

**THIS IS UNCLEAR IN MANY SECTIONS [ ] Proving how hard his handwriting was for Stevenson, and us, to read!**

Free church manse  
Penicuik  
NB (scored out) Scotland

March 31<sup>st</sup> 1890  
My dear friend

For outside the mistress and a small young lady who sits on the floor and informs dear father that three little kickies have lost their mickeys. I have none dearer or better known to me. Many and many's the time I would have written to you for love and easement. But man, I did write at least three times since I had a scrape from you and I didn't know whether ever you had got any of my letters. I got discouraged like and thought I must wait till ye tired o the [ ] and unchancy folk. Once it comes that I have a great deal to say to you and now proceed to say it.

The disaster first. Well, we are not out of the wood yet. Yesterday and today we were burying 34 of the poor chaps. They were only got yester week after 7 months. We have a very considerable charity for their widows and children. But O man, the amount of Petty consequentiality and [ ] bored condescension that is given out with makes me sick to see it. If it hadn't been for my father in law, Lang of the Brindled hair, Hugh Barbour and my dear old friend Colonel Henry Marco Polo at whose death bed I was privileged to wait four weeks last December, I don't know what I should have done, but I've been without funds since Lang sent us a cheque in January. And your helping hand overseas is just what I want. You don't say how much, but I'll risk the pounds. I'll risk 10 pounds. And if that's too much, just say, I swear and please you at the greedy Black Minister Corbys, though I'm a sport wearing grey no' black, you'll give me a wee. [ ] when [ ] come this year has been just ruination. Well the poor folks here and I have mony a time had a sair heart to find the bottom of my pooch when I would dearly hae lickit tea and odd crown or two. There are some cases needing specially. You know that whilst collie a folk are married ower the tings that up or very real as long as they shift to a new place and it's no kenned. But when they have to prove lawful connexion O man the sorrow. Also it happens that we have widows, indeed mother's, good partners faithful that never were wives and so do not receive their due portion from the fund. I fought hard for the humanist and morality of the master but the uncle worked too many for me and say ill Wally they were at me a [ ] or sleek in our immortality. Good save us was ever sick a thing kent. However they have not wanted yet no while I can beg. Well then there's but two bits o lassie's that were to be married the very day after the fatal 6th of September. [ ]knew we are burn o [ ]and the Daddy o them buried [ ]March 30th after being dead five months after the bit weans saw the lift. The mistress has been seeing after them in their trouble poor things and I got them 10 pounds apiece, I ken that's no muckle. We are [ ]out or walk yet wheel a wheel, That's all . It'll all be braw and bonnie when ye come in the summer. Say nay mair about but I knew it made me no that weel myself oot nicht and day for a while. Then watching and nursing our dear old Marco at the last. The wife helping me and then home to take the influenza, lie three weeks as I never did before in my life and then be sent off to a dreary English watering place where no wonder I had a relapse and my wife had to come down and nurse me. Now I am better again and looking forward to your coming out to us in the fullest of the year that will crown the year indeed for my dear and myself language. Perhaps Lang will be about then in which case you can abuse each other over a pipe in the study or [ ] as you please.

