

## Crockett Timeline for June 1894

June began with Crockett returning from Galloway, via Edinburgh where on Sunday 2nd he was preaching for Dr Whyte. He spent the rest of the month at home in Penicuik, mostly working hard on the serialisation of *Men of the Moss Hags* for Good Words. But at the beginning of the month, Unwin was chasing him for the completion of *Mad Sir Uchtred* for his 'Antonym' series. He also had to deal with corrections for the novel version of *The Lilac Sunbonnet*, still running in serial form.

*4th June*

*Telegram*

*Just home from ten days absence. Uchtred tomorrow complete writing. Crockett*

*4th June*

*Bank House*

*Dear Unwin,*

*Don't be a bear. I'll send you the whole of *Mad Sir U* tomorrow. I have been away for ten days and recruiting in the wilds far from the letters of ravening and ferocious publishers.*

*The copy of Lilac for corrections has not come. I shall give it you in three days time after receipt. The Playactress when I promised it in August.*

*We are in great distress about the sad and terribly sudden death of Dr Nicoll's wife.*

*Ever yours*

*SRC*

Note that he had not stayed with Dr Nicoll when in London in March because Robertson Nicoll's wife was ill.

*5th June*

*My Dear Unwin.*

*I am just home from my recruiting tour. I take up on fewer than four letters of yours in which you generally abuse me for my conduct, but as I told you before, do not be a bear. Don't shout at the man at the piano, he is doing his best.*

*I have sent away 'Mad Sir Uchtred' this afternoon so that should stop your ravening maw. Send me your copy of 'the Lilac'. I have not another to mark for the press. There will not be many corrections but still I would like carefully to go over it. It was corrected before 'The Raiders' and I have learned much in the interval. I had not heard about John Faa from the friend you mention till this morning but I will write to him. (Have done so)*

*I am glad to hear you have all you material for the illustrated 'Stickit' Of course you are the only final judge of what is suitable and artists and author must bow to you. I am very glad that you are completely under way.*

*With kindest regards*

*Faithfully yours*

*SRC*

*Penicuik*

*7th June 1894*

(headed with a couple of pictures of gravestones with unwin's name)... *I am killing myself with work.*

*Will reply rest again and hurry with Lilac.*

*My dear Unwin,*

*In haste to catch post*

*The Dedication and Notice to Sir Uchtred need not be paged. Indeed they are better not pages or if paged in roman in middle of page.*

*Drawings arrived all safe. Will write Burn Murdock. He is an everlasting nuisance. An ill death may be die! As our excellent ballads say.*

*Yours SRC*

On the same day he writes to a friend (surname unknown at this time) from his youth. In this letter he writes about the aborted plan between him and Barrie to go and visit Stevenson.

*June 7<sup>b</sup> 1894*

*Bank House*

*My Dear Harry,*

*It was a great pleasure to have a greeting across the water from an old 'pal' of min in C.D. one of the few who really entered into my life. I am glad to hear you are flourishing and that you like my books. They have certainly done amazingly well. We have sold 40,000 Raiders in seven weeks.*

*You will see I have left the Manse, though not yet the Kirk, I am however on the way probably. I have many invitations from publishers and others to visit the states and it is very probable I shall do so before long on my way to Samoa to see my old friend R.L.Stevenson.*

J.M.Barrie and I had made it up to go, when he went off and took bronchitis. He is however better. He is coming here to bide with us next month. Us means a wife and bairnies three. Are you also a Benedict? It seems quite wonderful to think of you remembering that very shady transaction about the 'Tales of a Grandfather' and it made me laugh heartily. I remember waiting outside the Bank at the back for you to purloin a copy of the Scottish Chiefs which belongs if I mistake not to your brother Bill as he was termed irreverently. On another occasion I remember us lying on our several 'wames' on the wall of your garden looking down on the passers by up the Back Street. We had 'catties' and pease and we practised on the travellers and on the cattle that went to the Market. I was the better shot I always upheld, but you were the provost's son and could make faces at the drovers. This was brought to notice of Mr John Conper who unfortunately gave us 'something warm' in his accustomed admirable way. Macmillan of N.Y my Yankee publishers, have sent me some hundreds of American opinions which must read very strangely to you who know all these things so accurately and know how the whole thing is.

