

CHAPTER TWO

A Lively Boy

THE skinny nine-year-old lay flat on top of the Black Rock, like a little pirate scanning the horizon for sails. Across the sparkling blueness of the Firth of Forth lay the Kingdom of Fife, but in Louis's imagination it could be anywhere, from the Gold Coast to the Caribbean. He could voyage around the world and still be home for tea at Rockend, the villa his parents had taken in 1860 for an autumn break at North Berwick, a short train ride from Edinburgh. There were no more holidays at Colinton since the death of his grandfather that April. A new minister was in residence, Auntie had moved to London, and the shouts of Balfour cousins echoed round the Manse no more.

Children's voices now alerted Louis to a crisis below, where a younger boy was clinging to the rock, unable to get up or down. Years later the boy would recall looking up and seeing a brown face with keen, grey-brown eyes, at once friendly and mocking. A thin, brown arm in a shabby, pepper-and-salt coat slid over the edge of the rock.

'Take my hand,' said Louis.

The delicate hand, with its long fingers, seemed unequal to the task but the eyes inspired trust.

'All right,' said the boy, and put a sandy paw in the proffered thin one. 'Hold tight and change your foot,' ordered Louis. 'One, two, three...'

With one good pull, the boy found himself on top of the Black Rock.

'I am Louis Stevenson,' said his new friend. 'I was lying up here in the sun, on the warm rock. Isn't it fine!'¹

He was always 'Louis Stevenson' to his dozen or so playmates, aged ten to 14. They found him odd, but fascinating. When they sailed model yachts, it was Louis who suggested racing them to Craigleith, a rocky island a mile offshore. When they built a kite, it was Louis who insisted on one so big that it lifted a boy and carried him 50 yards.² Unable to join in rough, team games, Louis enthralled the others

through the power of imagination, pottering about rockpools or 'Crusoeing' - cooking *al fresco* feasts of roasted apples or little fish called podleys caught with hook and line. He could make an ocean of a small pool with its seaweeds and hermit crabs and take his playmates on voyages of discovery. Nothing was ever dull when Louis endowed it with romance...

'Were you ever marooned? Well, look here, suppose you were on a desert island with nothing to eat, what would you do?'

'Fish?'

'Silly! How could you catch fish in the sea? They aren't trout that one can guddle. Shrimps, now - there are lots in the sand, and not bad to catch.'

'But we'd need a pot to boil them.'

'No - raw would do. Let us be marooned and try some.'

'Where are we to begin, Louis?'

'The head would be best; it would die at once - bite quick!'³

New sensations drove Louis on. He never shrank from opening a door, even that of the North Berwick slaughterhouse. Peering inside, he watched in horrified fascination as the poll-axe was swung, the sharp knife flashed and the red entrails were dragged from the still-warm body of the snowy victim. Turning awestruck to his companion, Louis whispered: 'Could you do that?'⁴

His imagination was never at rest. Exploring 'the glen' - a little ravine that ran up from the East Links - his companions would be told how the derelict water mill had fallen into ruin following the bloody murder of the miller. On cliff walks to Tantallon Castle, Louis would imagine ear-ringed buccaneers discovering an iron-bound chest in a cave deep below the fortress.

In fair weather, a few shillings would induce a poor fisherman to take well-spoken young passengers out with him in a herring lugger. In bad weather, the fishermen risked their lives, particularly on the stormy approach to the harbour as the fisher-wives watched anxiously from the pierhead. Louis would never forget one poor woman, having seen her husband and sons drown just yards from the shore, being led away by neighbours, 'and she squalling and battling in their midst, a figure scarcely human, a tragic Maenad'⁵.

While holidaying at another villa in the Quadrant, curving up from the seafront to the main road, a commotion alerted Louis to the ghastly spectacle of a fisher-wife who had botched cutting her own throat. Seated in a cart, bound to a chair, with her throat bandaged and the bandage - oh, horror! - all bloody, she was being taken to the jail for attempted suicide. Louis never learned why she had sought to end her own life in a hovel in nearby Canty Bay, but she had been drinking heavily and her bloody memory haunted him for years.⁶

Almost as macabre was the old woman in the Quadrant who, when a visitor to her house died of natural causes, continued to live alone with the corpse. One evening, seeing Louis and a cousin clambering on the garden walls, 'she opened a window in that house of mortality and cursed us in a still voice and with a marrowy choice of language. It was a pair of very colourless urchins that fled down the lane...'⁷

At Anchor House - the holiday home taken by Uncle David - there was also the tragic spectacle of Alan Stevenson in the final stages of paralysis. While his brothers shook their heads over poor Alan, his son and daughters played happily with Louis and the other children, heedless of family troubles. Away from the religious terrors of the nursery, Louis delighted like a little savage in the pagan appeal of fire. In sand holes excavated in the beach or inside the derelict mill, he was always lighting a little fire and tending it, watching the red flames flicker. Fire seemed to symbolise the romance that burned in secret in his breast, beneath the topcoat of respectability. This found perfect expression in the ritual of the lantern-bearers. Each September, little tin bull's-eye lanterns appeared in the North Berwick grocers' shops, where they could be purchased with a schoolboy's pocket money. Buckled to the waist with a cricket belt, the slide shut and the flame hidden, the hot tin lantern stank and burned the fingers. But it could be concealed under a top-coat as its wearer slipped out through the bedroom window after dark to meet similarly equipped playmates.

When two of these asses met, there would be an anxious 'Have you got your lantern?' and a gratified 'Yes!' That was the shibboleth, and very needful, too; for, as it was the rule to keep our glory contained, none could recognize a lantern-bearer, unless (like the pole-cat) by the smell. Four or five would sometimes climb into the belly of a ten-man lugger, with nothing

*but the thwarts above them, for the cabin was usually locked, or choose out some hollow of the links where the wind might whistle overhead. There the coats would be unbuttoned and the bull's-eyes discovered; and in the chequering glimmer, under the huge windy hall of the night, and cheered by a rich steam of toasting tinware, these fortunate young gentlemen would crouch together in the cold sand of the links or on the scaly bilges of the fishing-boat, and delight themselves with inappropriate talk.*⁸

A favourite meeting place was a tiny cave below a rocky headland, accessible only at low tide, where in the flicker of the lanterns Louis told gory tales of smugglers and pirates until their hair stood on end. At other times on the links, shivering with cold and spat upon by flurries of rain, the lantern-bearers' pubescent talk was by turns silly and indecent as they discussed what the big, wide world might have in store. This included girls, who a year or two ago ran free across the sands but were now creatures of mystery, their bashful new curves covered up by innumerable layers of underclothing. No respectable adult would dream of explaining to a boy what lay underneath, so the shivering, hormonally-tormented lantern-bearers could only speculate.

