

## CHAPTER THREE

### An Idle, Unpopular Student

SLEEPLESS he lay beneath a blanket in the cockpit of the yacht, under the wide and starry sky spread seamlessly from horizon to horizon. Nothing obtruded to betray the presence of 19th-century man, beyond the small wooden island with sails carrying the 37-year-old Louis across the greatness of the Pacific towards the archipelago of the Paumotus. In the glow of the binnacle lamp he could see the silhouette of the helmsman, guiding them towards a tiny tuft of palms and a coastline so low it was almost submerged, like the islands in the milk of Louis's porridge all those years ago. The Pacific night around him now was warm as milk . . .

*. . . and all of a sudden I had a vision of - Drummond Street. It came on me like a flash of lightning: I simply returned thither, and into the past. And when I remember all I hoped and feared as I pickled about Rutherford's in the rain and the east wind; how I feared I should make a mere shipwreck, and yet timidly hoped not; how I feared I should never have a friend, far less a wife, and yet passionately hoped I might; how I hoped (if I did not take to drink) I should possibly write one little book, etc. etc. And then now - what a change! I feel somehow as if I should like the incident set upon a brass plate at the corner of that dreary thoroughfare for all students to read, poor devils, when their hearts are down.<sup>1</sup>*

THE officious clanging of the bell summoned students from the Pump, as they called Rutherford's tavern in Drummond Street, a stone's throw from the great Playfair arch that gave access to the quadrangle of the university. In 1867 Louis entered through this portal in search of a kindred spirit. Since Bob departed for Cambridge, there had been nobody to share his deepest thoughts - but sadly the University of Edinburgh did not supply the intellectual stimulus Louis craved.

Most of the students were not there to expand their minds and open their hearts to new experiences, but to pass exams that unlocked the door to a good job. Many, like Louis, were sons of the middle class, preparing for their allotted station in life.

But unlike Cambridge, where Bob rubbed shoulders with a privileged elite, Edinburgh catered also for the intelligent sons of working men, desperate to escape the mire that had sucked down their ancestors into mindless, manual labour.

Such students lived in the cheapest lodgings and survived on oatmeal, brought from crofts where their families slaved to pay their tuition fees. The half-term holiday, when poor students went home to collect a fresh sack of oatmeal, was known as 'Meal Monday'. To them, the aesthetic posturing of a spoiled student like Louis was contemptible, and he was conscious of their unspoken scorn. The sight of one student who occasionally had to miss lectures because he possessed only one shirt was a constant reproach.

*IF ONE OF THESE COULD TAKE HIS PLACE, he thought; and the thought tore away a bandage from his eyes. He was eaten by the shame of his discoveries, and despised himself as an unworthy favourite and a creature of the back-stairs of Fortune. He could no longer see without confusion one of these brave young fellows battling up-hill against adversity. Had he not filched that fellow's birthright? At best was he not coldly profiting by the injustice of society, and greedily devouring stolen goods?*<sup>2</sup>

Yet Louis's pangs of guilt did not inspire action. He did not ask his father to fund a charitable Thomas Stevenson Bursary for starving students, while his son went out and found himself a job. Instead Louis resigned himself to his own unworthiness, continued to accept his father's bounty - and avoided the university as much as possible. His first-year studies were already light, studying Latin and Greek only, and he soon lightened them further by cutting the Greek classes.

The Professor of Greek, John Stuart Blackie, was a white-haired, picturesque Highlander who wore a plaid over his frock coat and delighted in Gaelic songs. A kindly, charismatic man with a wide-ranging knowledge, who was reputed to teach his students everything other than Greek, he kept open house at his home in Hill Street. But Louis stayed away, perhaps unwilling to play the disciple, and confined his dealings with Blackie to requesting a certificate of attendance for the lectures he had missed. The shrewd but indulgent Blackie would be kind enough remark, while in the act of writing out the requested document, that he did not know Louis's face.

Professors in general were a joke to Louis, and he made no effort to disguise his

contempt. Throughout his eight years as a nominal student he would clatter in late for their lectures, make the odd facetious remark, or sit ignoring them while scribbling his own compositions. His one concession to the few professors he admired was to stay away from their classes, which was the nearest Louis came to paying Blackie a compliment.

He attended the Latin classes of Professor William Sellar, a family friend. Like Blackie, Sellar liked to entertain his students at his home in Buckingham Terrace, above the village of Dean, but again Louis shunned such soirees. In a letter to Bob at Cambridge, the day after sitting an obligatory qualifying exam set by Sellar, Louis wrote sardonically: 'I send you the paper, as it may amuse. I have noted what I did, from which you can see that I am sure of the medal.'<sup>3</sup>

The one thing that saved Louis from becoming an overgrown, spoilt brat was his determination to write. The pockets of his battered pea jacket always contained a book to read, and a book to write in. Every spare moment was spent reading writers he admired, and attempting to copy their style. So equipped, he set out each morning after breakfast, a 'lean, ugly, idle, unpopular student, whose changing humours, fine occasional purposes of good, flinching acceptance of evil, shiverings on wet, east-windy, morning journeys up to class, infinite yawnings during lecture and unquenchable gusto in the delights of truantry, made up the sunshine and shadow of my college life'.<sup>4</sup>

He was certainly lean, never bulking out his 5ft 9in skeleton much beyond eight stone, and his bones showed like the sticks of a scarecrow through clothes that hung on his stooping frame. He had a starveling, 'shilpit' look and, ugly or not, he remained convinced of some vague physical deformity in himself and feared it hinted at moral deformity within. Yet despite Cummy's Calvinist tales of terror, he now found it disturbingly easy to cast aside the strictures of religion and indulge in a life of pleasure at his father's expense.

He longed for friends, but was indeed unpopular with most of the other students, whose outlook was depressingly conventional. Who wanted to associate with a fellow who cut classes, dressed like a bounder in a velvet jacket, and went wandering around disreputable parts of the city? So Louis found company among

the ordinary working people of Edinburgh. For a 17-year-old he was remarkably outgoing and could fall into conversation with almost anyone. Most responded with bemused tolerance to the young gentleman who seemed to take an interest in their lives.

