

INTRODUCTION

whatever Louis Stevenson gave himself to, it was always his whole self that he gave.

Small wonder is it that this man—who to the last of his days retained that enthusiasm which made him as a child throw himself into his games in “a very passion of play”—could write for children in the spirit of a child. In him the power to reveal his personality in his writings was combined with that of recalling at any time sensations once experienced. And thus in the simple verses of his *Garden* we have a true picture of the frail, brown-eyed little boy whose restless nights faithful Cummie soothed; so many of whose days were spent in the Land of Counterpane, the pleasant aspect of which he was yet able to see; whose happiest hours were passed in the dear, delightful garden at Colinton—that “enchanted ground” where his vivid imagination ran riot.

While the quaint conceits and the deep philosophy of some of these poems of childhood are beyond the power of children to appreciate, the thoughts in the lines are children's thoughts and the point of view that of a child, and few are the childish readers who will not be captivated by their charm. And since an acquaintance with this man's work means an abiding joy in him that grows with familiarity, the teacher or parent who leads a child to form the acquaintance renders a service that is indeed worth while.