

Elmsdale  
Nova Scotia  
April 11 1941

Dear Mr. Raddall;-

It must be a fact that I was well brought up, when young, I've such a guilty feeling when I omit "Thank-you's", and for a long time I have known that a sincere "thank you" is owing you for the pleasure your stories have given me. I am always glad when your name is listed in the table of contents in MacLean's or The Saturday Evening Post ( that they print your tales is proof they are both 'tops' as periodicals) and no matter how interested I may be in some serial, your story is read first.

Of course I have my favorites. Bald Eagle' Iggins, and the story about the viking ship and Capt....was it Solomon?...he was Captain Martin to me, I boarded at their home years ago, in my teaching days and Captain Martin was exactly like that, even to his disgust of an opposition newspaper. Being a teacher it is no wonder that I delighted in Swan Dance and Miss Fesant, I too have been in one or two Duffy's Sidings.

You will have received many letters of congratulation, I know, but I want to thank you not only for the stories that you give us but for the work you are doing for Nova Scotia and Nova Scotian authors as well. Has it struck you that a few years back the Satevepost demanded stories with an American locale ? You are putting Nova Scotia on the map of literature at last, a commendable thing, since for so long our Canadian tales have been either Mountie and redskin westerns or the French-Canadian chronicles.

Again thanking you,

I am

Yours sincerely

Mrs. Thomas Grantmyre

*Barbara Grantmyre*

Anad.  
June 25/41

Elmsdale, Hants Co. Nova Scotia

April 29 1941

Dear Mr. Raddall;-

This isn't establishing a precedent, nor must you bother to answer this letter as you did before, but if you will write good stories, willy-nilly you ought to get praise. "Swan Dance" made me write before, and now you have given us "Winter Idyll" a story four-sixths of the Grantmyre family enjoyed, (daughters Gretchen and Brenda are still at the Peter Rabbit and Alice age). To be sure my husband differed with you on some slight technical detail.....he is a very practical man....but as I haven't a mechanical bent I can't tell you what it was, anyway he did like it. So did Merritt and Leigh, aged 10 and 11, whose opinion on literature is far from juvenile; they were raised on The Saturday Evening Post, Kipling and Dickens, and have more than a bowing acquaintance with Glencannon, Soldiers Three and Micawber. They still vote for your Bald Eagle 'Iggins as best, though.

And my adopted province is niggardly in its appreciation of your work! Did you ever see such a contradictory place? Little-minded, big-hearted, just, indifferent, stubborn, gullible.....nearly any adjective can be used to describe N.S. and its inhabitants, yet it fascinates me. Particularly the older Nova Scotia that you are re-creating in tales like The Wedding Gift; I think the Bluenose character was more consistent then because there was less yeast of new ideas and new inventions to ferment and make it uneasy.

I wonder if you have a Canadian Authors Association branch at Liverpool? There you will see provincialism at its best (or worst.) In my salad days, when I wrote tripe I can't bear to think of now, I attended their Halifax meetings. Ye gods! They were terrible. Like

someone said once, "The trouble with the C.A.A. is that there are no Canadian authors." I particularly remember one woman in a grey, flowing sort of gown (you felt she'd made it herself without a pattern) she read a travelogue on a Trip To Scotland, with gestures; another woman, one evening read us pages and pages of a very intimate diary she'd kept for three years about her baby son. Another highlight was Bengée Atlee who shattered the Seven Pillars of Wisdom and didn't stub his toe on a single brick. Yet this was the cream of supposedly literary societies. I shouldn't decry the C.A.A., though; I did meet one interesting and valuable man, the late Harry Piers, curator of the museum and president of the Historical society. Knowing him, and Mrs. Piers was reward enough for being bored.

You must be bored by this time, yourself. What I meant to point out was that Nova Scotia has no yardstick for literary merit, and I meander on like the Tennysonian brook. Perhaps times have changed since 1930, but I doubt it.

Although I'm a busy housewife, mother, disciplinarian and the rest I too have the writer's urge. So far the best I've done is a mystery novel "The Egg" published in the "Montreal Standard" last Feb. It wasn't as well written as I wanted it to be, nor <sup>were</sup> ~~did~~ the compositors who cut it as capable as I had hoped, however it is a start. When I have leisure, ten years from now, maybe, writing may be easier. As it is I have to sandwich a few hundred words a day between household tasks. If I were only writing "Swan Dances" there might be less folly in trying to be so many persons at once.

By the way I read, I think, that you are English. I came from Bolton, Lancashire, in '11. Rather glad, at present, that my parents made the decision to come to Canada.

Sincerely

Barbara Grant Wyre

Answered  
Sep 8/41

Chmsdale P. S.  
July 29<sup>th</sup> 1941.

Dear Thomas Paddall;—

you have given us characters with more appeal in former stories, characters like 'iggins and the Tragi-comic school ma'am, and the old sea-captain, but I think your latest story Sport is your best. Every word, every sentence is in the right place — what a tremendous amount of labor must have gone into it to achieve that effect! It is a story of quality.

This time I can convey only the appreciation of my husband and myself on your tale, since the boys are at

occasion of the King's visit and they missed the processions. I didn't know her well but I imagine it was characteristic.

Clara the daughter at home is a noble soul. Not only does she keep house for her father and lame sister Marguerite but she has taken two little waifs for the duration, a rickety baby of seventeen months and a girl two years older. Do you remember them?

It was unexpectedly kind of you to answer my last letter and I do appreciate it. Perhaps sometime you will tell me what you know of copyright. Not that

Grandma's farm with other fascinating things to do than read.

In your letter you mentioned Kenneth Leslie. I went to school, I believe, with his sister Gose. A tall, red-headed girl with cream-eyelashes — I hope she's learned to use a little mascara by now — and an irritating habit of being Latin perfect.

We also have some erstwhile neighbors of yours in Obusdale.

The McPhees. Mr. McPhee is a talkative little man with a passion for painting. Landlords must call his name blessed, the way he scrapes, polishes and renovates the houses he rents.

Mrs. McPhee died on the

I am doing anything worth  
protecting at present. My  
association with the Standard  
is an apprenticeship, and only  
time will tell whether I'll  
gain a master's apron. However  
a little knowledge of the  
laws on copyright might come  
in handy later on; so far  
I've met ~~no~~ no one conversant  
with them.

