

Stevenson's Only Bust from Life

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE SITTINGS AT WAIKIKI

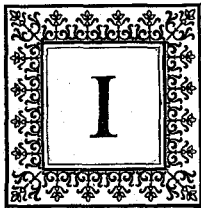
BY ALLEN HUTCHINSON

ILLUSTRATIONS FROM THE BUST BY MR. HUTCHINSON

EXTRACT FROM STEVENSON'S LETTER TO
SIDNEY COLVIN

WAIKIKI, HONOLULU, H. I.,
October 23d, 1893.

I am being busted here by party named Hutchinson. Seems good.—R. L. S.



It was in one of the rambling bungalows of Sans Souci, facing the surf, that Stevenson gave me sittings. He had come from Samoa for a change and seemed to enjoy it immensely in spite of chronic ill health. I never met a man who could extract so much out of the commonplace. He had a faculty of endowing the most prosy individual with interest, drawing out unsuspected qualities humorously, till we all began to think ourselves rather clever people. He had the gift of listening. His humor took the form of amiable raillery with just sufficient caustic wit to cause a laugh.

In 1893 Sans Souci was a rambling hostelry, nestled among the cocoanut and palm trees of Waikiki Beach. It was kept by an Englishman named Simpson and was truly Bohemian, with no pretense at modern luxury; the only beach hotel I can remember. The main building was a ramshackle wooden structure, a huge room which served as lounge and dining-room combined, called "lanai," to which the kitchen and offices were attached. The guests occupied small bungalows, thatched-roof affairs about ten by twelve, the bed being the principal article of furniture. It was in one of these bungalows that Stevenson had established himself, propped up with pillows on the bed in his shirt-sleeves. His Samoan servant, Sosi-mo, whose principal occupation was to light his master's cigarettes and keep the

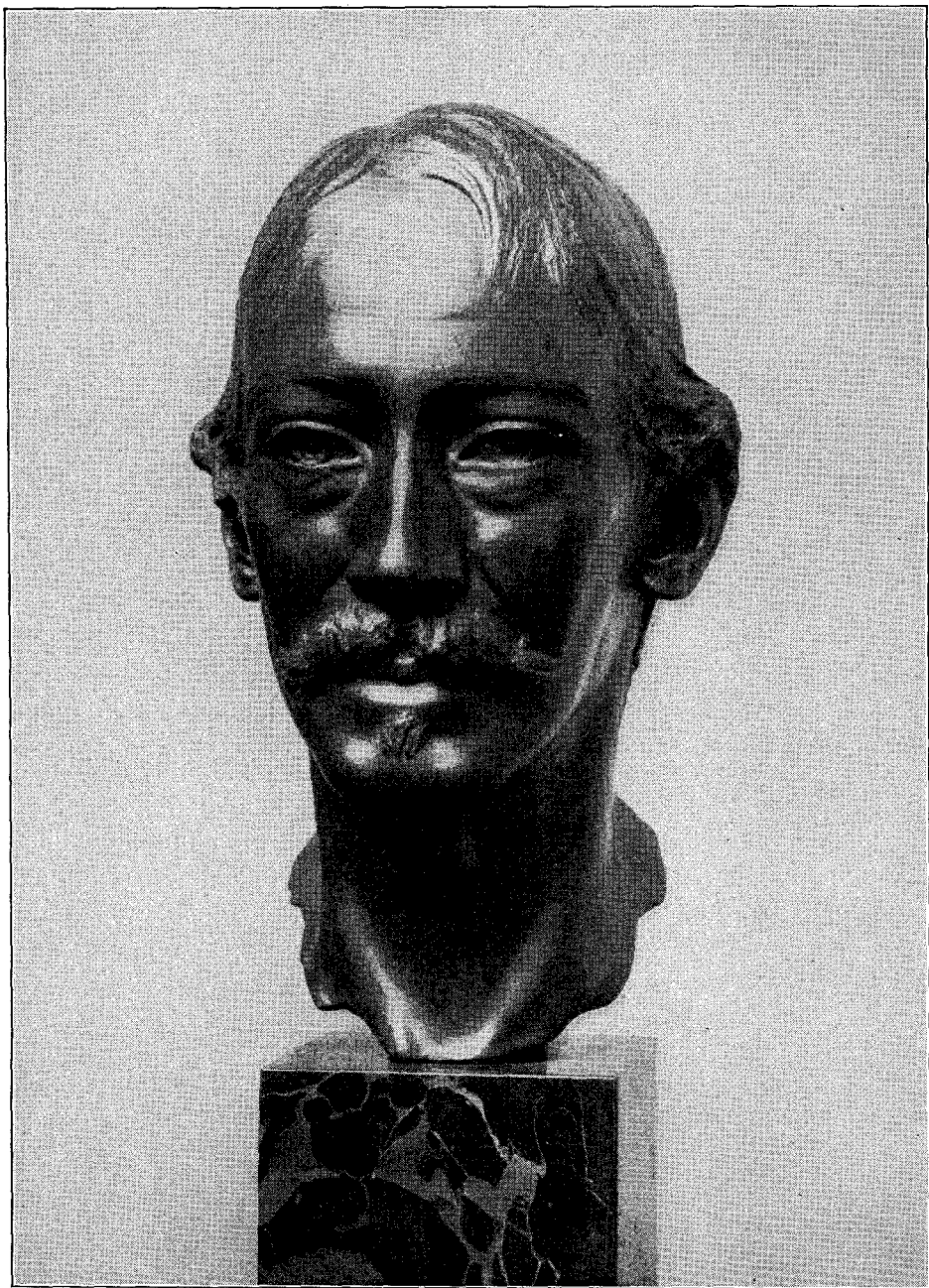
flies moving, squatted on a mat beside him.