If you have a wife and chicks, give them my (and our) kindest regards. If not be ashamed of yourself and go at once and get some

Ever truly

Your old friend

SRCrockett

In the following letters we might detect something of a strain in the relationship between Unwin and Crockett.

9th June

Dear Unwin

I have written Burn Murdoch. If he writes you any more simply refer him to me. He is a perfect nuisance. The drawings have arrived all right but I have not yet got them opened. I am working late and early revising the 'Lilac' and hope to send it to you early next week. What do you call that for despatch? I think you should have put up a monument to me even in advance of the usual testimonial. I am sorry you have had to repaginate, but I shall be wiser next time. I am not up in these technicalities.

I have written Maxwell of Dumfries. If the glossary is a good one we might possibly use it, if you think it possible.

With kind regards

Yours faithfully

SRC

*Penicuik*

*15th June 1894*

*Dear Unwin,*

*By the seventeen guns of Port Royal, NO!!!! Did I ever hear tell of anything so cool, breezy and refreshing. Not send me proofs of the Lilac.*

*I'll see you especially and particularly hanged, drawnn [sic] and quartered first.*

*I've a reppitation now mind you, and no tinker's type. So send me proofs made up into pages. I shan't need galley proofs and shall make as few corrections as possible but proofs I maun hae.*

*Also I wanted a proof of the first sheet - dedication etc of Sir Uchtred.*

*Go ahead without the telegraph poles. Denholm Y has gone to pot or Jericho or somewhere - or is in hiding. I can't reach him anyway, and don't know when he will again reach parts that are known*

*With kind regards*

*Yours brimstoneiously*

*SRC*

*Penicuik*

*19th June 1894*

*Dear Unwin*

*You might send proof of the 'Lilac' in large instalments or altogether and I would pass it very rapidly. I did not know the book was passed for the press in the US. I asked for a revise but I never got it so Appleton's must just 'dree their weird.' I returned the glossary yesterday with some corrections. I rather wish we had kept the American right of the *Lilac* in your hands, but one must live and learn. I had an offer from Harper and Co y'day, for them. I am wearying to see 'Mad Sir Uchtred.' I hope it will not be long before you can send me copies - cloth ones of course.*

*With kind regards*

*Faithfully yours*

*SRC*

*(I don't know how many you are going to stand me. 2 doz at least I hope SRC)*

*Penicuik*

*22nd June*

*Dear Unwin,*

*I shall, as you say keep the 'Lilac' proof back until I have one hundred pages or so and then send it. There are hardly any mistakes except a few literals. I think it would be wise to print the glossary in double columns and bind it at the end of the book. It is, as you say, too small for a special pamphlet. I should be glad to go over the proofs.*

*I am glad you are getting on with the Illustrated 'Stickit' It has not yet arrived but I shall go to work upon it when it does. With kind regards*

*SRC*

*Sat morning and you say sent off on Thursday, I hope all right..*

Then, on the 23rd we have a letter (unclear to whom) talking about *Men of the Moss Hags* and some research.

*Bank House*

*June 23<sup>rd</sup>*

*Dear Sir,*

*My friend Sir Herbert Maxwell has got a friend of yours to bore you about some literary difficulties of mine. I have been writing books about Raiders and other bad characters, and now I have to write about heavy cavalry, or at least to bring them in in a new story of the Covenanting time in Scotland.*

*I have a fight on horseback to start with and I don't want to make Gordon of Lochinvar and Peter Inglis of the Dragoons make arrange fools of themselves. When I have that Chapter done, would you kindly read it over and tell me if there is anything particularly asinine in it.*