Wm Dennis, a scion of  
the Halifax Herald Dennis,  
and farmer here, might have  
been expected to know such things.  
He, however, is busy with an  
expensive correspondence course  
on becoming a writer and  
hasn't come to copyright so  
far! Sincerely  
Barbara Grantayre

30  
Elmsdale, Nova Scotia

Nov. 14 1941

Dear Thomas Raddall;

Many thanks for your autograph and prompt return of H.M.Y. especially the latter, it makes for a pleasant weekend. You see Merritt, my first born, had started the book and was in the middle of the moose hunt when I sent it to Liverpool so we've been living in an atmosphere faintly tinged with frustration and reproach. Fortunately Leigh is deep in Hereward the Wake or David would see another battle or two until they both have read it.

I took your advice to heart and followed it in a measure by doing a radio play, (that they are still considering,) another mystery with a different treatment and have started a novel for the Ryerson Press Award based on Henry Moore Smith's life as told by Walter Bates of Kingston. Not that I expect to win but because it gives me a deadline to aim at.

Did you ever read that little volume? They have it in the Archives. He lived near here for a few years and is part of the local folklore. Although the things he did were considered almost superhuman one can contrive convincing explanations for them today. I'm going to try, anyway, adding a generous amount of fiction as well.

Candidly I don't know how I'll be able to do it. At long last we're getting the house finished inside and I'll be plagued by hammering, sawing and banging and a talkative workman whose propensity for conversation will naturally prolong the ordeal. Another more somber reason is that my brother in law, Fred Gunn, who used to run to Liverpool from Halifax (not literally. Express messenger on train) and who underwent an operation for cancer last year is steadily losing ground. In a very short while we can expect the death angel,

I'm afraid. Perhaps you will tell this to the agent at the station if you happen to think of it. He is a friend of Fred's .

However trials and obstacles are meant to be overcome so Lunar Rogue will be done by March first if the bull-dog strain counts for anything.

Still I'm envious, in a nice sort of way, of you, Thomas Raddall. If only you hadn't been born in '63! You've done so much with your time and I feel as if I've only started, yet I too was born in that year. The reason is probably psychological. Being feminine I'm prone to accept limitations, to build a little hedge around what I've tilled and forget the wider landscape. For the same reason I'm not artistically honest, except that honesty's the best policy in writing as in everything else. I mean I'd have no qualms about making Christopher Columbus discover the Indians at work on spinning jennys if I thought it would make a good story. It's amusing to think how admirably I've illustrated my point! I've but a vague idea of what a spinning jenny is. I know somebody invented it and it marked the beginning of the machine age, spelling doom to thousands of cottagers who used to weave at home. That's all I know. I got as far as Columbus when the word popped into my mind and I set it down whether apt or not. If I 'd been honest I'd have looked up spinning jenny in the encyclopedia, verified it, weighed its merits with some other machine..... and then put it down, happy in my mind because the sentence was rounded truly and honestly.

But about His Majesty's Yankees. I feel sure that it will be popular and that I'll have cause for pride in owning a first edition of it. You really have the atmosphere of Halifax, as peculiar to itself today as in revolutionary days. It's an ageless city, isn't it? MacLennan missed it completely in Barometer Rising.



Although we were living here when the Explosion occurred I spent a lot of time in Halifax and my impressions of the city should be similar to his, yet his book was as alien as Labrador when I read it. Clumsy puppets against a badly painted backdrop.

I didn't answer the kind letter you wrote me in the summer, not because I didn't appreciate it but because I was loath to become a nuisance. It was most thoughtful and kind of you to write at such a time when you were so busy.

Wonder if H.M.Y.'ll get a review in The Manchester Guardian? They do some reviews of books from this side, the better ones.

Sincerely

*Barbara Grant Myre*

Elmsdale, Nova Scotia

Feb. 13 1942

*Ans'd  
May 5/42*

Dear Mr. Raddall:

Congratulations! The editors of the Saturday Evening Post are not unmindful of merit, since they published The Wedding Gift and have chosen it as one of their best for '41. I liked it, too, but The Trumpeter should earn you the same distinction in the next volume.

That was a story. Was? I should have said is, because I'm sure it will live in many memories for a long time.

Sincerely

B. Grantmyre

*Barbara Grantmyre*

*Answered June 2*

Elmsdale,  
Nova Scotia  
May 15 th. 1942

Dear Thomas Raddall;-

Please don't say, "Drat the woman! I gave her a slice of good bread and now she's looking for butter on it." I neither expect nor want an answer until mid-summer, when your book is successfully launched and, I hope, rising into the best seller class. It will be good I know, and better than the poor fare that popular taste has had of late.

I need some advice. First though I'd like to say that I've no illusions about my stuff. There's such a lot I need to learn about writing I consider myself extremely lucky to have been received by the Standard. It took me from '26 to '40 to find out that the short story isn't for me, as rejection slips can prove, (I've a wonderful collection). So when my first long tale was accepted, and the next five, it seems like a pleasant miracle. It's even more miraculous when I remember that first story. I was half way through it when I read an article by S.S. VanDyne, stating the twelve cardinal rules for mystery writers. I had already violated five of them. This proves something or other, doesn't it?

What I am puzzled about is what to aim for next. Writing for the Standard at fifty per seems to lead nowhere, but I can't hear any distant drums. The enigma type of story is excellent training, I think, in structure but it gives one little scope for

atmosphere, or style, or character delineation.

Our mutual acquaintance, Dr. Martell, is anxious for me, too, to write of Nova Scotia's past but while I've had some success with historical articles ( The Shubenacadie Canal, Louis Mezanzeau, etc.,) the people never come alive for me in story form. Besides that is a field being admirably tilled already by T.H.R. I met Dr. Martell for the first time last week. He seems a good egg but I imagine he was brought up on the finer things of life and never went barefoot as a boy.

One thing in favor of a mystery story, your friends may deplore your taste in gore but they don't suspect you of hiding bodies in the cellar, or the Arch-Duke's diamonds in the rhubarb patch, while in any other type of tale they are scanning it for hints of your personality and deem your fiction characters part of yourself. Rather a nuisance when one lives in a small village.

