

LETTERS FROM READERS

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11.)

S. R. Crockett

Oakleigh, Boswall Road, Edinburgh.

June 21, 1932

SIR,—It is a pleasure to join with your correspondent in thanking Sir Herbert Maxwell for his model tribute to the memory of S. R. Crockett. One of the most absorbing books I read in early life was Sir Herbert's biography of the late W. H. Smith, who for long was Leader of the House of Commons, and who earned (no doubt very appropriately from Sir Herbert's point of view!) the nickname of "Old Morality." One envies Sir Herbert his gift of happy delineation. And it is well to recognise his own claims to authorship.

While serving my apprenticeship in Dundee, I was enabled to hear a number of eminent lecturers (under a scheme endowed by Lord Armitstead), one of these being S. R. Crockett. I well remember the tall, stalwart, red-haired and red-bearded figure (a massive Shaw), who had for chairman Sir John Leng, M.P., the distinguished journalist whose name will for ever be associated with Dundee. Crockett's subject was "Scottish Humour," and he was vastly entertaining, but I felt that his best friend would not have praised his delivery. The public rostrum was not his milieu. This lecture was shortly after printed in the "Contemporary." Crockett later edited an admirable set of Galt's works, which did much to revive interest in Galt.

Incidentally, one feels that a debt of gratitude is due to those who endowed winter lecture schemes, by means of which the poorest could listen to men and women of distinction in various spheres of activity. Peter Drummond, of Stirling, was another public benefactor of this kind. In Edinburgh, of course, we have for many years been well served in this respect by the Philosophical Institution. The wireless, no doubt, is a great boon. But what is any lecture or musical or dramatic programme without the living presence of the lecturer or performer?—I am, &c.

J. LESLIE MACCALLUM.