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Robert Louis Stevenson's Revisions to "The Merry Men"

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While staying with his wife and mother at Kinnaird Cottage near Pitlochry in mid-1881, R.L. Stevenson wrote at least three Scottish short stories, "The Body-Snatcher," "Thrawn Janet" and "The Merry Men," with the intention of putting them in a collection titled *The Black Man and Other Tales*. Of these stories, "The Merry Men" seems to have been the most difficult to complete: as Fanny Stevenson has remarked, the story "did not come so easily as *Thrawn Janet*, and never quite satisfied its author . . ."[1] In fact, Stevenson revised "The Merry Men" at least twice before its final publication, in book form, almost six years later.

"The Merry Men" was begun under the different title, "The Wreck of the *Susanna*."[2] By mid-July 1881, Stevenson had written "to the middle of Chapter IV";[3] but even at this early stage he considered that the story needed to be re-written: "Like enough, when it is finished I shall discard all chapterings; for the thing is written straight through. It must, unhappily, be re-written—too well written not to be."[4] However, a first draft was completed by the end of July and by August, when Stevenson

left Pitlochry, the story was still unrevised: "Goodness knows when I shall be able to re-write; I must first get over this copper-headed cold."[5] From August onwards, Stevenson's attention was taken up with *Treasure Island*, and he did not come to revise "The Merry Men" until the end of 1881 or early 1882 when he was at Davos in Switzerland.[6] This revised version was sent to Leslie Stephen, and "The Merry Men" was thus first published in two parts in Stephen's *Cornhill Magazine*, vol. xlv, No. 270 (June 1882) and vol. xlv, No. 271 (July 1882), exactly one year after it was begun.

The first Pitlochry draft of the story is not available, but Stevenson's letters to Sidney Colvin and W.E. Henley in mid-1881 suggest that several changes at least were made in the *Cornhill* version. The earlier title, "The Wreck of the *Susanna*, indicates that the ill-fated *Christ-Anna* in "The Merry Men" initially had a different name. In a letter to Henley in July, Stevenson listed the name of the Spanish ship in his Pitlochry draft as the "Santma Trinid",[7] but it is changed in the later *Cornhill* version to the *Espirito Santo.* The name-changes to both ships in the *Cornhill* version give them a Christian significance they previously did not have: as a consequence, they are more obviously contrasted to the diabolic characteristics of the sea and the "Merry Men" in particular, to which they (along with Uncle Gordon Darnaway) fall victim. In his letter to Henley, Stevenson also listed the title to Chapter III in the Pitlochry draft as "Past and Present in Sandag Bay";[8] but in the later *Cornhill* version, it is changed to "Land and Sea in Sandag Bay" (although this is badly mis-spelt in the June number of *Cornhill Magazine*, as "Lad and Leo in Sandag Bay").[9] However, Stevenson's brief outline of the five chapters of his Pitlochry draft in his letter to Henley indicates that the story remained fundamentally unchanged in its "revised" form in *Cornhill Magazine.*[10] Interestingly, in this later version, Stevenson did not (as he told Henley he would) "discard all chapterings."

In April 1884, almost two years after the first publication of the story in *Cornhill Magazine*, Stevenson wrote to his father, *"The Merry Men* I mean to make much longer, with a whole new dénouement, not yet quite clear to me."[11] Although he did not re-write "The Merry Men" as thoroughly as this letter might suggest, Stevenson did make a number of interesting and important changes to the *Cornhill* version at some time between

this date and the time of the story's second publication, in *The Merry Men and Other Tales* in February 1887. It appears, then, that Stevenson worked on "The Merry Men" intermittently over a period of some five-and-a-half years, producing three versions: the first Pitlochry draft (never published, but outlined briefly in his letter to Henley in July 1881); a "revised" version published in *Cornhill Magazine* in June and July 1882; and a second and more substantially revised version published in book form in 1887. The two revisions, over such a long period of time, may lend support to Fanny Stevenson's claim in her "Prefatory Note" to *The Merry Men and Other Tales*, that Stevenson "had succeeded in giving the terror of the sea, but had failed to get a real grip on his story" (p. xiii).

It may be useful to provide a complete list of differences between the *Cornhill* version of "The Merry Men" and the final version published in *The Merry Men and Other Tales*. The changes made to the *Cornhill* version are often minor and often involve accidentals or ways of spelling or presenting a word, especially a Scots word. But a number of longer passages were also substantially altered for the final version, and in one case a long passage from the *Cornhill* version is omitted altogether. Most of the substantial changes affect those passages presenting dialogue between Charles Darnaway and Mary Ellen (in Chapters II and IV), and those passages concerning the negro or "black man" (in Chapter V). The changes concerning the negro show how Stevenson attempted to revise or improve upon the concluding events in "The Merry Men" (although it cannot be said that he gave the story "a whole new dénouement"). For example, he rejected those descriptions in the *Cornhill* version which made the negro appear comical and simple and which gave the "dialogue" between the negro and Charles Darnaway a light-hearted quality. Instead, the negro in the final version becomes a more potent and serious symbol of the "black man" or "fallen king" (p. 50). The changes concerning the negro also show Stevenson putting into practice his technique of "condensation" when writing shorter fiction, of "always cutting the flesh off the bones"[12] so that "all the more neutral circumstances are omitted."[13] Indeed, these changes make the last chapter of the story somewhat shorter (rather than, as Stevenson had intended in his letter to his father in April 1884, "much longer") than the *Cornhill* version.

