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David Angus

Youth on the Prow:
The First Publication of *Treasure Island*



Between October 1, 1881, and January 28, 1882, there appeared in the Victorian children's magazine *Young Folks*, mostly placed near the middle or end of each number, a serial story entitled *Treasure Island, or The Mutiny of the Hispaniola*. By Captain George North. Thus did Robert Louis Stevenson, novelist, make his first unobtrusive appearance before the public eye.

The young folks in question (that segment of the public eye that first looked upon Robert Louis Stevenson, novelist) were neither entertained nor amused, and said so. The development of the tale was for them too slow, too deliberate, and lacking the right spice of constant hectic action.

The editor, James Henderson (he had already rescued the story from its disastrous original title, *The Sea-Cook*), spared it a single woodcut illustration and an initial vignette on its first appearance, but after that he did not trouble his artists with it. Henderson thought of *Treasure Island* as an unrewarding "passenger" (i.e., space-filler). It was not until it reached the adult reading public in November 1883 in book form that the tale took flight, artistically and commercially.

In *The Prose Writings of Robert Louis Stevenson: A Guide*, Roger G. Swearingen has pointed out that "Stevenson made numerous changes, deletions and revisions in the (*Young Folks*) text for its publication in book

form. . . . the book form edition was set from his revised original manuscript. . . ."¹

Swearingen does not indicate how numerous these changes were. In fact there are about 250 alterations to the original printed text, of varying degrees of importance. Nor does he attempt to classify these in any detail, though they can be so classified under some twenty different headings. He is, however, fully justified in these omissions, for the subject of the effect of Stevenson's alterations requires an article to itself—perhaps more than one. I hope that what follows will convince the reader that this is so.

A first reading of the *Young Folks* text (and the reader must be prepared for very large pages of very small print in four columns, 148 lines of print to each unillustrated complete column) involves us in a number of surprises, some pleasant, some less so. For instance, the sea-lions flopping about the shores of Treasure Island turn out, disappointingly, to have been mere seals in the original.

Jim (or Stevenson), in the early version, has no sense of direction and constantly gets his compass bearings muddled. Nor can Jim recall where Captain Flint (the pirate) died. Sometimes it is Palm Key; sometimes Key West; sometimes Port Royal. (Stevenson settled in the book for Savannah). The other Captain Flint (Long John Silver's parrot) turns out to have been a *hen*—"preening her green coat!"²

Then there are unexpected bits of personalia in the first text. When Jim Hawkins is counting the treasure at the end, he includes coins he calls "Lewises." The French coin was, of course, a Louis. Lewis was one of Stevenson's given names, later altered to Louis, and the Christian name used by his friends. We note too that the ballad-book, to which Long John Silver favorably compares a Bible in Chapter XXIX of the book, was originally a play-book. Did little Louis turn to his model theatre one Sabbath and get caught? How many of the touches of piety in the book version were retrospective sops to Mrs. Thomas Stevenson, perhaps shocked by the conspicuous lack of them in the original? Such touches there certainly are:

¹Roger G. Swearingen: *The Prose Writings of Robert Louis Stevenson: A Guide* (Hamden, CT, 1980), p. 63.

²*Young Folks*, XX, No. 579 (week ending Jan. 7, 1882), p. 8, col. 1. The *Young Folks* version of the story appears in the bound 1881 and 1882 volumes. I have consulted those held by the National Library of Scotland.

When Captain Billy Bones, on sight of Black Dog, has "the look of a man who sees a ghost," Stevenson adds in the book "or the Evil One."³ When, in the same chapter, Dr. Livesey forecasts that Billy Bones will die unless he gives up rum, he solemnly adds, in his warning to Bones, "die and go to your own place, like the man in the Bible."⁴ Even Long John Silver, reprobate though he be, is thus affected. In Chapter X of the book he says of his parrot, "if anybody's seen more wickedness, it must be the Devil himself."⁵ Originally, and weakly, he merely had said "I don't know who he is."⁶ And in the next chapter, talking to other pirates, not Jim, Silver's "and spilin' my little game"⁷ becomes "like the Devil at prayers."⁸

Ben Gunn the maroon is affected too, as this lengthy addition in Chapter XV of the book makes clear:

'Now for instance, you wouldn't think I had had a pious mother—to look at me?' he asked.

'Why no, not in particular,' I answered.

