

S. R. Crockett

4 Bangholm Terrace, Edinburgh,

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SIR,—To all lovers of Crockett and his Galloway stories the correspondence in *The Scotsman* must have given both enlightenment and pleasure. Before the correspondence is closed I should like to be allowed to correct an error which has been corrected many times but which continues to appear with an amazing regularity. It appeared in your excellent report of Sir Herbert Maxwell's address at the unveiling of the Crockett Memorial, and will no doubt appear again.

In the second of the three finely descriptive verses of dedication to Crockett by R. L. Stevenson, beginning "Blows the wind to-day," the word "homes" is almost invariably printed instead of "howes," which was the word used by Stevenson. Even in the admirable anthology, *Poems of To-day*, the word is wrongly given. This error is all the more inexcusable as the three verses in Stevenson's neat handwriting are reproduced in facsimile in the illustrated edition of *The Raiders*.

The word "howe" is a fine old Scottish word meaning hollow, glen, or narrow plain, and much the more fitting word for the purpose of Stevenson, who was too careful in his choice of words to speak of "homes" on the "vacant wine-red moor."

This is the verso:—

"Grey recumbent tombs of the dead in desert places,
Standing stones on the vacant wine-red moor,
Hills of sheep, and the howes of the silent
vanished races,
And winds, austere and pure."

It was this word that was used by the friend of Archbishop Beaton in the well-known warning:—"If you mean to burn any more of these heretics I advise you to burn them in howe cellars, for the reek of Master Patrick Hamilton has infected as many as it blew upon."

I would like to add that in my opinion one of the most characteristic pieces of Crockett's writing, with the true Galloway flavour, is his delightful Foreword to the splendid edition in two volumes of Patrick Walker's lives of the Covenanters, edited by Dr Hay Fleming.—I am,
&c. ALEXANDER CAMERON.