*Futhermore is there any way of finding out what was the accoutrement and arms of the Greys about 1680? They would wear long cavalry swords with basket hilts I suppose, and 'buff coats' are mentioned by chroniclers, but one can rarely rely on these details.*

*Sir Herbert thinks that ordinary dragoons had only carbines or firelocks; but 'heavy swords' are so persistently mentioned in all contemporary records that I cannot help thinking he must be mistaken.*

*Apologising for troubling you*

*I am, Dear Sir,*

*Faithfully yours*

*SRC*

At around this time Crockett received a letter from RLS (date not known but he usually replied swiftly, so I've inserted it here just before his reply) Note that at this point Crockett had been working hard on *Men of the Moss Hags* for 'Good Words' for some time, so Stevenson's desire for him to 'hold back' would have been impossible, even if he wanted. And also, in Crockett's reply, note his own version of the 'tablet advert' stooshie.

Dear Mr Crockett,

*Come I was very angry with you, but I have not the heart to be longer, and shall just swallow my little rufflement in silence or what is perhaps better irrelevant speech.*

*True it is and of verity that I have not yet The Raiders, though it has been a month here. There are certain times when fiction becomes illegible to me, fades out, becomes blank paper; and I am in one of these fits of heresy. But I shall read it soon. In the meanwhile, what a success you have had! How grateful you should be! And with how much penitence you should recall your faithless and dispirited words of last year, which I then chastised you for and made you repent in ashes and rags! I fear with every book that it may have no merit; I never fear it will be so full of merit that the public can't see it. There are two publics; about 10,000 persons who like literature qua literature if it's good; and about 100,000 people who like ink upon paper, if it's interesting. You can't live on the first public; but the first public with its 10,000 voices is the great advertiser; they dance with the 100,000, they meet him (it, I should say) at dinner, and they sell it your book, whether it likes or not.*

*I say, if you're on the Covenanting racket, let the wheels of your chariot move a little slowly for pity's sake! Is it the Cameronians you are after? It is a fine subject but give unto the flying hart, time to breathe how short so ever.*

THIS IS TO GIVE NOTICE THAT THE UNITED SOCIETIES IS RESERVED STRICTLY RLS

For three years, because, by that time, I shall really be seeing my subject; and then I'll race you! Yours sincerely, RLS

To which Crockett replied...