'Ah, well,' said he, 'but I had—*remarkable* pious. And I was a civil pious boy, and could rattle off my catechism that fast, as you couldn't tell one word from another. And here's what it came to, Jim, and it begun with chuck-farthen on the blessed gravestones! That's what it begun with, but it went further'n that; and so my mother told me and predicked the whole, she did, the pious woman!'⁹

None of this appears in *Young Folks*.

Finally, when the pirate Dick (he who tore a leaf out of his Bible to provide the "black spot" handed to Silver in Chapter XXIX of the book) is frightened by the eldritch voice of Ben Gunn (Chapter XXXII), we read in the book version: "Dick had his Bible out and was praying volubly. He

³*Treasure Island*, p. 11. All references to the book edition are to Vol. II of the Tusitala Edition of *The Works of Robert Louis Stevenson* (London: William Heinemann, 1924).

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 14.

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 63.

⁶YF [by this I shall always mean *Young Folks*] XIX, 569 (Oct. 29, 1881), 151, col. 1.

⁷*Ibid.*, col. 3.

⁸*Treasure Island*, p. 70.

⁹*Ibid.*, p. 94.

had been well brought up, had Dick, before he came to sea, and fell among bad companions."¹⁰ This is also new, and gives Silver an opportunity for further devout reflections on the next page:

Dick alone still held his Bible and looked around him as he went with fearful glances, but he found no sympathy, and Silver even joked him on his precautions.

'I told you,' said he--I told you you had spiled your Bible. It it ain't no good the swear by, what do you suppose a sperrit would give for it? Not that!' and he snapped his big finger, halting a moment on his crutch.¹¹

Setting the Bible to one side, I turn now to touches of humane feeling—it might be called sentiment—that first appear in the book edition. In any case, the boyish callousness of the original is markedly softened.

A few examples must suffice. In *Young Folks*, when Jim Hawkins is leaving the Admiral Benbow to go on his adventures, he gives never a thought to the late Billy Bones. But in the book, "one of my last thoughts was of the captain who had so often strode along the beach with his cocked hat, his sabre-cut cheek and his old brass telescope."¹² And at the end of the book (in Chapter XXXIV), an additional reason for not picking up the three surviving pirates left upon the island is given. Not only could the *Hispaniola* "not risk another mutiny," but "to take them home to the gibbet would have been a cruel sort of kindness."¹³ The considerable moderation of Dr. Livesey's language when applied to the pirates in general, which we shall note shortly, adds to the effect of a pervasive softening of tone and feeling.

In *Young Folks* we find a Jim Hawkins (Jem until the compositors learned better) who is unexpectedly nervous, unheroic, and given to a rather hollow bombastic swagger. Stevenson himself would scarcely have passed for a boy's boy when young, being a sickly, molly-coddled invalid more often at home than at school. The sensitive and susceptible Jim of this version represents, I fancy, a memory or projection of those unhappy days of his Edinburgh childhood. In the pirates' attack on the stockade (Chapter XXI in the book), the *Young Folks* version is a good deal more confused than the other because of the boy hero's own confusion at the

¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 205.

¹¹*Ibid.*, p. 206.

¹²*Ibid.*, p. 46.

¹³*Ibid.*, p. 217.

time, as Jim the narrator admits, "The events of the next few minutes came so thick that my mind is confused as to the order of their occurrence."¹⁴ (Stevenson was to rewrite the account of the attack completely for the book.)

The seat of the trouble was the earlier Jim's acute nervous susceptibility. "Hurry of the moment" was originally "hurry and fever of the moment."¹⁵ In a few lines he tells us "I was like one petrified in all this din, and knew not where to turn and what to do."¹⁶ A moment later Jim is "blinded and stunned" as he dashes out into the sunlight¹⁷; and when Livesey kills a pirate with a cutlass, Jim exclaims, "I shall never forget that sudden crimson streak."¹⁸ All these instances of Jim Hawkins's very natural boyish reactions are excised from the book version. When Jim (Chapter XXV of the book) boards the *Hispaniola* by himself and catches his first sight of Israel Hands sprawled beside the pirate he has killed in a drunken brawl, we are given the full shock in *Young Folks* of the lad's reaction, in a one-sentence paragraph: "I believe I must have jumped in the air."¹⁹ That too is omitted from the book. But, and this also is typical of the *Young Folks* Jim, in a few minutes, confronting the apparently helpless, drink-sodden Hands, he tells us "I was ready to crow over his distress."²⁰

In Chapter XXVIII of the book, when Jim has inadvertently walked into the pirates' arms and been captured, Stevenson allows him to retain some of this cocksureness: "'The laugh's on my side; I've had the top of this business from the first; I no more fear you than I fear a fly,'"²¹ But in *Young Folks* the bombastic side of Jim is allowed to get out of hand altogether:

¹⁴YF, XIX, 574 (Dec. 3, 1881), 191, col. 2.