Writing is a hard game for me, but I can't help it. It requires an enormous amount of self-discipline, for I have such crowded days, that sometimes I rail at myself for sticking at it. Our house, respectable enough on the outside, is unfinished within, ( when labor was plentiful we hadn't the money, now when we can buy finish not a carpenter or handyman is available to do the work) which means about three times the housework with worse result. We have four children, and because their surroundings aren't ideal I have to see that the amenities are stressed more than usual, with Company Days at intervals when adults and children alike behave with the utmost courtesy.... such a strain, but it's good for them. Then there is their mental growth, books, music, pictures. I have to see to that for Tom is away so much now he can't loom large in the educational scheme.

Tom, my husband, is a tractor operator, a very practical man and a dear. He is so very quiet one couldn't suspect how romantic he is at heart. We've been married fourteen years yet he has never changed. Remember that line in the immortal editorial on Dunkirk ..... when he endured poverty and hard work for his children's sake....? That is Tom. When I remember the bitter days of the depression and how steadfast he has always been I couldn't trample on this foible of his, but it's hard to create an atmosphere of soft lights, sweet strains, and perfume out of nothing, like playing Pelleas and Melisande in a piano box, and requires effort, especially when one has a sense of humour.

All these matters come first and then writing. I type about an hour in the morning, from three to four or five in the afternoon, from nine o'clock till midnight, with an intermission for Raymond Gram Swing. This is the weekday program, with something shorter for weekends, or holidays. But it gives me no opportunity to practise craftsmanship, to labour over phrases, to polish and smooth my sentences. It takes me an average of two months to do one of the Standard tales. I think each one out to the last detail before I start to put it on paper.

This then is my problem. Given time in which to achieve a smoother, more flexible style is it possible that my mixture of Nova Scotians and murder would prove pleasing to a wider public? Or would it be wiser to swing more to the provincial and less to the gory side of the picture? And should I keep on with the Standard stories for at least the balance of the year?

They've paid on acceptance of my last, The Lake Pippin Mystery, which is a slight upward lift. All the others were published first. This tale is frankly a pot-boiler. The one I'm on now I like much

better, at least it has more honest writing in it.

I do hope I have not bored you with this long letter.  
You see I have no one who might understand my problems.

With the heartiest good wishes for the success of  
your book,

Sincerely

*Barbara Grantzger*

*Ans'd June 2*  
Elmsdale, N.S.

June 1 1942

Dear Thomas Raddall;-

In horrified haste I'm sending my sincere apologies for the distressing breach of faith on the part of the Standard. Of course it's my fault; if I hadn't been so thrilled by your comment about Serena, and hadn't been writing to the editor the day I got it I wouldn't have quoted you, and then they wouldn't have printed the quotation. Ah me! No fine sense of ethics, I fear, while admitting that mine must have been dulled at the time.

Had they only printed the rest, where I told the editor what a thrill it was to receive such a letter from so distinguished a writer, and how kind it was for him to write it, it would be a little better.

Anyway I'm very, very sorry. It's made me look at the newly issued Lake Pippin Mystery with a jaundiced eye, instead of fine, careless rapture.

Hope the novel is progressing happily.

Apologetically

*Barbara Grant Lyell*

*Ans  
& book returned  
Nov 12/42*

Elmsdale Nova Scotia

November 9 1942

Dear Thomas Raddall;

"His Majesty's Yankees" has everything one hopes for in a historical novel (and seldom gets). I do like it and I'm sure it will be popular, although few will be able to appreciate the enormous amount of reeseach and dogged labour that's gone into it. On my way to Halifax Friday I called for mail and found that the publishers had sent it so I took it along with me, reading snatches of it on ferries, street cars and bus while every dip into its pages made me more impatient to really read it. Dr. Martell was a trifle disappointed in the jacket but pleased with your reference to him. I let him have the book while I was copying some stuff from Murdock's History and the writings of the remarkable Sherriff of New Brunswick Walter Bates.

Yes, I like David. You have every reason to be proud of him.

If it isn't asking too much will you autograph my copy? I'm sending it under separate cover. I'm not an autograph hound but in various ways and meetings I have gathered a few autographs-- Bliss Carmen, Noel Wilcox, Dr. Stewart, J.W. Logan and I'd like to have yours.

With heartiest congratulations and hopes that H.M.Y. makes the best seller list by Christmas,

Sincerely

*Barbara Grant Taylor*



And  
Sep 20

Oldendale

A.S. Sept. 28-1943

Dear Thomas Gaddall.

Welcome back!

It was pleasant to find your story in *His month's Colliers*, when I'd decided the only thing worth reading was that article by Ludwig.

I do like it. You haven't lost your flair for the short story in the time spent on your novels.

I am looking forward to

Sincerely  
Barbara Grant Myers

The new book. Haven't been to the archives since spring and have no report on your progress from Mr. Marshall — you are, I think, his favorite author and topic of conversation — but he did tell me it was about Halifax and Louisburg.

When you were a little boy and squirming through a dull history lesson, did you make a vow to alter all that when you grew up? You surely have made the learning of history painless and pleasant for every one.

Elmsdale, N.S.

Oct. 3 1943

Dear Thomas Raddall;-

At the risk of being dubbed a patient Griselda I must confess my motto for years has been ' It passes' . Not a particularly inspiring one but a good staff for weary marches. I've had to lean on it a good deal through 1943 for we have had deaths and illness on both sides of the family and with Tom still in Cape Breton and my only brother in the army it has been up to me to be a tower of strength to relatives and in-laws. Fortunately my immediate family, except for mumps, measles, music lessons and a few adolescent vagaries has given me no trouble.

I have been writing in spite of all this. Standard has two of my mysteries now, one paid for and not published as yet, the other received barely three weeks ago. They are the last for the Standard, I think.

I don't quite agree with you about selling them for sixpence. I've had to learn so much about writing I really think I got all they ~~xxxxx~~ ~~xxx~~ were worth, that I was paid as much as I deserved. For besides the seventy-five bucks--- I told you they upped the price a trifle, didn't I?--- I got encouragement and publicity and the assurance of a market.

During the past couple of weeks have sent a Christmas story to MacLeans. The fiction editor, returning one of my efforts last spring, wrote that it was more suitable for a full length novel, but

that they liked my style and hoped I would show them some more of my work. Then, too, I've finished and sent a short short to Liberty written last week end, so perhaps I may find my public getting larger.

