

Macmillan's Annual. Edited by E. F. LUCAS. 12mo, pp. 195. New York: The Macmillan Company. Price, paper, 35 cents.

WE recur to this collection chiefly because it contains several of Louis Stevenson's newly published letters. In one written to an early friend on a Sunday in Edinburgh, Stevenson, then twenty-four and broken down in health, wrote: "I had a nice time to-day, lying and resting about outside the church in the sunshine, hearing the psalms and the solitary voice of the preacher. All the same Sunday comes hard on me. The mind goes back of a Sunday and *repents*." That last word recalls James Whitcomb Riley's verses "My Conscience," a serious and by no means a jesting poem, in which one of Riley's familiar boys is made to say:

"Sometimes my Conscience says, says he,
'Don't you know me?'
And I, says I, skeered through and through,
'Of course I do.
You air a nice chap ever' way,
I'm here to say!
You make me cry—you make me pray,
And all them good things thataway—
That is, at *night*. Where do you stay
Durin' the day?"

"And then my Conscience says, onc't more,
'You know me—shore?'
'Oh, yes,' says I, a-trimblin' faint,
'You're jes' a saint!"

Your ways is all so holy-right,
I love you better ever' night
You come around,—'tel plum daylight,
When you air out o' sight!"

"And then my Conscience sort o' grits
His teeth, and spits
On his two hands and grabs, of course,
Some old remorse,
And beats me with the big butt-end
O' *that* thing—'tel my closest friend
'Ud hardly know me. 'Now,' says he,
'Be keerful as you'd orto be
And *allus* think o' me!"

The next letter, in better health, is to the same friend: "I could not write you yesterday, because, hosanna! I was hard at work. I am just set on work, and as long as this fit lasts life is easy enough. Keep up your heart. Sometimes life seems almost without meaning, no aim or end, no star as signpost in the maze. But I have had good times in the course of my pilgrimage; and so have you. If I could get to London to-day I feel sure I could make you have one more good time, I feel so good and jolly. So the fight's not lost, after all; and I am not going to be all my life under the constellation of the black dog. O dear friend, I wish I could be with you a moment just to show you it's all right. However, even this letter may do you good, if it is only to remind you that to each and all the spirit of delight does sometimes come." Not many months before his death, and when too weak to write, the following letter of invitation, describing analytically the Vailima household, was dictated to Mrs. Strong, Stevenson's stepdaughter. "Vailima, Samoa, April 3, 1893. My dear Barrie. Here follows a catalogue of my menagerie: (1) R. L. S., the Tame Celebrity. Native name: *Tusi tala*. Exceedingly lean, dark eyes, crowfooted, beginning to be grizzled, general appearance of a blasted boy—or blighted youth . . . industrious, respectable, and fatuously contented. Used to be very fond of talking about Art, don't talk about it any more. Is restrained by his family from talking about Origin of Polynesian Race. Really knows a good deal, but has lived so long with aforesaid family and foremast hands, that you might talk a week to him and never guess it. Name in family, the Tame Celebrity. Hopelessly entangled in apron-strings. . . . Manners purple on an emergency, but liable to trances. Essentially the common copybook gentleman of commerce: if accused of cheating would feel bound to blow out his brains, little as he would like the job. Has been an invalid for ten years, but can boldly claim that you can't tell it on him. Given to explaining the universe—Scotch, sir, Scotch. (2) Fanny V. de G. Stevenson, The Weird Woman, Native name: *Tamaitai*. This is what you will have to look out for, Mr. Barrie. . . . If you don't get on with her, it's a pity about your visit. She runs the show. Infinitely little, extraordinary wig of gray curls, handsome waxen face like Napoleon's, insane black eyes, boy's hands, tiny feet, wild blue native dress usually spotted with