Louis now ventured into the dark closes and rowdy scenes he had glimpsed as a wide-eyed child walking with his nurse. As with the slaughterhouse at North Berwick, there was no door he feared to enter. He sought out the lowest public houses, where drink was cheap and company rough. Over the next few years, drunken soldiers, brawling sailors, thieves, chimney sweeps and whores would come to know his face and greet him by his nickname of 'Velvet Coat'. In later life he would shudder to think of his temerity in venturing among them, with only his youthful charm to ward off evil.<sup>5</sup>

From such dens of iniquity he would return home to dinner with his parents, as if from a day spent deep in academic study. Sightings of Louis in low places must have found their way back to his father, but Tom Stevenson did not seem unduly concerned. He had never been a serious college student himself, and enjoyed passing the time of day with all and sundry. Louis's mother would simply smile and pretend not to notice. But she did share her worries with her sister, Jane Balfour. As they drove one day down the High Street, a curious figure appeared on the pavement. Despite being dressed like a rag-and-bone man, with a bundle of bones on his shoulder, it was unmistakably her son. While Maggie did her best to ignore him, 'Auntie' exclaimed: 'Oh, Louis, Louis! What will you do next!'<sup>6</sup>

Louis spent the winter making new entries in his 'book of original nonsense' at the back of the lecture theatre, or scribbling away in some spit-and-sawdust bar. In the spring of 1868, he was full of writing a play to rival Shakespeare. He poured out his ideas for Monmouth: A Tragedy in letters to Bob, seeking to enlist him as a dramatic collaborator, but Bob's talents lay in fantastical flights of verbal fancy and he was ill at ease with pen and paper. Louis fired off scenario after scenario: 'A. found making love to B. Enter Prince who overhears. P. and A. quarrel, P. being also in love with B. Swords are drawn...' But Bob, more inclined to boating on the Cam, never came up with the goods, even when Louis pleaded: 'If you can manage to

make any character say aught witty, humorous or bright, for Heaven's sake do so: I can't.<sup>7</sup>

By May the academic year was over and the family moved out to Swanston, but Louis would not spend all summer wandering the hills. He was meant to gain experience of engineering in preparation for entering the lighthouse dynasty founded by his great-grandfather Thomas Smith, who gave Edinburgh her first street lighting and began the work of ringing Scotland's coastline with guiding beacons, a task continued by Robert Stevenson and his son Alan. Meanwhile Alan's brother David had worked long hours to build up a thriving civil engineering business while Louis's father brought Victorian lighthouse technology to a state of near-perfection. All in all, the lighthouse Stevensons were a hard act to follow - and Louis had no intention of doing so.

But he offered no resistance when packed off for a month in Anstruther, a fishing town in Fife where D. & T. Stevenson was building a new breakwater. His father had arranged lodgings at Cunzie House, above the harbour and the cramped cottages of the fisher folk. There Louis stayed with John Brown, a cabinet maker, and his wife Catherine, who with the help of a maid kept the house clean and polished, the air scented by bowls of dried rose petals. Enconced in his own room, Louis penned letters home complaining that Anstruther was 'the very stronghold of the Pledge'. He had risked his hosts' displeasure in ordering half a dozen bottles of pale ale, and found it hard to get the Browns to comply with his dietary requirements: 'Mrs Brown "has suffered herself from her stommik, and that makes her kind of think for other people". She is a motherly lot. Her motherliness and thought for others displays itself in advice against hard-boiled eggs, well-done meat and late dinners... If you could bring some wine when you come 'twould be a good move: I fear vin d'Anstruther, and having procured myself a severe attack of gripes by two days total abstinence on chilly table beer, I have been forced to purchase Green Ginger ("Somebody or other's "celebrated"), for the benefit of my stomach, like St Paul.'<sup>8</sup>

The beer-drinking abstainer could always win his parents' sympathy by hinting at ill health, and his alcoholic needs were duly supplied with port and brandy. He in turn was a dutiful son, trudging each morning down the Burial Brae around the

church and down to the harbour. For his own enlightenment, he had been ordered by his father to make sketches of the breakwater scaffolding, the cranes and jennies that lifted the blocks of Fifeness stone into place. He would then return to Cunzie House to draw up accurate plans, discover he had forgotten a measurement, and have to trudge back down to get it. Onlookers noticed a growing alertness of step when he had at last finished his day's work at the harbour and was returning to his room to labour at a more important task - a series of dramatic monologues entitled *Voces Fidelium*.

The title is all that survives, yet at the time he believed *Voces Fidelium* was his one chance of immortality. Behind the reassuring merry banter of his letters home lay the black despair of 17 as he struggled, like a Scottish Hamlet, to come to terms with the fleeting, finite nature of human existence, scribbling late into the night as he sat between his candles in the rose-scented room. The night outside was warm, and through the open window would come a procession of moths, gyrating for a brief moment around the candle flames before falling, singed and fluttering in agony, upon the growing manuscript of *Voces Fidelium*. Unable to bear this cruel mockery of his quest for immortality, Louis would blow out the candles and climb into bed in the dark. Eventually *Voces Fidelium*, like the moths, would perish in the flames.<sup>9</sup>

During the week, Louis had various tasks to complete for his father, including a time-and-motion study at the harbour - '12 masons in 1 month would build 100 cubic yards'<sup>10</sup> - and reporting on tenders to build a boat for use in the harbour work: 'Tell Papa that his boat-builders are the most illiterate brutes with whom I ever had any dealing. From beginning to end of their precious specification, there was no stop whether comma, semi-colon, colon, or point...'<sup>11</sup>

Louis enjoyed idling by the harbour in the company of Morrison and Mitchell, two other young would-be engineers, and was drawn into the drama of an industrial accident when a truck went over and knocked two divers' assistants into the sea. Nobody was seriously hurt, but the town was buzzing and Louis was pointed out by a little girl who cried accusingly: 'There's the man that has the charge o't!'<sup>12</sup>

In quieter moments he enjoyed chatting with old James Lindsay, at 68 still working in the fishing industry of his home town during the summer to supplement

his pay as an Edinburgh University lab assistant. Louis was fascinated to learn Lindsay could recall the coal fire that had served as a beacon on the Isle of May until replaced by a Stevenson lighthouse, and had memories also of Louis's 'grandpapa' Robert Stevenson, a benevolent boss who would happily offer workers a lift in his carriage.<sup>13</sup> In the evenings, Anstruther's meagre entertainments ranged from a 'wretched farce' staged at the town hall to a psalmody class in the schoolhouse: 'One of the girls had a glorious voice. We stayed for half an hour.'<sup>14</sup>

After a month, Louis was 'utterly sick of this grey, grim, sea-beaten hole'<sup>15</sup> and returned to Swanston. But he would have less than a month of lazing with a book on the lawn or accompanying John Tod up the Pentlands before Tom Stevenson took him up north to Caithness. On August 27, the reluctant apprentice engineer was deposited for five weeks at the New Harbour Hotel, Pultneytown, Wick, 'one of the meanest of man's towns, and situate certainly on the baldest of God's bays'.<sup>16</sup>

Wick was even greyer than Anstruther, but more wild. The local inhabitants included cave-dwelling drunken gypsies, and during the herring season the town was swamped with wild West Highlanders. Louis arrived at the season's end, just as the herring fishers were about to leave, and watched the Stornoway boats put out to sea in a 'black wind' for the hazardous journey home to the Hebrides. Behind them they left thousands of migrant Highlanders who descended on Wick to process the fish, and this year they were not happy. The fishery had failed, there was not enough money to pay them, and riots were expected. Police numbers had been doubled and two gunboats, the Lizard and the Netley, lay at anchor in Wick Bay in case of trouble.

