

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Thomas Stevenson married a daughter of the Rev. Dr. Lewis Balfour, of whom there is a picture in "The Manse," an essay in "Memories and Portraits" descriptive of his home, about five miles from Edinburgh. Mrs. Stevenson was a woman of more than ordinary intellectual gifts—beautiful in character and person. From her, her son inherited much of that charm of manner that attracted all who met him, and from her, too, came certain weaknesses of constitution which in him developed later into chronic ill health.

This son was born November 13, 1850, in Edinburgh, which was his home, practically, for thirty years. He was christened Robert Lewis Balfour Stevenson, a name which combined those of his two grandfathers. Before he was of age he dropped the Balfour and changed his second name (by which he was called by his family and friends) in spelling, though not in pronunciation.

He was an only child and very frail, and had it not been for his faithful nurse, Alison Cunningham, the days in his Edinburgh home, so many of which were spent indoors, would have been very lonely ones. His mother, though devoted to him, was, herself, delicate during his childhood, and could not have him with her as much as she would have liked. She was able, however, to read to him a great deal, and by her he was taught to love the best in literature. His father was a busy man, though ever ready when at home to entertain the boy with thrilling tales of his own invention—for Thomas Stevenson was in no small measure responsible for his son's love of romance.

But there were times when life was very full of joy for this child, whose sweetness of disposition and vividness of imagination alike were remarkable. His mother had been one of thirteen children, and the old manse was always full of cousins. There, in the summer especially, were spent golden days, the brightness of which is reflected in the "Garden of Verses," "Child's Play," "Random Memories," "A Penny Plain and Twopence Colored," and "A Chapter on Dreams."

Louis's schooling was irregular, beginning later than that of the