The prospect of adolescent boys discovering sex before it could be sanctioned by marriage haunted respectable New Town Edinburgh. Middle-class daughters were easier to keep in check, particularly if the horror of an extra-marital pregnancy could be discreetly intimated, but boys were another matter. An adventurous spirit was a dangerous thing. The streets of Edinburgh were teeming with wicked young women, prepared to sell the sons of the middle classes the carnal knowledge they lacked. Madness, paralysis and early death could follow, as the Almighty wreaked vengeance on the sinner. By that time, respectable daughters who unwittingly married such young fornicators could be infected and pass on the disease to their offspring.

So respectable citizens, in a desperate bid to protect their children, founded the Scottish National Association for the Suppression of Licentiousness. The inaugural meeting in 1860 had been attended by Uncle David Stevenson, and membership grew over the next two years. The first report in 1861 stated: 'The guilty and miserable life, and the fearful end of those who are more immediately the objects of

the Society's solicitude, the fact, now ascertained, that in Edinburgh alone from two to three hundred fallen women annually sink into a premature grave, and the state of morals of the other sex which this fact suggests, call upon the followers of Christ to unite in devising and carrying out such measures as are fitted to check the progress of this flagrant and soul-ruining vice.⁹

To Louis, as he went off proudly to join the big boys at Edinburgh Academy that October, the moral depravity waiting to ensnare him was still a closed book, and respectable society wanted to keep it that way. When the Scottish National Association for the Suppression of Licentiousness issued its Private Appeal to the Heads of Families, the document carried a warning on the front cover: 'It is requested that Care be taken to prevent this Paper falling into the hands of Young Persons.' Tom Stevenson would have filed his copy away carefully among tedious scientific reports that Louis would never be tempted to read. The Appeal's contents made uncomfortable reading: 'The number of Houses undisguisedly devoted to the infamous traffic of Prostitution exceeds two hundred; and, according to the statements of the Police, there exist many others of the same class whose real character is carefully veiled under a mask of outward respectability. On the testimony of eye-witnesses, in the Old Town these houses are nightly filled to overflowing with working men and boys... those in the New Town are, in like manner, thronged by parties moving in the most respectable society, from the youth still attending school to the grey-haired parent...'¹⁰

The Appeal noted the 'extreme youth' of many far advanced on the path to destruction, adding: 'Mere boys and girls - for they cannot justly be otherwise designated - congregate nightly in the open spaces around our city, and, by their revolting language and bold obscenity, bespeak the growth among us of a generation lost to those feeling of shame and decency which the very heathen are careful to cherish...' A middle-class boy such as Louis was an innocent compared to the half-starved, ragged, barefoot children who lived crowded in a single tenement room with their drunken, violent, sexually-abandoned parents.

The sights Louis glimpsed up dark closes while out walking with Cummy filled him with disquiet. Above all, he had a horror of deformity, from the hunchback who

dispensed pills and potions at a druggist's to the bearded old washer-woman called Annie Torrence who helped with the Stevensons' laundry and terrified Louis by singing and dancing like a witch. In Howe Street, around the corner from Heriot Row, he often encountered a boy born with one leg shorter than the other, who walked with a sinister, wallowing gait. Yet from tracts and 'goody story books' Louis knew it was his Christian duty to extend the hand of friendship and one day blurted out: 'Would you like to play with me?' The resulting torrent of abuse, peppered with words Louis had never heard his parents use, was a lesson in the perils of patronising the poor.¹¹

At Edinburgh Academy, he struggled to relate to the other boys. One schoolmate recalled him in the Academy yards 'in a towering rage. Some of the other kiddies were ragging him, and the rim of his straw hat was torn down and hanging in rings round his face and shoulders'.¹² His form teacher was D'Arcy Wentworth Thompson, a kindly man from humble origins in Cumberland who had been reared at the Bluecoat School in London and could empathise with a strange child such as Louis, whose formal schooling to date was virtually nil. Louis's learning came mostly from books and conversations with his father, whose own childhood experiences led him to hold formal schooling in contempt. Tom Stevenson often described people or manners he despised as 'positively tutorial' and took no interest in Louis's position in class, so long as his son developed an inquiring mind and could hold his own in an intelligent discussion. Formalities such as spelling were not important - which was just as well when Louis took years to stop spelling 'literature' as 'litterature' and wrote 'Lieth' for 'Leith' to his dying day. Yet Louis was proud to be a member of the charismatic Thompson's class and later of the D'Arcy Thompson Class Club, through which he kept in touch with his old classmates down the decades.

Any desire to be a normal schoolboy was soon overturned by fate and his parents' nomadic tendencies. In the early 1860s, Maggie Stevenson's 'weak chest' appeared to be getting worse. Not to be outdone, her husband felt his own health could be compromised by the cold and damp of Edinburgh. Since Tom's substantial income from the firm of D. & T. Stevenson did not seem to require a commensurate number

of hours at the office in George Street, the Stevensons became gypsies in search of health. Incurable hypochondriacs, they would both survive into their late sixties, having spent long and luxurious convalescences at health spas, Mediterranean paradises and large Victorian villas in the Scottish countryside. If this meant interrupting Louis's schooling, so be it. Sometimes it was possible to hire a tutor, and travel would broaden the boy's mind.

Louis started his second year at Edinburgh Academy in the October of 1862 but by Christmas his mother's health required a warmer climate and, on January 3rd, the Stevensons headed for the Mediterranean. With them went Bessie Stevenson, Uncle David's eldest daughter - a striking young woman of 21 who got on well with her youthful Auntie Maggie - and Cummy, making her first sortie into foreign territory from the God-fearing climate of her native land. Installed in the Hotel Meurice in Paris, overlooking the Tuilleries, Louis dictated to his nurse: 'When first we left the Hotel, we passed along a street nearly three times as long as Princes Street, called the rue de Rivoli, when we heard the people calling out *le petit prince*, which means "the little Prince", and sure enough, there he was, driving past us in his carriage with lots of cavalry behind him. Then we went to see the famous Notre Dame. The funeral of a Cardinal Archbishop was going on with great pomp. Priests of all ranks of their Order were present, though we did not see them.'¹³

Throughout the holiday, Cummy was appalled by the superstition and sensuality of the people, unchecked by the priests who looked on indulgently as revellers played music and danced in the streets on the Sabbath. Such freedom and licence, unheard of in Edinburgh, filled her Calvinist soul with horror. More to her taste, while Bessie took Louis away on a walk, was a visit to the Paris morgue in the company of Tom Stevenson, two kindred spirits drawn to doom and gloom. Cummy would recall: 'I saw two men through a glass door, who, I suppose, had been murdered. They just appeared as if asleep. The clothes of all the murdered people were hanging along the ceiling. The dirty-looking clothes blowing with the wind, and the dead men lying below, made it an awful, dreary sight.'