Safely installed in his hotel overlooking the harbour, enveloped by the reek of fish, Louis sent his mother a facetious account of the decor in his room: 'It is adorned with pictures representing young ladies who have draped themselves with little care and whose habiliments are deserting them in a very elegant fashion. One of them looks like a shop girl presenting and holding up some red stuff for the admiration of her customers. Another, clad in wreaths of a very aerial blue veil or very material blue cloud, is taking a header across a globe, which she embraces in a tender and degage fashion. A third, lying on her face upon a 'purple couch' and surrounded by

Cimmerian darkness, is holding a torch above her head. To add to her troubles, in addition to the common grievance of her clothes coming off, this lady is tortured by the coming down of her back hair...'<sup>17</sup>

Despite the facetious wit, Louis remained alarmingly naive in dealing with the rough working classes. One night at the hotel, his slumbers were disturbed by a drunken fish-curer, 'a very respectable man in general; but when on the "spree" a most consummate fool. When he came in he stood at the top of the stairs and preached in the dark with great solemnity from 12pm to half past one. At last I opened my door. "Are we to have no sleep at all for that drunken brute?" I said. As I hoped, it had the desired effect. "Drunken brute!" he howled, in much indignation: then after a pause, in a voice of some contrition, "Well, if I am a drunken brute, it's only once in the twelvemonth." He's as bad again today; but I'll be shot if he keeps me awake. I'll douse him with water if he makes a row.'<sup>18</sup>

Tom Stevenson wrote back in high anxiety: 'Do not interfere with that drunk man. You may get into trouble. I never should have acted as you have done. You may get your head broken before you know where you are.'<sup>19</sup>

As Louis fought his way down to the harbour each day, battered by the wind, bemused by the local greeting of 'Breezy! Breezy!', and unwittingly elbowed off the pavement by 'lubberly fishers' who seemed all brawn and no brain, the abortive author of *Voces Fidelium* no longer cared two straws for literary glory. The brooding, introspective mood of Anstruther was blown away by the sharp East wind that gave him a taste for adventure. The expected riots turned out to be no more than a 'hum', as the disgruntled Highlanders were persuaded to depart without untoward violence, leaving unpaid debts around the town. The gunboats sailed away in disgust, leaving Louis to idle on the quayside, sketching the construction of a new pier and penning reports home to his father, enquiring as to the weight of a 'square foot' of salt water, and how many pounds were there in a ton?<sup>20</sup>

But if such glaring ignorance in an apprentice engineer caused Tom Stevenson to sigh, his son's most persistent request put him in high anxiety. Louis was desperate to disappear beneath the waves in a diving suit, declaring: 'I think what you say about the diving is nonsense: I should try only in shallow water and, if any effect



were produced, could go out immediately.’<sup>21</sup>

He had already made friends with one of the divers, Bob Bain, who was with him on the new breakwater when a workman fell into the sea. A rope was swiftly lowered but the man had difficulty holding on, so Louis quickly recruited Bain to help lower a plank for the poor, drowning creature to cling to. A rescue boat beat them to it, but the incident bred a mutual regard.<sup>22</sup>

When Tom Stevenson finally succumbed to Louis’s bombardment of letters, Bain was entrusted with taking the boss’s son down under the sea, with five shillings for his trouble. The skinny, over-excited 17-year-old, padded out with layers of woollen underclothing beneath the unwieldy diver’s suit, would have danced for joy on the platform were it not for 20lb of lead on each foot. The day was grey, with a harsh wind and a heavy swell running, but all this was cut off by the big, spherical helmet descending on Louis’s shoulders, almost crushing him double. As the attendants began to turn the hurdy-gurdy pump, the air began to whistle through the tube and someone screwed the barred window of the visor into the porthole of the helmet through which a pair of very bright brown eyes had just been visible.

The hermetically sealed Louis, cut off from the world and his fellow creatures ‘like a man fallen into a catalepsy’, stood dumbly as still more weights were hung on his back and breast and the signal rope placed in his hand. Under no circumstances must he let go, if he wanted to communicate with his life-support system on the surface. Slowly, awkwardly, he manoeuvred himself onto the ladder and began to descend until the green gloamin of the sea was all around him, ‘very restful and delicious’. At the bottom of the ladder, another dumb, helmeted figure took his hand. Porthole to porthole, he could just make out the features of Bob Bain. They could see each other, touch each other, but each could have burst himself with shouting without a whisper travelling beyond the enclosed space of the helmet.

Together, they picked their way across the stones at the base of the breakwater, between the weedy uprights of the staging, towards the sea wall. One block of stone was about six feet high, yet Bain seemed to be signalling to Louis to jump on top of it. With so many weights strapped to his body, this seemed quite ludicrous, and he laughed out loud inside the helmet. To show how impossible it was, he gave a small

push with his toes, and...

*Up I soared like a bird, my companion soaring at my side. As high as to the stone, and then higher, I pursued my impotent and empty flight. Even when the strong arm of Bob had checked my shoulders, my heels continued their ascent; so that I blew out sideways like an autumn leaf, and must be hauled in, hand over hand, as sailors haul in the slack of a sail, and propped upon my feet again like an intoxicated sparrow.*<sup>23</sup>

All around him was a dimly-lit green, through which fish darted before his eyes like hummingbirds, eluding all Louis's childlike attempts to catch them. Trussed up in the diving suit, he felt even less than a child, more like an infant being dandled by an unseen adult, helplessly dependent on the safety rope and the vital air fed down from above. It kept making him swallow, until his throat was so dry he felt he could swallow no more, and it was with relief that he climbed at last back up the ladder. There was one final shock as his eyes took a few seconds to adjust to light above the surface: 'Out of the green, I shot at once into a glory of rosy, almost of sanguine light - the multitudinous seas incarnadined, the heaven above a vault of crimson. And then the glory faded into the hard, ugly daylight of a Caithness autumn, with a low sky, a gray sea, and a whistling wind.'<sup>24</sup>

Louis was now content to make social calls, wearing spotless evening attire and the same rough navvie's boots he wore around the harbour - Cummy, who had forgotten to pack his dress boots, was mortified. Invited to dine at the house of the Sheriff Russel, Louis flirted with his 16-year-old daughter Sara and her friend, a Miss Latta, dubbing them 'the Forma and the Latta'. Later he took them out in a rowing boat with Miss Russel's brother Adam. Storms had been battering Wick, driving a Norwegian schooner onto the rocks at Shaltigoe and playing havoc with the harbour work. Louis had reported to his father that ten-ton blocks of stone had been scattered like a child's building bricks, ironwork twisted and planks 'gnawn and mumbled as if a starved bear had been trying to eat them'.<sup>25</sup> Ultimately the heavy seas in Wick Bay would inflict the worst defeat of Thomas Stevenson's professional career, forcing him to abandon the work, but in 1868 the Stevensons could still hold their heads up in Wick. As Louis and Adam Russel plied the oars, they were teased mercilessly by the young ladies, with the lively Sara demanding: 'Tell us something

to make us laugh, Mr Stevenson.'<sup>26</sup>

A few days later, Louis was in Miss Russel's company again at her father's house along with a Miss Cox, who had caught the eye of Adam Russel. After dinner, the young people proposed going out for a moonlight stroll along the cliffs, which threw Mrs Russel into a state of consternation. Louis was delicate, he might catch cold. They might all lose their footing and fall to their deaths on the rocks. And Sara's petticoat, carefully cleaned for a forthcoming trip to Germany, might get soiled. It was only after Louis had stood guarantee for the safety of the party, the petticoat's unsullied return, and agreed to take a shawl for himself (which he left in the lobby on the way out) that the five escaped along the cliffs to the Old Man of Wick, 'a ruinous tower on a neck of beetling cliff, with two roaring chasms of foam and a wild coast of crag and cave and boulder'.

