

Bank House

Penicuik

December 29 1894

Dear Ashcroft Noble,

Your brotherly letter gave me a great deal of pleasure this morning. I am delighted to hear from you, and I need not say that we shall be still more delighted to see you when you can get away from the turmoil of Babylon to our quiet spaces and woodland walks. We have Lang pretty often - Barrie also was here with his pretty wife and Nicoll is coming next month. When you come that will be another on the pleasant records of Bank House. We have no society here - mere paper makers and dullites - an intelligent banker is our sole speakable person here.

Yes 1894 has been a year of marvels for me. I suppose well on to 100,000 copies of my books were sold in this country alone - of course I did not write any of them during this year, and that is of course where common critic slips up - as it is quite natural he should and I don't blame him. The work I am just finishing "The Men of the Moss Hags" is much stronger. I have given a whole undivided year to it, and to nothing else. It is very full of history, but I hope that I have been able to keep the romantic interest as well.

It is hardly my way to say what I think of your work generally. I think few men have done more to recognise good literature. You belong to my society of "Encouragers" quite as much as William Grey.

I am glad you like Ian Maclaren. He writes abominable (wholly) Scots tone dialect, but from the point of view of the old Scottish language fearful. Yet in spite of that he triumphs and is great. I like his lightest things best. The funny speech of Drumtochty best of all. His pathos I don't care so much for. But he is a fine fellow and should go far. His book is noble in tone and spirit and I know I am a pedant in 'dialect' - which is not dialect but a fine old language.

I could not say anything about Stevenson. It is an old article in the "Bookman" I could not even touch it up. I thought your verses beautiful. Did you know that the last two lines of RLS's poem were simply my dedication of the Stickit Minister to him cut into lines. It was

"To R.L.S. of Scotland and Samoa I dedicate these stories of that Grey Galloway land
Where about the graves of the Martyrs the whaups were crying His heart remembers how"

It might be worth while saying so somewhere, for the P.M.G printed them and referred to them without any reference to me. Not as it matters, but presently some fool will find the lines in my book and say I plagiarised them from R.L.S. In sending them to me Stevenson wrote "I have turned your beautiful phrase of prose into three verses which I sent to you etc"

Greetings to you from my wife and myself and the bairns too. Did I never send you a Raiders? Surely! If I did not, say so on a P.C. and I shall send, [] if I have not.

Ever yours

S.R. Crockett