

The Club
House, St
Andrews, Fife.
June 18th 1898

Well, Dear Man of Drainie,

I have read your poor lad's Seaside Idylls, and in a word I'll tell you just what I think.

Your introduction is very fitting and graceful. It would have been better with more of Wellwood and less quotation. I'd have left out the long passage from Arnold and the sermon - sea experiences.

Still, I don't know but you are right and that they give the right tang of crude youth, a flavour I also find in the sketches.

De mortuis, my boy, I will not forget. If the writer were alive and asking for advice I could give it him drastically, and be right.

But being of the Beloved of the gods, I will tell you only the appreciative part of my thinkings.

The sketches are just sketches. Wherever they try to be stories, they fail. Wherever they are transcripts they are admirable and the simplest are the best.

"Jane Anne" is my choice; it is right throughout and the end is admirable. It is just what Jane Anne would do.

Barring the tumbling the newly marrieds out of bed at p 21 the 'wooing' and 'wedding' are also true and rightly felt. That paragraph is true enough, but artistically a mistake - at least in a book of sketches. Don't you think so?

Helen Macleod also in "Willie's Sweetheart" is as good as possible and worthy of Barrie. Better in fact - for Barrie does not have to my mind quite the right feeling for the love in a girl's heart. It is always to him a little humorous, which when a girl means it, it hardly ever is in any aspect. One word of disliking. I don't care about "Jock's conversation" and resent the last paragraph [something] p108 very much. It is a mistake to kill Jock. He should be left well and vigorous, with the Dexterous more dexter than ever.