

June 23<sup>rd</sup> 1894

Bank House  
Penicuik

Man, Man, o Man,

Gin e kenned a' ye wadna hae been sae ill at me. Be nae mair thrawn wi' me or crabbit, for o man, I like ye! I ken it luickit like ill-doin, but it wasnt athat, only ill judgment. I gaed an' you micht loot a man that I thought I micht pit confidence in see your poem at the tap o' yer letter, and waes me but he pit it in the Scotsman ower the head o' your Honolulu address, an' then Unwin (an ill death may he dee, baith the twa o them) gaed an' never said a word or let me see a proof o the abominable 'tablet advertisement' that they were pitting' in, but sent the proof in this form [diagram] an' when I got the buik I could had grat man; and I sat doon an' wrote awa' to the publisher and telled him whaur I hopit he wad gang to an' what I jaloosed wad get him. An' he wrote back an' said that the first edeetion was a' selled an' the second prentin, but he wad tak it oot, though that he had gie'n an unco heap o' siller for the buik (anither lee) an' he wood get it back.

But that ye micht ken the warst I hae telled ye an' sent ye yin o' the buiks wi' the Deevilish thing ontilt. It's aff maist o' the second, a' the third, fourth and fifht, and someday I'll maybe forgie mysel, 'tho' I durna keen hoo ever I'll luik ye in the face again. But the mither o' ye will tell ye that it wasba my faut; and deed gin ye want evidence that this is the way o' the thing, Andrew o Saint Anders (an' the brindled hair) can testifee that these things are sae, for he kens a' about it frae the beginnin'. I was ower for a week wi' him at St A, and he's comin here in a wee to bide for ten days.

Ye see I hae left the Manse, maistly for my buiks sake a' the bairns, but its for the quatenes an' the galmour' o the green things. The new hoose is in Sir George Clerk's grounds. The old factors house, very beautiful for situation and rose grown – a delight to me.

Man, I thocht o' ye when I was pittin' up the shelves an' stellin the buiks in rows like Clavers settin' up Society men on the burnsidies up by Garryhorn. I thocht there's a corener he wad like. Theres a walled corner wi' no yae buik that wadna be marrows to his banes.

An the Esk water rinnin clear ower the stanes at the brae fit allow his wandas, an' makin' a moise to pleasure him; an' him cockin' his lug to hear the cushies croon; the gowden efternune! Man it wad be [ ] like heeven to hae ye, an' a kin' providence [ ] sae bring it to pass afore the nicht.

Never heed; dinna begin to the 'Raiders' till ye haean ocht else. I did my best, an' it has to [ ] far awa - farder nor I ever thocht. What ye says about the twa publics is true – true – and the 10,000 certainly selled the Raiders graunly. But I'm minding aye my grandaithers say 'to walk humbly'. But man, I nearly didna for half an hoor after hearing Dawvis Masson on my bits o' buiks yae nicht in Enbra. But I minded on my letters end, an' got up the morrows morn to try an' better it.

I fear me the best I can do for the Cameronians is no muckle and is noo alas! Nearly finished. I am thirled to finish it for Good Words next year and know not whether it will be worthy or not. But it won't thwart your house. So do not fear. It is as far as I can judge, written with a curious detachment, which will I fear, tell against its popularity. The United Societies are in as a back ground to adventure. I had not an idea you were on them or I should not have trespassed. But as it is there is nothing but adventure in the buik. You will treat it broadly and all that. I have confined myself chiefly to Galloway, though Airs Moss is in, and the 'Desirable General Meetings' at Shalloch-on-Minnoch with puir Robin Hamnilton, now on the heightened [ ] now in the vale of tears. I have just been down there living in the herd's houses for a month, and hearing such tales as wad make your mouth water. 'The Slock o' the Dead wife' is the name of a pass with a tale to it to

make your hairs turn grey. What comes in the book for which I have not yet a name – I had thought of ‘Bonnet of Blue’ which would not be bad; but probably ‘The Covenanter’ will be the simplest, or ‘The Cameronian’. A good deal of the book is pure adventure and has little to do with the Cameronians, only three chapters as at present fixed deal with them, and if you sent me word in time, I’ll rewrite them to keep out of your track. I took up the thing largely because Lang has been so infernally cheeky lately about my forbears of the Sanquhar Declaration, and I saw I should show him the other side, which he [ ] declares does not exist. He [ ] me through several pages ever second morning. A little 20,000 word book ‘Mad Sir Uchtred of the Hills’ is to be out in a fortnight. I ran some chapters through the St James Gazette much to the surprise of the Londoners, but Sidney Low (good and honest Israelite) lets me do as I like. It made some high and mighty folk sit up and rub their glasses to come on Mr Alexander Peden in the evening paper.

Yes, you did duly chastise for my insufferable priggish and unbelief last year, and I duly repented in the customary garments, but it is all a wonder to me – the exceeding kindness of nearly everyone – at least of all the first class men. I had a few days in London and saw a good many people. And what (I think you will believe) pleased me more than all, the universal, quite unreserved and affection with which everyone, including even Hardy, speaks of you.

Write to me soon again. My heart is sore today for Sandy Gordon of Earlstoun has just ridden over the brae in the sun shining morning of June 23 1679 with the news of the weary leaguer of Bothwell and his mother sees that he rides by his lane.

So dinna pit nae mair ‘private and confidential’ on mair o’ yer letters,

Aye

S.R.Crockett