I fear when your wife and you come we shall want to be very selfish to keep you all to ourselves though. I shall, of course, meet you in Edinburgh just to report progress. Since you appeared to have heard from me June 1888, you say I have a little girl born August of that year [ ] nearly two years old. Do you know many a time and I have said that you ought to be proud of her love. Your photograph you sent is her chief joy. And that since she first began to notice it has been kissed and cooed over and [ ] mauled even in its frame. And Maisie Kaka, her name for herself, comes often into dear father's study to give a cush to Mr Steenson, which I am sure he would rather have in the flesh than vicariously, except perhaps after Toffy. I send you a photograph taken when she was 13 months old, the last we have. Of course, she is much more a little woman now with curls down over her shoulders as yellow as sunshine. I send you also a photograph of my wife taken November 1888 when she was just recovering from an illness [ ] The drawing in Dulce Cor is much like a her and canny. Why even yet she long's greatly to see your wife. and yourself and take her up by. Habley's Howe and Glen Course and Kirkyaird and Logan House and Logan See and even by the cold stained steps. What names these must be to her. How full of connotation to you. I add a picture taken for fun but which reveals an awful domestic tragedy, believe the culprit taken in the act. She he has been burying more books. He has succeeded in smuggling them over the frontier but his guilt has found him out. The bill comes into his wife's hand and she brings him to book with the fell items. Observe his conscience stricken look and the grim determination on the face of his judge who has the bill for [ ] from Jenner's when pocket unbeknown that the things are too deep for tears. Furthermore, professional inclination to say something. Thirdly, I am transformed into a bold bad solicitor in a small way since the new year I have been editing for Gaul and Ingalls a Maga for Sunday school teachers and my way to get them interested in a higher view of their functions than merely hearing something as most of them do. I send you four numbers. I don't expect you to read them. We have little money to start on and the editor has to write about 15 pages out of the 24 every month so the kind of stuff is way some but the Egyptology may interest you and some other things are amusing. I don't ask you for a word sometimes because I would not worry my friend but if ever you could send me a dozen lines or more about any mortal thing there would be joy in this manse. I think you are a [ ] of preaching. I like your sermons better than my own [ ] even when I don't believe the doctrines, and a word from you would give no me a great shove up. The total work monthly is not of my choosing nor were some of the early papers of my accepting, then I shall have been ill also and the final choice of what was to go in fell to the ignorant publishers The kink goes on well as far as that goes I had to chance a defiant one to Dunedin NZ and also an offer of [ ] ship at Princeton US which sharpened up the folks and made them anxious to keep me.

My dear is much better quite recovered from her long illness malaria fever caught in S Italy and for a rank Englisher has become wonderfully attached to the grey windy uplands. She is much more Presbyterian than I and more and far fiercer in her allegiance to the simple forms of our worship. It [ ] to find that many of those so suddenly doomed faced death bravely in the new faith and hope obtained at our mission meetings on the green only a month or two before they wrote their testimony on their [ ] in the last hours of facing a certain death. Pray God we can be as faithful. There I am again but they were bringing up the message to day. I've just been seeing them. You knew about the three pony laddies who when the man at the bottom called. 'Come on the pits on fire' said 'no, we'll no come we'll run and warn the men.' There's stuff in the old land yet they were bringing two of them up to day, one was locked in his father's arms. We had found them thus. This is mair than neither you nor Sir Walter could bear. 1500 feet down the Laddie George Pennycook turned him about from the certainty of swift exit into the sunshine and went to find his father and found him. Who shall say but so he did not sooner find the light and the father of us all. You [ ] this tiring day over back in the book lined floor and almost ceiling study, a good going pipe sandwiched with cigarettes a hassock and a book on my knee to write upon and so for a word or two I look over the magazine of mine and [ ] I think bleak shame to send it to ye man . Ye are a boring one, ye give me nay address but the SS Lubeck. and that will no bide a tween at Pierre and