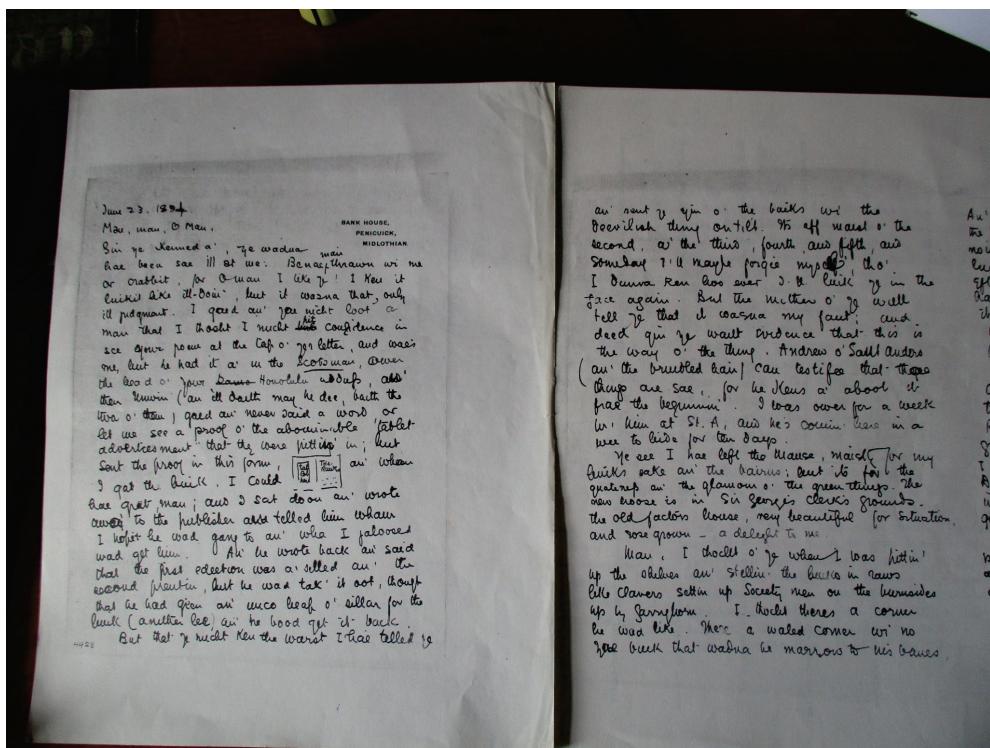
Bank House

June 23rd

To Stevenson

Man, man, O man,

*Gin ye kenned a', ye wadna hae been sae ill at me: Be nae mair thrawn wi me or crabbit, for O man I like ye! I ken it luikit like ill-doin', but it wasna that, only ill judgment. I gied an' nicht but a man that I thocht I might pit confidence in sae your poem at the tap o' yer letter, and waes me, but he had it a' in the Scotsman, even the heado' your Honolulu (?) an' then Unwin (an ill death may be dee, baith the twa o' them) gaed an' never said a word, or let me see a proof o' the abominable tablet advertisement that they were pitting in,; but sent the proof in this form [ small diagram TABLET AD THE RAIDERS]*



*An whan I gat the buik, I could hae grat man; and I sat doon an' wrote awa' to the publisher and telled him whaur I hopit he wad gang to an' what I jaloosed wad get him. An' he wrote back an' said that the first edition was a' sell'd an' the second prentit, but he wad tak it oot, though that he had gien an unco' heap o' siller for the buik (another lee) an' he bood? Get it back.*

*But that ye micht ken the warst I hae telled ye an' sent ye yin o' the buiks wi' the deevilish thing ontilt. Its aff maist o' the second, a' the third, fourth, and fift and someday I'll maybe forgie myself, tho' I durna ken hoo ever I'll luik ye in the face again. But the mither o' ye will tell ye that it wasna my fault; and deed gin ye want evidence that this is the way o' the thing. Andrew o' Saint Andrews (an' the brindled hair) can testify that these things are sae, for he kens a' aboot it frae the beginnin.' I was ower for a week wi' him at St A, and he's comin' here in a wee to bide for ten days.*

*Ye see I hae left the Manse, maistly for my buiks sake an' the bairns; but its for the guateness an' the glamour o' the green things. The new hoose is in Sir George Clerk's ground. The old factors house, very beautiful for situation and rose grown - a delight to me.*

*Man, I thocht o' ye when I was pittin' up the shelves an' stellin' the buiks in rows like Clavers settin' up Society men on the burnsides up by Garrythorn. I thocht there's a corner he wad like. There a waled corner wi' no sae buk that wadna be marrow to his banes.*

*An, the Esk water running clear over the stanes at the brae fit abloo his windas an' makin' a noise to pleasure him; an' him cockin' his lug to hear the cushies croon i' the gowden efternune! Man, it wad be rael like heeven to be ye, an' a kin' providence even sa bring it to pass afore the nicht.*

*Never heed; dinna begin to the 'Raiders' till ye haena ocht else. I did my best, an' it has be carriet far awa' - farder nor I ever thocht. What ye says aboot the twa publics is true - true - and the 10,000 hae certainly sell'd 'The Raiders' graunly. But I'm minding aye my grandfather's say 'to walk humbly'. But, man, I nearly didna for half an hoor after hearing Davrid Masson on my bets o' bucks yae nicht in Embra. But I minded on my latter end, an' got up the morrow's morn to try an' better it.*