¹⁵*Ibid.*

¹⁶*Ibid.*

¹⁷*Ibid.*

¹⁸*Ibid.*

¹⁹YF, XIX, 576 (Dec. 17, 1881), 206, col. 4.

²⁰*Ibid.*

²¹*Treasure Island*, p. 178.

'And if you ask me how I did it, tortures wouldn't drive me, in the first place; and, in the second, much good would it do you, now the harm's done, and you ruined. And now you can kill me if you please. The laugh's on my side, I've as good as hanged you, every man, and I'm not fifteen till my next birthday.'²²

In a moment he tells Silver to his face "I hate you," and demands that he inform Dr. Livesey, if he, Jim, is killed by the pirates, of "the way I took the thing," and adds "even if I get frightened after this, you'll tell him I outfaced you all at first"—a curious encapsulation of this Jim's nervous instability and boyish braggadocio.²³

In the book, at this point in the story, Jim is less outspoken and more astute: "If you spare me, bygones are bygones, and when you fellows are in court for piracy, I'll save you all I can. It is for you to choose. Kill another and do yourselves no good, or spare me and keep a witness to save you from the gallows."²⁴ Here again, in a curious way, humanity wins out.

Then there is the vexed question of Dr. Livesey. The retrained and gentlemanly Livesey of the book turns out to have begun life as a coarse, breezy, rather brutal military veteran. For the later version Stevenson was forced, practically, to re-create the character entirely. Livesey, in fact, was to become the mainstay of the "sympathetic" adults, the nearest thing to a voice of sanity, restraint and humanity among them, outshining the splotic and indiscreet Squire and the ramrod-stiff Smollett. In fact all three were rather different in their original personae, but David Livesey suffers an absolute sea-change in the revisions. Part of the trouble with him was that when Stevenson took up his pen again after a break in the writing (he had completed fifteen chapters at Braemar, but then, the first flash of inspiration having faded, was forced to resume elsewhere), he had to make Livesey his narrator for three chapters, Jim having defected from the main party to pursue his adventures on the island.

To appreciate the changes which Stevenson wrought on Livesey for the book version of *Treasure Island*, we must look at Chapters XVI-XVIII. I have made mention of the original Livesey's intemperate old-soldier's language when discussing or describing the pirates. Here are some instances: "human carrion . . . the evil ones . . . the precious pair . . . mostly fools . . . cowardly dogs . . . confounded hounds"²⁵ . . . the callous dogs."²⁶

²²YF, XIX, 577 (Dec. 24, 1881), 215, col. 2.

²³*Ibid.*

²⁴*Treasure Island*, p. 178.

²⁵YF, XIX, 571 (Nov. 12, 1881), 167, cols. 2 and 3.

This is not at all the gentlemanly and moderate voice of the book's Livesey. Instead, the military diehard with his bluff, plain, downright, damn-your-eyes manner of speech is to the fore. Livesey in his present situation is handicapped by being a landlubber ("three bells in their sea-lingo" is one exasperated interpolation of his,²⁷ but he does not hesitate to cross verbal cutlasses with Captain Smollett when they are in a boat off-shore, in this passage:

'If it's the only course we can lie, sir, we must even lie it', returned the captain. 'We must keep to windward.'

'Current-ward,' said I with a laugh.

'You see, sir,' he went on, not minding me . . . 'the way we go the current must slacken, and then we can dodge back along the shore.'

'Ay, ay, sir,' returned I. 'Anything to avoid a naval engagement.'²⁸

A few lines later Livesey is still critical, and still on the defensive: "So spoke the captain through his teeth, curling himself round his oar in true sailor fashion, ugly enough to my landsman eyes, for I was a good oar in my young days."²⁹

When, in *Young Folks*, Livesey hears a shot which suggests Jim Hawkins has been killed, he reacts with grim military practicality: "Jim Hawkins is gone' was my first thought. But there was no time to cry over spilt milk; if they had begun the killing, it was plain enough they would go on—Hawkins now, the rest of us as soon as possible."³⁰ Military brusqueness applies also to Livesey's doctoring, at least upon the battlefield, according to *Young Folks*: "You clap your eyes on the case—one, two three; and either you've tied the artery or the man is dead."³¹ After the pirates' unsuccessful attack on the stockade, he reacts as soldier rather than doctor:

²⁶YF, XIX, 572 (Nov. 19, 1881), 175, col. 3.