The following list will indicate *all* the differences between the earlier *Cornhill* version and the final version of "The Merry Men," including accidentals (changes involving commas, semicolons, hyphens, and so on) and changes in spelling or presentation of single words. The *Cornhill* version will occupy the left-hand side of the page, while the final version (as published in the Tusitala Edition, vol. viii, pp. 3-56) will occupy the right-hand side. Changes in single words will be listed on their own (for example, *aweful* becomes *awful*); but where changes involve more than one word or where they involve the insertion of new words or new passages, the last and first word common to both versions will also be given (for example, *moorcocks, as I used to say; and* becomes *moorcocks; and*). Where more than one line is involved, a dividing type-stroke will be included in the passage. Remarks on particular changes (for example, misprints or misreadings) will be given through an accompanying footnote.

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Cornhill, vol. xlv, No. 270 (June 1882)	*The Merry Men and Other Tales*
p. 676, *l.* 7 lowland	p. 3, *l.* 9 Lowland
l. 9 Islands;	*l.* 12 islands;
l. 17 lowlands;	*l.* 22 Lowlands;
ll. 26-7 moorcocks, as I to/say; and	p. 4, *l.* 8 moorcocks; and
ll. 32-3 Ben/Ryan, *the*	*ll.* 5-6 Ben/Kyaw. *The*[14]
p. 677, *l.* 2 Ryan.	*l.* 23 Kyaw.
l. 8 away,[15]	*l.* 30 away.
l. 40 Ryan.	p. 5, *l.* 33 Kyaw.
p. 678, *l.* 16 cauldrons	p. 6, *l.* 21 caldrons
l. 17 Roost	*l.* 23 *Roost*
l. 33 befel	p. 7, *l.* 3 befell
p. 679, *l.* 29 the name of Spain, from which	p. 8, *l.* 17 the more of the way in which
l. 41 king's	*l.* 31 King's
l. 43 James's	*l.* 33 Jamie's
p. 680, *l.* 11 her, with	p. 9, *l.* 14 her with
l. 18 sea-gulls,	*l.* 23 sea gulls,

l. 23 old, long-
l. 36 aweful
p. 681, *l.* 14 were new chairs
l. 14 kitchen, covered
l. 44 clean strae
p. 682, *l.* 4 yees;[16]
l. 17 old, stained
l. 25 this
l. 26 have
l. 26 no?
l. 27 fur
l. 29 fur
l. 29 no
l. 30 fur
l. 32 girgie,"[18]
l. 33 ha'e
l. 33 no
l. 39 10th
l. 46 put
p. 683, *l.* 13 back spang
l. 18 wan chancy
l. 19 ha'e
l. 27 ha'e't
l. 32 acquant
l. 33 sea, though I'm
no misdoobtin' inspiration.
But, troth,
l. 34 wasnae[20]
l. 34 wasnae
l. 36 spectacle
l. 40 draggons[22]
p. 684, *l.* 10 fiddling sinful
l. 15 "Oh, aye!"
l. 32 growing,
l. 32 sea beasts
l. 43 ha'e
l. 43 louped
l. 46 fur
p. 685, *l.* 2 have
l. 4 ane
l. 4 sic like,

p. 10, *l.* 6 old long-
l. 21 awful
p. 11, *ll.* 12-3 were/chairs
l. 13 kitchen covered
p. 12, *l.* 11 clean-strae
l. 19 eyes;
l. 35 old stained
p. 13, *l.* 6 thir[17]
l. 6 hae
l. 7 no'?
l. 9 for
l. 10 for
l. 10 no'
l. 12 for
l. 14 girzie,"
l. 15 hae
l. 15 no'
l. 23 10
l. 33 pit[19]
p. 14, *l.* 9 back-spang
l. 16 wanchancy
l. 17 hae
l. 26 hae't
l. 33 acquaint
l. 33 sea. But troth,

*l.*33 wasna
*l.*34 wasna
*l.*36 spentacle[21]
p. 15, *l.*2 draygons
*ll.*19-20 fiddling,/sinful
*l.*25 "Ou, ay!"
p. 16, *l.*5 growin',
*l.*5 sea-beasts
l. 19 hae
*l.*19 lowped
*l.*23 for
*l.*25 hae
l. 27 an'
l. 27 sic-like,

l. 13 No"
l. 14 ha'e
l. 15 Gobart;[23]
l. 21 no
l. 24 couldnae
l. 31 tops
l. 32 it? It
l. 34 crawin'
p. 686, *l.* 32 beneath
l. 32 Aye?
l. 32 wullit?"
l. 36 "Aye,
l. 40 there, waitin' as
l. 42 "You'll
p. 687, *l.* 26 north isles[26]
l. 26 southward, blue
l. 28 awhile
l. 40 we all
ll. 43-6-p. 688, *ll.* 1-6
money. All my days I have/loved and honoured you; the love and the honour keep on growing/with the years; I could not think to be happy or hearty in my life/without you. Do you think you could take me for a husband?"/
"I would not ask a better," she replied./
"Well then," said I, "shake hands upon it."/
She did so very heartily; and "That's a bargain, lad," said she,/which was all that passed between us on the subject, for though I loved/her, I stood in awe of her tranquility of charac-

