

STORIES of New Jersey

It is impossible to mention all of Stevenson's books as they appeared, but among his works interesting to children is The Black Arrow, a story of medieval England, which he wrote while in the south of France trying to build up his delicate constitution. Also while on the Riviera he worked on Prince Otto. This book which deals with a mythical land of romance influenced other authors and was the forerunner of that old favorite The Prisoner of Zenda, now revived on the screen, and a host of other tales laid in imaginary kingdoms.

In England Stevenson wrote his next big success, The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. Several of its scenes came to him in a dream, and he wrote the original draft in three days. This tale is an allegory of the double nature of man, of his capacity for good as well as evil. Because of its theme, it had a wide popularity among those who did not usually read romances.

Having found England unsuited to his health, Stevenson sailed for the United States in 1887, where he spent some time at Saranac, N. Y. Later he went to Manasquan while his wife was making arrangements in California to charter a yacht for their trip to the South Seas. After three years of cruising around the Pacific Islands, and making new friends, both white and brown, he finally decided to settle in Samoa where he built a large house in the hills. This he named Vailima, Samoan for Five Waters, for the five streams on his estate.

The health, happiness and new interests which Stevenson found in the tropics are delightfully described in his letters, and in his books and stories of the South Seas. Unfortunately, the happy days spent there were cut short by his sudden death in 1894. He was buried on the peak Vaea, where a monument now commemorates the grave of Tusitala, the Teller of Tales, as the Samoans called their British friend.

The qualities which endeared him to his friends characterize his writings. The sympathy and admiration felt for his courage during illness perhaps obscured the fact that he was not a writer of the highest rank. Forty-three years after Stevenson's death, now that few remain to remember his magnetism, a reaction against him has set in among certain critics.

But Stevenson is still read. Several generations of young folks have delighted in A Child's Garden of Verse, The Black Arrow and Treasure Island. He who would not stay awake o' nights to read Kidnapped, David Balfour and The Master of Ballantrae would lose the thrill of escaping from the world of everyday to the land of romance where all men are brave and there is new adventure at every turn of the road.



Long John Silver.