²⁷YF, XIX, 571 (Nov. 12, 1881), 167, col. 2.

²⁸YF, XIX, 572 (Nov. 19, 1881), 175, col. 2.

²⁹*Ibid.*, col. 3.

³⁰YF, XIX, 511 (Nov. 12, 1881), 167, col. 2.

³¹*Ibid.*

In the meantime, ferreting about, I found two tracks of blood disappearing in different directions into the thicket.

'Two more winged,' said I. Four killed and wounded and not a man on our side hurt. The war opens well.³²

The "lingo" of the earlier Livesey is not only intemperate; it is jaunty, idiomatic, slangy:

I came plump on the stockade . . . a man with a head on his shoulders . . . confounded blunder . . . I am an old hand . . . got a snip (slight wound) . . . in two two's . . . in a twinkling³³ . . . loaded like a cow . . . I was breaking my medical wind . . . rowing like a fellow in a race . . . bright and ready³⁴ . . . confoundedly overloaded . . . it was just about all that she could do³⁵ . . . I gave Joyce a black mark . . . we threw away (wasted) our bullets³⁶ . . . months would be liker the mark . . . all pretty white about the gills.³⁷

These expressions are drawn from *Young Folks* versions of Chapters XVI–XVIII, but as early as Chapter V Stevenson was going off the rails with Livesey. Mr. Dance, the Customs and Excise officer in Devon, describes the doctor in the original as "a man and a magistrate."³⁸ For the book Stevenson thoughtfully altered "man" to "gentleman."³⁹ In Chapter IX Livesey's idiomatic "We are risking it; but we are not such fools as you take us for, Captain,"⁴⁰ is modified to "We take the risk; but we are not so ignorant as you believe us."⁴¹

³²YF, XIX, 572 (Nov. 19, 1881), 175, col. 3.

³³YF, XIX, 571 (Nov. 12, 1881), 167, col. 2.

³⁴*Ibid.*, col. 3.

³⁵YF, XIX, 572 (Nov. 19, 1881), 175, col. 2.

³⁶*Ibid.*, col. 3.

³⁷*Ibid.*, col. 4.

³⁸YF, XIX, 567 (Oct. 15, 1881), 135, col. 1.

³⁹*Treasure Island*, p. 32.

⁴⁰YF, XIX, 568 (Oct. 22, 1881), 143, col. 3.

⁴¹*Treasure Island*, p. 55.

Dr. Livesey's crudities are less obvious once he ceases to be narrator, but they are still visible, though in a muted key. For example, in the *Young Folks* version of Chapter XXII, when he dresses Jim's slight wound, he not only pulls his ears, as in the book, but remarks, "If you were at home and had done it in play . . . you would never so much as have observed it, but you got it in battle, forsooth, and it's a wound in consequence."⁴² Over dinner, after the stockade attack, the doctor reflects rather heavily:

Of all the actions that ever I was in, or heard of . . . this brush of ours has been the bloodiest. Seven dead out of a score of men engaged on either side makes thirty-five per hundred, and, let me tell you, there are no drilled troops in Europe that would stand a loss so heavy. But the oddest of all is this, that out of eight wounded (nine of you are to count Jim Hawkins and his scissor-snip) there should be seven dead, or good as dead, for with Hunter, poor good man, it's a question of time and nothing more. Hot work! Hot work! And, alas, they're all to bury yet.⁴³

It is as if, as the writing of the first version went on, Stevenson began to feel his way tentatively towards the final characterization—for there are touches of humane feeling here too, and the boastfulness is modified. Nevertheless, Stevenson sternly scissor-snips all of this from the book of *Treasure Island*.

As I have suggested, Squire Trelawney and Captain Smollett are also changed—but rather more subtly and less radically—in their transference from *Young Folks*. It comes as something of a shock, it must be admitted, to find in the original of Chapter VI that the Squire's looks there suggest the intellectual ascetic. He is described as possessing "a fine, inquiring face, with a long nose, and deep-set, clear blue eyes, but roughened and reddened and lined in his long travels."⁴⁴ In the book he simply has "a bluff, rough-and-ready face, all roughened."⁴⁵ A little way on in *Young Folks*, he retains a fair enough complexion and enough sensitivity to be able to say "I still blush to have shared in the disgrace."⁴⁶ Stevenson gets

⁴²YF, XIX, 574 (Dec. 3, 1881), 191, cols. 2 and 3.

