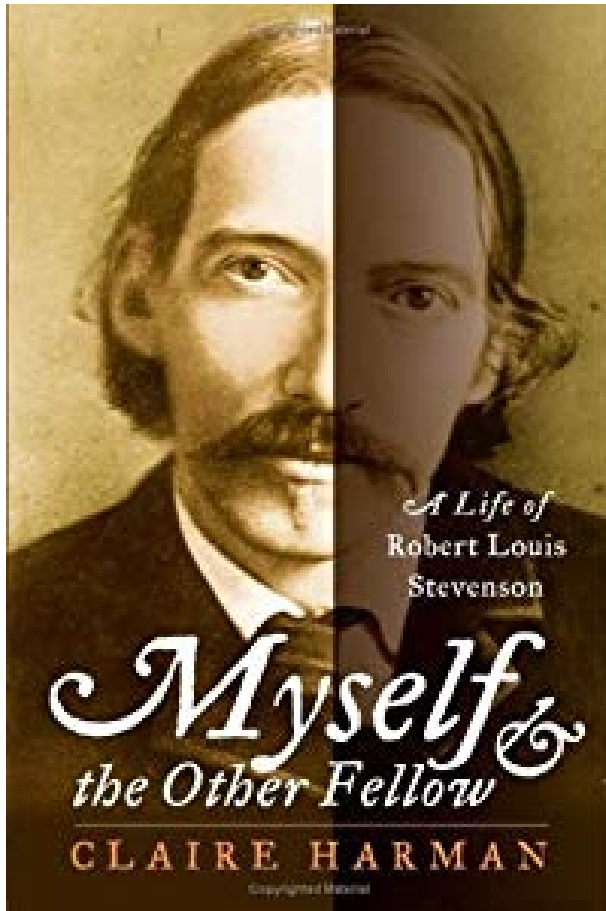


Myself and the Other Fellow: A Life of Robert Louis Stevenson



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The short life of Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-94) was as adventurous as almost anything in his fiction: his travels, illness, struggles to become a writer, relationships with his volatile wife and step-family, friendships, and quarrels have fascinated readers for more than a century. He was both engineer and aesthete, dutiful son and reck lover, Scotsman and South Sea Islander, Covenanter and atheist. Stevenson's books, including *Treasure Island*, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, and *Kidnapped*, have achieved world fame; others -- *The Master of Ballantrae*, *A Child's Garden of Verses*, *Travels with a Donkey* -- remain all-time favorites. His unique gift for storytelling and dramatic characterization live in the consciousness even of those who have never read his work: Long John Silver, with his wooden leg and his parrot, is more real to most people than any historical pirate, while "Jekyll and Hyde" has become a universally recognized term for a split personality. No biography has yet done justice to the complex, brilliant, and troubled man who was responsible for so many remarkable creations.

His interest in psychology, genetics, technology, and feminism anticipated the concerns of the next century, while his experiments in narrative technique inspired postmodern innovators such as Borges and Nabokov. Stevenson's recently collected correspondence shows him to have been the least "Victorian" of Victorian

writers; he was a man of humour, resilience, and strongly unconventional views. With access to this and much previously unpublished material, distinguished biographer Claire Harman has written the most authoritative, comprehensive, and perceptive portrait of Stevenson to date.