It was here that I established my turntable and bucket of clay while my subject entertained his visitors. I cannot say that he was a good sitter, as he was never still. On the whole this may have been as well, for it did away with the inevitable self-consciousness that posing induces, and I was better able to enter into the psychology of the man. Though Stevenson did not pose, he paid great attention to the work as it developed, and his constant criticisms as he got up from the bed to inspect it became disconcerting; I had to remonstrate vigorously, requesting him to return to the bed—in fact, to mind his own business, which consisted in entertaining his guests. This amused him greatly, but he obeyed.

Naturally these visitors took an interest in my model and here is an instance of his form of raillery. He would allow no remarks. He said: "Look you must of course—'a cat can look at a king'—but don't say a word; Hutchinson is a terrible fellow and if you utter a syllable he will throw you out; I am not even allowed to look."

The visitors were various, and I was amused at the way he entered into their idiosyncrasies. To stoical Scots with a rich brogue, there to visit their illustrious countryman, he spoke with a brogue, though his usual accent had no Scotch inflection; but he dearly loved a Scot, there is no doubt about that.

A judge of the supreme court arrived with a rather formal manner. Stevenson, having obtained a fresh light, became a lawyer. He acquired his legal knowledge as a young man in Edinburgh and he appeared to outshine the judge. I remember a naval officer who came with great curiosity to interview the author, but there was no literary exercise. Ste-



Robert Louis Stevenson.
By Allen Hutchinson, Waikiki, 1893.

venson took him at once to sea, becoming, I thought, as much a sailor as the officer. There could be no suspicion of patronage in these conversations, his dominant note being without the personal equation. I had not imagined Stevenson in the rôle

of a theologian, but it appears he was one, as he discussed John Knox and the covenants with a Scotch divine.

Stevenson possessed a very distinctive individuality, marked with incongruities. One of these traits was a certain vein of



Robert Louis Stevenson.
By Allen Hutchinson, Waikiki, 1893.

cynical humor. The searching analysis which he applied to others he used equally on himself. In harmony with this vein, I remember asking him what estimate strangers generally put upon him. He replied at once: "They take me either

for a prince or a barber." He was alluding, of course, to specimens generally prevailing in Europe forty years ago. This was not my view, but if he affected either of these types it was the latter. I am, however, convinced there was noth-

ing more in all this raillery than allowing his imaginative humor to run riot, as much for his own entertainment as for that of others.

His appearance was always striking. While at Sans Souci I do not remember him in anything but his shirt-sleeves, except at dinner, when he donned a velvet coat, collar, and tie.

Though now thirty-three years have passed, the impression Stevenson left on me is still vivid. He impressed me as a man of vivacious personality and a brilliant talker. He was certainly a man of wide sympathies and generous instincts.

He returned to Samoa almost immediately and I had my last sitting the day before he left.

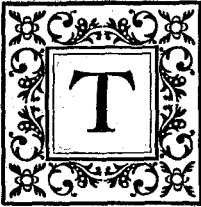
The head which illustrates this article I sent to the New Gallery, London, six months after his death, in the spring of 1895. I believe it is the only sculptured head in the round, and with the relief by Augustus St. Gaudens is all that has been preserved in plastic art of the great author.

During a recent visit to England I exhumed it from a storeroom in my brother's house, where it had remained packed as it was returned after the closing of the exhibition just thirty-one years ago. I can offer no reason why it has remained all these years stored away, further than that, though I have always intended to bring it into the light, I have procrastinated.

A Wilful Andromeda

BY HENRY VAN DYKE

ILLUSTRATIONS BY REGINALD BIRCH



THE famous old Spanish playwright Calderon gives his judgment of woman—that topic about which men say so much and know so little—in a sharp couplet.

“He is a fool who thinks by force or skill
To turn the current of a woman's will.”

I am not sure that the Don is right. At least it seems to me that his judgment is too absolute and dogmatical.

The trouble with men is that they seek either to break down a woman's will by bullying, or else to outwit it by craft and guile, deceiving her a little and flattering her a good deal. Resenting the first method, and seeing through the second, no wonder she refuses to submit. She either declares her independence by an outbreak which might almost be called an act of violence, or else she hides it by a counter-camouflage which makes you think she has yielded when in fact she has not changed her mind a bit.

But there is a third way of turning a woman's will, a *via media*, which partakes of force only in the sense that reason is forceful, and of skill only in the sense that it skilfully lets in a new light of facts on a subject that has already been too much debated in vain. The conviction that this third way often proves good, leads me to tell a story that I know about a girl who once was in danger of making a mess of her life.

Of all the lovely damsels who have illuminated the fame of Baltimore, Nancy Lang was one of the prettiest, gayest, simplest, most romantic and obstinate. A fashionable finishing school had polished but by no means finished her. She knew everything about the newest dance-steps, and a little, very little, about other subjects. Her mind, lively in its motions, was in that state where she believed all that she read in the “*Sun* paper,” (the journal which for so many years has moulded the matutinal opinions of Baltimore). Novels of the modern Ouida type gave form and color to her secret dreams.