The family travelled down to Nice, where Louis and his nurse made their way through crowds of carnival revellers. A crowd, imitating a funeral but laughing and

dressed in white, came carrying a 'corpse' which they would toss in the air, in scandalous disregard for God's Holy Day. Instead of seemly black, they wore the most gorgeous array of garments, trimmed with silver and gold tinsel. Some wore tall, conical hats, while Cummy noted others hid their faces behind masks with a 'frightful-looking' horn sticking up in front of their forehead. Louis was enthralled by the riotous abandon, while paying lip-service to his nurse's pious sentiments: 'The great adversary does triumph here. Hasten, hasten, O God, that day when the kingdoms of this world shall become the Kingdom of Christ!'

Cummy stayed behind when the Stevensons went to Monaco to see the gambling, visiting a 'poor gaming house' and taking a walk along the cliffs, where Tom Stevenson gave his son an impromptu lesson in physics by tossing pebbles over the edge and asking Louis to calculate the height from the time the stones took to reach the sea. At last the Stevensons took a villa at Mentone, where Cummy could escape the agony of luxurious living in hotels where the guests dressed in their finest clothes for dinner at the *table d'hote* - almost tantamount to an orgy in her book. She preferred to shut herself in her room, surviving on cups of tea. But Louis enjoyed the treat of being allowed into smoking rooms with his father, whose droll conversation in company belied the melancholy that plagued him in solitude.

The move to Mentone was supposed to herald a more settled regime with a tutor, but there was plenty of free time for long walks in the sunshine with Cummy, observing the Mentonese and doing humorous little sketches of the peasants on donkeys and women wearing enormous, wide-brimmed hats with flat crowns, on which they balanced anything from baskets of oranges to babies in cradles. Louis's mother at last seemed to be recovering from her chest ailment, and such was Cummy's joy that she quite forgot to be scandalised when the Stevensons went to the opera, and only complained of them playing cards when it kept her from her bed after 10pm.

With Louis, Cummy climbed the Alps above Mentone, where his imagination could roam free among the olive yards and little toy houses with red fronts and green shutters, high above Mediterranean. He dictated to his nurse: 'The hill on which we are seated is covered with thyme and rosemary. The larger shrub plants

are the cypress, firs, and lemons. A man below us is knocking down the fruit of the olives with a long reed. He is dressed in the costume worn here, which is knee breeches, white shirt, and a jacket only tied round the neck by a string and allowed to hang down behind. On his head he has a high red cowl. This concludes the handsome costume of a Mentonian, besides which they generally have black moustaches and small beards, which make them look like bandits or the ruffians in a play.'

Two months hence, in Naples, they would see real Italian brigands, captured by the army, being marched away to be hanged. 'Poor, unhappy young men,' noted the kind-hearted Cummy. 'They all looked quite young.'

After two months in Mentone, the Stevensons made their leisurely way home. In Pompeii, they strolled down Roman chariot-rutted streets, between recently-excavated buildings whose frescoes were as bright as the day they were buried by the eruption of Vesuvius. Cummy and Tom Stevenson were much fascinated by the casts of the bodies, curiously frozen in time by the hot lava, as they put up their hands in vain to fend off the wrath that was to come. In Rome, Cummy so forgot her loathing of the Antichrist that she consented to tour the Vatican and at one point actually referred to the individual she had earlier dubbed 'the man of sin' as 'His Holiness'. At Pisa, Louis took his nurse to the top of the leaning tower, but the high point of her holiday was Venice, rising dreamlike from the sea as they crossed the long causeway on the train. As Cummy lay one night in a carpeted gondola, the staunch Calvinist who would shortly berate herself on her 40th birthday - 'How old I am getting, and have done so little!' - surrendered herself to the romance of the starry heavens above, one perfect evening in a lifetime of toil.

Maggie Stevenson, seemingly cured of her affliction, was 'quite daft about boating here, and no wonder, as she is well now and able to enjoy it'. Her health held up throughout Italy and across the Brenner Pass, where the remote mountain scenery and isolated hamlet of Mittwolde entered Louis's consciousness and would reappear years later in his short story *Will O' The Mill*. They made their way up through Germany, by train and Rhine steamer, and came at last to Calais. In the cooler climate, Cummy's conscience may have pricked her for being seduced by Catholic

hedonism, and to make amends she went out after tea with a pious housemaid from Aberdeen, distributing Protestant tracts to poor people.

By Calais, Maggie Stevenson's health had broken down again and she went to stay with her sister in Blackheath while Tom, Bessie and Cummy returned to Edinburgh. After a few days with 'Auntie', Louis was deemed old enough to make the long train journey home on his own.

*Faster than fairies, faster than witches,
Bridges and houses, hedges and ditches;
And charging along like troops in a battle,
All through the meadows the horses and cattle:
All of the sights of the hill and the plain
Fly as thick as driving rain;
And ever again, in the wink of an eye,
Painted stations whistle by...¹⁴*

It was now the end of May, too late for Louis to return to Edinburgh Academy before the long summer holidays. He would not pass through its doors again. Instead he visited his widowed uncle Ramsay Traquair, father of his favourite Balfour cousins Henrietta and Willie, then farming at Overshiels by the Lammermuir Hills. Louis remained particularly close to Henrietta, calling her by her pet name of 'Puss' or occasionally 'Cat'. As summer turned to autumn, another cat would console him as he sat sobbing one Edinburgh Sunday evening on a door-step in the London Road. He wept, he knew not why, with all the hormonally-charged misery of youth. Somehow the cat sensed his distress. 'She fawned upon the weeper, and gambolled for his entertainment, watching the effect, it seemed, with motherly eyes.' Underlying it all was the knowledge that he was going away to school in England, leaving his old childhood self behind. 'Had I been let alone, I could have borne up like any hero; but there was around me, in all my native town, a conspiracy of lamentation: "Poor little boy, he is going away - unkind little boy, he is going to leave us"'

When Louis told his parents what had happened, they feared for the health of their highly-strung son. 'It was judged, if I had thus brimmed over on the public

highway, some change of scene was (in the medical sense) indicated; my father at the time was visiting the harbour lights of Scotland; and it was decided he should take me along with him around a portion of the shores of Fife: my first professional tour, my first journey in the complete character of man, without the help of petticoats.¹⁵

It was to St Andrews that Louis and his father were now bound, via a string of Fife coastal villages, each with its own harbour and lights. Failure to maintain them reduced their brightness and could spell shipwreck, so the wrath of the joint chief engineer to the Northern Lighthouse Board descended heavily on those who neglected their duty. As Tom Stevenson berated the local plumber supposed to maintain the lights at St Andrews, young Louis noted the poor man 'perspired extremely'.

