



In The South Seas

Robert Louis Stevenson

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Novelist and essayist, was born at Edinburgh, the son of Thomas Stevenson, a distinguished civil engineer. His health was extremely delicate. He was destined for the engineering profession, in which his family had for two generations been eminent, but having neither inclination nor physical strength for it, he in 1871 exchanged it for law, and was called to the Bar in 1875, but never practised.

From childhood his interests had been literary, and in 1871 he began to contribute to the Edinburgh University Magazine and the Portfolio. A tour in a canoe in 1876 led to the publication in 1878 of his first book, *An Inland Voyage*. In the same year, *The New Arabian Nights*, afterwards separately published appeared in magazines, and in 1879 he brought out *Travels with a Donkey in the Cevennes*. In that year he went to California and married Mrs. Osbourne. Returning to Europe in 1880 he entered upon a period of productiveness which, in view of his wretched health, was, both as regards quantity and worth, highly remarkable.

The year 1881 was marked by his unsuccessful candidature for the Chair of Constitutional Law and History at Edinburgh, and by the publication of *Virginibus Puerisque*. Other works followed in rapid succession. *Treasure Island* [1882], *Prince Otto and The Child's Garden of Verse* [1885], *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* and *Kidnapped* [1886], *Underwoods* (poetry), *Memories and Portraits* (essays), and *The Merry Men*, a collection of short stories [1887], and in 1888 *The Black Arrow*.

In 1887 he went to America, and in the following year visited the South Sea Islands where, in Samoa, he settled in 1890, and where he died and is buried. In 1889 *The Master of Ballantrae* appeared, in 1892 *Across the Plains* and *The Wrecker*, in 1893 *Island Nights Entertainments* and *Catriona*, and in 1894 *The Ebb Tide* in collaboration with his step-son, Mr. Lloyd Osbourne.

By this time his health was completely broken, but to the last he continued the struggle, and left the fragments *St. Ives* and *Weir of Hermiston*, the latter containing some of his best work.

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