Had to shelve from last spring the novel I started, Lunar Rogue, but re-reading the two chapters I had finished has given me the urge to go on. I really think they're good. It's in the 1813--1814 period, did I tell you? I'm basing it on the book The Mysterious Stranger, Henry Moore(Moone) Smith, written by the warden of Kingston jail. It's in the archives. The fictional love story is woven through the facts known about Smith and as very little was known about the man except when he was in prison, or at large, I have plenty of scope for imagination.

It won't be His Majesty's Yankees! You are such a craftsman. I'm content to put 'she smoothed her kirtle' and pay my gentle reader the dubious compliment of expecting them to know what a kirtle is; you'll put the yardage, the fabric, the style so that they would recognize it if the wearer strolled along Spring Garden Road this afternoon! I expect it all boils down to the fact that I'm not fundamentally honest in the literary sense, perhaps no woman can be. I hold no brief for the anti-feminist but one has to accept one's limitations.....

During the summer I made the acquaintance of a Mrs. Jean Mayo. I think you met her at a party some time ago..... or it may have been someone else. She's a graduate of Oxford, has a husband in the Air Force, a little boy Timmie, and spent the summer at Enfield. Last week she went to Montreal. I do like her and will

miss her a great deal. This is a neighborhood of dull minds and a congenial spirit is rare to find. I fear that Jean is tainted with the Oxford urge to reform the world but as I disclaimed any interest in political economy, the underprivileged, Karl Marx, capital and labour and the rest she met me on pleasanter levels. She doesn't like Maugham much, but does like Hardy. Speaking of Maugham have you read his Modern Prose Readings? I got it through the Book League. Most of the extracts and stories I had already read but his remarks throughout are a delight.

This letter confirms my dread. I must change the ribbon on my typewriter--- and soon.

I meant to say this at the beginning of my letter. In the Count of Monte Cristo there was a chapter written around a telegraph. Remember? It puzzled me for years for I knew the wireless was unknown then. Now I know how it worked! A nother example of the kirtle.

Sincerely  
Barbara Stanlyre

Elmsdale, N.S.

April 23 1944

Dear Thomas Raddall;-

Congratulations are in order, and while I was delighted to hear you had gained the Governor General's Award I do feel it a somewhat tardy recognition of your work. Didn't the literary pundits read His Majesty's Yankees?

Goodness knows, I'm not belittling the Pied Piper. All the tales are good, but one Winter's Tale I like best. I wished when I first read it that you had written Barometer Rising! McLellan is all wrong in his interpretation of Halifax at the time of the Explosion, somehow I feel he is echoing his parents and how they felt at the turn of the century; there is a colonial flavour to it that belongs to an earlier decade. I knew Halifax from 1911, and the impressions, the atmosphere you have put in Winter's Tale, belong to me as much as young James Gordon. You have it, too, in the only newspaper serial I ever followed..... G of Halifax.

But I am glad you have the award. I know if John Buchan has time to spare a glance earthward he will rejoice at this year's choice. Knowing Canadians he will not be too hard on the committee for past mistakes, stupid though they be.

Sincerely

*Barbara Granbyre*

Ans'd. March 6th

Elmsdale N.S.

Mar.1 1945

Dear Thomas Raddall;-

I am sending you this copy of the Manchester Guardian which reached me this week from England. You may have already seen the review on His Majesty's Yankees -----and accustomed as we are over here to extravagant phrases its terseness is disappointing--- but since to be mentioned in the Guardian is an achievement I thought I'd send it along.

Finished Medallion Murder for Standard and am working on a short Christmas yarn for Chambrun. It pays to keep ones fences mended and so far I've not made the grade I hoped with our mutual acquaintance. Tom says it is because I haven't written what he wants but I wonder if there isn't something more subtle at work in my disfavor. The lady who introduced us, after being treated very well, I thought, by J.C. went a bit New Yorkish and has changed agents(not with any marked results to date so far as I know) and I have an unhappy feeling that Chambrun may think I too, lack loyalty. Rather a delicate situation.

A bit discouraging, for I've been using time on short yarns and stuff that could have been spent on Lunar Rogue, though I am philosopher enough to feel that any writing done will make L.R. that much stronger in the long run. I've a lot to learn!

We have had a good winter with the minimum of colds, the maximum of outdoor sports, but I'm glad it's ~~March~~ March.

Spring, even with mud, is a gladsome time.

Sincerely

*Barbara Granbyre*

Ans'd  
March 12/45

Elmsdale, N.S.  
Mar. 9 1945

Dear Thomas Raddall;  
Your letter arrived this morning and its contents seemed to fit in so well with what I've experienced with Mr. Chambrun that I'm taking the liberty of asking for more advice. I enclose some of the correspondence between us. After reading it will you tell me if ethically and from the standpoint of good business I could submit a yarn direct to the Ladies Home Journal? I sent one to Chambrun written after I'd had received Mrs. Page's encouraging comment on 'Erbert Winch, in which she said that it was too dated now for the Journal but wanted to see more of my stuff. It was a good story. A couple of little boys and their worries on a Saturday, not much plot but it was real stuff. Chambrun sent it back and wanted more problem in it involving an uncle..... I'm trying to show you that he really missed the point of the yarn.... that children have troubles that loom so big and awful, and from an adult's viewpoint they're nothing. He wouldn't send it to the Journal at all. He may have been right, of course, but he showed poor judgement in submitting Gold Below the Barnacles to them..... it's not the type at all for the Journal, so he may have erred with this story The Dollar Knife. And now I've about finished a Christmas story and I fear it may get the same treatment from him, so do you think I could send it to Mrs. Page without bothering him? He has three of my yarns now but I have no high hopes for them.

Eleanor and Fletch sold their Halifax home last September and moved to New York where they are living on E.43rd. St. The three bairns go to kindergarten and nursery school, and in the afternoon a woman



. takes charge of them so Eleanor can pursue the Muse unhampered by family cares. Fletch is the daytime Answer Man for W.O.R. works a few hours and spends more on reasearch and gets a flat hundred bucks a week plus additional for commercials so the move seems to have been a profitable one.

I don't know who her new agent is. Her last letter was a bit low spirited though she admitted an acceptance would change the color of the world.