⁴³*Ibid.*, col. 3.

⁴⁴YF, XIX, 567 (Oct. 15, 1881), 135, col. 1.

⁴⁵*Treasure Island*, p. 34.

⁴⁶YF, XIX, 567 (Oct. 15, 1881), 135, col. 2.

rid of this too. On the ruddy Trelawney of the book a blush would scarcely have shown.

Apart from this preliminary faltering, this flying of false colors, it must be said that Stevenson finds the true Trelawney almost at once—choleric, chauvinistic, loose-tongued, naive, at bottom good-hearted—and sticks to it pretty consistently throughout. Only in Dr. Livesey's highly suspect narrative do we find a false note, dictated by the medico's own military swagger.

'My bird,' said the squire grimly (of a shot pirate).

It was not his tenth speech, nor, I believe, his fortieth word, since we had cast anchor in the fatal bay.⁴⁷

This sound a good deal more like Smollett than Trelawney. Stevenson, having taken up the pen again to finish the serial, has not quite felt himself back into the story at this point.

Smollett himself, in *Young Folks*, is at once less and more of a "hard man" than in the book. In the original of Chapter IX he is capable of saying, about the crew of the *Hispaniola*, newly gathered by Silver: "I am nervous, and I'm not a nervous man by nature."⁴⁸ With Silver himself he is tetchy and suspicious from the first: "You should have been aboard before . . . Too smooth for me, sir."⁴⁹

In the early version, Smollett is more lavish in his praise for Gray (the crew member who escapes the pirates and joins the others) than in the book: "And the best of us, to my mind, Abraham Gray here. Gray, I'll be proud to give you a character aloft."⁵⁰ Also, in the original of Chapter XXI the captain uncharacteristically addresses Hawkins by his first name: "Load the gun, Jim."⁵¹

On the other hand, Smollett can be very tough with men on his own side in *Young Folks*. We still get a glimpse of this in the book at the start of Chapter XXI, only mildly modified from *Young Folks*, when he berates

⁴⁷YF, XIX, 572 (Nov. 19, 1881), 175, col. 3.

⁴⁸YF, XIX, 568 (Oct. 22, 1881), 143, col. 3.

⁴⁹*Ibid.*

⁵⁰YF, XIX, 572 (Nov. 19, 1881), 175, col. 3.

⁵¹YF, XIX, 574 (Dec. 3, 1881), 191, col. 1.

Trelawney and Jim for leaving their posts in the stockade to overhear a parley. But it is all the clearer in the first version of Chapter XVIII, when it is suggested to Smollett that the Union Jack above the stockade is something of a target for the pirate gunners to aim at. In *Young Folks* he does not mince his words about this: "'Strike my colours!' roared the captain. 'No, sir. And let me tell you, if a man lays a hand on them, although it were yourself, sir [Trelawney], I'll shoot him like a dog.'" "So that" (adds Livesey's narrative) "...was the end of that."⁵²

In the book Stevenson smooths all this over as best he may: "'Strike my colours!' cried the captain. 'No, sir, not I,' and as soon as he had said the words I think we all agreed with him. For it was not only a piece of stout, seamanly good feeling; it was good policy besides, and showed the enemy that we despised their cannonade."⁵³

In the face of death or wounds the *Young Folks* Smollett is impassive to the point of caricature. "Dooty" is all. When wounded himself he remarks "'I don't give a marling-spike for that,"⁵⁴ and when things look hopeless for them all he bursts out: "'And one word, lads. If you do go to Davy Jones, why, what's the odds? All in our duty, every man Jack."⁵⁵

After the unsuccessful attack on the stockade in which one of the captain's party, the sailor Redruth, is mortally wounded, Smollett hurries out to raise the colors (hitherto missing). Then, in the *Young Folks* version, he re-enters the log-house:

... whistling till he observed Tom Redruth, when he immediately doffed his hat and resumed his customary grave expression.

'Going aloft, my man,' said he. 'My compliments and you've done your duty.'⁵⁶

In the book Stevenson sensibly omits both the whistling and the remark.

With four 'sympathetic' characters of such inconsistency and volatility, and with each of them displaying (for English characters) such surprising evidence of "the Caledonian antisyzygy," it is only to be expected that in

⁵²YF, XIX, 572 (Nov. 19, 1881), 175, col. 4.