l. 39 "No'
p. 17, *l.* 2 hae
l. 2 Gabart;
l. 10 no'
l. 14 couldna
l. 23 taps[24]
l. 24 it! it
l. 27 crawing
p. 19, *l.* 5 wast[25]
l. 5 Ay?
l. 6 wull it?"
l. 10 "Ay,
l. 16 there waitin', as
l. 18 "Ye'll
p. 20, *l.* 16 north with isles
l. 17 southward blue
l. 18 a while
l. 32 we may all
ll. 36-9-p. 21, *ll.* 1-18
money."/And at that I paused. "You can guess fine what that/is, Mary," I said. She looked away from me in silence,/and that was small encouragement but I was not to be/put off. "All my days I have thought the world of you,"/I continued; "the time goes on and I think always the/more of you; I could not think to be happy or hearty/in my life without you: you are the apple of my eye."/Still she looked away, and said never a word; but I/thought I saw that her hands shook. "Mary," I cried/

ter./
About her father she would tell me nothing, only

in fear, "do ye no' like me?"/
"Oh, Charlie man," she said, "is this a time to speak/of it? Let me be a while: let me be the way I am; it'll/not be you that loses by the waiting!"
I made out by her voice that she was nearly weeping,/and this put me out of any thought but to compose her./"Mary Ellen," I said, "say no more: I did not come/to trouble you: your way shall be mine, and your time/too; and you have told me all I wanted. Only just this/one thing more: what ails you?"/
She owned it was her father, but would enter into no/particulars, only[27]

p. 688, *l.* 8 havenae
l. 10 lang
l. 16 spearing[29]
ll. 30-1 Danna-/ways.[30]
title to Chapter III LAD AND LEO[31]
l. 37 peak;
l. 40 outtops
p. 689, *l.* 5 Ryan
l. 11 evolving
l. 29 west
l. 42 oversea;
l. 46 outwardly honour
l. 46 misfortune. But I

p. 21, *l.* 20 havena
l. 22 long[28]
l. 30 speiring
p. 22, *l.* 9 Darnaways.

p. 23, title to Chapter III LAND AND SEA
l. 9 knoll;[32]
l. 13 out-tops
l. 21 Kyaw
l. 28 revolving[33]
p. 24, *l.* 18 east[34]
l. 35 over-sea;
p. 25, *l.* 1 outwardly to honour
ll. 1-2 mis-/fortune. I

p. 690, *ll.* 3-4 me,/even
l. 4 fear that
l. 8 the last circle of
l. 9 both having

l. 14 Swedish
l. 20 sight indeed,
l. 20 tears
l. 23 voiceless
l. 44 rocks four or five fathoms

p. 691, *ll.* 2-3 show what it was,/but
l. 4 and a faint lap, and now and then a dying

l. 31 ships drifted
l. 39 scoured like an alley
ll. 39-40 and even/behind me,

p. 692, *l.* 19 breeding place
l. 41 lopsidedly,
l. 42 curious[39]
l. 43 the clefts and roots of
l. 46 go when

p. 693, *l.* 8 left go, leaped

l. 9 on to the
l. 13 this
l. 15 Brean[40]
l. 21 again, and

p. 694, *l.* 11 boathook
l. 38 larger

p. 695, *l.* 4 adventures, poor,
l. 5 lawless, filled
l. 14 lying to
l. 21 coast the

l. 6 me even
l. 6 fear, that
l. 12 the first arc of[35]
ll. 13-4 both/masts having
l. 20 Norwegian[36]
l. 27 sight, indeed,
l. 27 emotion
l. 31 noseless[37]

p. 26, *l.* 17 rocks several fathoms
ll. 22-3 show/that it was water but
ll. 24-5 and now and/then a faint lap and a dying

p. 27, *l.* 20 ships, drifted
l. 29 scoured into the likeness of an alley
l. 30 and before me,[38]

p. 28, *l.* 23 breeding-place

p. 29, *l.* 12 lop-sidedly,
l. 13 carrion
l. 14 the grain and the clefts of
l. 18 go, when
ll. 28-9 left hold of/the tangle, leaped
l. 30 on the
l. 35 their
l. 37 ocean

p. 30, *l.* 5 again and

p. 31, *l.* 13 boat-hook

p. 32, *l.* 8 longer
l. 23 adventures—poor,
l. 24 lawless—filled
l. 36. lying-to

p. 33, *l.* 6 coast, the

Cornhill, vol. XLV, No. 271
(July 1882).