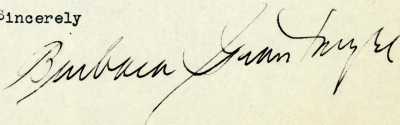
I listened to some book reviewer from King's last week-end, reviewing Roger Sudden and Merkel's book. He was good for the most part. I was sorry he didn't dwell a little on the ending of Roger Sudden....the last two pages in my opinion contain some of your finest prose.....but time I expect was short.

A few weeks ago I too, was featured on the radio! Claire Wallace and her Robin Hood flour program. I'm afraid it was too good a combination for her to resist because she had Serena and me and Robin Hood Flour turning out with united effort the finest of cakes and pastry with very little stress on our literary side. Miss Wallace telephoned me from Toronto, talked for half an hour, and though I did tell her I used Robin.H.F. I'm sure I didn't say that the idea of writing a mystery yarn came to me as I was making a chocolate cake, nor did I tell her I was a good cook.... however it caused a little flurry in the village.

Remember me to your sister when you see her. The war news is getting better hour by hour, isn't it? I do hope her husband is spared all but the ordinary, hard enough, vicissitudes of the sea.

With many thanks for your kind letter, apologies for the length of this,

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Barbara Joan Taylor". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed name "Sincerely".

Elmsdale, Nova Scotia

Oct. 15 1945

Dear Thomas Raddall;-

I don't know what to do, so as usual I dauger other people, but if feeling guilty about tresspassing on good nature helps I do:

I'm enclosing my latest Serena. Green Are the Graves Now (tritely re-titled Green is the Grass). I thought it might do all right as a novel, expanded mostly in the part about Halifax in the 1860's, so I sent a synopsis to MacMillan's, and to show that Serena has already gained a modest place in Canadian fiction I sent some of her other exploits.

Miss Blochin has written me a lengthy letter, of which I enclose a copy. I don't know whether it's encouraging or not. I don't know whether I'm capable of balancing the melodrama in Green Graves with enough solid writing to make a decent book. In short I'm like King John's Christmas.... a prey to hopes and fears.

It's a curse, having a knack for melodram and bathos instead of nobler emotions.

Sometime when you can spare a few moments will you skim through this yarn and tell me whether you think it worth while re-writing?

I hope you are as swift a reader as I, the I know it won't take too much of your time.

I think I've made a mistake I'd correct were I to do it again.... in the portions

where one goes back I've tried too hard to get the old-fashioned atmosphere and it's stilted.

Now to other things. Remember your advice about Chambrun? Well, I didn't and did follow it. I sent that yarn to the Journal saying if they liked it to advise J.C. and I wrote to him and told him that I was doing it that way because I wanted it for the Canadian market if they didn't take it. They didn't so I sold it myself. The above is a bit involved, and sounds devious but it worked out all right.

He has finally sold 'Erbert Winch for me. To Extension magazine. I never heard tell if it, and it sounds like an offshoot of the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge, but he got a hundred for it, so who cares so long as they're solvent.

He wasn't interested in Green Graves at all.

Hope you don't mind my persistent calls on your kindness. I wish my circle of literary friends was wider than I might not prove such a nuisance.

Yours sincerely

*Barbara Santmyre*

Copy of Miss Blochin's letter.

Oct. 11

Dear Mrs. Grantmyre:

I have enjoyed Serena too. You ought to get her in the hands of some good American Syndiaate, and also with an English agent who would send her soaring through innumerable papers there and very likely into many popular small books, such as the 2/6 editions that sell so rapidly for pastime reading.

The synopsis of Green Are the Graves Now I have to admit kept me at it until the last dog was hung! I mean it is a good mystery, but it so verges on the melodramatic that it sometimes is almost amusing. I do not underestimate the possibilities of the downright murder mystery, but if this were to be put into a real novel of early Halifax it would have to be handled with such skill and finesse that it would be a poser for a master craftsman. There is something about old wine that demands old bottles; it is hard for us in this day and age to make the vintage potable. The bouquet is almost paralysing. That is one thing that always amazed me in "Gone With the Wind" All the old 'hokum' was there, and yet it didn't seem to be spurious or hackneyed. It is simply pure art. It is a challenge to a modern writer, and if you feel you can do it, we shall be glad to see the results.

There is a firm in Toronto buying material for cheap editions, particularly murder mysteries but I know you have greater ambitions for this story. However he might also be interested in Serena and her doings. He, I say, because I merely know the proprietor's name..it is Mr. Simmons of the Magazine Digest, Toronto. I have merely heard this to be so, and donot make the suggestion that you submit anything official.

You should go places with Serena.

With thanks for your thought of us, and to tell you that I really did enjoy the Toffania murders by the way the stuff is supposed to be cyanide of potassium. Yours sincerely

A E. Blochin

November 22nd, 1945.

Dear Mrs. Grantmyre,

Sorry to have been so long about writing this letter but I've been extremely busy, and as usual I've neglected my correspondence. I've read GREEN IS THE GRASS and the copy of Miss Blochin's letter -- and frankly I agree with her that the story is too melodramatic. The ancient Italian poison, for instance. The story would be much more credible and in key if Lydia had used some simple farn poison and trusted to luck. Medical science in 1865 was pretty crude, and the country doctors of those days wouldn't have known how to recognise a poison even if they had suspected it. And Serena's fiddling of the diary behind a secret panel is a device worn out long ago. Much more natural if she found it in a pile of rubbish in the attic or an outhouse.

But the chief fault in the story is in the method. You start off by looking over Serena's shoulder, so to speak, as she reads the diary. This is difficult enough to the reader, who finds himself watching a two-ring circus -- the modern one of Serena and Chris, and the 1865 one of the Herons. Then you have the Herons themselves suddenly coming to life in chapters or portions of chapters, which adds a third ring to your circus. And finally you have these 1865 characters themselves indulging in memories of times past, and there's a fourth ring. The reader's attention is distracted by these continual jumps and flashbacks. Just when you're beginning to capture the atmosphere of 1865, you jump back into the 20th century. This sort of thing is all very well for the movies, where the atmosphere is apparent to the eye ( sounds like a paradox, but you know what I mean ) at every change of period. But it's a very difficult thing to bring off in print.

If you are contemplating turning this story into a novel, I suggest that you drop Serena and the modern characters altogether and tell the tale as a straight piece of the 1860's. You would have to find some better way of getting Richard out of the British Army. An officer couldn't be cashiered on a mere suspicion of rape; he would have to be convicted in a civil court first, and then it would be a matter of his colonel telling him he'd better sell his commission and get out -- a quite common occurrence in the good old days.

