

New Waterford, N. S.
Aug. 20, 1940.

Answered
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Dear Mr. Raddall:--

I get my Saturday Evening Posts from my sister after she has finished with them, and after going through the Postscript Column first as usual, I turned up your two stories, "Bald Eagle 'Iggins" and "Blind McNair", and read them through with a great deal more than ordinary interest. Primarily, I was interested because they were written in Nova Scotia, about Nova Scotia, by a Nova Scotian - if you don't mind being called a Nova Scotian - I gather you are really English. In the second place - and this is really the most important - I was interested because I realized they were both exceptionally well written. There is much good writing in both of them - that sounds rather presumptuous, but isn't meant to be - but I revelled in the picture you painted of the afternoon - or rather midday on the day McNair sang in the blacksmith shop. Do you by any chance write poetry?

I have been praising both stories to my wife and mother, and to my friends here in the office, and my boss remembered reading both and said he enjoyed them both very much. "Bald Eagle 'Iggins" has a ring of authenticity about it - is there any factual foundation, or did you get the idea from "Grey Owl"?

I was also greatly interested because once about every ten years or so I manage to sell a story myself, and my ambition has always been the one which you have accomplished so well - to be able to earn my living writing.

About ten years ago - as long ago as that. - I sold a story to McLean's. I read it over a few nights ago, and wished that I could write as well today. At that time I was on the upgrade, but laziness - which my wife claims - or inability - which I think is nearer the mark, has held me down to a sale to National Home Monthly two years ago, and an occasional boys story to Sunday School papers, and a christmas poem to the New York Times. A year or so ago, I decided to try at it in earnest again, and started sending a few stories to an agent in New York by the name of A. L. Fierst. So far he hasn't managed to sell anything for me - though I don't blame that on him. I have just completed an 1800 word story - awkward length - which I will give him to tear his hair over. Do you sell through an agent or directly to the magazines? If you are good, I suppose one is not necessary, but rejection slips get me down, away down, and I like to let someone else take all the slaps.

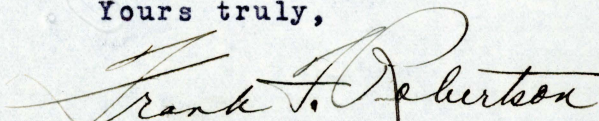
We were very much interested in the account of your career, and probably a little envious. My own misfortune has been that I have been all my life in this one mining town. I was born in Halifax, but left there when about a year old, and have only been back twice - for a day each time. My wife had the better luck to be born in Louisburg where her father operated a tug, and then went teaching school in Glace Bay and Truro. I find my lack of experience and background a great disadvantage, but since I am now married with a son and a daughter, 8 and 6 years respectively, and a mother - 72 - to look after, I shall not likely do any roaming unless Ralston should get desperate enough to hook me for the army. Being 37 that is not very likely.

Still - it is somehow wonderfully encouraging to see Nova Scotians coming into the limelight, and we still dream of that converted schooner we plan to own when we have money enough, and the poking into little harbours along the Nova Scotia shore, and the big trip up the St. Lawrence and through the Lakes sometime with the kids and some congenial companions. Who knows - it may come yet.

Do you ever think of coming to Cape Breton? We're not in the best of it. There is as much lore in the hinterland here on the island as anywhere else in the Province, and it has yet to be properly written up. Strangely enough, my one story to McLean's was set in Quebec in a country district. But - what I started out to say was that if you should ever wander this way, we would be delighted to have you call - our address in 511 Warren Avenue. Could you find time out to drop us a note about yourself and tell us where you live? This will have to go via the Saturday Evening Post -- like going all around the world to get next door.

In the meantime - good writing and sure sales -

Yours truly,



Frank F. Robertson.