garden mold. In company manners presents the appearance of a little timid and precise old maid of the days of prunes and prisms—you look for the reticule. Infernal energy; relieved by fortnights of entire hibernation. Doctors everybody, will doctor you, cannot be doctored herself. The living Partizan. Imaginary conversation after your visit: 'I like Mr. Barrie. I don't like anybody else. I don't like anybody that don't like him. When he took me in to dinner he made the wittiest remark I ever heard.' Is always either loathed or slavishly adored—indifference impossible. (3) Isobel Stewart Strong. [*Your humble servant the Amanuensis. Native name, Teulla.*] Eyes enormous and parti-colored, one-and-three-fifths brown, the other two-fifths golden. Her long dark hair deep as her knees. Caricatures cleverly. Will arrange your hair and stick flowers about you. Meaning of her native name, The Adorner of the Ugly. Even a stiff six-foot-two English guest learned to kneel daily for his wreath, and the native boys go to her to have their ties put on. Runs me like a baby in a perambulator, sees I'm properly dressed, bought me silk socks and made me wear them, takes care of me when I am sick, and I don't know what she doesn't do for me when I'm well, from writing my books to trimming my nails. Has a growing conviction that she is the author of my works, manages the house and the house-boys, who are very fond of her. Does all the hair cutting of the family. Will cut yours, and doubtless object to the way you part it. Mine has been re-organized twice. (4) Lloyd Osbourne, The boy. Native name, *Loia*. Six foot, blond. Eyeglasses—British eyeglasses, too. Address varying from an elaborate civility to a freezing haughtiness. Decidedly witty. Has seen an enormous amount of the world for his age. Keeps nothing of youth but some of its intolerance. Unexpected soft streak for the forlorn. When he is good he is very very good, but when he is cross he is horrid. Of Dutch ancestry, and has spells known in the family as 'Cold blasts from Holland.' Exacting with the boys and yet they like him. Rather stiff with his equals, but apt to be very kindly with his inferiors—the only undemonstrative member of the family which otherwise wears its heart upon both sleeves; and except for my purple patches, the only mannered one. Has tried to learn fifteen instruments; has learned none, but is willing to try another to-morrow. *Signe particulier*; when he thrums or tootles on any of these instruments, or even turns a barrel-organ, he insists on public and sustained applause. (5) *Family Life*. The Boy, the Amanuensis, and the Tame Celebrity all play on instruments, and all ill. But you need not applaud the two last: little they'll reck if you'll let them play on. General character of life: a solid comfortable selfishness—guests preferred to be selfish also. N.B. No attention paid to guests. Clothing: you may find *Loia* in pajamas of which he has lost the string, soaked through and bedaubed with mud; or you may find him in white coat, tie, and shirt, gaudyish sash, and excruciatingly elegant riding breeches and boots; to say nothing of silver-mounted riding-whip and sapphire studs. Take me at the present moment, my costume consists of one flannel undershirt and one pair of striped pajama trousers all told—I beg your pardon, I forgot two rings, but you see the process

is exhaustive. On the other hand you might find me in cords and fancy boots, with a velvet jacket chosen by the Amanuensis to the exact shade of harmony. My wife's usual dress will scarcely bear to be dwelt upon; but, sir, when you took her out to dinner she was in black velvet and duchesse lace, and I will trouble you for how she looked. The Amanuensis would require a pen more accomplished than mine. Her effects are various. Now she is to be seen in bare feet with toe-rings, and anon she is troubling the world with silk stockings, and these are sometimes blue. Her frocks and my wife's are all (to do the creatures justice) on the same pattern, the native pattern. But the Amanuensis calls in turn into the field every color known under heaven; she goes through similar changing phases with her hair, of which there is so much that the combinations and permutations are practically inexhaustible; and after each fresh make-up she appears among us for approval and weeps if it be withheld. You can see for yourself it is a somewhat dressy spot, though not at all like Piccadilly. And now, my dear fellow, I want to thank you very heartily for your last letter. . . . All that we want to do now is to meet—again. Do try and bring this visit about before anything happens." With quenchless gayety of spirit Stevenson was writing this sparkling letter a few months from life's end. The spirit was not failing with the failing of the flesh: body to the earth, spirit to the God who gave it; two opposite directions and destinies. From Arnold Bennett we have this: "March 25, 1898. Mrs. L—, a Science healer, wished to prove her curative powers on me, as a journalist capable of spreading her fame. On Wednesday I received a letter from her that she had found my temperament a 'responsive' one, and was sure of success. She asked several questions as to my headaches, to which I replied. I was to telegraph to her immediately I felt a headache coming on, and she would at once exert her influence. Distance was no bar. This morning, having a bad headache, I wired her at noon. During the afternoon it disappeared almost entirely. Possibly a coincidence. But I cannot deny that for years my headaches have never lasted less than twenty-four hours; thirty-six would be nearer the average. March 26, 1898. I had an apologetic letter from Mrs. Lewis Lewis saying that she had been from home and had not received my telegram till eleven o'clock last night."