

CATRIONA /

A SEQUEL TO "KIDNAPPED"

BEING MEMOIRS OF
THE FURTHER ADVENTURES OF
DAVID BALFOUR
AT HOME AND ABROAD

IN WHICH ARE SET FORTH HIS MIS-
FORTUNES ANENT THE APPIN MURDER;
HIS TROUBLES WITH LORD ADVOCATE
GRANT; CAPTIVITY ON THE BASS ROCK;
JOURNEY INTO HOLLAND AND FRANCE;
AND SINGULAR RELATIONS WITH JAMES
MORE DRUMMOND OR MACGREGOR, A
SON OF THE NOTORIOUS ROB ROY,
AND HIS DAUGHTER CATRIONA.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF, AND
NOW SET FORTH

BY

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON



LONDON: WILLIAM HEINEMANN, LTD:
IN ASSOCIATION WITH CHATTO & WINDUS:
CASSELL & COMPANY, LTD: AND LONGMANS,
GREEN & COMPANY.

STEVENSON AT FORTY-THREE*

BY LLOYD OSBOURNE

THE photographs of Vailima show a large, and rather a gaunt, barn-like house, disappointingly lacking in picturesqueness. But the photographs, omitting nearly everything save the house, and often taken before the second half was added, convey a very false impression. Not only was it far more attractive than it looks, but it should be visualised in relation to its site, which was superb.

In front, sparkling above the leafy tree-tops, was the vast horizon of the sea ; behind was the primeval forest ; on one side, rising almost as sheerly as a wall, and densely wooded to its peak, was Mt. Vaea ; on the other, the blue mountains of Atua in the distance. Not another house was visible ; not a sign of cultivation except our own ; Vailima seemed to stand alone on the island.

Directly in front of the house was a lawn, marked for two tennis-courts, and separated from the green paddock beyond by a long, dry-stone wall, which stretched in either direction for about a quarter of a mile. Both in this paddock, and on the land about the house were—here and there—magnificent trees, a hundred and fifty feet in height, which had been spared in clearing away the original forest and were so enormously buttressed at the base that they were eight or ten yards in circumference. A stream on one side of the clearing, splashed musically in a series

* This is one of thirteen papers on Stevenson at different ages by Lloyd Osbourne, his stepson and collaborator, who shared his life from 1876 until its end in 1894. They have been specially written for this Edition of the Works of Robert Louis Stevenson.

of cascades, and ended—as far as we were concerned—in a glorious pool, as clear as crystal, in which we bathed.

There were mango-trees, round, dense and faultlessly symmetrical ; glossy-leaved breadfruits, lemon trees, orange trees and chiramoyas, with their prickly misshapen fruit, the size of a man's head ; avocados with their delicious “pears” ; cacao, with its bright red pods sprouting out of its trunk ; exquisitely scented *moso'oi* trees, peculiar to Samoa, with their yellow, leaf-like flowers that bloomed thrice a year ; pandanus, with its big red seeds that strung with a sweet-smelling wild creeper called *laumaile* were the favourite necklaces of the Samoans ; and of course in profusion were the cocoanut palms and bananas, which with the breadfruits were in time to supply us with such a large part of our needs.

There were hedges of double-hibiscus, perpetually in bloom, and studded thickly with crimson flowers, three inches across ; hedges of fragrant lime trees and so luxuriant that we gave away limes by the sackful ; hedges of citrons ; stately wild orange trees with hard, uneatable fruit, which cut open could be used as soap, especially for the hair which it made soft and silky ; fences of living *fao* posts, which took root and sprouted into trees ; *vineula*, with its pungent little transparent fruit ; guavas ; love-apples ; papaias ; *pasio* on arbours, with a fruit more delicious than strawberries ; pineapples weighing from five to eighteen pounds ; sweet potatoes that once planted continued to grow and spread without further care ; pumpkins similarly growing like weeds ; and below the verandahs plants of jasmine, tube-roses and gardenias of a suffocating sweetness.

