the world below; of the river, ever moving and growing until it sailed forth into the majestic ocean; of the cities, full of brisk and beautiful people, playing fountains, bands of music and marble palaces, and lighted up at night from end to end with artificial stars of gold; of the great churches, wise universities, brave armies, and untold money lying stored in vaults; of the high flying vice that moved in the sunshine, and the stealth and swiftness of midnight murder. He was like some one lying in twilight, formless pre-existence, and stretching out his hands lovingly towards many-coloured, many sounding life." (1)

But as the years roll by, little by little, comes the realization that life is not the painted pageant of his dreams, he prefers to dwell on the hill-top, living his own peaceful and contented life, awaiting death with the confidence of a child, hoping at last to find the complete fulfillment of all his hopes.

Conclusion.

At the close of this treatise, a few words on our indebtedness to Stevenson and his place in English literature, would be most appropriate. From one point of view, that of the spiritual return to nature, Gessing has quite fully summarized Stevenson's share in the Romantic revival of the nineteenth century. To him is due, in a large measure, the restoring of the taste for romanticism but quite apart from the novel. "To have been a leading spirit in making a great reaction sane and sweet, is Stevenson's incalculable service. It was not in protest but in the spontaneous joy of living, not in rebellion against past or present, but in the wholehearted desire to add to the wealth of existence that he gave to the world his essays and adventure stories. He did not set out to revolutionize man's attitude to life; it is doubtful if he knew how much he was doing. Here was the offset to a literature which keeping to its old formulas, long after their first pregnancy was gone, was beginning to runwaddle. It was a return to run-wild elemental nature, to the stratum below the conventionalities and artificialities of life; and it was made in the healthiest way possible, simply harking back to the buoyant youthfulness that still survives in all of us".(1)

Moreover, by his excellent literary style, he has given abundant proof of the fitness of the English language to express the most delicate and subtle emotions; of the flexibility of English words and phrases to respond, under a master hand, with perfect ease and grace to the modulations of the sweetest harmonies. Words have acquired a wealth of meaning

(1)(Stevenson's Attitude to life, J.Gessing, page 9.)

since he has shown the infinite variety of uses to which they can be put. The apparent ease with which the words seemed to flow from his pen is often misleading; for we fancy that it is an easy task to embody our conceptions in concrete terms and picture-words. It is only when we come to express these same ideas in our own words, that we find how much skill is required to bring out of words and phrases the full richness of their value. "Never before in the literature of prose romance was there so happy a blending of exciting incident with such rhetorical perfection." (1)

As to his place in literature, all critics will concede and unanimously agree that Stevenson stands as "the polisher of the modern short-story, which he has elevated above suspicion of triviality." (2) He greatly contributed, also, in giving it its peculiar style, making it thereby a distinctly individual type, forcing critics to regard it as a special form of literature quite distinct from the novel.

Stevenson's reputation has never waned, for by "his brave and cheery spirit he has made us all the braver and cheerier by what he has written", (3) "Without ever appealing to the animal in humanity, he had the keen satisfaction of reigning in the hearts of uncultivated readers and of receiving the almost universal tribute of refined writers." (4)

(1) (Essays on the Modern Novel, W.L. Phelps, page 139.)

(2) (Studying the Short-Story, H.S. Canby, page 327.)

(3) (English Literature, J. Long, page 519.)

(4) (Advance of the English Novel, page 175.)

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