Father and son returned to Edinburgh by cab - a big disappointment for Louis, who, on being told they were 'to post', had imagined a romantic journey in a mailcoach. Unwaylaid by highwaymen, they arrived safely at Heriot Row where preparations were in progress for Louis's departure to boarding school. He was to attend Burlington Lodge Academy at Spring Grove, Isleworth, on the outskirts of London, along with his grandly named cousin De Verinne Colinton Balfour, more commonly known as Collie. 'Auntie' Jane Balfour was now living close by and could keep an eye on them both. For a term Louis did his best to maintain a stiff upper lip to please his father, but he did not take readily to the life of an English public schoolboy. He tried gamely to play football, but spent so much time imagining the game as a romantic battle between two armies that he was practically useless on the field. It was all he could do to survive the rough-and-tumble, and the headmaster and his wife were kind and understanding when he was laid low with a headache.

Outside classes, in which he assured his father he was 'getting on very well', he spent his time reading and writing. Since changing his ambition from the church to literature at the age of five, he had composed various works. The History of Moses had been followed by a History of Joseph and, at the age of ten, The Antiquities of Midlothian. At 12 Louis was penning his own verbal caricatures of the inhabitants of Peebles, in the style of Thackeray's Book of Snobs. Now he had the thrill of

appearing 'before the eyes of the publick'¹⁶ as a published author, having penned an item at Spring Grove for The Schoolboys' Magazine.

Louis proudly sent home examples of his proficiency in Latin, but was desperately homesick, lying in bed thinking of home and the holidays, and Coolin. He asked his father to keep a diary of the dog's doings: 'You can direct his paw and make him write every day a short account of his adventures.' But when Tom Stevenson took his wife away for another winter in Mentone, Louis longed for the sunshine. Just before his 13th birthday, at the foot of a note to his mother, he threw in the towel: 'My dear Papa you told me to tell you whenever I was miserable. I do not feel well and I wish to get home. Do take me with you.'¹⁷

Tom Stevenson arrived to rescue him late on the Saturday after school broke up for Christmas. Louis was waiting anxiously alone, the last boy to leave. By Christmas Day he was in Mentone. There would be no more boarding school for Louis - no school at all for the rest of that academic year. In Mentone, his mother's companion this time was Jessie Warden, daughter of Tom Stevenson's sister Jane. Now 33 but unmarried, Jessie was a card - lively and humorous, roaring with laughter as she fell down a couple of foot-high terraces in the sunshine. But Maggie fretted for her absent husband, and wished she was enjoying a walk with him up Corstorphine Hill in Edinburgh - much to Louis's exasperation:

Jessie: Would you like to be there?

Mama: Yes, if I had Tom with me.

Louis: Oh Mama, that's tiresome.

Jessie: Oh man, can you no gie us something new...¹⁸

This year's sojourn in Mentone was less exciting than the previous year, especially when Maggie paid tedious social calls on Mrs Morgan, wife of the local English clergyman. The bored Louis took revenge by penning a scrap of satirical dialogue to his father, headed: 'Scene from "The Unsociable Grosbeak of Menton". A room in Morgan Villa.'

Mrs Morgan, a sour-favoured woman discovered toiling at a pillow cover. Sound of wheels without.

Mrs M. (starting up): Another visitor (going to window). Oh, those tiresome Stevensons.

Would they were at the bottom of the sea (rushes to bell, pulls violently).

Enter servant.

*Mrs M.: Therese, I'm out. If ever them people come again, rec'lect I'm not at home...'*¹⁹

By May, the weather in Edinburgh was fine enough for them to return. Much of the early summer was spent with Uncle Ramsay, who now lived at Colinton Farm with his children and his unmarried, older brother William, a lawyer in his mid-fifties. Henrietta, now a young lady of 14, was away in Islay, leaving 12-year-old Willie to play with Louis. When boredom set in, Louis wrote to Henrietta:

'My dear Cat, I am at present watching other people taking tea and hearing Willie saying, in a doleful tone, "I don't know what to say". But as I am in the same state I cannot afford to laugh at him. Mamma says you wish to know what is going on, so here goes - Mr Traquair is reading the newspaper, Jessie is clearing away the tea things, Uncle Ramsay is looking at the cattle, and the rest of us are all writing to a certain person called Puss.'²⁰

One day they were out driving in the dog cart when Willie spotted a pigeon on the parapet of Redford Bridge and pointed it out to Louis. 'I had a stone in my catty so I let fly, and down went the pigeon. "Stop, I've killed it," yelled I. "Shut up," screamed Willie. "It is not ours." And so we drove away and left the Fish pie dying. Contrary to my expectations, the ghost has not as yet appeared. If it does, I'll have a ready answer; all that I'll say will be "temporary insanity, my good pigeon".'²¹

Louis had been following the trial of George Bryce, a drunken carter in the village of Ratho, just outside Edinburgh, who had committed a bloody murder. Bryce's affections had been spurned by Lizzie Brown, the cook at a big villa near Ratho, and he blamed the nursery maid Jeanie Seton for turning her against him. For ten days he stalked Jeanie, before breaking into the house and chasing the screaming girl into the garden, where he slashed her throat with a razor. It was a real-life drama to rival the 'penny dreadfuls' Louis read surreptitiously at the newsagents, begrudging the penny to buy them and take them home, where they would probably be confiscated as too salacious for a young mind. But in the respectable Edinburgh Evening Courant he could read three whole columns on the macabre final act of the squalid tragedy. Despite Bryce's defence of 'temporary insanity', the Home Secretary had

rejected the jury's recommendation for mercy. In the early hours of that morning, the municipal gallows was taken out of the storeroom and erected at the head of Liberton Wynd.

The black timbers of the gallows presented a horrible aspect in the twilight hours - for there was no darkness - and in the strong light of the full moon, which, excepting when occasionally veiled by murky clouds, shone upon the dismal scene. As daylight advanced the crowd increased, every road leading to the High Street contributing its almost continuous stream. The body of the crowd nearest the scene consisted chiefly of the roughest portion of the community. Some of the women had children in their arms, and others had their little ones with them, whom they occasionally held up. Shop lads and shop girls were present in large numbers just before the hour of going to business.

Bryce had slept little, being attended all night in the condemned cell by Mr Rutherford, the missionary teacher of the prison, who prayed with him as Bryce read the 51st Psalm and other passages of scripture. With the congregation of St John's Episcopal Church now gathered and praying for his soul, while other more evangelical divines with placards distributed tracts among the crowd, Bryce was escorted out by the Reverend Doctors Glover and Fowler. He was dressed in a black suit of clothes, and his countenance seemed wan and careworn. His lips quivered as he crossed the pavement, and a slight muttering betrayed the deep emotion which he felt.

As the van approached the County Buildings near the scaffold, it was spotted by the crowd, which had to be held back by policemen as Bryce ran up the steps, casting an anxious glance behind him at the masses thirsting for his blood. In the sheriff-officers' room, guarded by city officers with archaic halberds, the condemned man's hat and cravat were removed and the hangman, James Askern, pinioned his arms. As Bryce mounted the stair, looking 'dreadfully pale and nervous', he had to be physically supported by his two spiritual advisers. They then prayed over him as he knelt at the foot of the scaffold, the words inaudible over the hubbub of the crowd in the street and above, where hundreds with telescopes and opera glasses packed the tenement windows, apart from those few decent homes where the blinds had been drawn on the horrible spectacle outside.

