November 1850. He suffered from infancy from great fragility of health, and nearly died in 1858 of gastric fever, which left much constitutional weakness behind it. From the age of six he showed a disposition to write. He went to school, mainly in Edinburgh, from 1858 to 1867, but his ill-health prevented his learning much, and his teachers, as his mother afterwards said, “ liked talking to him better than teaching him.” He often accompanied his father on his official visits to the light­houses of the Scottish coast and on longer journeys, thus early accustoming himself to travel. As his health improved it was hoped that he would be able to adopt the family profession of civil engineering, and in 1868 he went to Anstruther and then to Wick as a pupil engineer. In 1871 he had so far advanced as to receive the silver medal of the Edinburgh Society of Arts for a paper suggesting improvements in lighthouse apparatus. But long before this he had started as an author. His earliest publication, the anonymous pamphlet of *The Pentland Rising,* had appeared in 1866, and *The Charity Bazaar,* a trifle in which his future manner is happily displayed, in 1868. From about the age of eighteen he dropped his baptismal names of Lewis Balfour and called himself Robert Louis, but was mostly known to his relatives and intimate friends as ii Louis.” Although he greatly enjoyed the outdoor business of the engineer’s life it strained his physical endurance too much, and in 1871 was reluctantly exchanged for study at the Edinburgh bar, to which he was called in 1875. 1873 he first met Mr Sidney Colvin, who

was to prove the closest of his friends and at last the loyal and admirable editor of his works and his correspondence; and to this time are attributed several of the most valuable friendships of Stevenson’s life.

He was now labouring, with extreme assiduity, to ground himself in the forms and habits of literary style. In 1875 appeared, anonymously, his *Appeal to the Clergy of the Church of Scotland,* and in that year he made the first of many visits to the forest of Fontainebleau. Meanwhile at Mentone in the winter of 1873-1874 he had grown in mind under the shadow of extreme physical weakness, and in the following spring began to contribute essays of high originality to one or two periodicals, of which the *Cornhill,* then edited by Sir Leslie Stephen, was at first the most important. Stevenson made no attempt to practice at the bar, and the next years were spent in wanderings in France, Germany and Scotland. Records of these journeys, and of the innocent adventures which they encouraged, were given to the world as *An Inland Voyage* in 1878, and as *Travels with a Donkey in the Cevennes* in 1879. During these four years Stevenson’s health, which was always bettered by life out of doors, gave him little trouble. It was now recognized that he was to be an author, and he contributed many essays, tales and fantasies to various journals and magazines. At Fontaine­bleau in 1876 Stevenson had met Mrs Osbourne, the lady who afterwards became his wife; she returned to her home in Cali­fornia in 1878, and in August of the following year, alarmed at news of her health, Stevenson hurriedly crossed the Atlantic. He travelled, from lack of means, as a steerage passenger and then as an emigrant, and in December, after hardships which seriously affected his health, he arrived in San Francisco. In May 1880 he married, and moved to the desolate mining-camp which he has described in *The Silverado Squatters,* As Mr Colvin has well said, these months in the west of America were spent "under a heavy combined strain of personal anxiety and literary effort.” Some of his most poignant and most enchanting letters were written during this romantic period of his life. In the autumn of 1880 he returned to Scotland, with his wife and step­son, who were received at once into the Edinburgh household of his parents. But the condition of his health continued to be very alarming, and they went almost immediately to Davos, where he remained until the spring of 1881. In this year was published *Virginibus puerisque,* the earliest collection of Stevenson’s essays. He spent the summer months in Scotland, writing articles, poems, and above all his first romance, *The Sea-Cook,* afterwards known as *Treasure Island*; but he was driven back to Davos in October. In 1882 appeared *Familiar Studies of Men and Books* and *New Arabian Nights.* His two winters at Davos had done him some good, but his summers in Scotland invariably undid the benefit. He therefore determined to reside wholly in the south of Europe, and in the autumn of 1882 he settled near Marseilles. This did not suit him, but from March 1883 to July 1884 he was at home at a charming house called La Solitude, above Hyères; this was in many ways to be the happiest station in the painful and hurrying pilgrimage of Stevenson’s life. *The Silverado Squatters* was published in 1883, and also the more important *Treasure Island,* which made Stevenson for the first time a popular writer. He planned a vast amount of work, but his schemes were all frustrated in January 1884 by the most serious illness from which he had yet suffered. He was just pulled through, but the attack was followed by long prostration and incapacity for work, and by continued relapses. In July he was brought back to England, and from this time until August 1887 Stevenson’s home was at Bournemouth. In 1885 he published, after long indecision, his volume of poems, *A Child's Garden of Verses,* an inferior story, *The Body Snatcher,* and that admirable romance, *Prince Otto,* in which the peculiar quality of Stevenson’s style was displayed at its highest. He also collaborated with W. E. Henley in some plays, *Beau Austin, Admiral Guinea* and *Robert Macaire.* Early in 1886 he struck the public taste with precision in his wild symbolic tale of *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde.* In the summer of the same year he published *Kidnapped,* which had been written at Bournemouth.

This, however, was a period of great physical prostration, so that 1886 and 1887 were perforce among the least productive years of Stevenson’s life. In the early months of 1887 Stevenson was particularly ill, and he was further prostrated by being summoned in May to the deathbed of his father, who had just returned to Edinburgh from the south. He printed privately as a pamphlet, in June 1887, a brief and touching sketch of his father. In July he published his volume of lyrical poems called *Underwoods.* The ties which bound him to England were now severed, and his health was broken to such a discouraging degree that he determined to remove to anotfier hemisphere. Accord­ingly, having disposed of Skerryvore, his house at Bournemouth, he sailed from London, with his wife, mother and stepson, for New York on the 17th of August 1887. He never set foot in Europe again. His memoir of his friend Professor Fleeming Jenkin was published soon after his departure. After resting at Newport, he went for the winter to be under the care of a physician at Saranac Lake in the Adirondacks for the winter. Here he was very quiet, and steadily active with his pen, writing both the greater part of the *Master of Ballantrae* and many of his finest later essays. He had undertaken, for a regular payment greatly in excess of anything which he had hitherto received, to contribute a monthly essay to *Scribner's Magazine,* and these essays, twelve in number, were published continuously through­out the year 1888. Early in that year was begun *The Wrong Box,* a farcical romance in which Mr Lloyd Osbourne participated; Stevenson also began a romance about the Indian Mutiny, which he abandoned. His attitude about this time to life and experi­ence is reflected in *Pulvis et umbra,* one of the noblest of all his essays. In April 1888 he was at the coast of New Jersey for some weeks, and in June started for San Francisco, where he had ordered a schooner, the "Casco,” to be ready to receive him. On the 28th of the month, he started, as Mr Colvin has said, “ on what was only intended to be a pleasure excursion . . . but turned into a voluntary exile prolonged until the hour of his death he never again left the waters of the Pacific. The "Casco ” proceeded first to the Marquesas, and south and east to Tahiti, passing before Christmas northwards to Honolulu, where Stevenson spent six months and finished *The Master of Ballantrae* and *The Wrong Box.* It was during this time that he paid his famous visit to the leper settlement at Molokai. In 1889, “ on a certain bright June day,” the Stevensons sailed for the Gilbert Islands, and after six months’ cruising found themselves at Samoa, where he landed for the first time about Christmas Day 1889. On this occasion, however, though