

Free Church Manse, Penicuik.
Scotland.

Ap.23.1888.

My dear Freen -

Man, it was ill for ye that yer letter cam on a Monday, for ye'll get a screed. I misdooted we wad ne'er hear hilt nor hair o' ye.

The bit buikie cam back frae Bournemouth, and I feared that the man that took the picturs oot o' the buik had pitten the letter oot o' the gait.

It said on the buik ' Left the Country, left no address,' which lookit like a moonlicht waegaun; but we didna think that o' ye, Maister Stevison.

Onyway, we were blythe to hear o' ye this mornin', it was as guid as Italy to the wifie; we were there last year, but we canna maunt this time, tho she needs't sair Aweel -- ye dinna ken hoo blythe it made us ---- The wife wasna that weel yesterday, so she stayed frae the Kirk, and read twa buiks o' yours - ane Virgini ---- something (ii) , a thrawn kin o' name, for a wee thrawn kin o' buik, and whan she tired o' that, an' couldna get her tongue ower ye, whan ye thocht ye kenned a'thing, an' didna -- she had yer graun' callant-buik aboot the cuddy an' you (iii). It brings the water tae her 'een, that buik, she hardly kens what for - you sae young I think, an' by yersel', an' naebody tae guide ye, like her guidman afore he fell in wi' her.

Man, whan ye come hame, ye'll come out an' see us, an' bring the mistress wi' ye; what a week we wad hae, juist the fowersome, amang the Pentland howes, an' in the bit manse, bielder in winter, caller in simmer, an' amang the buiks - twae cairt-load, like the Meenister of Dule (iv) but no mony theology-buiks, weary fa' them. I'm gled ye stick

to Dumas, he was as like Sir Walter as ony French body could be - and that's no verra -I hae read it (the Vicomte) (v) aften - tho' no near sae aften as yer ain Jeems Hawkins (ae but yon laddie needit his licks) or what's far better Dawvid an' Alan'.

I think the Kirk wadna weary ye; its big, and no stuffy - 'raither ower breezy wi the wun i' the east', the wife says - but then she's a puir feckless Southern (a wunner what thae warm kintra weeman-fowk see in Scotch lads). The first prayer is three or fower meenits, nae prayer should be mair, unless yin's sair hadden tilt, and the sermon inside o' the half oor - if ye'll no believe sic-like's in Scotland, come an' see (vi).

Scotland minds me. Ye're richt, verra richt about the N.B. on my last, note-paper.

Man, nae fear o' me pitten that --. It was a learned callant oot o' Oxford, (where I gaed for my sins to learn an' didna) this dominie-loon (caaed a fellow) wanted my mistress, but she wadna hae him - sae the gangrel waited till we war mairit, an' sent us twenty boxes o' paper wi "N.B" on't, as if Scotland was a conqueret kintra. Wha wad hae thocht the craetur wad hae had that in the heed of

Noo for my name, I'm no a guid writer, or aiblins you a reader - atween us, ye misst my name --- Ye like maps I ken - hae ye a guid map o' Scotlan' ? If no. ye should hae, juist tae warm yer heart at the names. Look at Gallawa, sax mile frae Castle douglas, an ye'll see Crockett-ford (ye can read prent (CROCKETT- FORD), whiles it has juist ae T. --- that's where the wild Gallawa Crocketts, when gaun hame wi Buccleuch's cattle, found the ford stopped wi' the warden's men, threw tar on the beasts' backs, set fire tae't, louped on, an' rade through the warden's men - a hunner mad men on a thoosan' mad stirks, yellin an routin, cleared Buccleuch's men oot o that like tow, and awa tae the back of Minnigaff & Carsephairn whar they belanged, but whar the beasts didna. Man, it wasna richt, I ken brawly, but it was graun', an' it wad hae been worth a sair doup to hae leevd afore John Knox and Richard Cameron, and ridden the ford wi my forebears. Since then the Crocketts hae been there, except a branch that gaed to America, an' made some stir in Texas - Covenanters, Whigs, Cameronians a' - my grandfather often took me to his great grandfather's grave, no far frae the back o' the hoose - 'shot to death by Grier of Lag' etc. It was my grandfather that caaed me 'Samuel Rutherford' but that's ower big a burden, so I never pit ocht but the first letters, an' them no verra plain whiles.