At the close of the devotions, Bryce mounted the drop, and as the executioner stepped forward to adjust the fatal noose, the murmur of the crowd rose into a roar of horror and

*execration. Askern went about his work with fearful coolness, and in a few seconds had drawn a white cap over the head of the doomed man. He then took a piece of cord and tied his legs, and having placed the rope round his neck, drew the bolt and the drop fell with a loud crash at twenty minutes past eight.*²²

The brutal moment of extinction, taking place as Louis and his mother breakfasted with the Traquairs at Colinton, was not quite instantaneous, although a black screen prevented the crowd seeing the slight movement of Bryce's legs and nervous twitching of the hands that continued for several moments afterwards. His lifeless remains were left dangling, like a broken jumping-jack, until Askern cut them down at 9am, to hoots and groans 'from the more youthful and thoughtless of the morbid onlookers'. Having read all this in the newspaper, Louis, with callous schoolboy humour, wrote to cousin Henrietta: 'Bryce's breakfast consisted of an artichoke and an oyster (hearty choke and hoister).'

The latter part of the summer was spent at Peebles, a Borders town on the banks of the Tweed just south of the Pentland Hills. A comfortable villa was secured in the area known as Springhill, and while Maggie Stevenson continued her genteel convalescence, Louis ran riot with the other boys, riding his pony in the countryside around, bathing in the Tweed and running about naked, acting the goat.²³ Louis was becoming a handful as he approached his 14th birthday, leading a gang of boys playing 'chap door run' in the long evenings at Springhill - hammering on the doors of the villas, then running before an angry adult appeared. As his mother put it mildly, Puck was much to the fore in Louis that autumn.

He became friendly with Bobby Romanes, son of wealthy and pious parents, who lived with his sisters Leila, Louisa and Alice at Craigerne, a large house with stables and a pretentious turret set in rolling parkland on the edge of Peebles. As is often the case with children brought up in a repressive, over-religious household, Bobby grew up wild and his later exploits in the army would scandalise Edinburgh society. One day the quiet of Peebles was disturbed by the loud crack of pistol shots as Bobby and Louis squared up to each other for a duel with real weapons. Their anxious parents were relieved to find the boys had fired only blanks.

The long break over, Bobby went off to Edinburgh Academy but Louis did not

follow him. Instead he was to attend a special school for delicate or backward pupils run by Robert Thomson in Frederick Street, within easy walking distance of Heriot Row. Louis's three years there would be the nearest he came to normal schooling, and there were still interruptions for health trips with his mother, including two extended stays in Torquay. There, in the spring of 1864, Louis whiled away the hours by writing to a new friend he had met at Mr Thomson's. Henry Baildon had been his partner in creating schoolboy magazines with titles such as Jack o'Lantern or The Trial. With Louis now exiled to Glen Villa in Torquay, the boys exchanged long epistles in verse:

*From Baildon I
Received a high-
Ly finished rhyming letter
Than which I'm sure
And can assure
I never read a better...²⁴*

Louis's powers as a rhymster found outlet in a libretto for a comic opera called The Baneful Potato, with characters such as Dig-him-up-o the Gardener and Seek-him-out-o the Policeman. But generally Torquay was a bore for a 14-year-old, until his mother sent for Jessie Warden to liven things up. The comical cousin did her best, and a few days later Louis wrote to his father: 'Jessie has gone to church in Mama's clothes. Is'n't good?' He reported back also on the tutors whose fees Tom Stevenson was paying - Mr Mistowski for German and French and, for arithmetic and mathematics, a Mr Dent who wore 'a hideously ill-made wig of brown hair, from which circumstance I have named him Browniwig, under which cognomen he is alone spoken of'.²⁵

Meanwhile Tom Stevenson busied himself in Edinburgh with the plight of fallen women, for whom a new Edinburgh Magdalene Asylum was being built in Dalry Road. His work for the asylum was low-profile but as a civil engineer he may have advised on the design and construction of the new building, built to replace the overburdened old asylum in the squalid slums of the Canongate. It was a strange procession of penitents that made its way up the High Street that day in 1864, the

former ladies of the night now divested of their cheap silks, walking modestly in single file, dressed in coarse but seemly overalls with freshly scrubbed faces and their few poor belongings in their hands. At the new asylum they would find honest labour to redeem them from sin, scrubbing and mangling in the the laundry or stitching away in the sewing room while members of the Society's ladies committee read them improving extracts from pious works.

By May, the Stevensons were reunited at Heriot Row and Louis returned to Mr Thomson's school and more literary projects with Baildon. The manuscript magazines they penned together and circulated for a reading fee of one penny were full of gory tales to chill the blood, plus incidental love interest: 'Next morning very early we had to get up and prepare to be burned alive. When we arrived at the place of execution, we shuddered to think of being killed so soon. But I had forgot to tell you that I had made love to a beautiful girl even in one day, and from all I knew she loved me. The next thing they did was to build round us sticks and rubbish...'²⁶

Louis spent July and August with his parents at Elibank Villa in Peebles. Instead of pistols, this time he 'bought a certain cudgel, got a friend to load it, and thenceforward walked the tame ways of the earth my own ideal, radiating pure romance - still but a puppet in the hands of Skelt'. His companions in 1865 included his cousin Bob, now a humorous young man of 18, and Bob's sister Katharine, a fey 13-year-old who fascinated Louis as she hovered on the brink of womanhood. Uncle Alan had reached the grim closing stages of his paralysing illness, but this seemed only to strengthen his children's determination to live life to the full as they galloped like the wind on their ponies across broom and heather and down the valley of the Tweed. Katharine would recall how 'Bob had a black pony, and Louis called it Hell; his own was brown, and was called Purgatory; while mine was named Heaven. Once the two boys galloped right through the Tweed on the way to Innerleithen, and I had to follow in fear of my life...'²⁷

It was at Peebles that Louis first experienced a boy and girl romance, although he never revealed the young lady's identity. As a child he was sweet on his cousin Henrietta Balfour, but in all likelihood his first love was the strange, romantic Katharine. Writing to her two decades later, when youthful passion had mellowed

into adult kindness, he would declare: 'You know very well that I love you dearly, and that I always will.'²⁸ By then Katharine would be a single parent recovering from a broken marriage and he a chronic invalid, nursed by his wife, yet Louis still recalled their youth together as if it were yesterday:

*Bells upon the city are ringing in the night;
High above the gardens are the houses full of light;
On the heathy Pentlands is the curlew flying free;
And the broom is blowing bonnie in the north countrie.*

*We cannae break the bonds that God decreed to bind,
Still we'll be the children of the heather and the wind;
Far away from home, O, it's still for you and me
That the broom is blowing bonnie in the north countrie!*²⁹

That same year Louis discovered the power of romance in a more unlikely quarter. A favourite haunt, just upstream of Peebles, was Neidpath Castle, stronghold for six centuries of Frasers, Hays and Douglasses until allowed to fall into ruin by William Douglas, 4th Duke of Queensberry, who excited the wrath of the poet Wordsworth by cutting down the surrounding forest: 'Degenerate Douglas! Oh the unworthy Lord!' For some reason the youngsters felt this was the perfect epithet for Louis's cousin Lewis 'Noona' Balfour, known as Degenerate Douglas thereafter.

