

or to contrast with the bald, direct story-telling of the old romancists, the exquisite subtlety with which old Mackellar, in the "Master of Ballantrae" is made to exhibit his own character, without in any way obtruding himself as an obstruction between the reader and the personages whose story he tells. The effect of the standard that has been thus set up is quite evident in recent fiction: for the work of the later man may almost be classed as literature or not, according as they have learned the lesson Mr. Stevenson has taught. Thus the author of "She" has not learned it; the writers of "The Gentleman of France," "The Refugees," "The Raiders," and "The Prisoner of Zenda," in varying degrees have done so.

The value of Mr. Stevenson's Essays, apart from the professed contents of such as are critical of other men and books, is two-fold, and lies in the charm of their style, and the revelation which they make of a delightful and unique personality, and of his view of life. In the Essays, the predominating quality of Mr. Stevenson's style is a fine felicity of phrase, attaining with perfect accuracy the shade of meaning to be expressed, and though free from all pretentiousness and pedantry on the one hand, and loose familiarity on the other, exhibiting an almost scholarly sense of the ancestral meanings of words, while preserving the flavour of a vernacular. Take this sentence on the physician: "Generosity he had, such as is possible to those who practise an art, never to those who drive a trade; discretion, tested by a hundred secrets; tact, tried in a thousand embarrassments; and what are more important, Heracleian cheerfulness and courage." Notice the fine, clear distinctions, the contrasts, the correspondences, the balance. Such writing as this is not fluent, and there may be grounds for the charge that some passages smell of the lamp; but such delicate perfection, comparable only to chiselled marble, is a quality that can hardly cost too much.

The view of life disclosed in the Essays is that of a man who has experienced much, but whose experience has in no way soured him, but only made his sunny humour richer and graver; of a man who if he has had enough disappointment in the world to make him cautious in expectation, has found in it many things that are beautiful and full of quaint significance; many people whose lives are lovely and harmonious, and whose presence soothes like sweet music; many interests, whose stirring makes it good to be alive. It is the view of a man who observes in detail, whose love of nature is not confined to the broad, startling effects that compel attention, but who revels rather in the wonders of the common, whose eyes are keen enough to see "the marvel of the human eyebrow," and whom vision is fresh enough to admire "God's bright and intricate device of days and seasons." When he is satirical he does not care to deal with the great brutal vices and hypocrisies of men, but lets the keen lightning of his wit play around the little self-deceptions and supposed righteousness which a man delights to hug. Of religion he seldom talks explicitly, but his gratefulness for the lovely things he has known, his kindly charity to his fellows, his sturdy love for a clean man and a gentleman of honour, assure us that such silence is no cover for vagueness or indifference. Mr. Le Gallienne has of late elevated Humour to a place among the religious senses, on account of the tendency, through its clear vision of disproportion, to produce that humility which is the most characteristic religious virtue; and, if this be granted, Mr. Stevenson's humour, which is emphatically of this nature, will almost entitle him to rank as a religious force. No one, perhaps, would have been more astonished than he to find himself so classed, yet the suggestion contains more than a grain of truth.

The attitude towards life, which we have been attempting to indicate as revealed in the essays, becomes clearer in the poems of the "Underwood's" volume. The melodious language of these verses conveys fragments of a philosophy which reminds us not a little of the "New Cyrenaicism" of that other great master of English prose, of whom, also, this autumn has bereft us, according to which "not pleasure, but fulness of life, and 'insight' as conducting to that fulness—energy, variety and choice of experience" form the end of life. The enjoyment of nature, to which we have referred, exemplified in poems like "The House Beautiful;" the magnificent capacity for friendship, so characteristic of the man, suggested by the large number of poems addressed to persons; the pardonable pride in the "strenuous family" from which he boasted his descent in the poems on "Skerry-

vore;" the keen enjoyment he finds in satirising the conceit and love of argument—especially theological argument—so characteristic of his countrymen; the broad sympathy with every living thing represented by the poem on the Sea Gull in the inland garden; all these things and more do we find in one little volume of flawless verse.

Among all Mr. Stevenson's work there is, perhaps, nothing so completely *sui generis* as "A Child's Garden of Verses." Until the thing was done, one could not have imagined it possible that a grown man could take us back so vividly to the ideas and sensations—else completely forgotten—of our childhood. The imaginations of a child about its playthings, the courage needed to

"Face with an undaunted tread
The long black passage up to bed;"

the wistfulness of the little fellow at the window watching for the passing lamplighter's nightly nod; these and a hundred other delightful childish fancies, which we had supposed obliterated forever, are recalled by the magic of this volume.

Less successful, it has seemed to us, is the volume of "Ballads." "Ticonderoga" is indeed a true ballad, fit to stir the pulse and make the hair rise, but it is hard to realize the atmosphere of the South sea legends, and think of these queer folk with human sympathy. "The Homer of the Islands of the Pacific," Sir George Douglas calls him, with an editor's enthusiasm, but while the weird rhymes of "Ticonderoga"

"Sing in your sleeping ears
And hum in your waking head."

it needs an effort to return to "The Song of Rahero," to master its uncouth names, and image its outlandish scenes.

We have only glanced at the main classes of Robert Louis Stevenson's work, and yet what a feast is suggested by the mere enumeration! In fifteen years he produced the score of books he has left us; if only he had lived fifteen more! Yet it is no such calculation that gives the sting to the present hour. Chiefly we grieve to-day, not because we might have had another "Catriona" or "Inland Voyage" and have not, but because of the man that is gone. Behind all the books, and greater than them all, was a personality that has its place with the one or two immortals who are as dear as great, as much loved as admired; the one or two whom affection marks for peculiar honour by the fond insistence on the use of their Christian names. Thus: *Charles* Lamb we always say, and so *Robert Louis* Stevenson.

The reviver of romance, the traveller, the essayist, the poet, the champion of Damien, the friend and singer of the Pacific islander, has ceased from his manifold activity, and his poor tortured body, that cramped and limited him through years of suffering, has now the rest he prayed for in his most beautiful of Requiems:

"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 sea,
And the hunter home from the hill."

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Lady cyclists are now to be found in high places. They mount not only the tricycle, but stretch their limbs on the "bike," which must not be confounded with the Doric "bike" and "bumbees." The daughters of the Prince of Wales frequently ride bicycles on the paths within the ground at Sandringham. Mrs. Asquith, who is well known as a dashing horse-woman, is also a clever bicyclist. There are a good many aristocratic lady riders, at the head of whom is Lady de Grey—formerly Gladys, Countess of Lonsdale—who is said to be, perhaps, the most accomplished bicyclist in fashionable circles. It is surmised that the favourite flower of cycle-women is cyclamen.

The money in the London banks is estimated to foot up \$1,150,000,000. No wonder that the prudent English have it arranged that no panic shall last more than a few hours at the utmost, and occur not much oftener than once in a generation at that. It is said that Canada has never had a general panic.—*Banker's Monthly*.