But it would be wrong to think of these as all jumbled together. They were not. In Vailima there was always a sense of spaciousness ; of a big and lordly house set in a park ; of wide vistas open to the sea and the breeze. About it all was a rich, glowing and indescribable natural beauty, which never failed to cause a stranger to exclaim aloud ; and being six hundred feet above the sea it had a delightfully fresh climate for so hot

a country. The nights were usually cold, especially in the early hours of the morning, and a blanket was essential. Our simple thermometer—a bottle of cocoanut oil—seldom failed to solidify nightly, which implied fifty-six degrees Fahrenheit.

Within the house the visitor's astonishment grew. Not only was the main hall extremely large, where a hundred people could dance with ease—but as R. L. S. had imported all his Bournemouth furniture, and much from his father's big house in Edinburgh, one might have thought oneself in civilisation, and not thousands of miles away on a remote island of the South Pacific. Pictures, napery, silver—all were in keeping; and except for the rack of rifles and the half-naked servants the illusion was complete; and to realise it to the full it must be remembered that all the other white people, even the highest officials, lived in a rather makeshift way, with the odds and ends they had picked up at auction, and very comfortlessly. Every official term ended in an auction, and often I would mark some attractive glasses or coffee-cups, or whatever it was, and say to myself: "I must buy those in when they are sold."

In contrast, the dignity, solidity and air of permanence of Vailima was impressive. It dominated the country like a castle. Chiefs came from the furthest parts of Samoa just to gaze at it, and to be led in a hushed and awestricken tour of its wonders. When a Samoan said: "Like the house of Tusitala," he had reached the superlative. And in this setting, and soon familiar with the language, Stevenson gradually grew into a great feudal chieftain whose word carried weight in a great part of Samoa. I shall dwell but little on this animated and picturesque aspect of his life; of this literary Rajah Brooke, reaching out for empire; it is better told in his own letters, which are so vivid and full. But I should like to elucidate them a little—particularly in regard to the cost of it all.

Stevenson made a very large income, and spent it all on Vailima. His letters often show much anxiety about money, and some of his intimate correspondents lectured him severely on his extravagance. Often he lectured him-

self, as the assiduous Stevensonian well knows ; often in moments of depression he called Vailima his Abbotsford, and said he was ruining himself like Scott. But his concern ought not to be taken too seriously. Much of the money spent on Vailima was in the nature of capital investment ; and once completed—had he never written another line—he could have lived there comfortably, and in no lessened state, on his income from royalties. Moreover, at his mother's death, he was to come into a very considerable inheritance from his father. While Vailima was undoubtedly a fantastic extravagance, it was at least within his means, and he had nothing really to fear from the future had he lived.

In recent years people have surprised me by asking, usually in a lowered voice : “ Wasn't Stevenson very morose ? Did he not have violent outbreaks of temper when it was unendurable to live with him ? Was there the least truth in that idyllic life in Vailima ? ”

Like all slanders there is a germ of truth in this. There were times when Stevenson was terribly on edge with nerves ; when he would fly into a passion over nothing ; when jaded and weary he would give way to fits of irritability that were hard, indeed, to bear. But it must be remembered that he was one of the most unselfish, lofty-minded, and generous of men ; there was no pettiness in him ; nothing ignoble or mean. He was no petulant sick man raging at his family because one of his comforts had been overlooked. Rather was it the other way. He cared nothing for risk or danger, and went into it with an appalling unconcern. Of all things he hated most were anxious efforts to guard his health or make him comfortable. Once I tried to put a mattress on the almost bare boards he slept on. It was like disturbing a tiger ! The mattress nearly went out the window in a fury of oaths. Such passions were not without their humour, and afterwards Stevenson was often as ready to laugh over them as we.

How could anyone hold the least resentment against such a sorely tried and heroic man whose repentances were as impulsive as his outbreaks ? No, the sad part of life in

Vailima was the consciousness of that physical martyrdom ; of that great, striving heart in so frail a body ; the sight of that wistful face, watching us at tennis, which after but a single game had ended—for him—in a hemorrhage ; the anguish which underlay that invincible optimism, and which at rare moments would become tragically apparent ; the sense of a terrible and unequal struggle ; the ineffable pity swelling in one's breast until it became almost insupportable.