Sydney till this gangs there. But as I say, I feel ashamed that you should read much of what I have written there, but I did not choose the subjects and am hampered by many things I must not say. And in my [ ] manner of saying them for fear of the young person who teaches in Sunday schools and manages by accident to do some good, your story of the tinned mules came home to me. I've never been to the in the Pacific, but I have been along the North Coast of Siberia to the [ ] mouth and hadn't we tinned meats there and no American tins either but Archangel, and tinned so there were no spoiled tins. Then I tell you only some more highly flavoured than others like [ ] oysters and rotten salmon [ ] with a stick like porridge or cut with a cleaver if frozen, and us coming back from [ ] the only things that fed our flesh meat. Fresh were the soups. But do you say we had a broad time of it here in Pennicuik? Man, if I had gotten a bit word at ye then you would he come to stretch here as hard as ye could something for the young's grain for vegetables. Onions like young turnips and brussels sprouts and even asparagus that divides the royalty with the mighty onion. And as for milk and cream man, my greatest admirers is the Lady of the cream and whatever gangs without the Manse gets a good pint. Ilka day I could not be [ ] my parrot for cream of the night and I had a jug of good new milk at my elbow. Just let it let it doon like if it were ower rich. I may therefore consider a fortnight's visit as settled. You shall [ ] and bedroom for the mistress and your self. It looks on the Pentlands or if you like quiet you shall hae the best bedroom, for there ye can a' hear the burns and that looks on the Penicuik woods and over the muir foots. You'll come I ken. Any line speaking o'Connell, it may interest you to know that I read to him a week before he died. Great Master of Balantry. Youre crowning mercy and the tears ran down his cheeks at the reading of the marvellous chapter, the Knight of the 27th. I could not think why he was agitated and was continuing when he said, 'I am not strong enough to stand writing of that kind.' As the road to Lucknow, now let me see. Since I wrote you, I've got on the wrong box, which I can't say. And re-read so often as the others. It amused me excessively, but it made me say, this is no my ain't Robin. I put it with the Black Arrow, which I agree with your wife, in finding unreadable with as good attempts as hers and nearly as good will. I may be wrong. However, likely I am. For my father in law, who has just been reading it, admires it exceedingly. No me. You will pardon my frankness. I could so successfully take a First class in any examination on Stevenson ,R.L. Even filled with credit as Stevenson lectures ship. That surely I may give an opinion, but the Master , O the master is just grand, and I don't think it falls off, except in the sense in which the dent Blanche and [ ] that Breck on and Mountarosa fall away from the Matterhorn. You can't have it all splendid snow crested upward, rush off peak, and you can't for very pity to humanity. Have two chapters like that. What a wonderful night and the candles that burn straight as I have seen them many a night at [ ]. When I tried to snuff them with a revolver and did so about once in five goes, I'll have a cigarette and another read at it. Well, no. If I do, you'll not get another word out of me. The night and take my Bonnie Man. After that, the grimmest and greatest thing in the book, almost in any book of yours, is my Lord, sitting gloating and glowering at the master, clouting breeks on the waterside at New York [ ] Canyon of Arthur. But I'm saying far too much. You'll never get to the end of half of this screed. I don't know what you think of Bacon's aphorism, but I know that much speaking makes me a most unready man at tackling the writing. Reading makes me a full man, perhaps with two vowels and only one consonant. And writing found me and leaves me a' most inexact as you. So you must attack this leather as you find it. I am not afraid of disenchantment. I expect no rainbow, but a stiff necked opinionated dream haunted man after my own heart with a tricky puck up his sleeve and his heart where it ought to be. You must look for a darrell yet sheepish crow not in rainbows, but in hot and grey, as becomes a shepherd of a race of shepherds, as Galloway, as Criffell and about the size of Ben Cairn.

I am longing to hear about Samoa and the wide spaces of the ocean of [ ] I've been wearying for you many days to think you've actually seen it all and made a native wondrous shin up a tree for a coconut while you stood below with a horse whip or did the beggar out [ ] Swiss family Robinson or drive in pegs. Kingston and you know the difference between a beachcomber and Bech

de mere wondrous sage. I stand and gaze and you understand the Constitution of Jamaica and can give the devil points in his traffic in Seoul's from your knowledge of the laughter traffic in bodies. ? I don't say you would, but you could never mind. I've been [ ] if you've been roasted and you have had a to take your idea of white beer from white beer from the zoo or the humble show in the [ ] ranked more likely and you tried to make a snow hut which you called an igloo in your backyard after reading the world of ice by Ballantyne and made an ignominy. Was me boy too and probably got soundly spanked for making a [ ] of yourself when you were brought in by the ear and you never saw how the interior of a bear looks when you look past his teeth down his throat and he's coming to dine with and on you. And as for a [ ] and a reindeer sled. Well [ ] opinion on them is [ ] plainly worth candy. But the hours getting late. It's afloat in your bed. You should be doctor [ ] write to us soon. It makes life worth living and the hope of your coming gives us a definite point to live towards. My wife sends her greetings to you both and your little sweetheart Maisie Goldilocks sends you a kiss. I shake your hand ever your friend if so you will.

your friend  
SR Crockett.