

**ROBERT LOUIS
STEVENSON**

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Robert Louis Stevenson by L. Cope Cornford

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BY

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1900

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P R E F A C E.

AS I have always been an eager student of Robert Louis Stevenson's work, so it was with peculiar pleasure that I entered upon the study of his finished achievement, and of his personality and temperament as expressed in that achievement. For, such were the terms of my ambition: and they may serve (at least) to define the limits of this essay. Beyond those limits it was not mine to adventure. That Mr Sidney Colvin has in preparation the authorised biography of Stevenson, is matter of common knowledge; and this consideration naturally prevented me from recording aught of the main facts of Stevenson's career, that has not been made public property already; and, for the same reason, I have abstained from making any use of the series of Stevenson's *Letters* which have recently been published in a monthly magazine.

918880

With the name of Robert Louis Stevenson is indissolubly connected the name of William Ernest Henley: and I delight to acknowledge, with the liveliest gratitude, the help which Mr Henley has given me in the making of this essay towards a just appreciation of his old comrade. And to John William Simpson, my old master in a noble and difficult art, I would render thanks for the service he did me in sign of our common admiration for Stevenson, the artist.

L. COPE CORNFORD.

OIVINGDEAN GRANGE,
near BRIGHTON, September, 1899.

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APPARITION.

*Thin-legged, thin-chested, slight unspeakably,
Neat-footed and weak-fingered: in his face —
Lean, large-boned, curved of beak, and touched with race,
Bold-lipped, rich-tinted, mutable as the sea,
The brown eyes radiant with vivacity —
There shines a brilliant and romantic grace,
A spirit intense and rare, with trace on trace
Of passion and impudence and energy.
Valiant in velvet, light in ragged luck,
Most vain, most generous, sternly critical,
Buffoon and poet, lover and sensualist:
A deal of Ariel, just a streak of Puck,
Much Antony, of Hamlet most of all,
And something of the Shorter-Catechist.*

W. E. HENLEY, *Rhymes and Rhythms.*

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.



I.

PROLOGUE: HIS HERITAGE.

Do you remember — can we e'er forget? —
How, in the coiled perplexities of youth,
In our wild climate, in our scowling town,
We gloomed and shivered, sorrowed, sobbed, and feared?
The belching winter wind, the missile rain,
The rare and welcome silence of the snows,
The laggard morn, the haggard day, the night,
The grimy spell of the nocturnal town,
Do you remember? — Ah, could one forget!

— R. L. S., *To my Familiars.*

WHEN Robert Louis Stevenson, some five-and-twenty years since, went to and fro to his studies in the University of that city which was his birthplace and his home, and which always remained to him as the image of "the dear city of Zeus," the old Scots order, giving place to the new, was even then suffering the last processes