

Still in Private Hospital
Near Perpignan
Pyrenees Orientales

December 1, 1913

My Dear Fellow Labourer,

Your interesting and brightly written letter of fraternal goodwill reached me some days before the plaid and the books, which came safely by means of my Bank out here.

Your very amusing account of the effect of the other people's sheep on honest and worthy people was much relished by me. I am glad you are out of that business and am only sorry that you should have been worried by it at all. You are made of finer clay than to have to struggle about mere precedencies, but I am glad you found the books and the plaids correctly and exactly for me - for all which I am deeply grateful to you and to your wife. I will take your hint as to "peats" etc and act upon them you may be sure.

I am still only partly able for work. I have had rather a bad three weeks and have been confined to my room, which means to bed and couch, all the time. But I have not had such a turn for a year which ought to make me grateful. Though how much more grateful I should have been not to have had it at all!

On the whole I may call myself content. I can live here with my windows open and my lungs full of fresh air. Here I can do a little work occasionally, and even when the days are warm and the breeze propitious, rather more than a little.

But early winter always tries me, even here and were I in the North I might as well retire to my little landed property (or "howking") in Balmaghie Kirkyard. To live and work, however, are great things and permission to do both about as much as we have any call to ask of God.

I remember looking from Monte Rosa across the Great Plain of Italy a hundred miles to Monte Viso - all corn and fine lands, crowded with towns, villages and farms. A sense of the insignificance of the life of man came over me. But it was my eye which was distorted. For once down there on a farm became at once interested in all the outgoings and incomings of the peasant and farmer folk and saw that I had been only reclusing myself wilfully from the life of men.

I do not understand whether the "sent" book packages are at the Manse or at the Cottage. If at the Manse please open them and mark on one of the lists which are enclosed what volumes I have received, also please inform Dent that these packages have been received by you for me who am kept abroad by continued indisposition. If at the cottage, Dent must just "do without".

I have to keep my son Philip busy contradicting the paragraphs about my being ill etc. For publishers won't take books from sick authors any more than people will be cured by an invalid doctor. So I say as little as I can about my illness, and my literary agent Mr. Watt, exhorts me to say nothing at all.

I enjoy the Montague very much and above all I am glad to have my old Bible, marked when I still knew a good deal of Greek and even a little Hebrew. I envy you who have kept your classes up. I can read Latin still, because so many chronicles and historical works are written in Latin, but of

Greek I could not pass, except in the New Testament now (by remembrance of the context).
Xenophon would throw me sure and ask for Hebrew - I don't believe I know all the letters.

All good grace to you and salaam to the lady your wife.

Ever your friend,

S.R. Crockett

I hope to shake your hand some good day yet to come.