Adam paired off with Miss Cox, leaving Louis with Sara and 'the latter woman'. Fortunately Miss Latta 'who is very romantic and likes Byron, Scott, dim moonlight and faded lovers, found her heart too full for words and retired to a far pinnacle'.<sup>27</sup> This left Louis and Sara with just each other and the night. As they flirted harmlessly on the clifftop, neither could know that within two years the lively, laughing Sara would be coughing with consumption and in four she would be dead, her petticoats out of peril forever.<sup>28</sup>

While in Wick, Louis's main engineering task appears to have been trying to set up poles to take sightings. Perched precariously in the stern of a lighter, his hands skinned and stained with tar from hauling ropes, the youth who had spent so much of his delicate childhood confined to the nursery now revelled in this physical adventure: 'How much better it was to hang in the cold wind upon the pier, to go down with Bob Bain among the roots of the staging, to be all day in a boat coiling a wet rope and shouting orders - not always very wise - than to be warm and dry, and dead-alive, in the most comfortable office.'<sup>29</sup>

There was also time to write in the evenings. In a letter to Bob, announcing the completion of his tragedy *Monmouth*, Louis had returned once more to his lust for literary immortality and the world's acclaim, 'a hideous disease to have, even though shielded, as it is in my case, with a certain imperturbable something - self-

consciousness or common sense, I cannot tell which, - that would prevent me poisoning myself like Chatterton or drinking like Burns on the failure of my ambitious hopes.'<sup>30</sup>

On the evening of Tuesday, October 6th, Louis climbed aboard the ancient stagecoach known as the Wick Mail, there being no railway until Golspie, 50 miles to the south. An overnight journey on 'the last Mail Coach within Great Britain' was the fulfilment of a long-held ambition and he could scarce contain his excitement as he mounted onto the box beside the coachman.

*To me, on whose imagination positively nothing took so strong a hold as the Dick Turpins and Claude Duvals of last century, a Mail was an object of religious awe. I pictured the long, dark highways, the guard's blunderbuss, the passengers with three-cornered hats above a mummery of greatcoat and cravat; and the sudden "Stand and deliver!" - the stop, the glimmer of the coach lamp upon the horseman - Ah! we shall never get back to Wick.'*<sup>31</sup>

But there were no Caithness highwaymen at large in the night, which was cloudy and dark with a strong wind. Louis, wrapped in a cloak, huddled under the apron of the coach and chatted with the coachman, whose view on what constituted a gentleman was based on the man's inclination to be free with his money: 'Well sir, Mr Lockyer has always shown himself a perfect gentleman to me, sir - his hand as open as you'll see, sir!'

The coach clattered and swayed down to Lybster, where after 14 miles they changed horses. A Catholic priest with a seat inside the coach insisted on changing places with Louis, knowing he was delicate. Rocked into slumber, Louis awoke to find a bright moon shining over the sea, a sheet of silver below them as they rattled up the shoulder of coastline known as the Ord of Caithness, and on to Berriedale, where they changed horses around 1am. The climb to the south was exceptionally steep so, to save the horses, Louis, the priest and some other passengers went up the hill on foot. Fully awakened by their walk, they mounted back on the coach and offered each other 'fills' of tobacco as they refreshed themselves from hip-flasks and pint bottles.

Just before dawn the coach rattled past Dunrobin, the Duke of Sutherland's fairytale French chateau, and arrived at the Golspie Inn, where Louis clambered out

for the last time and had breakfast and a pipe on the verandah, watching the dawn come up and feeling the magic of the journey slip away as he rejoined the Victorian age. With a sigh, he headed for the station and his train home to Edinburgh.

Back at Heriot Row, Louis's thoughts turned much on religion. He was training to be an engineer, wanted only to be a writer, yet worried this would not make him of much use to mankind. He felt he should be seeking out the poor and dying in the squalid closes of Edinburgh where he roamed as a dilatory student, yet told Bob: 'I cannot trust myself in such places. I told you my weak point before and you will understand me.'<sup>32</sup>

His 'weak point' was probably his horror of deformity, but Louis may also have feared the temptations of vice. He was toying with the idea of becoming a Sunday school teacher but could not see himself as a model of moral conduct: 'Have I a right to talk theology *ex cathedra* to poor boys when my own account is not made up, when my own life is a mere tissue of appearances and flimsy barriers that the first breath of temptation may blow to the winds?'<sup>33</sup>

He felt the pull of the sensual life, yet dutifully despised poets such as Swinburne and Keats for worshipping physical beauty: 'What a grovelling ideal!'<sup>34</sup> But in almost the same breath he was enthusing to Bob about the countryside around Bridge of Allan: 'I am mad for nature just now... I only long and long to do something with the beauty I see, and don't know what to do. I grow delirious over a woodland aisle and foam at the mouth over a hillside...'<sup>35</sup>

Another bout of pneumonia absolved him from the Latin lectures that were now the sole academic justification for his existence, Louis having formally dropped Greek. He was still convalescing when a newcomer to Edinburgh made her first social call at Heriot Row. Anne Jenkin was a handsome, accomplished woman of 32 who had grown up in a cultured London household where Thomas Carlyle and John Stuart Mill were family friends. She took an intelligent interest in the arts, had talent as an amateur actress, and was doted on by her husband Fleeming, the new Professor of Engineering at the university. Fleeming Jenkin had been at school with Tom Stevenson's friend Professor Peter Tait, who had soon introduced him to the lighthouse engineer and his pleasant, sociable wife. But it was the curious, artistic

son who excited Anne Jenkin's interest.

As she sat chatting with Maggie Stevenson by the drawing room fire, 'suddenly, from out of a dark corner, came a voice, peculiar, vibrating; a boy's voice, I thought at first. "Oh!" said Mrs Stevenson. "I forgot that my son was in the room. Let me introduce him to you." The voice went on: I listened in perplexity and amazement. Who was this son who talked as Charles Lamb wrote? this young Heine with the Scottish accent? I stayed long, and when I came away the unseen converser came down with me to the front-door to let me out. As he opened it, the light of the gas-lamp outside fell on him, and I saw a slender, brown, long-haired lad, with great dark eyes, a brilliant smile, and a gentle, deprecating bend of the head... I asked him to come and see us. He said, "Shall I come tomorrow?" I said "Yes," and ran home. As I sat down to dinner, I announced: "I have made the acquaintance of a poet!"<sup>36</sup>

It is doubtful if Louis's mother would have appreciated her son being compared to the atheistical, post-romantic German poet Heine, whose pleasures with the *filles de joie* of Paris led to the paralysing tertiary syphilis from which he had died when Louis was five. But she was happy for Louis to make friends with the Jenkin's.

