

October 6th, 1951

ROSE LAWN,  
KINGSGATE-ON-SEA,  
BROADSTAIRS,  
KENT.

Dear John Stokes,

A very cheery letter, which shows that you are undoubtedly mending; and I am very glad to hear that the plaster is going into the discard. In fact I think you may say now, in the words of M. Coue, "Tous les jours, a tous points de vue, je vais de mieux en mieux". And it is a real pleasure to me, my dear boy, to know that it is so.

I fear that I cannot lay claim to wizardry in timing the arrival of the Rockwood book so fortunately. But I am very glad that it arrived when it did. By the way, a short Grayfriars story has just appeared in a magazine called "Hand-wagon", and I am enclosing a copy for that Corner of yours.

So you have been reading a Cliveden story from the old 'Herald'. It is a long, long time since 1909: F.R. was quite a young fellow then, not yet out of his thirties. I remember at that time looking upon my approaching fortieth birthday with distaste. Now I am expecting my eightieth, and it doesn't bother me

at all. I was living in London, near Baker Street, when that story was written; and wasn't I glad, when time permitted, to get out into country places, among the fields and the trees! Yes, you have guessed it I always loved long tramps on rainy days; I think there is hardly a greater pleasure in life than to feel the wind and rain in one's face, when one is young and full of beans, and the miles slip unheeded under one's feet. I am afraid that all my life I have walked people off their legs; though now, alas! Father Time has walked me off my own! But I had a good innings and I won't grouse about that. ~~Enough~~ Every now and then it is rather a jolt to realise that the staircase is steeper in these days than the Matterhorn used to be! But if I ever feel like grumbling I shall think of your patience in plaster of Paris, and like the old fellow in Kingsley's "novel", feel very small indeed!

I shall be very glad to hear when you are up and walking again; though you must take it easily; and don't try 50 m.p.h. at first! Keep on getting better, laddie.

Always yours sincerely,

Frank Richards