There are one or two minor points. Only a very old lady in 1865 would use a profusion of capital letters in writing; that fashion went out in the 1820's or '30's. Nor would Mrs. Goodeve be addressed in 1865 as "Mistress Goodeve". It would be just plain Missus, as now. Your dialogue is, as you say, rather stilted. If you could run in to the Archives some time you'd get a lot of authentic atmosphere from the newspaper files of the period, especially the letters and advertisements.

Well, good luck and all power to you !

Sincerely,

*Ans'd  
Feb. 23/46*

Elmsdale, N.S.

Feb. 19 1946

Dear Thomas Raddall;-

My timing is usually poor, so when you get this volume you'll probably be too busy to autograph it and wish me less anxious to keep my collection complete. Anyway, please sign Tambour sometime, and if you aren't too swift in sending it back maybe the kind souls who've asked to borrow it will buy copies for themselves. Something ought to be done about people who don't buy books.

I had meant to write before, when the distressing news came about Dr. Martell, but somehow I couldn't find words. I know what a loss it must be to you, as a friend, and in your work. In a lesser degree I feel the same loss. Our acquaintance was still exploratory, in some respects superficial, yet looking back I remember signs and portents that now have special significance. He gave me a copy of that brochure of his about Halifax and when I asked him to autograph it he said "Why not wait until I have published a book?" Still, he wrote his name on the flyleaf.

And once when we were talking about philosophy, religion ..... something on that line.... and I had to confess I had no definite convictions, except that one must work out one's own salvation in this and probably a succession of lives.... he recommended the books of Lewis', The Screwtape Letters, Christian Behaviour, Broadcast Talks. These titles he wrote on a slip of paper, which I promptly mislaid.

When my brother sent me a copy of Pilgr~~m~~'s Regress from London I hunted and hunted for that slip and couldn't find it. I wanted to see if that title was listed.

Yet, the night before news came of his death the bit of paper just fluttered from my desk drawer as I was looking for something else.

I did like him. There was something so eternally boyish about him, and yet I think I've said before I don't think he had had a real boyhood.

We commiserated each other, those few years back, when sickness and death ~~was~~ <sup>were</sup> playing hob with personal habits and freedom. I believe he told me that for three years he hadn't been able to leave the city for half a day, so necessary was he to the care of an invalid father-in-law. It was a long time, anyway.

I know he had no great faith in my ability as a historical writer, which is no wonder, but he was so helpful and kind he never betrayed impatience at my shortcomings.

During the week when he was ill I had written, not knowing, to ask his help and advice about locating some records for a family I know.

How empty the Archives n ow. How awful he had to go, thus, when his work had scarce begun. How glad I knew him for a little while.

Sincerely

Barbara Stanway





Elmsdale, N.S.  
September 14, 1960

Dear T.H.R.;

With regret I've turned the last page of 'The Governor's Lady.' A fine book. One that goes far beyond the limits of its title for you've humanized John Wentworth and given him the stature often denied him.

My copy already carries your autograph so this time we need not engage on the bothersome post-and-re-post details to make it uniform with its companions.

The first date on the Raddall shelf is Nov. 12, 1942... His Majesty's Yankees. Eighteen years of quality.

With all best wishes, regards to Mrs. Raddall, and hopes for future volumes,

Yours sincerely

*Barbara Grant Inyee*

P.S. But who writes the blurbs on the cover?  
'...sparsely settled island' Ugh!

Sep. 15, 1960

Dear Mrs. Grantwyre,

I'm glad you liked Governor's Lady. And Johnnie Wentworth. He was really an admirable character in his New Hampshire days, and his story after that is simply the decline and fall of a good man. After his return to Halifax as Governor (where I chose to end my book) he soon sank into the rut left by Farr before him, or rather he permitted Fannie to push him into it, constantly seeking money and favor for himself, his friends and relatives. He became a pompous autocrat, out to squelch anyone who questioned his ways, and finally the British Government was glad to get rid of him, and the Nova Scotians were glad to see him go.

Oddly enough, in the year he died in a boarding house at Halifax, his old mansion in the New Hampshire hills was destroyed by fire, and the great pine tree on Mount Delight was shattered by a bolt of lightning. His house in Portsmouth still stands, and to this day you can stand by the site of the Atkinson house and see the west bedchamber where Johnnie used to watch for Fannie's signals.

The jacket blurb infuriated me. It was slapped together by some hasty idiot and sent off to the printers without being checked by me or by the editor who looks after my books at Doubleday's New York office. Apart from the silly errors -- Nova Scotia an island -- and the statements that I live in Halifax and wrote a book called "Nova Scotia, Warden of the North" -- there was that line about "having become friends with John Buchan, Kenneth Roberts and Theodore Roosevelt Jr". It would have been much more accurate to say that these three men befriended me, a struggling young writer whom they had never met, as they had befriended dozens of others.

I trust you are in good health and that your pen is fruitful.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Barbara Grantwyre,

Elmsdale, N.S.

March 17, 1961

Dear Mrs. Grantingro,

A week or so ago I noticed in the Chronicle-Herald a letter from one Kenneth Leslie, headed "Elmsdale, N.S." It urged the Cape Breton people to give a hearing to Tim Duck, who was then trying to hire a hall in those parts.

I didn't pay much attention at the time. Now it dawns on me that the letter-writer must surely be Kenneth Leslie, the erstwhile poet of Nova Scotia, who made quite a figure in the late 1920's and early 1930's. He roved about Nova Scotia and P.E.I. like a new-model Elise Carman, and some of the verse he wrote was good enough to appear in prominent newspapers in Britain and the U.S.A.

He called on me here in 1937. He was then cruising about the coast in a converted Tancock fishing-boat. His current bug was the ancient wrongs perpetrated by the English upon the Irish and Highland Scots; he talked a lot of Gaelic (or what he thought was Gaelic) and described himself as "an anti-Imperialist". He presented me with two or three inscribed copies of his published poems, and wandered off again. I never saw him again, and I never heard of him until about 1950, when he was publishing in New York a small periodical called "Protestant" but openly Communist, and devoted to scurrilous attacks on the R.C.Church.