The west wing of Neidpath had collapsed, although one floor still served to accommodate a gamekeeper. But when he was abroad there was nothing to stop the youngsters exploring the mouldering, panelled rooms and narrow, winding stair to the battlements. In a turret they made a miraculous find - half a dozen back numbers of a long, romantic serial entitled *Black Bess or The Knight of the Road*, the work of one Edward Viles.

The lure of the forbidden penny dreadfuls overcame any scruple of petty larceny - 'the idea that the gamekeeper had anything to do with them was one that we discouraged'³⁰ - and the cousins bore the mildewed sheets away to a nearby fir-

wood. There, stretched out on a bed of blaeberrys, they abandoned themselves to the delights of cheap literature:

The rim of the rising moon was just peeping above the horizon, and a few faint, sickly beams of light shot up from into the night sky, giving to all objects a dim, spectral-like appearance. Standing in the middle of the high road which skirts Wimbledon Common on the north side was a horse and rider. The moonlight shimmered upon both with a strange effect. At first sight it seemed as though a lambent flickering flame was playing over them, from the horse's hoofs to the long feather in the rider's hat... He was tall and muscular and sat in the saddle with an ease and grace as rare as it was admirable... Of the steed which he bestrode, and which was no other than the mare so celebrated in song and story - Black Bess - we feel it is perfectly unnecessary to say a word in the shape of description. Her rider - whom we may as well at once call by name, Dick Turpin - had, at the moment we introduce him to our readers, one hand upon her neck...³¹

Louis rolled over and made himself more comfortable on the springy bed of blaeberrys, dappled by sunlight streaming through the canopy above. Picking up the next number, he read eagerly ahead as the gallant highwayman escaped from his pursuers across the rooftops of a city and appeared without warning through a trap-door into a room below.

A horrifying sight met his gaze. Cowering on the floor, and divested of almost every article of attire, was a young girl of about 17 years of age. She was dark, and had long glossy hair hanging disorderedly about her. Her hands were clasped together tightly, and her face, under happier auspices, was doubtless beautiful, but now it was convulsed with agony. Her lips were apart and bloodless, and tears were streaming from her eyes.

Standing over her, and flourishing a broad, heavy belt or strap, was a being in the shape of a woman. She was old and gaunt, presenting indeed more the appearance of an animated skeleton than aught else. Her eyes were bright and reptile looking, and a ghastly expression of delight and fiend-like malice lighted up her countenance as she struck the girl brutally with the strap. 'Help! Help! Save me! Save me!' shrieked the girl, as her eyes fell upon the newcomer... Dick passed his arm round the slight frame of the young girl and drew her towards him, endeavouring by this means to reassure her and calm her terrible agitation.

'Save you, my poor girl!' he said, in his deep, manly tones, which thrilled through every

*nerve of the girl's body with a feeling of exquisite delight which she had never before experienced, 'of course I will...'*³²

If Katharine glanced up, she might have found Louis looking at her strangely with dark, gleaming eyes, perhaps quickly returning his gaze to the printed page and blushing hotly with all the confused feelings of 14. *Black Bess* or *The Knight of the Road* was prefixed by an assurance to parents that 'in no place will vice be found commended and virtue sneered at; nor will any pandering to sensuality, suggestions of impure thoughts, or direct encouragement to crime be discovered; neither are there details of seduction, bigamy, adultery and domestic poisonings such as are indispensable ingredients of our popular three-volume novels'. But passages such as the one Louis had just read would serve only confirm the suspicion of Edinburgh parents that cheap romances were the instrument of the devil.

The warning from the Scottish National Association for the Suppression of Licentiousness was clear: 'Our cheap weekly literature is largely of a character fitted to inflame the passions, and to accustom the mind to the contemplation of various forms of wickedness. It is retailed in small stationery, tobacconist, fruit and toy-shops - is found in the hands of boys attending day schools, and constitutes the Sabbath-reading of the young of both sexes to an extent scarcely dreamt of. By the testimony of the fallen themselves, no other single cause contributes so much as this to make the descent to ruin rapid and easy.'³³

Tom Stevenson's chivalrous care for the fallen at the Magdalene Asylum made him all too conscious of the road to ruin that ran like a sewer through Edinburgh. It could not all be blamed on penny dreadfuls and cheap novelettes, but it was no doubt true that works of lurid sensuality with no clear Christian moral framework were a danger to the young, encouraging the hedonistic dissipation which he had fought in himself as a young man. Poor Alan had fought it, too, but too late. Lax business habits and a failure to get a grip on himself had been his downfall. Two days before Christmas, at the house in Pitt Street, Portobello, Alan Stevenson's obscene paralysis finally closed its grip and at the age of 58 he breathed his last in the small hours, his family gathered round the deathbed in the gaslight. At 18, Bob's first sad duty was to register his father's death - the one-time King of Nosingtonia

was now the only man of the house.

But it was Tom Stevenson who took on the burden of managing his dead brother's estate and ensuring his family was provided for. After Christmas and the funeral, Bob returned to Windermere College in preparation for Cambridge the following year. Louis, now turned 15, continued his literary efforts with Baildon in a new magazine venture, *The Sunbeam*, billed as an illustrated Miscellany of Fact, Fiction and Fun, edited by R.L. Stevenson. There was little fun but a long story by Louis called *The Banker's Ward*, a rather dreary narrative of middle-class life. As if trying to please his father, the former author of lurid tales of adventure was now attempting to write in a more serious vein.