⁵³*Treasure Island*, p. 114.

⁵⁴YF, XIX, 574 (Dec. 3, 1881), 191, col. 2.

⁵⁵YF, XIX, 572 (Nov. 19, 1881), 175, col. 3.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*, col. 4.

Young Folks we shall find much mutual resentment and recrimination amongst them. By comparison the pirates rub along reasonably well together (apart from Israel Hands and his victim), at least until near the end. We have already observed the needling match involving Livesey and Smollett (seaman v. landlubber) on the jolly-boat's last trip ("third" in *Young Folks*, "fifth" in the book), as well as the captain's wrathful readiness to shoot Trelawney on the matter of the colors. In the following chapter even Jim Hawkins harbors some dark thoughts about his superiors: "I do not mean to blame anyone, but it might have been better if they had taken us [the loyal crew-members] more freely into their confidence. The result of that council, and the various questions discussed, were of great importance to all; yet we never knew their decisions till long after."⁵⁷

The dislike between Trelawney and Smollett does survive, of course, in the book edition, but in the *Young Folks* version we find more reason for it, when Smollett discusses with Livesey what arms the mutinous pirates may have:

'Oh, and muskets too, I make no doubt,' he added. 'We'll see the muskets as soon as they've had time to grapple for them. All stowed away among the cargo. Now John Trelawney is a good owner to me, and a cool head, and a good shot, which is better; but you'll perhaps excuse me for saying that he's a most egregious ass.'⁵⁸

In the book's Chapter XVIII Stevenson merely notes casually that "every man of them [the pirates] was now provided from some secret magazine of their own."⁵⁹ He abandons the idea of muskets loaded with general cargo under Trelawney's blind eye.

Dr. Livesey, as we have seen, is a goo deal hotter in his expressions in *Young Folks*, and this makes him outspokenly critical of others. When Jim Hawkins defects to the island, they are all, in Livesey's narrative, "confoundedly put out,"⁶⁰ though no one doubts him. During the attack on the stockade, as I noted, he gave Joyce "a black mark in my own mind"⁶¹ for firing late, and noted that "Hunter, Joyce and the squire were all pretty

⁵⁷YF, XIX, 573 (Nov. 26, 1881), 183, col. 2

⁵⁸YF, XIX, 572 (Nov. 19, 1881), 175, col. 4.

⁵⁹*Treasure Island*, p. 114.

⁶⁰YF, XIX, 571 (Nov. 12, 1881), 167, col. 2.

⁶¹YF, XIX, 572 (Nov. 19, 1881), 175, col. 3.

white about the gills."⁶² By implication he is critical of Captain Smollett when he describes the jolly-boat's failure to carry fresh water ashore as "one confounded blunder"⁶³; also when, in the next chapter, he says the boat is "confoundedly overloaded."⁶⁴

This mood of mutual abrasiveness, muddle and general discontent (Livesey v. Smollett, Smollett v. Trelawney, Jim Hawkins v. the rest) fairly pervades the "good" party in the *Young Folks* version. Stevenson had to cut and revise quite rigorously to modify these divisions and this divisiveness in the book.

By comparison the pirates not only agree well; they are fairly consistently drawn. Only secondary details require to be altered for the final version. Some of Long John Silver's speeches are trimmed and one is amplified, but otherwise he is the ambiguously observed, formidable rogue with whom we are familiar. Only his missing leg gives Stevenson occasional trouble. In fact, our tyro author tends to forget about it. When Silver, newly on the island, attacks the honest seaman Tom in *Young Folks*, we are told: "John whipped the crutch out of his armpit [to use as a missile] and, bereft of his support, rolled face forward on the ground."⁶⁵

Stevenson, on revising, saw that this was not really the effect intended. (He might forget the missing leg, but John Silver could not.) In Chapter XIV of the book we note at this point "John seized the branch of a tree" before hurling the crutch at Tom.⁶⁶ But that leg keeps coming back. In the original of Chapter XX, Silver is, we note, remarkably versatile in his movements for a one-legged man: "But Silver laughed at him aloud, took him by the shoulder and shook him, slapped him on the back and poked him in the ribs."⁶⁷ This seems excessive even for a two-legged man. In the book Long John only manages the laugh and the slap.⁶⁸ In the *Young Folks* version of Chapter XXX our suspicions about that leg are con-

⁶²*Ibid.*, col. 4.