p. 56, *l.* 3 gable end
l. 10 there, that
l. 16 treasure ship;
l. 30 "Aye, aye,
p. 57, *l.* 5 vain for
l. 7 laying
l. 16 hadnae
l. 17 couldnae
l. 20 bony!"[41]
l. 27 maunnae
l. 27 maunnae
ll. 29-30 for't!"/
A sense of loathing
began to fill my
l. 33 Cherlie,"[42]
l. 35 bony!"[43]
l. 46 man, that
l. 46 pared[44]
p. 58, *ll.* 18-9 laughing. Right
or wrong, we have to/
marry. If
l. 27 you
l. 28 havenae
ll. 37-41 so."/
I could never
rightly tell the reason;
but at this, like a poor
child, I/began to cry.
She came over to me, and
put her hand upon my
shoulder/kindly./
"Charlie,"
l. 41 neednae
l. 42 house, and
ll. 42-3 stranger/—
though well loved, I
can tell you that; take

p. 34, *l.* 1 gable-end
l. 13 there that
l. 20 treasure-ship;
p. 35, *l.* 9 "Ay, ay,
l. 22 vain, for
l. 24 lying,
l. 35 hadna
l. 37 couldna
p. 36, *l.* 2 bonny!"
l. 10 maunna
l. 11 maunna
ll. 13-4 for 't!"/
Something like fear
began to creep into my
l. 18 Charlie,"
l. 20 bonny!"
l. 33 man that
l. 33 pored
p. 37, *ll.* 18-9 laughing./
If[45]
l. 28 ye
l. 29 havena
p. 38, *ll.* 2-5 so."/
I was a while silent,
not knowing what to say;
and/when I roused my
head at last to speak,
she got before me./
"Charlie,"[46]
l. 5 needna
l. 6 house and
l. 7 stranger; take

ll. 44-5 folk. It'll/not be me that blames you, Charlie. If you	*ll.* 8-9 folk, and if you
l. 46 years from now, you	*l.* 10 years syne, you[47]
l. 46-p. 59, *ll.* 1-3 would be blythe and/welcome still; and there's not a soul in Aros but would say the same/with me."/ "Mary	*ll.* 10-11 would find me aye waiting."/ "Mary[48]
p. 59, *ll.* 3-4 said,/yes.	*l.* 12 said as good as yes.[49]
ll. 4-5 am; whatever you/ wish, I wish; as	*l.* 13 am; as
l. 7 around	*l.* 15 round
ll. 11-2 of/your uncle, poor man, till	*l.* 21 of my father till
l. 14 upon her father. All	*ll.* 23-4 upon/my uncle. All
l. 19 February 11, when	*ll.* 29-30 February/the tenth, when[50]
l. 29 dryshod	p. 39, *l.* 3 dry-shod
l. 29 overlong	*l.* 4 over-long
p. 60, *l.* 13 watch. I need not say I	p. 40, *l.* 1 watch. I
l. 14 more so, as,	*l.* 2 more readily as,
l. 26 ocean;	*l.* 16 sea;
l. 45 Roost. It was there, it	p. 41, *ll.* 1-2 Roost. There,/it
ll. 45-6 seemed,/that was	*l.* 2 seemed, was
p. 61, *l.* 24 a leap and a toss	*l.* 33 a toss
l. 34 vice, was	p. 42, *l.* 6 vice was
l. 44 eyes	*l.* 18 eye
l. 45 Charlie, man,	*l.* 20 Charlie man,
p. 62, *ll.* 10-1 sea,/wantin'	*l.* 34 sea wantin'
l. 12 cannae	*l.* 36 canna
l. 12 daurnae	*l.* 36 daurna
ll. 23-35 morning."/For a moment, he stood stupefied; then, the whisky working in his/brain, he	p. 43, *ll.* 10-11 morning."/ Suddenly,

began to gesticulate, and
to bow, and to step to
and fro, and/back and
forward, in a sort of
formless dance. We could
hear him/accompany his
movements, now with a
snatch of a sea-drinking
song;/now, as he bettered
the pace, with such cries
as young men utter in
a/reel; and now, as again
he moved more slowly,
with old Scottish psalm/
tunes and verses of the
Psalms of David. Some
times a gust would/strike
and almost overthrow him;
sometimes great, lashing
sprays fell/upon us and
hid him from our sight;
and again, in a lull, we
could hear/the words of
his song, and see him
modulate his steps and
gestures to/the air./
Suddenly,[51]

ll. 41-3 command. My
uncle, too,/had heard it,
and had ceased his dance.
He, and I, and Rorie,/
crouching together

l. 43 edge, waited,

p. 63, *l.* 16 bank; and there my
own emotion was relieved
by tears. As[52]

ll. 34-5 of/my duty to
Mary to

p. 64, *l.* 18 driftwood

l. 21 no

l. 21 no

l. 19 command. Crouch-
ing together

l. 20 edge, we waited,

p. 44, *ll.* 4-5 bank./As

p. 45, *l.* 3 of duty to

p. 46, *l.* 2 drift-wood

l. 5 no'

l. 5 no'

l. 25 night, as
l. 27 "no so bad
l. 28 cannae
l. 29 ord'nar;
l. 36 o'

p. 65, *l.* 3 further."
ll. 8-9 is/As great
l. 9 sea billows
l. 11 dinnae
l. 11 dare
l. 12 nae
l. 12 amnae
l. 17 subject. But
l. 19 stimulant; and
l. 23 bow
l. 24 stem
l. 25 grave, I

p. 66, *l.* 10 eyes; and
l. 15 It was not possible

ll. 21-2 us. Then/he stooped and clasped his hands, as if in supplication. At[54]
l. 23 revived; and
ll. 23-4 near./He dropped

ll. 25-6 hesitations, crouching and clasping his hands, and/making a world of gesticulative signals. At[55]
l. 27 uneasiness, I
l. 30 further
l. 31 had an indifferent reputation.
l. 36 castaway's, the
l. 46 negro

p. 67, *l.* 4 halfway
l. 9 one besides that
l. 11 negro

l. 10 night as
l. 12 "no' as bad
l. 14 canna
l. 15 ordnar;
l. 23 of
l. 39 farther."