But in letters he became increasingly witty. From Torquay, where Tom Stevenson had again left him with his mother, he wrote in pursuit of hard cash to while away the boredom: 'Respected paternal relative. I write to make a request of the most moderate nature. Every year I have cost you an enormous - nay, elephantine - sum of money for drugs and physician's fees, and the most expensive time of the twelve months was March. But this year the biting oriental blasts, the howling tempests, and the general ailments of the human race have been successfully braved by yours truly. Does not this deserve remuneration? I appeal to your charity. I appeal to your generosity. I appeal to your Justice. I appeal to your accounts. I appeal, in fine, to your purse. My sense of generosity forbids the receipt of more - my sense of Justice forbids the receipt of less - than half-a-crown. Greeting, from, sir, your most afft. and needy son R. Stevenson.'³⁴

Yet Louis did not entirely abandon his love of romance. The childhood nightmare of the galloping horseman now collided in his imagination with the escapades of Dick Turpin, tempered by the serious moral crusade of Cummy's beloved Covenanters, as Louis made his first proper attempt at a novel. What fired his imagination was the murder in 1679 of the Episcopalian Archbishop James Sharpe on Magus Muir, the dreary stretch of land outside St Andrews which the disappointed Louis once crossed in a common cab with his father. John Balfour of Kinloch, had led the party of Godly assassins that pursued the Archbishop's luxuriously appointed coach across the moor before dragging him out and

slaughtering him in full view of his daughter. But this was not what drew Louis to the tale.

No scene of history has ever written itself so deeply on my mind; not because Balfour, that questionable zealot, was an ancestral cousin of my own; not because of the pleadings of the victim and his daughter; not even because of the live bum-bee that flew out of Sharpe's 'bacco box, thus clearly indicating his complicity with Satan... The figure that always fixed my attention is that of Hackston of Rathillet, sitting in the saddle with his cloak about his mouth, and through all that long, bungling, vociferous hurly-burly, revolving privately a case of conscience. He would take no hand in the deed, because he had a private spite against the victim, and "that action" must be sullied with no suggestion of a worldly motive... 'You are a gentleman - you will protect me!' cried the wounded old man, crawling towards him. 'I will never lay a hand on you,' said Hackston, and put his cloak about his mouth. It is an old temptation with me, to pluck away that cloak and see the face - to open that bosom and to read the heart...³⁵

Eager to learn more of this man of mystery, 15-year-old Louis used parental influence to gain access to the Advocate's Library, the greatest collection of books in Scotland. Buried deep in the subterranean storeys below the Parliament House, sitting shame-faced among far older students in the very room where Hackston had been tortured before being hanged, disembowelled and dismembered, Louis perused every book and manuscript he could lay his hands on, but to no avail. Hackston remained an enigma.

Hackston of Rathillet was Louis's attempt to breathe life into him, with many abandoned attempts at the novel stuffed away in the back of drawers. The face hidden by a cloak, the human reality behind the Calvinist mask of Scotland, the passions that burned like a lantern beneath the tightly-buttoned topcoat were what fascinated him. His childhood sense of something moving in things, of an infinite attraction and horror, remained and drew him also to another enigma - Deacon Brodie. No other figure in Edinburgh's history so encapsulated the profound schizophrenia experienced by its middle-class citizens. Like Thomas Stevenson and hundreds more, Brodie was outwardly a picture of respectability. Denied his youthful romantic desire to join the Navy, he submitted to entering his father's

successful business and became a proficient cabinet maker. Tom Stevenson had acquired a large wardrobe by Brodie's own hand which stood in Louis's bedroom, augmenting the child's night-time terror, for beneath the ornamental veneer of respectability lay a heart of darkness.

By day Brodie was a man of influence as Deacon of Wrights on the town council. He had money, power and influence, and attended church regularly. Yet the darkness within him drove him each night to the city's lowest taverns and brothels, where he roistered and sang from his favourite Beggar's Opera, assuming the devil-may-care persona of Macheath the highwayman. Shunning the straightjacket of marriage, he kept at least two whores in separate parts of the city and had families by them, each quite unaware of the other's existence. For the ultimate thrill, he became a housebreaker, planning ever-more audacious nocturnal raids on wealthy homes and jeweller's shops until, betrayed by his accomplices, he was brought to trial and the warring spirits that possessed Brodie were extinguished together on the gallows, before a roaring crowd in the Lawnmarket.

All this impressed Louis profoundly, and together with Baildon he made his first attempts at a drama based on Brodie's life. The manuscripts did not survive. If Tom Stevenson ever read them, it would have filled him with disquiet. His son was falling into the same self-indulgent habits that he had been required to subjugate in himself years ago. He could still recall how, as a young man reluctantly entering his father's engineering business, he had been caught in the act of literature. In the pocket of Tom's coat, Robert Stevenson had discovered a bundle of dog-eared papers. Brother David informed his father that there was a drawer full of similar stuff in Tom's room. Unable to confront his wayward son in person, Robert Stevenson wrote him a letter concerning the abuse of 'seven pages of my good card paper filled in your handwriting with great nonsense... I made an attempt to read it but I could not go on with it... I beseech you, Tom, give up such nonsense and mind your business. You are most ignorant of the history of your country and the science of your profession... this is not the time for you to write but to read lessons in morals and the practical details of your business'.³⁶

If Louis was going to take his rightful place in the Stevenson lighthouse dynasty,

he must learn the same hard lesson. His one surviving sustained piece of writing from this period was not a romance but a dutiful attempt to demonstrate detailed knowledge of one small episode in the history of his country. His researches among the Wodrow manuscripts in the Advocate's Library had made him a juvenile expert on the Covenanters, the devout band of Presbyterians who refused to accept Episcopalian clergy imposed by a Stuart monarchy in London and suffered the consequences at the hands of 'Bluidy Clavers', John Graham of Claverhouse, with his murderous dragoons.

The ancient manuscripts contained the ingredients of a gripping, romantic tale, which is how Louis began to write it - full of colour and drama, 'a regular novel' of the kind Cummy deplored. His father also disapproved, suggesting Louis had 'spoiled' his material by turning it into a story, but offered to pay for the little book to be printed if Louis would redo it as a more sober, factual account. Dutifully Louis took fresh paper and began *The Pentland Rising*. Heavily interlaced with notes on sources, it was a remarkable scholastic achievement by a boy of 15, but far from a rattling good read:

The prejudices of the people against Episcopacy were 'out of measure increased,' says Bishop Burnet, 'by the new incumbents who were put in the places of the ejected preachers, and were generally very mean and despicable in all respects. They were the worst preachers I ever heard; they were ignorant to a reproach; and many of them were openly vicious... Those of them who arose above contempt or scandal were men of such violent tempers that they were as much hated as the others were despised.' It was little to be wondered at, from this account, that the country-folk refused to go to the parish church, and chose rather to listen to outed ministers in the fields...³⁷

The revised *Pentland Rising* was published on November 28th, 1866, the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Rullion Green that saw the Covenanting rebels crushed. For Louis, just turned 16, his first book was both a triumph and a defeat. The moralising 'Shorter Catechist' that Cummy had instilled in him gained the upper hand, driving the child of romance underground. Tom Stevenson, having got his way and fulfilled his part of the bargain, bought up all unsold copies to prevent his son's youthful folly being exposed to the public gaze.

