

high seas with a dagger in his teeth, a cutlass in his right hand and an arsenal of pistols in his belt; scaling the rocks of Edinburgh Castle in some mad enterprise. Had he lived in the days of Charles Stuart, he would have been the most reckless of Jacobites; and, after all, who among Scotsmen does not respond and thrill even now to the glamour and romance of that ill-fated, unscrupulous, but daring young gallant, 'Bonnie Prince Charlie'?

That Stevenson never grew up; that he remained a child to the end of his all-too-short days; that he had been and still remained a boy with the champagne of perpetual youth efferecing in his feverish veins; that he understood the child-mind as few others have done—one has only to refer to his wonderful field of child-delight, 'A Child's Garden of Verses,' to verify.

Our juvenile school-books contain many poems from this Verse Garden—and why? Because they are of the best that the best of our educators can find. Proud indeed may any author be to find his work reproduced in our modern school primers—prouder than if he had been given place in all the famous anthologies of the world—for truly, to attain to this is, to my mind, to attain to the blue ribbon of literature.

'My Shadow,' to mention one poem only from this masterpiece, has been printed and sung wherever the English language is spoken.

I have a little shadow that goes in and out with me,
And what can be the use of him is more than I can see.
He is very, very like me from the heels up to the head;
And I see him jump before me, when I jump into my bed.

And on he goes, telling of the queer antics of this shadow-companion under varying conditions, until he disposes of it in his own quaintly original way, conceivable only to a Stevenson and, possibly, a J. M. Barrie.

One morning, very early, before the sun was up,
I rose and found the shining dew on every butter-cup;
But my lazy little shadow, like an arrant sleepy-head,
Had stayed at home behind me and was fast asleep in bed.

Modern poems, by the hundred, written supposedly for children, are nothing but inferior children's poems for the perusal of grown-ups and have little or no attraction for the child-mind; but Stevenson's are children's poems for children, tried and tested, and of pure gold. Should one have any doubt on this score, let him take the first opportunity of experimenting with them on some little boy or girl acquaintance.

In the foregoing, I have merely hinted at a few of Robert Louis Stevenson's poems and I have barely touched on the charm and beauty of them. They are a gold-mine of recurring surprises.

It would be impossible to conclude any comment on Stevenson's poetry—however short it might be—without reference to his 'Requiem.' There is none other like it for steadfastness of faith, unerring belief in the hereafter, together with a simple note of preparedness and a knowledge that he had earned, in some measure, the reward that awaited him:

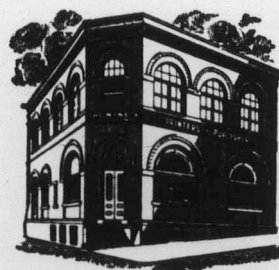
Under the wide and starry sky,
Dig the grave and let me lie.
Glad did I live and gladly die,
And I laid me down with a will.
This be the verse you grave for me:
Here he lies where he longed to be;
Home is the sailor, home from the sea,
And the hunter home from the hill.

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