p. 47, *ll.* 5-6 is,/Or great
l. 6 sea-billows
l. 8 dinna
l. 9 daur[53]
l. 9 no'
l. 10 am no'
l. 16 subject; but
l. 18 stimulant, and
l. 23 stem
l. 24 stern
l. 26 grave I

p. 48, *l.* 27 eyes, and
l. 34 It seemed scarce possible

p. 49, *l.* 4 us. At

l. 4 revived and
ll. 5-6 near, and he, on his part,/dropped
l. 7 hesitations. At

l. 8 uneasiness I
l. 12 farther
l. 13 had a sorry reputation
l. 19 castaway's the
l. 31 black[56]
l. 36 half-way

p. 50, *l.* 3 one, besides, that
l. 6 black

ll. 12-32 with
undisguised alarm. As I
came nearer, I held out
my hand; and/the poor
creature ran to it,
kissed it, and placed it
on his heart, breaking/at
the same time into a
torrent of words that
were incomprehensible to/
me. My eyes filled with
tears, partly at his
gratitude, partly at
thought/of the far dif-
ferent scene in February;
but I signed to my cast-
away that/I was unable to
comprehend him, and tried
him with a few words,
first/of English and then
of Gaelic, in vain. It
was plain that we should
/have to rely upon the
language of looks and
gestures; and I was/
reminded of a book that I
had read, *Robinson
Crusoe*, where, upon an/
island in a far part of
the world, another
Englishman relates diffi-
culties/of the same na-
ture with another negro.
I motioned him to follow
me,/which he readily did.
As we passed the grave, I
paused and raised my/eyes
and hands to heaven in to-
en of respect and sorrow
for the dead./As if to
show that he understood

ll. 7-30 with folded
arms, like one pre-/
pared for either
destiny. As I came
nearer, he reached/forth
his hand with a great
gesture, such as I had
seen/from the pulpit,
and spoke to me in
something of a pulpit/
voice, but not a word
was comprehensible. I
tried him/first in En-
glish, then in Gaelic,
both in vain; so that
it/was clear we must
rely upon the tongue of
looks and/gestures.
Thereupon I signed to
him to follow me,
which/he did readily
and with a grave obei-
sance like a fallen/
king; all the while
there had come no shade
of alteration/in his
face, neither of anxiety
while he was still wait-
ing,/nor of relief now
that he was reassured;
if he were a/slave, as I
supposed, I could not
but judge he must
have/fallen from some
high place in his own
country, and fallen/as
he was, I could not but
admire his bearing. As
we passed/the grave, I
paused and raised my
hands and eyes to/hea-

me, he fell at once upon his knees and/ appeared to offer up a prayer, looking up when he had done, nodding/and smiling, with an irreverence that somewhat shocked my notions of/religion. Then he turned, pointed to my uncle, whom we could just see/perched upon the top of Aros, and touched his head to indicate that he/ was mad./

I was anxious if possible to discover whether he had belonged to the/schooner. We

ven in token of respect and sorrow for the dead; and/he, as if in answer, bowed low and spread his hands abroad;/it was a strange motion, but done like a thing of common/custom; and I supposed it was ceremonial in the land/from which he came. At the same time he pointed to/my uncle, whom he could just see perched upon a knoll,/and touched his head to indicate that he was mad./

We[57]

l. 38 once. Nodding and smiling, he took the

l. 37 once, and, taking the

p. 68, *l.* 1 negro

p. 51, *l.* 10 black

ll. 2-3 scene, mingling and distinguishing the diff-/erent parts with what seemed to me the talent of an actor; now[58]

l. 11 scene, now

l. 7 boatman. Lastly,

ll. 16-7 boatman; but all with the same solemnity of manner,/so that I was never even moved to smile.
Lastly,[59]

ll. 10-6 comrades. Throughout the per-/formance, for I can call it nothing else, he assumed in turn the port[60] and/the grimace of every character he represented; now strutting and

ll. 21-3 comrades; and thereupon folded his arms once/more, and stooped his head, like one accepting fate./

The[61]

turn-/ing out his toes,
now squinting and hanging
the lips, so that, had I
known/the parties, or
even seen them nearer
hand, I might have recog-
nised each/as he ap-
peared./
The
ll. 18-33 surprise, and,
I thought, little sorrow;
his gestures seemed/to
indicate a philosophical
acquiescence in the laws
of nature and the/common
fate of man; and next
moment he had picked a
flower and was/trying to
explain to me, as I
thought I gathered, some
virtue latent in/the
plant, now in words, now
by vigorous pantomime,
smiling the while/from
ear to ear./
There was something
in this poor castaway
that engaged my affec-/
tionate interest. For all
his height, which was
almost gigantic, and his/
strength and activity,
which seemed truly for-
midable, he appealed to
me/rather as a child than
as a full-grown man. In
our necessary panto-/
mime, he plainly found
the relish of play; his
eye and his mind were/
continually wandering;

ll. 25-34 surprise nor/
sorrow, and, with a sud-
den lifting of his open
hand,/seemed to dismiss
his former friends or
masters (which-/ever
they had been) into
God's pleasure. Respect
came/upon me and grew
stronger, the more I
observed him;/I saw he
had a powerful mind and
a sober and severe/char-
acter, such as I loved
to commune with; and
before/we had reached
the house of Aros I
had almost forgotten,
and/wholly forgiven him,
his uncanny colour./
To[62]

and I have never seen any one who smiled so/often or so brightly. Even his black face was beautified; and before/we reached the house of Aros I had entirely conquered the first repul-/sion of his looks./