⁶³YF, XIX, 571 (Nov. 12, 1881), 167, col. 2.

⁶⁴YF, XIX, 572 (Nov. 19, 1881), 175, col. 2.

⁶⁵YF, XIX, 570 (Nov. 5, 1881), 159, col. 3.

⁶⁶*Treasure Island*, p. 89.

⁶⁷YF, XIX, 573 (Nov. 26, 1881), 234, col. 4.

⁶⁸*Treasure Island*, p. 123.

firmed: "Silver stamped upon the floor."⁶⁹ In the book, more discreetly, he is said to have "struck the barrel with his open hand."⁷⁰ Stevenson learned to be wary of that leg!

In the case of Ben Gunn (whom I count as a pirate here), again it is appearance details—in this case details of dress—that had to be amended by Stevenson, apart from that increase in piety, of course. For Ben, in his original form, our author borrowed a good deal too amply from Defoe, especially in the matter of apparel. Here is Jim Hawkins' description of his own first glimpse of Gunn, in the *Young Folks* version: "Yet a man it was . . . a man covered with the hair of goats, his head crowned with a caps of the same material, and his long legs and arms bare and blackened with the sun."⁷¹ And here is the full and detailed description of his dress, once Jim catches up with him:

His dress, if it could be called a dress, was a kilt of goatskins, bound about his waist with an old brass-buckled leather belt, a case or waistcoat of the same about his body, and a round pointed cap upon his head, with the long hair hanging over his eyes. He had no weapon, and except the belt, no mark of civilization.⁷²

No weapon? So how could Ben kill goats to get their skins? In a moment he tells us himself: "I can run the goats down upon my naked feet."⁷³

In the book version Stevenson banished the goatskins, at least from Ben Gunn's person, thus:

Of all the beggar-men that I had seen or fancied, he was the chief for raggedness. He was clothed with tatters of old ship's canvas and old sea cloth; and this extraordinary patchwork was all held together by a system of the most various and incongruous fastening—brass buttons, bits of stick, and loops of tarry gaskin.

⁶⁹YF, XIX, 578 (Dec. 31, 1881), 167, col. 4.

⁷⁰*Treasure Island*, p. 191.

⁷¹YF, XIX, 571 (Nov. 12, 1881), 167, col. 4.

⁷²*Ibid.*

⁷³*Ibid.*, and p. 167, col. 1.

About his waist he wore an old brass-buckled leather belt which was the one thing solid in his whole accoutrement.⁷⁴

So—only the belt survives; and there is in the book no running down of goats upon naked feet.

Nevertheless, the goats do survive, in the book's Chapter XV: "'Marooned three years ago,' he continued, 'and lived on goats since then, and berries, and oysters.'"⁷⁵ Before the end of this same chapter, lo and behold, RLS has forgotten his own alterations: "Close at my side the marooned man in his goatskins trotted easily and lightly."⁷⁶ In Chapter XXXIII of the book, Stevenson, busily revising, does remember to cut "and used to run down goats"⁷⁷ after "Ben Gunn being fleet of foot,"⁷⁸ but on the same page the goats stubbornly pop up again as "goats' meat salted by himself (Ben)."⁷⁹ The ghost of Daniel Defoe was not so easily exorcized!

The other pirates came out pretty much unchanged in the book. It was the heroes, not the villains, that caused R.L.S. furiously to labor over his revisions. A Jekyll much troubled by his own Hyde, Stevenson was always happier, in life as in literature, with those whose darker selves showed unmistakably through. To smooth down, for the purposes of publication in book form, those asperities and abrasivenesses and curious 'double' natures we have noted here must have come hard to him.

In this article I have concentrated chiefly on alterations or modifications of character and general tone, when serial became book. If I were to attempt to summarize the effect of these, it would be in the following terms. In the *Young Folks* version we seem to look through the eyes of Jim Hawkins the *boy*, despite the fact that the language of his narrative is sometimes a good deal too sophisticated for that. The story, of course, is for the most part meant to be told by the *mature* Mr. Hawkins in retrospect. In revising for the book version Stevenson seems to have remem-

⁷⁴*Treasure Island*, p. 93.

⁷⁵*Ibid.*

⁷⁶*Ibid.*, p. 97.

⁷⁷YF, XX, 581 (Jan. 21, 1882), 24, col. 2.

⁷⁸*Treasure Island*, p. 212.