That was the shadow of Vailima.

But it would be a mistake to think we were not gay. It was usually a very jolly party that sat round the big table ; laughter abounded, and Stevenson in general was in excellent spirits. It was a point of honour with any of us going down to Apia to bring back a budget of news, and the merrier the better. And the little town, to anyone with a sense of humour, brimmed over with the ridiculous. One of its brightest phases was an old rascal without a penny to his name who used to write under the imposing letter-head of " The South Sea Trading and Plantation Company," to an endless series of wholesale houses, asking for shipments on credit. Scarcely a ship came in without a consignment from some victimised firm, and the loot—for it was nothing else—was sold at auction under a tree for half nothing. Consignments of ladies' hats ; ten thousand ore-sacks in one shipment ; tinned rabbit ; agricultural machinery ; peanut roasters ; cutlery ; window-shades ; garden furniture ; school desks—all was grist to the South Sea Trading and Plantation Company, which no storming consul nor outraged municipal president was ever able to curb.

If anyone became hopelessly insolvent in Apia it was often the custom to give him a municipal position, and divide his pay amongst his creditors. There was no prison for whites, and anyone condemned at a stately consular trial, became forthwith a white elephant, and had to have a cottage rented for him, with all its ensuing absurdities. When one man became quite sure he was the rightful Duke of York, " the Beach " could think of no solution except

to pass the hat round, and ship him off to Sydney—from which he promptly came back ! Of such was our news, varied with a social and political gossip as entrancing as that of a great capital. Strangers would listen amazed at so much vivacious talk, especially were some great chief present and taking part, and wonder how we could find so much entertainment in a place that to them seemed the end of the world.

That Stevenson sometimes chafed against his enforced exile is only too true. There are passages in his letters that read very pathetically. But had his health improved, and had he returned to Europe, would he really have been content in some more pretentious " Skerryvore " or " La Solitude ? " I cannot think so. His life of feudal splendour in Samoa would have seemed twice as resplendent in the retrospect ; and in some French or Italian villa I believe he would have broken his heart to return. Samoa filled his need for the dramatic and the grandiose ; he expanded on its teeming stage, where he could hold warriors in leash, and play Richelieu to half-naked kings. He had been touched by that most consuming of all ambitions—statecraft—and there was in him, hardly realised but emerging, the spirit of a great administrator, slowly bringing order out of chaos, and finding immeasurable joy in the task.

Sir George Grey, one the greatest of English proconsuls, appreciated this, when he said so earnestly at parting with Stevenson : " Go back ; fight on : and never lose heart—for your place is in Samoa, and you must never think of leaving it."

Stevenson may not have been always happy in Vailima, but of one thing I am sure, he was happier there than he could have been in any place in the world. •

PREFATORY NOTE

BY MRS. R. L. STEVENSON

DURING the year 1892 my husband accomplished an immense amount of work, partly because his health had greatly improved, but more on account of his increased facility "in," as he said, "the use of his tools." Writing to Mr. Henry James on December 5th of that year, he says, "In twelve calendar months I finished *The Wrecker*, wrote all of *Falesa* but the first chapter (well, much of), the *History of Samod*, did something here and there to my *Life of my Grandfather*, and began and finished *David Balfour*." After the publication of *David Balfour*, it was found that many English people were confused by the two names, thinking that, as *Kidnapped* was the story of *David Balfour*, there must be only one book with a double title. For that reason in England the name of the sequel was changed to *Catriona*, causing some of my husband's American readers to imagine that one more book had been published there than in America.

Never was a novel written in more distracting circumstances. With the natives on the verge of war, and amid the most kaleidoscopic political changes, uncertain as to what moment his personal liberty might be restrained, his every action misconstrued and resented by the white inhabitants of the island, the excitement and fatigue of my husband's daily life might have seemed enough for any one man to endure, without the additional strain of literary work; but he found time, besides, for the study of harmony and counterpoint, and accepted every invitation he received to attend public functions or private entertainments, in accordance with his theory

that social intercourse was necessary in so small a community, and that no one should hold himself aloof for any consideration other than absolute physical disability.