To

l. 38 still ravenously eating

p.69, *l.* 19 negro

l. 37 negro,"

p.70, *l.* 4 negro

ll. 4-46-p. 71, *ll.* 1-8 me. His terror/at the ideas was/extreme; the more I insisted, the more abject became his signals of/reluctance and petition; and when at last, weary with the whole busi-/ness, I swam back again to Aros, he greeted my arrival with the most/speaking pantomime of affection, submission, and gratitude for his/escape./

"Poor lamb," said Mary, "he durstn't. And I'll tell ye one thing,/Charlie Darnaway: whether he was sent here in Heaven's anger or/Heaven's mercy, I would think shame upon the house of Aros if we/drove him forth. Man, or bairn, or beast, I can hardly tell which to/think him, he

p. 52, *l.* 1 still eating

l. 33 black

p. 53, *l.* 16 black,"

l. 32 black

ll. 32-9-p. 54, *ll.* 1-2 me. He signed, with the/same clearness and quiet as before, that he knew not the/art; and there was truth apparent in his signals, it would/have occured to none of us to doubt his truth; and that/hope being over, we must all go back even as we came to/the house of Aros, the negro walking in our midst without embarrassment./

All we could do that day was to make one more attempt/to communicate with the unhappy madman. Again he/was

shall have a seat at the fireside and a spoon at the table/for me."/

Even Rorie was of much the same way of thinking. "He will be a/fine, canny body at all," was his opinion of the negro; and I can hardly/explain how glad I was to hear their verdict. Perhaps his special/gratitude to myself had touched me; but I have never felt a more/affectionate pity for any creature calling himself man. Indeed, in the/long hours that followed, he began to show a sympathy with our sorrow/and an intelligent understanding of its cause and nature, that endeared/him equally to all. I could never reproduce in words the series of/fantastic gestures and grimaces by which he managed to explain his/meaning; it was a strange business, and made stranger by the glee and/the noisy laughter with which he perceived he had been understood./ He must have closely and thoughtfully observed our comings and /goings, and the behaviour of the maniac on the hill; for, absurd as it/may seem, we

owed to his suggestion
the simple and obvious
plan by/which food was
conveyed to my uncle.
Acting, as he had done
before,/two parts in suc-
cession, he climbed the
hill with a basket in
the/character of Rorie,
observed him from the
hilltop in that of the
mad-/man; came higher as
Rorie, ran away as my
uncle; as Rorie, left
the/basket on the summit
and descended to the
house; returned as my/
uncle to his perch, and,
finding the basket,
opened it with every sign
of/joy, and supped with
the most laughable and
unnecessary details, such/
as licking the lips and
fingers or smacking glut-
tonously with the/mouth./
    It was like a ray of
light to the rest of us,
and no sooner understood/
than put in execution.
Rorie carried it out,
Rorie speechless in ad-
mira-/tion of the negro.
From that moment, in
fact, the Hebridean ser-
vant/began to regard our
castaway with eyes of
singular respect, like
some/odd sort of collie,
especially intelligent
and kind. And it is here,

among/all these events,
that I can see most
plainly the mark of the
hand of/God. Judging by
guess, I should have
thought this superstitious old/fellow would
have held the stranger in
the extreme degree of
horror./But his superstitions were of another
order; he had not been
fed in/youth, like my
uncle among the Camer-
onians, on tales of the
devil ap-/pearing in the
similitude of a black
man, and, with cozening
words and/specious pre-
texts, luring men to
ruin. It was rather as an
animal than/as a fiend
that Rorie thought of our
visitor; and as he found
him more/and more human
in his ways, he came more
and more both to ad-
mire/and condescend./

Again my uncle was[63]

p. 71, *ll.* 13-8 hour. The
black/once more embraced
and kissed my hand with
the same humble grati-/
tude. He even offered to
follow me, but when I
signed to him to stay/
with Rorie, he cheerfully
obeyed, nodding and smi-
ing to his new/companion./

I

l. 19 negro

p. 54, *ll.* 8-9 hour./
I

l. 10 black

l. 25 negro	*l.* 18 black
l. 32 Within Rorie	*l.* 26 Within, Rorie
l. 32 snoring	*l.* 26 asleep
ll. 39-40 stars, the countless regents of the moon,/rained	*l.* 35 stars rained
l. 46 kinsman's voice; and	p. 55, *l.* 4 kinsman's; and
p.72, *l.* 20 bloom, upon	*l.* 28 bloom upon
l. 22 of sea	*l.* 30 of the sea
l. 27 further	*l.* 37 farther
l. 44 but, high	p. 56, *l.* 19 but high

NOTES

[1]"Prefatory Note," *The Merry Men and Other Tales*, Tusitala Edition (London, 1923-4), VIII, xiii. All further references to this edition will be incorporated into the text.