⁷⁹*Ibid.*

bered this latter point, and made it his lodestar. His chief narrator's tone and attitude are now in every way more adult, restrained, moralistic and religiose. He is kinder, not only to the pirates (those humane touches), but to his readers (he assiduously irons out faults of language, tone, plot management and general treatment), to their mothers(!), and to his characters overall. The latter mature along with the narrator. David Livesey, from a rather hard and thick-skinned veteran of the wars, grows into the "verray parfit gentil knight" of the novel. Captain Smollett is less the timber-sided tarpaulin, and Squire Trelawney, for all his faults, less the "egregious ass." Even the boy Jim is less a bundle of juvenile nerves, and more deserving of the liking and admiration of Silver and Livesey.

It may well be that this abrupt maturing had much to do with the fact that the story in *Young Folks* was intended primarily for a youthful audience or readership (as it was at Braemar), and the book form made it accessible to adults. The conscious artist in Stevenson (an enormous part of him) was simply forced to take over, mayhap, and to provide an 'older' approach, a more responsible attitude altogether. In short, I rather think that the R.L.S. who wrote the story for young Lloyd Osborne to amuse him that wet Autumn on Deeside was a much 'younger' author than the one who made up the book edition. He could unbutton himself and afford to be at one with his juvenile audience. Thus he rejoiced in the things that boys do rejoice in—not only in adventures in faraway places and exotic settings and circumstances, but in arguments and disagreements among grown-ups, in seeing adults as caricatures of themselves, in boyish boastfulness and deeds of independent derring-do (proving something to those foolish grown-ups) and in equally boyish moods of discontent and rebelliousness. Even the less heroic side of Jim Hawkins was perhaps a form of confessional self-indulgence. The boy in R.L.S.—no physical hero—simply would out. But the challenge presented by an adult readership (those buying the book for their children or young relatives, and reading it to check its suitability perhaps) changed all that.

As I have hinted above, many other forms of emendation are to be discovered in a close comparison of the two texts of *Treasure Island*. Vocabulary is polished, the best word replacing the second or the third best, or the quite wrong. Certain vague narrative points receive clarification. The plot is strengthened where certain omissions or inconsistencies have made it shaky. Needless verbiage, detail, reflection or speculation is hacked away. If the book version of *Treasure Island* was heavily slanted towards the adult literary tastes of the 1880s, I have a notion that the *Young Folks* version could hold a greater appeal for the 1990s. The taste

for anarchic iconoclasm, chaotic humors and moral confusion is an up-to-date one. The world of the *Treasure Island* of *Young Folks* is instantly recognizable today, warts and all—much more so than the "Victorian values" in the book with all its artistic polish.

It is typical, it seems to me, of Stevenson that when he came to write the article *My First Book: Treasure Island*⁸⁰ in the year of his death, he made no mention whatever of those extensive revisions, though he does describe in some detail how the tale first came to appear in *Young Folks*. The piece is almost desperately frank about some of the literary borrowings that went into the making of the novel, and yet in true Stevensonian fashion it is not frank at all, and hides all the essentials. About Defoe, for example, R.L.S. only admits that the parrot once no doubt belong to Robinson Crusoe, and to using "a few reminiscences." Stevenson, indeed, would have us believe that his first book "sprang full-armed from the brow of Jove." It did not. But what adult reader would have troubled, in 1894, to go back to the old copies, if he still had them, of *Young Folks*?

When *Kidnapped* made its serial bow, five years later in the May-June-July numbers of *Young Folks*'s successor, *Young Folks Paper*, it required only six minor corrections before going between hard covers.⁸¹

By this time R.L. Stevenson was a famous name (he was billed as "author of *Treasure Island* and *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*"), and *Kidnapped* shone forth on the front cover pages throughout its appearance, with ample woodcut illustrations. These five years had made all the difference. No chance now of the professional Stevenson betraying even to children his half-formed ideas and uncertain characterizations.

Today the piled-up manuscripts in the Beinecke Library at Yale may contain evidence of these, but the published Stevenson was as complete, assured and finished as ever he could make it. Youth might still be on the prow—it usually was with Stevenson—but his older, graver self stood firmly at his helm. The Hispaniola days of drifting, with a boy alone on deck and (if the truth be told) more than a little at sea, were all gone by. Stevenson would never betray himself thus again.

Bridge of Allan

⁸⁰*Treasure Island*, pp. xxiii-xxxi.

⁸¹See Swearingen, *Prose Writings of Robert Louis Stevenson: A Guide*, p. 105.