My First Book—Treasure Island

Robert Louis Stevenson

Document Type
Article

Date
Fall 1896

Keywords
Syracuse University Special Collections, rare books, Robert Louis Stevenson, novelists, Treasure Island, classic literature

Language
English

Disciplines
Arts and Humanities | English Language and Literature

Description/Abstract
This article (after a brief introduction by Mark F. Weimer of Syracuse University) first appeared in McClure’s Magazine in 1894. It is the now-rare preface to the classic novel Treasure Island, in which Robert Louis Stevenson comments on how the novel sprang from a map he painted with the assistance of an imaginative schoolboy while recuperating from an illness. A holograph manuscript of the preface is located in the Syracuse University Libraries.

Additional Information
The text used for this article was originally published in McClure’s Magazine in September 1894.

Recommended Citation

Source
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It was far indeed from being my first book, for I am not a novelist alone. But I am well aware that my paymaster, the Great Public, regards what else I have written with indifference, if not aversion; if it call upon me at all, it calls on me in the familiar and indelible character; and when I am asked to talk of my first book, no question in the world but what is meant is my first novel, TREASURE ISLAND. To S.L.O., an American gentleman in accordance with whose classic taste the following narrative has been designed, it is now, in return for numerous delightful hours, and with the kindest wishes, dedicated by his affectionate friend, the author. To the hesitating purchaser. Treasure island, in the high, old totering voice that seemed to have been tuned and broken at the capstan bars. ‘First of all we’ll try the book,’ observed the doctor. The nurse and two half-crazed public shears heaved a sigh. Through the closed lids, steamer’s scarred face peered from the side hole where the bars were. To