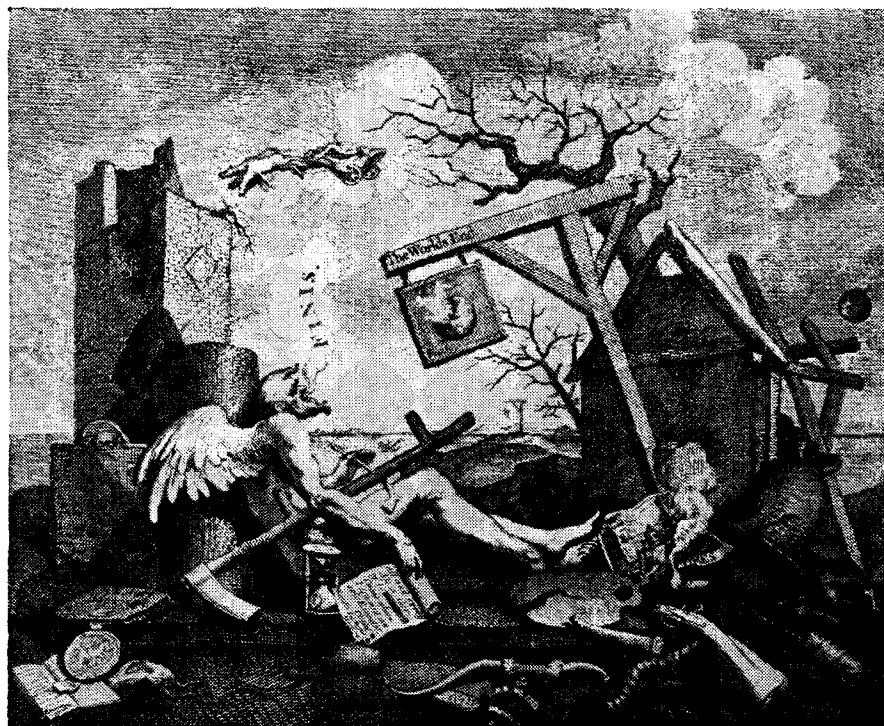




Detail from "A Harlot's Progress."



Tailpiece for "The Bathos."

rakes, the harlots, and the prisoners—just as they are in Hogarth's work.

Fortunately for Mr. Quennell, both the man and the artist in Hogarth are as nearly identical as they appear to be in Vincent van Gogh, and thus this biography affords a legitimate approach to criticism. One may ask, however, if the art-historian can so easily be dispensed with as Mr. Quennell

apparently believes he can be. The artist and the man are rarely so nearly identical as they are in Hogarth.

In the main Mr. Quennell is content, as literary people are prone to do, to portray a painter and his work as visual counterparts of literature. This is a failing, and it will take a different sort of book to rescue Hogarth and his work from such kindly oblivion.

## RLS at Home

*"Our Samoan Adventure," by Fanny and Robert Louis Stevenson, edited, with an introduction and notes, by Charles Neider (Harper, 264 pp. \$4), includes, in published form for the first time, a diary for the years 1890-1894 kept by Mrs. Stevenson. It is reviewed below by Professor Howard Mumford Jones of Harvard.*

By Howard Mumford Jones

BY PUBLISHING the Fanny Stevenson diary, now owned by the State of California, Charles Neider adds importantly to our knowledge of Robert Louis Stevenson's last years. Difficult to decipher, the diary was irregularly kept; Mr. Neider has both filled in gaps and given the reader another perspective on key episodes by interspersing his transcript of Mrs. Stevenson's journal with appropriate quotations from Stevenson's letters and published works, particularly the "Footnote to History," the account by RLS of the international struggle for the possession of the Samoan islands among the Germans, the British, and the Americans, none of whom come off unscathed in this new material.

It is odd that the psychologists have not gone to work on the Stevensons as they have gone to work on the Brownings and the Brontës. It will be remembered that Fanny Stevenson was more than ten years older than her second husband, and that she was a wife and thrice a mother when she met RLS, and that when Fanny and Louis sailed for the South Seas in 1888, they took with them Louis's mother and Fanny's son, Lloyd Osbourne. In 1889 they determined to settle at Vailima; and in September 1890 they went there, after various familial permutations and combinations. Fanny's diary begins in September, characteristically "on the [blank] day of September," for, charming and capable as she was, she was a woman of temperament. For instance, during a Homeric campaign to create a garden we read:

... Louis went with me and fell to digging, too, with a sort of dogged fury. I had prepared quite a large place [for lettuce], having to stop finally on account of three enormous blisters on my hand, while Louis was sifting and separating from stones and weeds a very small space. I left him there, hard at work, and returned to the house to get lunch. Sitting down for a moment to

rest, I felt into a fit of vacancy and forgot all about the cooking for near upon half an hour. When Louis came in, stiff and aching with his long stooping posture, muddy and hungry, the meal was not yet on the table.