Fleeming Jenkin was a brusque, no-nonsense engineer whose interests ran far beyond his concern with the early telecommunications industry. He had the intellectual rigour Louis sometimes lacked, and was prepared to listen to any argument without censorship - unlike Tom Stevenson, who became apopleptic if anyone questioned his religion. At last Louis had found a strict mentor who would take his thoughts seriously, even when disagreeing totally. At home, he confided to Bob: 'My daily life is one repression from beginning to end.'<sup>37</sup> But at the Jenkin's home in Fettes Row he found a free-thinking but disciplined environment in which he could grow intellectually.

Having turned 18, he was encouraged by his parents to enter Edinburgh society by holding his first dinner party, for 16 guests. His cousin Henrietta was recruited to help keep the young company entertained. Louis could be charming, but still found it hard to relate to people he did not know well. When compelled to attend a dance, he would stand on the sidelines, chatting to a few special friends. But at the 'young people's dinner parties' at Heriot Row he played the host to perfection, and his

guests enjoyed the laughter and frivolity. They might find his more serious dissertations hard to follow, but Louis was good fun.

In January, 1869, he was well enough to go out riding in the countryside around Edinburgh, following the local hunt 'just to give him an object,' as his mother explained, 'not that he cares for the sport'. Back at the university, Louis tried to socialise with other students and joined several societies to no great effect, including the Conservative Club and the Dialectic Society, where 'his remarks were always so very far from the mark that he provided material for all the later speakers to rag him. He usually bolted as soon as he had done speaking'<sup>38</sup>

Yet one exclusive club became a haven. On February 16, Louis was elected to the Speculative Society, 'the one good thing in Edinburgh', known simply to its members as 'the Spec'. This august debating society had once had the young Walter Scott as its secretary. Members had to be of a certain intellectual and social standing and, perhaps partly because of his father's professional reputation, the scruffy, outlandishly attired and hitherto obscure Louis found himself elevated to an elite band of students destined to make their mark in politics, the law, the church... or even literature.

The Spec had its own rooms, outwith the university's jurisdiction, including a debating hall with a raised podium for the presiding vice-president, upholstered benches, Turkish carpets and portraits of former members on the walls. It was lit for meetings by candles and had changed little since the previous century. There was also a library where Louis could read, enjoy a pipe without fear of violating the university's ban on smoking, or sit and write in the spare hours between lectures. The Spec was also a handy address where Louis could receive letters he did not wish his parents to see.

By the start of May, Louis had completed his dilatory attendance at Professor Sellar's Latin classes and could move out to Swanston, disappearing up the Pentlands with the shepherd John Tod, or on his own with a book. Some of the more lurid romances would not have met with Tom Stevenson's approval, so Louis would hide them in the whins, or clumps of broom, where they were enjoyed also by another young reader. Tod's son David would come across 'stories of adventures,

published in London and Edinburgh. I often read them and put them back again. I knew that Mr T. Stevenson was a very stern father, and perhaps R.L.S. had kept them out of the house'.<sup>39</sup>

In June, Louis embarked on a five-day tour of inspection of the lighthouses in Orkney and Shetland with his father. They travelled in the Northern Lights' own steamship, the *Pharos*, and once again Louis experienced the odd sensation of sitting at the right hand of a man regarded as God in the lighthouse business. Tom Stevenson would have deplored the blasphemous comparison, but everywhere they were met with grovelling, forelock-tugging deference: 'Verily, *mon pere* is a great man here: he putteth out his lip, and all men tremble'.<sup>40</sup>

It was an educational trip, but with plenty of fresh air and good food. For breakfast one day, Louis downed three salmon steaks, three slices of toast and a cup and a half of tea, 'not bad, that. I think Mr Andrews (one of the lighthouse commissioners) and my father ate me down a long while, though'.<sup>41</sup>

In the Far North summer, it was still light enough after sunset to read small print until 'there came a great white streak between two layers of cloud in the eastward, which widened and brightened into orange and red. This was the dawn. Just then, the bell rang for midnight. It was very picturesque: the decks all lucid and shining with the early shower, the dawn brightening feebly, and the ship rolling between the two shorelines'.<sup>42</sup>

At Kirkwall, Louis was impressed by the red bulk of St Magnus Cathedral, and climbed the tower. The maze of stone stairs and narrow passageways through which he ascended fired the imagination so that at every turn he expected 'to meet a "priest in surplice white that defunctive music knows", a sexton in hose and steeple hat, a mitred Bishop...'.<sup>43</sup>

He noted the bleakness of Shetland, whose inhabitants struggled to survive through crofting and knitting in a barter economy. Then they sailed on to North Unst lighthouse, 'the most northern dwelling house in Her Majesty's dominion', set on a rock 190ft above the sea when it was calm. To land, Louis and his father had to make a leap for a rusted iron ladder, then scramble up a flight of stone steps cut into the rock.<sup>44</sup>



At Lerwick they saw the fishing fleet put out to sea, around 100 vessels whose design still echoed the Norse longships, and on Sunday father and son attended a kirk service conducted by the Rev Alexander Saunders, whose sermon Louis found 'swarming with epigrams'. With his inner religious doubts, he must have fidgeted in the pew at: 'Men's consciences may be elastic; but Heaven's gate is not.'<sup>45</sup>

Their last port of call was Fair Isle, a tiny, inbred community of around 300 clinging for survival to a rocky islet where the Duke of Medina Sidonia's vessel had been wrecked after the Spanish Armada was scattered by storms. Many of his Spanish soldiers and sailors were murdered by the islanders, who feared famine, but others were given shelter, and Louis imagined the strange sight of 'all these southerners, fresh from the orange groves of Seville, living in filthy cottages on the wildest island of our northern archipelago'.<sup>46</sup>

In the churchyard, Louis's father had to be restrained from taking out his pocket knife and correcting a spelling error on a wooden tombstone, the minister explaining that the local people would think this insulting to the dead.<sup>47</sup> It was not often someone dared cross Tom Stevenson, but he conceded the point. He would not always do so in the turbulent years ahead with his son.

The years from 1869 to 1873 were a period in which Louis would be accused of bringing great unhappiness to his parents through his attitude to religion, social standards and 'excesses in the realm of sex'.<sup>48</sup> Behind closed doors at Heriot Row, his father would rave and his mother have hysterics as it became clear their only son was turning into a moral degenerate. To the outside world, however, Tom Stevenson maintained the utmost dignity while Maggie continued to smile and pretend nothing unpleasant was going on.

Louis developed the habit of escaping from the house straight after dinner and staying out late at night. During the New Year festivities to welcome in the 1870s, he was returning home along Queen Street when he heard a swaying figure in the middle of the street proclaim: 'O! that thish too, too solid flesh wou' melt... thaw, an' resholve itsself into a doo...'

As Louis approached, the drunken Shakespearian apparition challenged him: 'Under which king, Bezonian?<sup>49</sup> Shpeak, or die!'

'Under King Harry,' the delighted Louis replied.

"arry the fourth? Or fi'th?"

'Harry the fourth.'