When the anti-Communist fever spread over the U.S.A., Leslie turned up in Kentville, living quietly with a lady said to be his third wife. Now, it seems, he's living in your part of the province. Do you know him? If you do, perhaps you can tell me something of his present life. I remember him as a charming fellow, lazy and easygoing, with some wool-headed ideas about life and history, but the makings of a good native poet.

With my regards,

Sincerely,

Elmsdale, N.S.

March 19, 1961

Dear T.H.R.

On separate sheets I have written something of Kenneth Leslie's stay in Elmsdale. Not, I must add, from personal knowledge in every detail but from village gossip. He is no longer a property owner here, so the address in the paper was deliberately misleading.

Now may I ask you about a mutual acquaintance? Do you know if James D. Gillis is still alive? I used to write to him at Baddeck. My last letter went unanswered...that must be almost a year ago.

Regards to Mrs. Raddall.

Best wishes

*Barbara Grant Ingers*



About six years ago he bought an old, three-storey house (built around 1855 as a boarding house for the workmen on the railroad) in Elmsdale. On two occasions he rented part of the house ~~to~~ for some months but preferred to live alone until, so he said, his wife would return from the States where she was caring for a sick relative. (Her name, I believe, was Olga). Olga never appeared. He acted as a supply preacher in the Elmsdale Presbyterian church, and in other parishes at \$6.00 a Sabbath.

He also taught in the East Hants Rural High School for one month. Although K.L. is a college graduate he could only teach on a temporary license at \$1000.00 a year. Since after deductions this comes to about \$87.00, he gave up the post when he got his first cheque. He says.....and it's probably true.... the inspector gave him to understand he would have a much larger salary.

He was also editing his paper from Elmsdale. I am not sure about the name. I only saw one copy. I think it was The Protestant under a new title. This paper, though it claimed to be 'published and printed in Elmsdale, N.S.' was done elsewhere. It was mailed from here. I found it bitter, dull and with a rather old-fashioned 'radical' element....

This paper has, or had, many supporters and they often enclosed money in excess of the subscription price. One lady, Zilla, or Zoe, was a generous monthly contributor to this 'cause'.

One unusual, and pleasant thing he did about this time. Across the road were seven year old twins, nice little youngsters but most retarded. They were very shy and their speech was almost intelligible. Ken tutored them for a year, an hour a day, with remarkable results. The following term they began school in Grade Two and are doing fairly well.

He made a trip to the U.S.S.R. in '58, I think was the year. Other Canadian poets went, among them Wilson MacDonald. The trip was at Soviet invitation and expense, of course.

Two years ago he sold his Elmsdale property and bought a farm in Pictou county. He never lived there. Instead he went to U.S.A.

Olga, according to local gossip, and he were divorced by this time. She subsequently married his nephew.

It was generally surmised that he would now marry 'Zilla' or 'Zoe'.....instead he travelled to California, met and married a well-to-do widow from the Middle West, Norah. They returned to N.S. and are now living on Tobin Street, Halifax.

So the address in his letter to the Chronicle-Herald was quite misleading.

He is a strange person. Rather pathetic, perhaps, though sympathy is wasted on one who manages his affairs in such a charming, devious manner. He writes little poetry nowadays, except for an occasional one inserted in his paper. The latest, I heard, was on the death of Patrice Lumumbo.

He came to the house several times, presented me, also, with some of his printed verse, but his sojourn in the village was something of a disappointment. I had hoped for brilliance and wit.

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1961  
 1957  
 24



March 23rd, 1961

Dear Mrs. Grantmyre,

Thanks for your very interesting letter. K.L.'s latest matrimonial acquisition must be his fourth at the very least. He figured out long ago that a poet must keep his mind on loftier things than earning a living, and the simplest way to do that was to marry a woman with plenty of money. His first was one of the Noirs, of Halifax. When he called on me here twenty-four years ago La Noir had divorced him and he had married a wealthy American widow considerably older than himself and with a grown-up family. She lived in Vermont, I believe. And so it went. There was good precedent for a Maritime poet living off women most of his life. C.G.D. Roberts and Bliss Carman played the trail long ago. Of course Roberts was a scoundrel and a sex athlete, while Carman was a gentleman with a heart as simple as a child's. K.L. is more in Carman's class in that respect.

I haven't had any direct word from Jimmie D. Gillis in a very long time. I'm told that he's been definitely off his rocker for quite a while, and that he is now in a private home; but this came to me in a roundabout way and I can't vouch for it. I did two or three radio interviews with him in Halifax in '45, and got recordings of them. This was before tape came into use, of course, and the radio people made the recordings on platters of some ersatz wartime material. After playing them over a few times the stuff began to wear badly, and I laid them aside. I assumed that a master recording must be kept in the CBC library, and that some day I'd get them to make a new tape from it. I mentioned this to Lloyd MacInnis when he visited me here a year or so ago, and he took my old recording back to Halifax with him.

Search in the CBC library found no trace of the original. Their experts did their best to restore the old copy and took a tape from it; but alas, while one can recognise the voice of Shamus Dubh one can hardly understand a word he says. A great pity, for those interviews brought forth some Gillis gems, such as "the international boundary between Victoria and Inverness counties", and the way to restore old bagpipes by a judicious soaking of certain parts in whiskey.

Best regards.

Sincerely,

Elmsdale, N.S.

December 5, 1963

Dear Thomas Raddall;

Perhaps in another seven weeks---though I doubt it---I couldn't write of the Wings of Night T.V. production with such whole-hearted approval as I feel now but for once I've been able to watch a half-hour play( or 22½ min. isn't it?) without detecting some stupid mistake or inanity that destroys its mood. Frankly this, to me, is the first C.B.C play with integrity of direction. I like it.

Of course I liked your book and since the director had it to start with the play was bound to be good. Congratulations! If the same high standard continues, as I'm sure it will, through the remaining weeks the rest of Canada will see and learn something of Nova Scotia as it really is.

With all best wishes to you and Mrs. Raddall,

Sincerely

*Barbara Grant Taylor*

December 7/63

Dear Mrs. Grantmyre,

It was very good of you to write.

I thought the first episode was rather jerky and incoherent, although I realise that the first one must introduce the scene, the chief characters, and set the plot, all in less than thirty minutes.