But romance remained alive as Louis discovered the works of Alexandre Dumas, the dissolute old rogue whose extravagant lifestyle with many mistresses would never have won the Stevensons' approval. Although Louis was duly appreciative of his parents' 16th birthday present - Macaulay's History of England - he was far more captivated by the adventures of D'Artagnan and the Three Musketeers in the rambling *Vicomte de Bragelonne*. To Bob, now an undergraduate at Cambridge, Louis sent an enthusiastic analysis of the characters of Aramis and D'Artagnan, then added with unconvincing resolve: 'At present I am going in for Macaulay's History, and no novels at all. Do likewise! Stick in! Go it, my tulip! With which classical and encouraging remarks begins and ends the moral part of this here epistle.'³⁸

Louis was now in his final year at Mr Thomson's, studying Latin and Greek, augmented by private lessons in mathematics, German and 'practical mechanics', which consisted of attempting to construct a wooden box, planing and sawing it smaller and smaller until the teacher had to intervene to prevent it vanishing. In a bid to build up Louis's weedy physique, he was sent to Mr Roland the gymnastics instructor, who also taught fencing.³⁹ Under the influence of Dumas, Louis was keen to become a proficient swordsman and crossed swords often with his 12-year-old cousin Davie during a five-week Easter break at Bridge of Allan.

After years of taking large villas on short-term lets, Tom Stevenson had now decided to acquire a permanent country residence to complement Heriot Row. Swanston Cottage at the foot of the Pentland Hills, set back a little from a picture-book hamlet of thatched cottages, seemed perfect. Owned by Edinburgh city corporation, which had once used it as a pleasant retreat for junketing councillors, the cottage was available on a long lease. Before signing, Louis's father persuaded the corporation to build an extension, adding a drawing room and a bedroom for Louis to make the 'cottage' a commodious residence. Over the next 14 years, Swanston and the Pentlands would enter Louis's soul as the dearest spot in his native land.

From the moment the carriage first deposited him at the door after the three-mile trip from Edinburgh, he could feel his spirit break free. With Coolin at his heels, the scarecrow youth with shining eyes struck out across the fields to the very hills on

which Covenanters had held open-air meetings and sacrificed their lives. His reverie was short-lived as the air was split by an angry roar and a wild man in a plaid appeared on the hill above, brandishing a shepherd's crook, more fearsome than Claverhouse and his dragoons. Never had Louis heard the Scots language used with such vividness and force as when John Tod outlined in trenchant monosyllables the nature of his crime. From Tod's wrathful battle cry, 'C'way oot amang the sheep!', Louis gathered he had sinned in bringing a dog among the flocks. But over the weeks the pair dropped into civilities until Tod would proffer his snuff box whenever they met. It was the start of an unlikely friendship between the privileged youth, not quite 17, and the roaring shepherd, at 56 'the oldest herd on the hills', with a wife and family crowded into a small shepherd's cottage. But Louis was a keen listener, as well as an avid talker, and Tod found in him a willing audience for tales of the good old droving days, herding sheep over the hills to England.⁴⁰

Louis could drop into conversation with people of all classes, but his life so far had been sheltered - tied to Cummy's apron strings and closely supervised by his parents. Now in the autumn of 1867 there was a change in the wind over the Pentlands, from which he would descend a free man, able to roam the streets of Edinburgh and consort with whoever he pleased.

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¹ 'Lantern-Bearer', I Can Remember Robert Louis Stevenson, ed. Rosaline Masson.

² David M Lewis, I Can Remember Robert Louis Stevenson, ed. Rosaline Masson.

³ 'Lantern-Bearer', I Can Remember Robert Louis Stevenson, ed. Rosaline Masson.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ RLS, The Lantern Bearers.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Scottish National Association for the Suppression of Licentiousness records, The Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh Central Library.

¹⁰ Private Appeal to the Heads of Families, Scottish National Association for the Suppression of Licentiousness, The Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh Central Library.

¹¹ RLS, Memoirs of Himself.

¹² James Milne, I Can Remember Robert Louis Stevenson, ed. Rosaline Masson.

¹³ Alison Cunningham, Cummy's Diary: A Diary Kept by R.L. Stevenson's Nurse Alison Cunningham While Travelling with Him on the Continent during 1863.

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- ¹⁴ RLS, *From a Railway Carriage, A Child's Garden of Verses*.
- ¹⁵ RLS, *Random Memories: The Coast of Fife*.
- ¹⁶ RLS to his Father, Spring Grove, October 1863, Yale 18, MS Yale.
- ¹⁷ RLS to his Parents, Spring Grove, November 12, 1863, Yale 19, MS Yale.
- ¹⁸ RLS to his Father, Mentone, February 17, 1864, Yale 24, MS Yale.
- ¹⁹ RLS to his Father, Mentone, March 2, 1864, Yale 26, MS Yale.
- ²⁰ RLS to Henrietta Traquair, Colinton, June 1864, Yale 27, MS Milne.
- ²¹ RLS to Henrietta Traquair, Colinton, June 1864, Yale 28, MS Milne.
- ²² *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, June 21, 1864.
- ²³ James Milne, *I Can Remember Robert Louis Stevenson*, ed. Rosaline Masson.
- ²⁴ RLS to HB Baidon, Glen Villa, Torquay, March 22, 1865, Yale 29, MS Yale.
- ²⁵ RLS to his Father, Glen Villa, Torquay, April 2, 1865, Yale 32, MS Yale.
- ²⁶ RLS, *Creek Island or Adventures in the South Seas*, *The Schoolboy's Magazine*, 1863.
- ²⁷ Graham Balfour, *The Life of Robert Louis Stevenson*, Chapter IV, *Boyhood*.
- ²⁸ RLS to Katharine de Mattos, Skerryvore, Bournemouth, January 1, 1886, Yale 1507, *Colvin Letters*.
- ²⁹ An anglicised version of the second verse appeared in RLS's dedication to Katharine of *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*.
- ³⁰ RLS, *Popular Authors*.
- ³¹ Edward Viles, *Black Bess or The Knight of the Road, A Tale of the Good Old Times*. This Penny Dreadful commenced serialisation on August 8, 1863, and ran for 254 weeks until publication of the full bound volume in 1868.
- ³² Edward Viles, *Black Bess or The Knight of the Road, A Tale of the Good Old Times*.
- ³³ *Private Appeal to the Heads of Families*, Scottish National Association for the Suppression of Licentiousness, The Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh Central Library.
- ³⁴ RLS to his Father, 2 Sulyarde Terrace, Torquay, March or April 1866, Yale 34, MS Yale.
- ³⁵ RLS, *Random Memories: The Coast of Fife*.
- ³⁶ Robert Stevenson to Thomas Stevenson, 1836.
- ³⁷ RLS, *The Pentland Rising: a Page of History*, 1666.
- ³⁸ RLS to Bob Stevenson, 17 Heriot Row, November 26, 1866, Yale 36, MS Yale.
- ³⁹ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁰ RLS, *Pastoral*.