'A foutra fur thine offish,' roared the drunk as a broad grin spread across Louis's face. The F-word was commonplace in low-life Edinburgh, but he had never before had it hurled at him in Shakespearian French. Smiling, he held out his hand, at which the drunk effortlessly switched plays.

'Ruffian, le' go that rude, unshivil touch; thou friend of'n ill fashion!'

But Louis would not be shaken off as they lurched along Queen Street, trading quotations until it seemed Elizabethan England had come alive in Edinburgh. Who was this drunken man? Some intoxicated thespian from the Theatre Royal, or a strolling player, down on his luck? Had they not met William Murray, an acquaintance of Louis's who would later bear witness to Bob of the truth of the encounter, the whole thing would be hard to credit.

In a letter to Bob, Louis told also of horseplay during the Daft Days of the New Year: 'I was up in Murray's room today, when in came a clerical employer of his and I had to take refuge in a coal place, where I kicked the coals about and yelled with laughter, and whence I kept injecting smoke into the main room to the no small amazement of the cleric...'<sup>50</sup>

At 19, Louis still enjoyed the mischievous nature that had exasperated his mother at Peebles. On February 24, when the snow lay thick in Edinburgh, a grand snowball fight broke out among the students. Rival factions fought it out across Nicolson Street, where many windows were smashed and shopkeepers were forced to put up the shutters. Louis, who claimed he was only a spectator, was among those arrested for 'snowballing, rioting and resisting the police'.

When the incident was reported in the newspapers, his parents cannot have been pleased. Fortunately most readers would have been distracted by reports of a far more salacious misdemeanour. The unco guid of Edinburgh were squirming as they perused every detail of the sex life of Harriett, Lady Mordaunt, daughter of a Perthshire aristocrat who had encouraged her to marry Sir Charles Mordaunt, a wealthy, middle-aged Worcestershire MP. But the young bride had continued to see

various admirers, including the Prince of Wales, with disastrous results... her first child was born with what she feared was congenital syphilis and she confessed her infidelities to her husband.

None of this would have come to Edinburgh's attention, had not Sir Charles insisted on a divorce - and Harriett's father, Sir Thomas Moncreiffe, done his utmost to oppose it, to save his family's reputation and a generous marriage settlement needed to prop up his Perthshire estates. The Prince of Wales likewise was anxious to avoid scandal and to do so Sir Thomas was prepared to argue his own daughter was insane - nymphomania being classed as 'moral insanity'. Eventually Lady Mordaunt was confined to a lunatic asylum, thanks largely to the medical opinion of Sir James Simpson, the eminent Edinburgh gynaecologist.

With the papers awash with such scandal, a paragraph about a snowball fight went almost unnoticed. Louis hoped his misdemeanour would soon be forgotten, and did his best to please his parents. When Nellie Mackenzie, sister of Maggie Stevenson's favourite 'adopted daughter' Louisa, got married, Louis had sent a silver mirror as a wedding present, with a charming little poem:

*A picture-frame for you to fill,  
A paltry setting for your face,  
A thing that has no worth until  
You lend it something of your grace...<sup>51</sup>*

But Louis's mother would have been less pleased to show afternoon callers the lines which, unknown to her, the sexually frustrated Scottish Heine was penning in his bedroom:

*I walk the streets smoking my pipe  
And I love the dallying shop-girl  
That leans with rounded stern to look at the fashions;  
And I hate the bustling citizen,  
The eager and hurrying man of affairs I hate,  
Because he wears his intolerance writ on his face  
And every movement and word of him tells me how much he hates me.*

*I love night in the city  
The lighted streets and the swinging gaits of harlots  
I love cool pale morning  
In the empty bye-streets,  
With only here and there a female figure,  
A slavey with lifted dress and the key in her hand,  
A girl or two at play in a corner of waste-land  
Tumbling and showing their legs and crying out to me loosely<sup>52</sup>*

Loose conduct was much on the mind of respectable Edinburgh that winter. In 1869, Parliament had passed the second of the Contagious Diseases Acts, which tacitly accepted prostitution by bringing in compulsory medical inspections for the world's oldest profession. The Act, applying only to garrison towns and naval ports, was intended to prevent venereal disease weakening Her Majesty's armed forces by consigning all women who suffered from it to the Lock Ward of the local hospital. But Mrs Grundy and her intolerant spouse were far more concerned that reducing the perceived risk of syphilis encouraged young people to indulge in gross immorality without fear of the consequences. To seek to ameliorate venereal disease, God's punishment on the fornicator, was to condone sin - so Calvinist Scotland refused to adopt the 'CD Acts'.

Instead, prostitution was controlled by a new Police Act that allowed officers to arrest any woman caught loitering or propositioning in the street. On being found guilty, she would be given a choice. Bad girls with no intention of reforming were sent to the Calton Jail. Louis would often climb to the top of nearby Calton Hill and gaze down at the convicted whores exercising in the prison yard, like not-so-penitent nuns in their prison uniforms, under the stern gaze of a warder.

The alternative to imprisonment was to submit to a medical inspection and a highly unpleasant course of mercury treatment in a Lock Ward, before being offered the chance of reform at an institution such as the Edinburgh Magdalene Asylum. The Lock Ward at the Infirmary in Edinburgh was a squalid, degrading basement where the women in coarse gowns and slippers, pale and disfigured by the mercury that made hair and teeth fall out, would waddle to and from their sleeping quarters

in single file. This black comedy, a far cry from parading in their finery on Princes Street, led to the Lock Ward being nicknamed 'the duck pond', and the women would be kept there until they were no longer infectious.

Whether this made any demonstrable difference to the health of the squaddies at the Castle or the barracks at Jock's Lodge, or the lusty tars who came rolling up Leith Walk on a spree from their ship, is open to question, but the whole issue scandalised the middle-classes. On the same day as the students rioted in the snow, some of Edinburgh's more sober citizens attended a meeting called by the Lord Provost at the Craigie Hall, where they unanimously adopted a series of resolutions calling on Parliament to repeal the Contagious Diseases Acts and 'to consider the best means of dealing with the existing immorality in the naval and military services, and among the people generally'. Since the CD Acts did not apply to Scotland, this was taking public spiritedness beyond the call of duty. Certainly Tom Stevenson, whose son had just been arrested, could be forgiven for not attending. In fact he had recently given up his duties on the acting committee of the Edinburgh Magdalene Asylum, where his position was taken by his brother David. Tom's chivalrous concern for fallen women had perhaps been tempered by the suspicion that some of them were corrupting his wayward son.

He attempted to exert parental control via the purse-strings. On an allowance of just one pound a month, Louis could never afford Clara Johnson's - but a low dive in the Low Calton off Leith Street was always a possibility. It was an area familiar to Louis, the slums of the Low Calton spanned by the Waterloo Arch, part of a great civil engineering scheme carried out by his grandfather to create a grand approach to the city. This involved a deep cutting through a cemetery where Robert Stevenson's own children who had died in infancy lay buried. Unsentimental, he had ordered his workmen to press on with their macabre task. The result was Waterloo Place, a grand, classical stretch of hotels, shops and dwellings that had impressed Prince Leopold of Belgium when he opened the bridge in 1819. But half a century later the area had gone to seed and by night Waterloo Place echoed to the catcalls and coded whistles of revellers bent on sin.