I dislike the TV ( and for that matter the movie) practice of preparing a shooting script solely with the view of economy and efficiency in the production. This means doing bits and sections one after the other while the actors are assembled in one particular scene -- regardless of the actual story sequence. Thus, unless all the actors have read the novel carefully beforehand ( few do!) they have no real idea of what each of these bits and pieces means in the general plot. They rely utterly upon the director for all that, and no matter how good a director may be there is a tendency to merely recite the given lines while putting on the facial and other expressions that he suggests.

Jeremy Wilkin is a good stage actor as well as a TV actor, whereas Jimmy Doohan is a TV and movie man, with no experience of the stage. On location here Wilkin told me that the audience gets far better ~~action~~ acting in a stage play, simply because a stage play is done in its proper sequence from the very first rehearsal, and everyone in the cast knows what it's all about, step by step, and can throw himself or herself into the part accordingly. "In Tv or ~~news~~ movie work you're told everything you're supposed to do, in disjointed shots, and there's no sense of continuity, no feeling that you're acting out a story in real life."

However, Ron Weyman is an excellent director and he knew the story intimately, so I'm hoping that the play will really get going in the next instalment! Most of it was shot in Toronto, and I wasn't consulted on the screen play, so I know no more about it than you do at the present time.

My wife joins me in kind regards,

Sincerely,

Elmsdale, N.S. May 7, 1965

Thomas H. Raddall,

Liverpool, N.S.

Dear T.R.

I intend to apply for a Centennial Commission-Canada Council grant. Before making a decision they ask for comments from three referees so, presuming on old acquaintance, I trust you will be one of my trio. This is my project.

I want to write the history of the Shubenacadie river. It's fascinating, I think. A waterway for the Indians, Pere LaLoutre's 'mass house' at Shubenacadie, the Acadians, Titus Smith's journey along its courses in 1802 (his journals are in the Archives), the English settlements along the river especially Maitland and the ship-building there, the Shubenacadie canal....there's a wealth of material about this river Shubenacadie. I feel a carefully researched book on it would be worthwhile and I think I can write it but I'm past the stage when enthusiasm for a writing project is sufficient reward. I could not, now, commit myself to a long year's task in blind trust. So unless I get a grant the river must wait for a chronicler.

Since I feel we share a certain writer's integrity I know you will not debase it by half truths and, if you think this project beyond me, will say so.

With all best wishes and kind regards to Mrs. Raddall and yourself,

Sincerely

*Barbara Grant Inyke*

May 19th, 1965

Dear Mrs. Grantmyre:

I have sent off the form to the Centennial Commission, with a good recommendation for your history of the Shubenacadie River, and I hope the Canada Council will make the grant.

It's an excellent project with most interesting material.

Don't forget Fort Ellis; the farming projects of Admiral Sir Alexander Cochrane ("Admiral's Rock" etc.) on which he spent a great deal of his War of 1812 prize money; but undoubtedly you know all that.

With every good wish,

Mrs. Barbara Grantmyre,

Elmsdale, N.S.

Elmsdale, N.S. Aug. 6, 1965

Dear T.H.R.;

The postman's strike delayed the letter from the Centennial Commission written July 27 so the adage 'Bad news travels fast' is sometimes incorrect. I got their refusal yesterday afternoon.

Naturally I'm disappointed though the hardest part is telling folks I've been turned down. All summer I've been getting material with increased enthusiasm for the project. On July 1st. Brenda and I took out our outboard from the mouth of the Nine Mile River( where Captain Owen and his company spent the night of Sept. 20, 1767) down the Shubenacadie to below Milford. I had a copy of his compass readings and could compare them, approximately, with a compass in the bow. We saw his 'tall, high rock with a rivulet at the base. Starboard' marked how the courses of the river have changed little in 198 years, and what was most striking of all at the spot N.E. by E where Owen's boat was stopped by 'upwards of a hundred trees some of huge size' that choked the river so that they had to drag it up the bank, put it on rollers and thus get round the obstruction we were halted by floating debris, not great trees but old boards, branches and cartons carried there by the tide. We turned at this point.

I got a copy of Floyer's Journal of the March on the Shibenaccadie from Ottawa, too. Did you know that their guide took them along the WEST side of Grand Lake to get to the source of the river? I'm sure you do, of course. But every time we've been there this year I could see those poor devils slogging along the far shore so many extra weary miles, and can't help but admire the

restraint of 'If a Party after coming to the first Stream instead of proceeding by the Western side of the Lake should cross the Stream( for it is fordable in the dry Season) and march on the Eastern side,it would cutt off at least Six mile.'

And Admiral Sir Alexander Inglis Cochrane.....the Chancery suit.... Ville Hebere.....the Micmacs..... These are only a fraction of the tales to tell.

I hate to give up the project. Helen Creighton suggests that I try to interest the provincial government, per Jerry Redmond, in the idea of a subsidy for the book but I fear it would merely lead to more disappointment. Certainly I can't do it alone. It would be sheer folly. To date Lunar Rogue has netted me about \$268.00, and while singly the yarns in A Rose For Minnie Mullet sold much higher the collection itself has brought in only the \$200. 00 advance royalties. So The River Shubenacadie, published on the same terms, could hope for no better success.

On the other hand.....

I began this as a note of sincere appreciation of your efforts on my behalf instead I'm guilty of a rambling epistle. It'd still sincere and full of thanks.

With best wishes to you and Mrs. Raddall,

*Barbara G.*

Elmsdale, N.S.

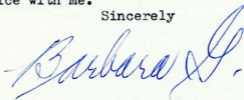
April 21, 1972

Dear T.H.R.;

As one of my earliest sponsors.....1966?...  
this may interest you. At long last the Canada  
Council has given me a grant ' to research and  
write the history of the Nova Scotian river,  
Shubenacadie.'

Rejoice with me.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Barbara G.", written in a cursive style.



April 24, 1972

My dear Mrs. G.,

I'm delighted to know that the Canada Council has come across at last. Your project deserves the grant far more than a lot of others. Mordecai Richler and Margaret Laurence, for example, have tapped the fund with the greatest of ease, for nothing of value to Canadians. Both prefer to live in England and write on cosmopolitan subjects, and both are well off financially.

There are others, closer to home, who have used the Council simply as a source of easy money. But enough said on that.

I know that you will do a first rate job on the Shubenacadie, and I'll be delighted to read the result.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Barbara Grantmyre  
Elmsdale, N.S.