

MAD SIR UCHTRED OF THE HILLS

PART ONE.

SERIALISATION AND PREPARATIONS FOR NOVELLA PUBLICATION

(April to July 1894)

Mad Sir Uchtred of the Hills was published in 'St James's Gazette', the first episode on March 29th the second on March 31st and the third April 4th. It was subsequently published in Unwin's 'Autonymn' series in July 1894

In his letter of April 27th Crockett wrote to Marriott Watson

I have finished 'Mad Sir Uchtred of the Hills' some chapters of which appeared in the St James since I came home. I think it is about the strongest I have done, but a man never knows. It is not clap trap anyway, and I did once run must on the mountainside even thus, though my skin did not crack and scale and other disagreeable things.

(note, he came home from London at the beginning of April 1894)

He also mentions it in a letter to the Macmillans:

27th April 1894.

To the Macmillans.

I am glad you liked 'The Raiders.' I thought you would. I have just finished a short book called 'Mad Sir Uchtred of the Hills' I have used the Clints of Clashdan – which I have called Clashdaan, and the Dungeon as a background. The names are so grand.

In a letter to Unwin of the same date he added a postscript comment:

P.S. Lang thinks Mad Sir Uchtred the best thing I have ever done.

There was something of a stand off with Unwin, who Crockett wanted to publish the work, but Unwin may have been holding out for better terms from Watt... As ever, Crockett has to be diplomatic in his dealings:

May 4th 1894

My dear Unwin,

*I have your letter and enclosures of May 1st and 3rd. I did not know what terms Mr Watt was asking because I don't meddle with these things. But I do know that he has had many proposals for books from publishers and that he is not asking what he has not practically had offered. It does not matter of course about Sir Uchtred. I should have liked you to have it. I don't want to publish *The Playactress* till after 'The Lilac' in the autumn and I thought Sir Uchtred would have filled the bill for you as to the Autonym. It is as you say rather short (but you said you rather liked them short than*

long. You are mistaken in thinking it 'padded out.' It was written much as at present, except one chapter (1000 words or thereby) in my own hand. About a third appeared in the St James but you said that serial publication you did not object to.

I had a London publisher the other day calling here with an introduction from an eminent essayist and critic - He wanted a story of that length for a new series, but I said (thinking you would want Sir U) that at present I had nothing. However, it does not matter seriously - after all, the Lilac is the thing and you want that, my covenanting story is bought by Good Words for a very large sum and also by McClure for America for as good terms. It is well - I am just flitting and nearly dead. I shall not of course mention to Mr Watt that you sent me copy of your letter to him. Indeed I never bother with these things. I scribble and tickle the shy typewriter - that is my business.

Re initials and Denholm Young, I fear he can only do wash but I shall send on the part of your letter referring to the Stickit Minister Initial. The drawing of the Stickit Minister on the Menu of the Pen and Pencil Club was first rate. I shall try to get McKay to give us that putting in an initial.

All right about 250 copies. You know best. Sorry you are leaving out the Pennell drawings. 'A terrible row there's sure to be, when Joseph comes back again!' But it's your funeral, not mine.

I don't know anything about Share Lists; what on Earth can the man mean? Did I say anything about share-lists - not as I know or remember. I aint got no share lists or no money to put on them - waes me. The utterance is cryptic - a dark saying on the Harp of Unwin. I shall send Touson's sketch. You can leave out one of someone else's. I enclose a cutting of Masson's speech. It was splendid from my point of view (and yours also)

Yours sincerely ever

SRC

While at St Andrews he wrote to Unwin again, mentioning Sir U. 'M Sir Uchtred I shall simply say as a prefatory note that a few of the Chapters appeared in the St James' and that will shut the reviewers up.'

I shall pass proof rapidly when it comes

Ever truly yours

SRC

Moving on to June. Crockett had been in Galloway and working on *The Men of the Moss Hags* (as well as *Mad Sir Uchtred*.) Unwin was obviously pressing him as he sent a telegram:

4th June

Telegram

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

And then a letter.

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

When he had been in London in March Crockett did not stay with the Nicolls as planned because Nicoll's wife was sick. Note here that she died. The next day Crockett wrote to Unwin again:

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

Thoughts were turning to the Lilac. He had *Lilac*, *Uchtred*, *Playactress* and *Men of the Moss Hags* on the go at the same time. As well as a full time job as minister, a wife and three small children. I don't envy him! His next letter to Unwin comes on 19th June:

Dear Unwin

You might send proof of the 'Lilac' in large installments 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. I don't know how many you are going to stand me. 2 doz at least I hope SRC)

With kind regards

Faithfully yours

SRC

Crockett had returned home from Galloway at the beginning of June to a letter from Stevenson and in his response to that letter he wrote on June 23rd, telling him that *Mad Sir Uchtred* was due out soon:

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.

He also wrote to Thin on June 28th:

Mad Sir Uchtred 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 bairns 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.

At the beginning of July, he was still waiting for the publication of Uchtred.

JULY

July 3rd 1894.

Dear Unwin,

The drawings (reproduction) are exceedingly satisfactory and the book should be a very beautiful one. I shall set to work immediately.

I shall write a list with a note or two on the drawings severally.

I am wearying to see Mad Sir U. We stay here till Saturday. If you have a copy ready you might send one here. You had better send five dozen to Penicuik (Note for the [] of your young men) who say - in 'un 'e is always a wantin' summat!!

You might have a copy but in vellum for old Masson (Dedicatee)

But that is for PART TWO. (coming in July/August)