Louis strolled the lamplit pavements, puffing at a cigar as he coolly appraised the

'swinging gaits' of the girls who paraded their charms at the east end of Princes Street. In their cheap, gaudy working attire they seemed different creatures from the friendly souls he encountered in the taverns by day while skipping lectures. On the gas-lit pavement, after the shops had closed at 8pm, most of the girls did their own soliciting but a few relied on pimps. The most loathsome of these, a familiar sight around Edinburgh, managed to operate effectively despite being deprived of the power of speech:

*The man has a red, bloated face, and his figure is short and squat. So far there is nothing in him to notice, but when you see his eyes, you can read in these hard and shallow orbs a depravity beyond measure depraved, a thirst after wickedness, the pure, disinterested love of Hell for its own sake.*

*The other night, in the street, I was watching an omnibus passing with lit-up windows, when I heard some one coughing at my side as though he would cough his soul out; and turning round, I saw him stopping under a lamp, with a brown greatcoat buttoned round him and his whole face convulsed... He is old, but all these years have not yet quenched his thirst for evil, and his eyes still delight themselves in wickedness. He is dumb; but he will not let that hinder his foul trade, or perhaps I should say, his yet fouler amusement, and he has pressed a slate into the service of corruption. Look at him, and he will sign to you with his bloated head, and when you go to him in answer to the sign, thinking perhaps that the poor dumb man has lost his way, you will see what he writes upon his slate.*

*He haunts the doors of schools, and shows such inscriptions as these to the innocent children that come out. He hangs about picture-galleries, and makes the noblest pictures the text for some silent homily of vice... As the business man comes to love the toil, which he only looked upon at first as a ladder towards other desires and less unnatural gratifications, so the dumb man has felt the charm of his trade and fallen captivated before the eyes of sin. It is a mistake when preachers tell us that vice is hideous and loathsome; for even vice has her Horsel and her devotees, who love her for her own sake.<sup>53</sup>*

At this stage Louis was probably only window-shopping among the whores on Princes Street, storing away all the images and sensations of this lamplit, vicious fairy land that came to life when the respectable citizens of Edinburgh were safe in the bosom of their family. It was the dark side of the city whose existence could not

be acknowledged, full of sin yet crying out irresistibly to a young man whose heart, since childhood, had reacted against stern moral strictures and 'went forth to evil things'.

By day, his manic moods would plunge suddenly into deep depression, and by the end of March he was morbidly hanging around graveyards. Mortality, particularly his own, was much on his mind and he tried to write his way out of it. He essayed a new poem, Deacon Thin, a satirical tale of an Edinburgh jerry-builder that left him elated as it tripped off the pen. But in the cold, clear light of morning he realised it was no more likely than Voces Fidelium to render the initials R.L.S. immortal, and fell into despair.

*From the morning I was gone, tried to find out where I could get Haschish, half-determined to get drunk and ended (as usual) by going to a graveyard. I stayed about two hours in Greyfriars Churchyard in the depths of wretchedness... The grass was wet. A sexton was at work upon a grave; and two wretched, filthy women, one of them with a child, were walking up and down there, with occasional harsh, strident laughs. As I walked towards the university, I looked down College Wynd, with its clothes poles and harridan faces craning from the windows and its steep narrow roadway clotted with fish barrows and loafing prostitutes. Near the top, two small boys held a skipping rope. A haggard sickly little girl was performing on it, with bouts of laughter that reminded one fantastically of the old women in the graveyard, and blaspheming with the most horrible and filthy oaths. Watching and listening to this was almost the only thing that interested me that morning.*

*At the College I met a commonplace friend, who wished me to walk with him. I told him I was not fit to walk with the devil; but he got me away. He is a very nice fellow; but I must have rather astonished him. To begin with, I scarcely spoke to him for about ten minutes. But the grand finale was when I was getting better. I saw some children playing at marbles in a stable lane; and I don't know why, the idea of playing pleased me. So I insisted on going away and buying a half-penny worth of marbles and setting to work with my companion. By good luck, the shop I tried did not possess the article; and my better angel (generally my worst) laziness, prevented me from doing anything more. You should have seen my friend's face!*

The reference to haschish was the first indication of Louis's recreational drug use. Over the years he would experiment with cannabis and develop more than a

nodding acquaintance with opium and its derivatives, using them to dull pain when he was ill or simply swigging laudanum to give him a buzz when he felt 'seedy'. Such drugs were neither illegal nor frowned upon by Edinburgh society, so long as their use was discreet, and they were readily available from chemist's shops. As Louis wandered the streets or stood leaning over the parapet of the railway bridge above Waverley Station, longing to escape with the trains heading south, his sense of depression can only have been worsened by being 'out of it' on drugs.

Another favourite graveyard haunt was the Old Calton Burial Ground, cut in half by his grandfather's Waterloo Place development. The larger segment, overlooked by the strong walls of the Calton Jail, was dominated by the imposing tomb of David Hume, whose immortal fame seemed a standing reproach to Louis in his obscurity. When Hume was interred there, the sight had so depressed James Boswell that he sought to blot out the spectre of mortality by coupling with a whore in a builder's shed near the house where his philosopher friend no longer lived. For a blind instant, the power of sex could conquer the fear of death, as Louis discovered a century later. Wandering morosely among the graves, each family burial plot enclosed by stone walls like a house from which the roof and hearth had been torn away, his spirit was lifted suddenly by a vision.

The end wall of the Waterloo Hotel overlooked the smaller and more secluded segment of the graveyard. At a window, just above the level of the charnel houses, an unlikely angel appeared. The hotel servant was very young, barely sixteen, and very pretty as she rested for a moment, broom in hand. Spotting the woebegone young gentleman down among the graves, the lassie took pity and blew him a kiss. Louis smiled and bowed gracefully, as if she were a lady.

*For some days together, she dumbly flirted with me from a window and kept my wild heart flying; and once - she possibly remembers - the wise Eugenia followed me to that austere inclosure. Her hair came down, and in the shelter of the tomb my trembling fingers helped her to repair the braid...*

How far the encounter went in that quiet graveyard, screened from public view, would be determined by the daring and inexperience of the participants. A kiss, a touch of bliss... but little more. In maturity, Louis would reflect how, when the



housemaid, broom in hand, smiled and beckoned from the open window, the fame of the bewigged philosopher melted like a raindrop in the sea, 'and yet in soberness I cared as little for the housemaid as for David Hume'.

The 'wise Eugenia' was probably no more than Euphemia Spence, then a scullery maid at the Waterloo Hotel, and such creatures, however beautiful, had no place upstairs at Heriot Row. Over the years, Louis's passionate nature would be drawn to various young women with whom the lasting sanction of marriage was not possible.