I'm sending you (I'm sure you are tired of the Gallawa by this time) the bit buik - one of three hand-made large-paper copies because we love you, and its only value may be in scarcity of that kind. You never write about love (barring the chambermaid, waes me,) it's nearly all about love. I did not put my name to it, but a name that stuck in my dreamy head for years, Ford Bereton; various lovesick youths so I suppose have bought one edition for presentation and quotation --- as for the following editions --- quoth the raven etc.

But Ford Bereton himself may interest you. He was also a lonely boy, & it is true - as indeed is the buik. folly is so often a fact. I have had various kind letters - from Tennyson, Whittier, & 'Olig Grange' though I never sent a copy to any man I did not know, saving yourself - but I suppose somebody did.

But sermon making and general speaking has knocked poetry out of court for two years, and Dulce Cor seems almost as far behind me, as your first pamphlet published by decent Andrew Elliot does to you, though I have no after record like you - A big Kirk, a heep o' folk, a hantle wark, an' little for't give me plenty to think of specially in winter time. I've been preaching and teaching Evolution, and there is a libel on the horizon which I dont think will come to anything; Wit does, we must emigrate or try to cut you out at bletherin'. I've just finished engineering a course of twenty-two popular Scientific and Literary lectures, and am trying for a library here.

The mistress has come down, and says "All that to Mr Stevenson, he'll never read it". I reply "Likely no, if he was at hame, but amang the Yankees, he'll read it for the Scotch". What does even the best of Englishers ken o' the kindly bairns of icarritch' and 'parritch'.

Man, I wad fain hae your picter; yon thing in the "Century" gars me grue, the man maun hae drawd it on the back o' a siller spune - peety me, ye are never like that. I'll

send ye mine if I can get it without the wife seed; she says its 'not like me, and the collar is abominable'. Weel if I'm no bonny I'm big. One of my Swiss Guides, dear Christian Gosse of Grindelwald, said my Tariff would be "hundert francs, traversiren zwei hundert".

The Mistress is plain to be seen at the beginning o' the buik. She says if she wasn't plain then, she is now, but we differ frequently.

I must not trouble you much longer. It is kind of you to say that you had pleasure in my talk. If you care to write ever so short a note, complaint, growl, or what not -- I will give you the benefit (?) of a long Monday's talk. It is a pleasure to me to talk to you, sure of understanding. I never write when I can help it to anyone, my wife does the correspondence; but it would be a letting out of myself to ease my mind to you.

I am a speaker principally now; but a speaker trying to awaken dulness - my most biting sarcasm and pet tickling phrases were called "merely flippant" by a venerable at the Theological Socy of the County last week. I was reading a paper on Evolutionary Christianity - a kind of ratiocination of your "probably arboreal" - and it came to that probably it was true, but it made me very angry for I was in earnest. They are so contented, and wrap themselves so comfortably in Westminster gravecloths - fie, let us not talk of them.

"You are enjoying yourself" says Mistress R. 'Naturally' says I "talking to a man who has talked to me for ten years & never given me a chance to talk back.

If you are good enough to write to me, don't do it on a Conscience Clearing-House day and dont think of me as a cleric. Probably we would agree on more points than you think possible - even about going to church if you dont feel like it.

But we would be death on Theories as of old in the Spec. and Philomathic where I think we both listened chiefly, and made our speeches on the way home.

Haste ye fast and write -- if ye will to me - at least, more books. I have preached and lectured on most of them, I'm thankful ye didna hear me.

O man, are ye no comin' hame this simmer?

With greeting from my wife & thanks for your message to her & your delightful letter to myself.

I am ever illegibly but cordially

S. R Crockett