*I fear me the best I can do for the Cameronians is not muckle and is noo alas! Nearly finished. I am thisled to finish it for Good Words next year and know not whether it will be worthy or not. But it won't thwart your house. So do not fear. It is, as far as I can judge, written with a curious detachment, which will, I fear, tell against its popularity. The United Societies are in as a background to adventure. I had not an idea you were on them or I should not have trespassed. But as it is there is nothing but adventure in the buik. You will treat it broadly and all that. I have confined myself chiefly to Galloway, through Airs Moss is in, and the 'despicable General Meetings' at Shalloch on Minnoch with puir Robin Hamilton, now on the heightened contendays, now in the vale of tears. I have just been down there living in the herds houses for a month, and hearing such tales as would make your mouth water. The Slock of the Dead Wolf is the name of a pass with a tale to it to make your hairs turn grey. That comes in the book for which I have not yet a name. I had thought of 'Bonnets of Blue,' which would not be bad; but probably The Covenanter will be the simplest, or The Cameronian. A good deal of the book is pure adventure and has little to do with the Cameronians only three chapters as at present fixed deal with them, and if you sent me word in time, I'll rewrite them to keep out of your track. I took up the thing largely because Lang has been so infernally cheeky, lately about my forbears of the Sanquhar Declaration, and I said I should show him the other side which he [prentlendy] declares does not exist. He slangs me through several pages every second morning. A little 20,000 word book 'Mad Sir Uchtred of the Hills' is to be out in a fortnight. I ran some chapters through the St James Gazette much to the surprise of the Londoners, but Sidney Low (good and honest Israelite) lets me do as I like. It made some high and mighty folk sit up and rub their glasses to come on Mr Alexander Peden in the evening paper.*

*Yes, you did duly chastise me for my insufferable priggishness and unbelief last year, and I duly repented in the customary garments; but it is all a wonder to me - the exceeding kindness of nearly everyone - at least of all the first class men. I had a few days in London and saw a good many people. And what (I think you will believe) pleased me more than all, the universal, quite universal and affection with which everyone, including even Hardy, speaks of you.*

*Write to me soon again. My heart is sore today for Sandy Gordon of Earlston has just ridden over the brae in the sunshining morning of June 23 1679 with the news of the weary leaguer of Boswell and his mother sees that he rides by his lane.*

*So dinna pit nae 'private and confidential' ony mair on your letters*

*Aye*

*SRC*

It's interesting that Crockett responded to Stevenson largely in Scots.

Towards the end of the month, he was writing to his bookseller friend Thin, still focussing on *Men of the Moss Hags*.

*Bank House*

*June 28*

*My dear Thin,*

*I am so glad to hear of your complete restoration that I forgive you for your negligence in writing. Indeed though the threats I uttered were dire they were altered like the oath provocative and minatory to induce a reply.*

*I quite understand that when one is convalescing writing is about the last thing to be faced. And I also am not writing much at present (letters I mean) for I am deep early and late at the big Covenanter book - it is a big thrill*

for 'Sir Walter or Bust!' At any rate it will be a picture of the Covenanters as they really were for the first time sympathetically given. But it is always hard to start a big book and I am now fairly under weigh. 'The Raiders' has done far beyond any expectation and has hardly slackened from the first week in its sale. Indeed it is just beginning to sell quickly in England.

Mad Sir Uchtdred is ready, writing for America as usual. We are settled pretty well but not completely yet for there are a good many things to fit in. We are not thinking of taking any holiday this year. The barins have had 3 weeks at West Linton and Mrs Crockett and I are going away for ten days in September but I must now stick to my literary last. You must come and see us in a bundle when you come back.

Kindest and most affectionate regards

SRC

And finally, at the end of the month, back to dealing with Unwin.

Bank House

30th June 1894

My Dear Unwin,

The package containing the originals and proof has arrived all safe. As I formerly wrote you Denholm Young is ill and there is no chance of him being able to finish the 'telegraph post' sketch, so we must just do without it.

I have written to the man in Selkirk. I think he must have been a gentleman with a great admiration and little to do

Faithfully yours

SRC.