

FCM,
Penicuik
May 17th 1893

My dear Mr Watt,

I thank you for your kind letter and cordially commit all my literary affairs to your firm and able direction, excepting only my arrangements with the Christian Leader (for the meanwhile). I am indebted to Wylie for a promise to stand by me in the payment of a sum of £335 at the coming November term – a loan which I had to contract at the time of my marriage under painful circumstances, which I shall not write, but shall tell you when I see you.

Now, if he turns rusty and at my putting all my affairs into your hands as he is rather inclined to do, will you stand by me at that time? I mean could you get me a loan of that sum. I have not much security – two Insurance policies of £1500 of about £400 surrender value and say £1000 worth of books (sale value.) Perhaps I would not need it, but it has been the fly in my ointment for a long time. I found myself landed for it on my return from my honeymoon, and it nearly turned my brain. I have paid £800 of it in five years, and I must finish off the £335 at Nov 12th 1893. Wylie offered to back me but is displeased to have my wares so suddenly appreciated beyond their former value, and may, as I said, turn rusty. He wants of course to keep me in his own hands. If you could guarantee me – say as perspective of ‘Rogues’ Island and other work – it would keep my mind easy and enable me to put my best work into my books. O that I could just for ever be a desert island and financed by Watt! I soon as I get the ‘Lilac’ through hands I shall do three or four stories which are waiting to be written such as you asked for the P.M. Maga. And others about 5000 words; and then we will plunge into the adventure book – and see if I can’t beat Treasure Island!! No Scot needs the ‘couthy conceit’ says my wife.

My wife wishes to say that she would much like to have, for herself, the other photograph. She refer’s to Ayton’s as ‘that libel.’ Women have such a judicial and calm way of looking at works of art. I know it is very daring in me writing to you thus; but I feel that you are a friend, and you might feel that I was keeping something back if I did not. I have written Wylie plainly telling him what your position is to be and what his. So you see, I almost count (though with some fear and trembling) on your support. I have no other debts whatever and this millstone is a great one to you; but I cannot utter the anxiety is has been to me.

I feel of course that I do owe something to Wylie for his offer even if in changed circumstances he sees fit to withdraw it. You will send me a lone to ease my mind. You could if you chose apply to my Banker, Mr I.D. Anderson [poss J.D.] Bank of Scotland, Greenside, Edinburgh who knows all my position as to my financial positions, if you thought it necessary, but of course the fewer who know the better. The lawyers (representing the estate of a dead relative who lent me the money five years ago have been worrying me to repay) I managed to put them off till November. I would have been all right but for the defection of a number of my richest members who left the church at the Disestablishment questions last July which reduced my income by £150.

I hope to put the Herd in your hands in time for the Autumn. Rogues Island as I said about middle of Sept; portions of it in August to submit to Lang.

I am deeply grateful for the Kiplings. They are a treasure. I shall keep my finger on them. I enclose informal note of agency, and am, in all friendship and confidence, very truly yours
S.R.Crockett

PS I find that Wylie had written Unwin some time ago asking better terms for himself and for me. He acted when the first edn was arranged and might naturally expect to do it again. There is nothing in it anyway.