[2]*The Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson*, Tusitala Edition, II, 151. All further references will be abbreviated to *Letters*.

[3]*Letters*, II, 160.

[4]*Ibid.*, p. 160

[5]*Ibid.*, p. 162.

[6]Stevenson remarked that the story was "finished at Davos" in a letter to George Iles, 29 October 1887, *Bookman*, No. 7 (February 1895), p. 136.

[7]*Letters*, II, 160.

[8]*Ibid.*, p. 160.

[9]On 21 December 1882, Stevenson wrote to the new editor of *Cornhill Magazine*, James Payn (who had replaced Leslie Stephen), and complained that the publication of "The Merry Men" in *Cornhill* had "contained numerous errors because it was printed before Stevenson had returned his proof," G.L. McKay: (comp.), *A Stevenson Library: Catalogue of a Collection of*

Writings by and about Stevenson formed by Edwin J. Beinecke (New Haven, 1951), III, 1009 (Beinecke 3214). However, the title of Chapter III notwithstanding, the number of actual misprints in the *Cornhill* publication of "The Merry Men" is not particularly large.

[10]See *Letters*, II, 160.

[11]*Ibid.*, p. 303.

[12]*Ibid.*, III, 177.

[13]"Preface, by Way of Criticism," *Familiar Studies of Men and Books*, Tusitala Edition, XXVII, xii. Stevenson's remark here actually concerns his "short studies" of historical and literary figures, but his principle of composition compares with his notion of economy and precision in the short story.

[14]The name *Ben Ryan* was used throughout *Cornhill* No. 270, but in *Cornhill* No. 271 the name is changed to *Ben Kyaw*, with the following apology attached to the end of the story: "NOTE: In the first part, Ben Kyaw was accidentally printed Ben Ryan," *Cornhill Magazine*, XLV, No. 271 (July 1882), p. 73. This "accident" may not have been the magazine's, however; in the outline of the five chapters of his Pitlochry draft to Henley (that is, before revising the story for *Cornhill*), Stevenson called his mountain *Ben Ryan*, *Letters*, II, 160. He may have forgotten to alter the name when submitting the revised version of his story to *Cornhill*; or, the name-change may have been a last-minute decision made only in time to be included in the second part of the story.

[15]The comma here is a misprint: the word marks the end of a sentence.

[16]The Scottish word *yees* is used here by the narrator, Charles Darnaway, in his description of his uncle's features. Although Charles sometimes slips into Scots in dialogue (especially with Mary Ellen), he tells his story in English. Indeed, outside of the recorded dialogue, *yees* is the only Scottish word to appear in Charles's story, and Stevenson might have

changed it to *eyes* later on for the sake of consistency.

[17]Both *this* and *thir* (Scottish for "these") make sense in their context.

[18]The *g* in *girgie* is probably a misreading of Stevenson's *z*.

[19]Here, in Uncle Gordon's dialogue, Stevenson has changed the English *put* to the Scottish *pit*.

[20]In Scottish negatives such as *wasnae* or *couldnae*,the final *e* is included throughout the *Cornhill* version but omitted in the final book version.

[21]This is a misprint.

[22]The first *g* in *draggons* is probably a misreading of Stevenson's *y*.

[23]The *o* in *Gobart* is probably a misreading of Stevenson's *a*.

[24]Again, in Uncle Gordon's dialogue, Stevenson has changed the English *tops* to the Scottish *taps*.

[25]The change here gives the sentence a slightly different meaning: Uncle Gordon points to a sea-rune or "scart" that is either *beneath* or *wast* ("west of") the "grey stane."

[26]The sentence here does not quite make sense without the word *with*: this is probably a misprint.

[27]In the earlier *Cornhill* version, the dialogue between Charles and Mary is brief and direct, with Mary accepting Charles's marriage proposal with a kind of boyish enthusiasm. In the final book version, however, their dialogue is much longer, and both characters are less certain of their feelings. Charles's marriage proposal is treated less directly (he changes his question from *Do you think you could take me for a husband*?to *do ye no' like me*?), and although there is a certain affirmation of love in Mary's answer, the issue is postponed rather than agreed upon. Mary no longer has the *tranquility of character* evident in the

earlier *Cornhill* version, though Charles still seems to be *in awe* of her.

[28]Here, in Mary Ellen's dialogue, Stevenson has changed the Scottish *lang* to the English *long*.

[29]This is a misprint; or, the *a* in *spearing* may be a misreading of Stevenson's *i*.

[30]This is a misprint.

[31]The misprinting of Chapter III's title has been noted.

[32]Stevenson may have thought that the word *peak* gave the impression that Aros was more mountainous than he intended it to be.

[33]Both *evolving* and *revolving* make sense in their context, although it is likely that the latter is correct.

[34]*East* is indicated by the story.

[35]Both descriptions make sense in their context.

[36]*Swedish* and *Norwegian* refer here to the location of the city, Christiania. The latter is correct, since Christiania was the earlier name given to Norway's capital, Oslo.