Meanwhile, *David Balfour* slipped through this turbulent year so quietly that we were hardly aware of his passage, though the family caught occasional glimpses of Catriona and Miss Grant. From Catriona, who was meant to be the conventional heroine of the book, my husband gradually transferred his affection to Miss Grant, and it was with the greatest difficulty that he was able to keep her in her secondary position in the story. She was drawn from his remembrance of the beautiful and witty Mrs. Ferrier who came honestly by both her beauty and her caustic tongue, being the daughter of Christopher North (Professor Wilson) who was as famous in Scotland for his physical perfection as for his literary achievements.

It might seem a far cry from Samoa to Scotland, and yet in many ways one recalled the other. There were days when the clouds driving about the summit of Mount Vaea dropped in soft grey mist that almost obliterated the intervening trees ; the tinkling of a little rushing stream, and its accompanying waterfall a few yards from our door, made the illusion so nearly complete that for a moment my husband would feel himself transported to his own beloved Scotland. Nor was it the scenery alone that reminded the exile of his home. The fatherly rule of the Samoan chief, and the loyalty of the clan to a name more than to an individual, were extraordinarily in the Scottish spirit, and the simple dignity of the high chief was the same in both countries. The ramifications of a Scotch family are bewildering to a stranger, who would hardly go beyond a second cousin twice removed in his search for kindred ; in Samoa even the most distant relations of an adopted child must not marry within the family of its adoption.

When the war drum sounds and the native warriors of the different factions " go to the bush " (which is preliminary to fighting in the islands) the easy discipline of peace is at once discarded ; the chief now becomes a real

leader of men, his "sons" rendering him an absolute obedience in all things. In times not so remote affairs were so ordered in the Highlands of Scotland.

I remember the astonished pride of the native men of our household when they discovered that the crest on our silver was not a meaningless adornment, but a symbol of the family. The large dish covers were thereafter always produced when we had Samoan visitors, and the crest pointed out and explained. Even the fact that my husband's ancestors built lighthouses redounded to the glory of our family ; for house-building of any description is one of the fine arts in Samoa, and a most suitable occupation for a chief.

F. V. DE G. S.

DEDICATION

TO

CHARLES BAXTER,

Writer to the Signet

My Dear Charles,

It is the fate of sequels to disappoint those who have waited for them ; and my David, having been left to kick his heels for more than a lustre in the British Linen Company's office, must expect his late re-appearance to be greeted with hoots, if not with missiles. Yet, when I remember the days of our explorations, I am not without hope. There should be left in our native city some seed of the elect ; some long-legged, hot-headed youth must repeat to-day our dreams and wanderings of so many years ago ; he will relish the pleasure, which should have been ours, to follow among named streets and numbered houses the country walks of David Balfour, to identify Dean, and Silvermills, and Broughton, and Hope Park, and Pilrig, and poor old Lochend—if it still be standing, and the Figgate Whins—if there be any of them left ; or to push (on a long holiday) so far afield as Gillane or the Bass. So, perhaps, his eye shall be opened to behold the series of the generations, and he shall weigh with surprise his momentous and nugatory gift of life.

You are still—as when first I saw, as when I last addressed you—in the venerable city which I must always think of as my home. And I have come so far ; and the sights and thoughts of my youth pursue me ; and I see like a vision the youth of my father, and of his father, and the whole stream of lives flowing down there far in the north, with the sound of laughter and tears, to cast me out in the end, as by a sudden freshet, on these ultimate islands. And I admire and bow my head before the romance of destiny.

R. L. S.

*Vailima, Upulu, Samoa,
1892.*

THE WORKS OF
ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON
TUSITALA EDITION
VOL. VII

First published, TUSITALA EDITION, 1924

This story was first issued under the title, *David Balfour, Memoirs of his Adventures at Home and Abroad*, in *Atalanta*, December, 1892, to September, 1893.

After publication it was found that many persons were confused by the two titles, as both books told of the adventures of the same hero. For that reason in England the name of the sequel was changed to *Catriona*.

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

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PART I
THE LORD ADVOCATE