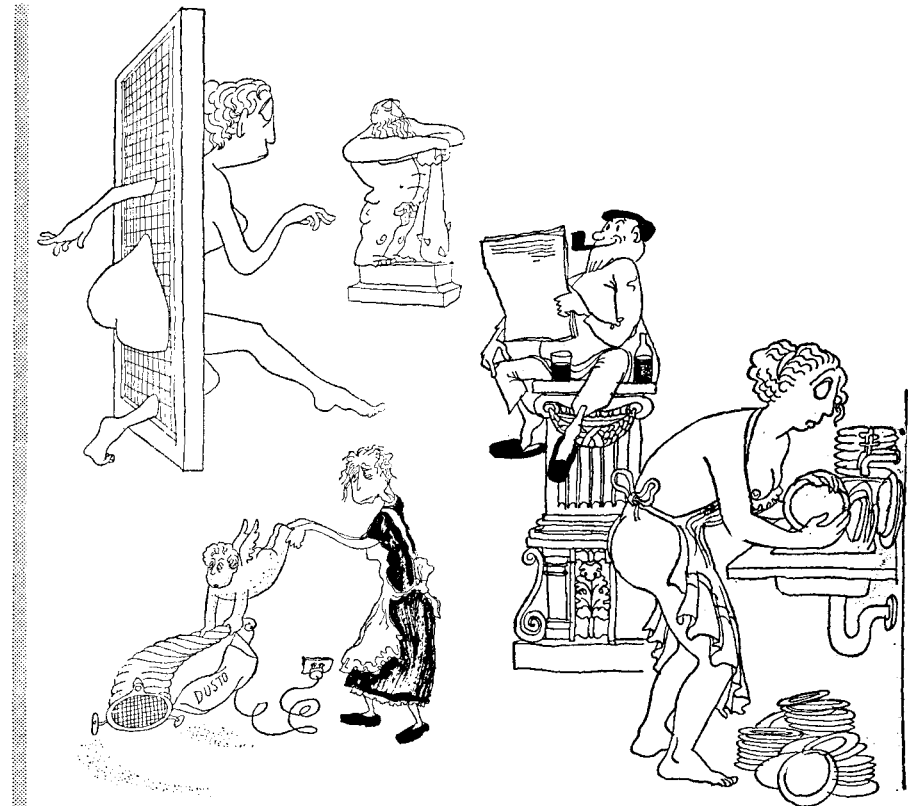
Louis, however, innocently gave as good as he got. That same night

the rain fell with such violence that we could not hear each other speak, and it seemed as though the house must be crushed by the weight of the water falling upon it. In the middle of the night Louis arose, made a light, and fell to writing verses.

**T**HE diary makes one wish that Fanny had written more. She was a great novelist *manqué*. Personalities, European and Samoan, are seized and fixed for eternity with the precision of a collector impaling a butterfly, and the customs of the islanders are understood instinctively and sympathetically. Consider, for example, this vivid passage:

A very pleasing old lady came up from Leshar and asked to be taken as a general servant. I jumped at the offer, but Leshar couldn't let her go. She had all the manners of a stage duchess and I never saw anyone get more expression into the countenance than she did. She complained of a want of food, pressing her hands upon the pit of her stomach to emphasize her statement that it was always empty. There was nothing in the place but grass, she said, and she was left there alone without provisions. . . . "Look at me!" she cried; "I got no belly allee same bullimakaw! [lean cow]." . . . She threw out both hands with all the fingers outspread, protruded her eyeballs, and allowing her jaw to drop like a dead person's, the lower lip falling away from it, sat a few moments as though petrified with the horror of her position.

Only a strong spirit and a keen sense of the ridiculous could have kept Fanny Stevenson going through the incredible difficulties of creating a livable home in Samoa. One servant, Henry, "always became lame if I asked any little service from him." A banana swamp gave her a fever "with the most alarming promptitude." Another servant, Paul, had a genius for disorganization and comic incapacity: sent to tie up a visitor's horse, he virtually strangled the animal because he tied it with a slip noose around the neck. A messenger sent to town was seen calmly to tear open the letter and abstract the money



**STATUARY OFFENSES:** George Molnar is an Englishman with a simple thesis, to wit: "I believe that all our troubles are caused by using abstract instead of human standards in our everyday life, in art, in politics, in economics. We have to stop that. We have to humanize ourselves. The first step is to have more statues." As his contribution to the first step, with an assist from the New York publishing house of E. P. Dutton, Mr. Molnar is offering an album of some eighty-five cartoons called "*Statues*" (\$2.50), grouped under such categories as "Practical Home Statues," "Decorative Public Statues," and even "Statues and How to Make Them." Whether or not they succeed in proving his thesis, the cartoons do provide their share of smiles, as is shown by the examples above. The one at top left is an "Efficient Statue Adorning Two Rooms at Once"; the one at lower left is called "A Statue (mobile) Named Dusto"; the one on the right illustrates the "Horrible Fate of a Statue Named Pygmalion."

order. The storms were of incredible violence. Articles as varied as tools, leather straps, a pistol, buckets, fans, red and white wine, and smoking tobacco had to be kept in Mrs. Stevenson's bedroom against misuse or thievery. And yet out of this chaos (sent to make a bed for planting seeds, Paul pulled up all the finely growing coffee tree!) Fanny managed to create a home, quietness, and authority, so much so that she and Louis became unacknowledged political powers in the struggle for Samoa.

One final comic touch, from a visit to the "capital":

Mr. Haggard, who had had more to drink than was good for him, and besides was quite intoxicated with excitement and romantic feeling—He had several guns, a

pistol and lots of ammunition and declared that he and all concerned with the land commission were, in case of the town being "rushed," going to hold the little matchbox of a building where their office is. To complete the romantic effect, he bitterly wanted women to protect, and besought Belle [Mrs. Isobel Osbourne Strong] and me to remain in town, ready to fly to the commissioners' office. He said we would lie under a table (on the upper floor) and hand cartridges out to him.

"No," I said, "I do not wish to be found dead, lying under a table shot through the stomach."

"Well, then," he rejoined, "I'll go under the table and hand cartridges to you, and you can shoot."

A woman who can joyously record episodes like this reminds one of Smollett or Dickens.