With the coming of spring, his spirits lifted. Towards the end of April, 1870, he was sent off to inspect another engineering project at Dunoon on the Firth of Clyde. This academic session, the education of an engineer had stepped up a gear. Louis was now studying Natural Philosophy (otherwise known as science) with his father's old friend Professor Tait, and mathematics with Professor Philip Kelland. Largely to impress his innumerate father, Louis had actually found time among his other diversions to attend mathematics lectures, and worked so hard that he was in danger of winning a medal. But at Dunoon he was absorbed mainly in literature, staying up late in his hotel room to pen the reflective essay *A Retrospect*. Inspired by Hazlitt, Louis looked back with nostalgia on a family holiday spent in Dunoon as a child.

But his most vivid encounter this time was with a poor, mad old Highland woman who came into the tap-room of the hotel for drink. Long before the 1869 Contagious Diseases Act was even a gleam in Mr Gladstone's eye, she had made a living attending to the physical needs of the common soldier. 'She had been a camp-follower in her younger days, and she was never tired of expatiating on the gallantry, the fame, and the beauty of the 42nd Highlanders.' Now deranged by drink, if not something worse, she claimed the Highland gift of second sight and offered to tell Louis's fortune after a good draw at her clay pipe.

*The oracles of my Highland sorceress had no claim to consideration except in the matter of obscurity... All that I could gather may be thus summed up shortly: that I was to visit America, that I was to be very happy, and that I was to be much upon the sea, predictions which, in consideration of an uneasy stomach, I can scarcely think agreeable with one another.*<sup>54</sup>

In time, Louis would see all these prophecies come true.

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- <sup>1</sup> RLS to Charles Baxter, Yacht Casco at sea near the Paumotus, September 6, 1888.
  - <sup>2</sup> RLS, Lay Morals, Chapter II.
  - <sup>3</sup> RLS to Bob Stevenson, 17 Heriot Row, December 21, 1867, Yale 39, MS Yale.
  - <sup>4</sup> RLS, Some College Memories.
  - <sup>5</sup> RLS, Notes of Childhood.
  - <sup>6</sup> Rosaline Masson, The Life of Robert Louis Stevenson.
  - <sup>7</sup> RLS to Bob Stevenson, Edinburgh, April 17, 1868, Yale 41, MS Yale.
  - <sup>8</sup> RLS to his Father, Cunzie House, Anstruther, July 2, 1868, Yale 43, MS Yale.
  - <sup>9</sup> RLS, Random Memories: The Education of an Engineer.
  - <sup>10</sup> RLS to his Mother, Cunzie House, July 7, 1868, Yale 44, MS Yale.
  - <sup>11</sup> RLS to his Mother, Anstruther, July 14, 1868, Yale 45, MS Yale.
  - <sup>12</sup> RLS to his Father, Office Anster, July 17, 1868, Yale 46, MS Yale.
  - <sup>13</sup> RLS to his Mother, Cunzie House, July 7, 1868, Yale 44, MS Yale.
  - <sup>14</sup> RLS to his Mother, Anstruther, July 15, 1868, Yale 45, MS Yale.
  - <sup>15</sup> RLS to his Mother, Cunzie House, July 28, 1868, Yale 50, MS Yale.
  - <sup>16</sup> RLS, Random Memories: The Education of an Engineer.
  - <sup>17</sup> RLS to his Mother, New Harbour Hotel, Pulteney, Wick, August 28, 1868, Yale 51, MS Yale.
  - <sup>18</sup> RLS to his Mother, Wick, September 7, 1868, Yale 57, MS Yale.
  - <sup>19</sup> Thomas Stevenson to RLS, September 11, 1868, quoted in footnote to Yale 57.
  - <sup>20</sup> RLS to his Father, New Harbour Hotel, September 2, 1868, Yale 52, MS Yale.
  - <sup>21</sup> RLS to his Father, New Harbour Hotel, September 1, 1868, Yale 52, MS Yale.
  - <sup>22</sup> RLS to his Father, Wick, September 4, 1868, Yale 54, Text: Balfour, I, 71.
  - <sup>23</sup> RLS, Random Memories: The Education of an Engineer.
  - <sup>24</sup> Ibid.
  - <sup>25</sup> RLS to his Mother, Wick, September 19, 1868, Yale 64, MS Yale.
  - <sup>26</sup> RLS to his Parents, Wick, September 23, 1868, Yale 65, Text: Colvin Letters, I, 15-17.
  - <sup>27</sup> RLS to his Mother, Pulteney Hotel, Wick, October 2, 1868, Yale 69, MS Silverado.
  - <sup>28</sup> Sara died at home in Breadalbane Terrace, aged 20, on April 14, 1872. Cause of death phthisis pulmonalis or consumption of the lungs.
  - <sup>29</sup> RLS, Random Memories: The Education of an Engineer.
  - <sup>30</sup> RLS to Bob Stevenson, New Harbour Hotel, September 6, 1868, Yale 56, MS Yale.
  - <sup>31</sup> RLS to Bob Stevenson, Edinburgh, November 17, 1868, Yale 72, MS Yale.
  - <sup>32</sup> RLS to Bob Stevenson, 17 Heriot Row, October 22, 1868, Yale 71, MS Yale.
  - <sup>33</sup> Ibid.
  - <sup>34</sup> Ibid.
  - <sup>35</sup> RLS to Bob Stevenson, Edinburgh, November 17, 1868, Yale 72, MS Yale.
  - <sup>36</sup> Graham Balfour, The Life of Robert Louis Stevenson.
  - <sup>37</sup> RLS to Bob Stevenson, Edinburgh, November 17, 1868, Yale 72, MS Yale.
  - <sup>38</sup> James Milne, I Can Remember Robert Louis Stevenson, ed. Rosaline Masson.
  - <sup>39</sup> David Tod, I Can Remember Robert Louis Stevenson, ed. Rosaline Masson.
  - <sup>40</sup> RLS to his Mother, Lighthouse Steamer between Cantick and Hoy, June 18, 1869, Yale 76, MS Yale.
  - <sup>41</sup> Ibid.
  - <sup>42</sup> Ibid.
  - <sup>43</sup> Ibid.
  - <sup>44</sup> RLS to his Mother, Lighthouse Steamer between Cantick and Hoy, June 19, 1869, Yale 76, MS Yale.

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- <sup>45</sup> RLS to his Mother, Off Lerwick, June 20, Yale 77, MS Yale.
- <sup>46</sup> RLS to his Mother, Between Fair Isle and Ronaldsha, June 21, Yale 77, MS Yale.
- <sup>47</sup> RLS to his Mother, Between Fair Isle and Ronaldsha, June 21, Yale 77, MS Yale.
- <sup>48</sup> JA Steuart, Robert Louis Stevenson Man and Writer.
- <sup>49</sup> RLS to Bob Stevenson, 17 Heriot Row, January 7, 1870, Yale 78, MS Yale.
- <sup>50</sup> RLS to Bob Stevenson, 17 Heriot Row, January 7, 1870, Yale 78, MS Yale.
- <sup>51</sup> RLS, To Minnie (With a Hand-glass), Underwoods.
- <sup>52</sup> RLS, Poems 1869-76
- <sup>53</sup> RLS, A Character.
- <sup>54</sup> RLS, A Retrospect.