[37]The words *voiceless* and *noseless* describe the figure-head, an angel, of the wrecked ship, the *Christ-Anna*. Both make sense, though it is not at all clear why the change to *noseless* was made. It may have been a misprint for *noiseless*.

[38]Charles is looking out under water here, so that the descriptions in both versions make sense.

[39]The word *curious* is probably a misreading of the word *carrion*, although, again, both make sense in their context.

[40]This is probably a misprint.

[41]This is a misprint.

[42]This is a misprint.

[43]This is a misprint.

[44]This is a misprint.

[45]Given the earlier remarks on the treatment of Charles's marriage proposal, it is significant that the final book version omits the corresponding sentence.

[46]In the *Cornhill* version, Mary Ellen is again presented as "tranquil" and perhaps even maternal (so that, with her, Charles is *like a poor child*). In the final book version, Charles manages to remain composed at Mary's declaration of loyalty to her father.

[47]Here, in Mary Ellen's dialogue, Stevenson has changed the English *from now* to the Scottish *syne*.

[48]In the *Cornhill* version, Mary Ellen's remarks to Charles are less personal: she presents her feelings in a communal way (*there's not a soul in Aros but would say the same with me*), whereas in the final book version she presents her feelings alone.

[49]Again, the sense of commitment between Charles and Mary Ellen is less direct in the final book version.

[50]The date given in the final book version is correct: it has already been established that the *Christ-Anna* was wrecked on February 10th (see *Cornhill*, XLV, No. 270 [June 1882], p. 682, *l.* 39; and *The Merry Men and Other Tales*, p. 13, *l.* 23).

[51]It is not clear why this passage, showing Uncle Gordon's drunken dancing while a ship comes to grief in the turbulent "Merry Men" below, should be omitted from the final book version. The passage underlines the sense (also present in the final book version) that Uncle Gordon comes to "resemble" the "Merry Men" themselves: his wild dance recalls the "dancing" of the "Merry Men," and so on. The passage also shows a

fundamental connection between Uncle Gordon's growing madness and his background as a strict Cameronian, so that he sings, among other things, the metrical Psalms of David.

[52]This is the second time that Charles sheds a tear in the *Cornhill* version. As indicated, both displays of emotion are omitted from the final book version.

[53]Here, in Uncle Gordon's dialogue, Stevenson has changed the English *dare* to the Scottish *daur*.

[54]The omission of this description of the castaway negro in the final book version provides an early example of how Stevenson later rejected any suggestion that the negro is servile (or, "suppliant").

[55]Again, with the omission of this description in the final book version, the negro becomes less "suppliant." In the earlier *Cornhill* version, the castaway negro is much more animated and much less dignified (as the description shows) than he is in the final book version.

[56]The change from *negro* to *black* in the final book version is important, since it underlines the symbolic function of the negro as (to Uncle Gordon, at least) the "black man" or devil. This change occurs eight times.

[57]The opening changes indicate most clearly just how the negro's character has been altered. In the earlier *Cornhill* version, he responds to Charles *with undisguised alarm*, while in the final book version he confronts Charles *with folded arms*: that is, he has become (as he was not before) a figure of dignity and seriousness. The negro's animated behavior in the *Cornhill* version also contrasts with the final book version where, now, there is *no shade of alteration in his face*. In the final book version, the negro's "Man Friday" characteristics are also omitted. The sense of the negro as the "black man" or devil is also made more apparent in the final book version, where Charles now considers him to be a *fallen king*, *fallen from some high place*, and so on. It may be interesting to speculate whether Charles, in his admiration for the negro, is deceived (like many characters in

Scottish folk-tales) by the apparently innocent appearance of the devil. In the *Cornhill* version, Charles sheds a tear a third time, but again this is left out of the final book version. Note also that Stevenson uses the word *knoll* again in the final book version (see *The Merry Men and Other Tales*, p. 23, *l.* 9).

[58]With the omission of this description in the final book version, the negro again becomes less animated.

[59]This extra description in the final book version underlines again the new seriousness or *solemnity* of the negro's character.

[60]This is a misprint for *part*.

[61]Again, the lengthy description of the negro's animated behavior is omitted in the final book version, replaced by a sense of his dignity and "solemnity."

[62]The turnabout in the characterization of the negro is again indicated in these two corresponding passages. In the earlier *Cornhill* version, the negro is a *child* who enjoys *pantomime* and *play*; while in the final book version, he has, by contrast, *a sober and severe character*. Charles's admiration of this "sober and severe" character interestingly reflects on his own status in the story.

[63]Obviously, the corresponding passage in the final book version is very much condensed: to quote from the *Cornhill* version itself, Stevenson seems to have omitted all the *laughable and unnecessary details*. The *Cornhill* version is interesting for several reasons, however. For example, it shows that Mary Ellen, rather than Charles, is instrumental in keeping the negro on the island: this is important in any discussion of Charles's ultimate responsibility for his uncle's death at the story's end. The *Cornhill* version also provides an explanation as to why Uncle Gordon should regard the negro with horror: it is because he had been fed on Cameronian folk-tales about the devil appearing as the "black man." This explanation is omitted from the final book version, or rather, it is incorporated into the figure of the *black* himself who is, now, more obviously symbolic of the "fallen king."