

24 Oxford St.,  
Halifax, N.S.  
February 2, 1954

Dear Mr. Raddall,

You probably will not remember me, but a few years ago you were here at our house for dinner. I always feel very honoured when I look at the flyleaf of "The Wedding Gift" and see the words you wrote there at that time — "To Moira and the rest of her charming family".

I am writing with what you will no doubt consider a very odd request. All Grade 10 students at Queen Elizabeth High have been asked to write Career Books on whatever subject each person thinks he will make his career. As there are about 400 pupils writing, the subjects range from stevedoring to classical sculpture. I am going to make my book on Creative Writing. I think I am the only person who chose that field, but it is the only thing in which I am really interested.

We have quite a large Vocational Guidance Library, but when I looked at the files I could find very little on what I wanted, since nine-tenths of the "Writing" section

is about newspaper work. Our adviser suggested to me and a few others in the same predicament that we write to one or two people who have made a success of the chosen career, and ask them for advice. That, then, is the purpose of this letter.

I wonder if you could spare a minute or two to write me some of your ideas on the subject. The chapters which I can find closest about are the ones on "The Ladder to Success," that is, how to break into print, and the way up to the top; "Standards for the Debut," educational, mental, social, and so on; "Rewards of the Work," which takes in pay, achievement, security, and whether the work is satisfying.

I have just finished reading "The Nymph and the Lamp," which I think is one of the loveliest books which I ever read, and it makes me think of another question: How, wherever, do authors get the inspiration for their books or stories?

I hope, Mr. Kaddall, that this will not be too much of a bother to you, for it would mean a great deal to me to have enough good material to make a fairly decent book.

Very sincerely,  
Mira Kerr

1954

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February 6th, 1954

My dear Moira,

Of course I remember you, and the happy and interesting evening I spent at your home. Probably I shouldn't know you if I met you now, for my own daughter ~~is~~ is about your age and I perceive that she has become quite another person in the past four years or so.

I'm glad that you are thinking of creative writing as your field. Our country lags sadly behind the rest of the world in the creative arts, especially in letters, chiefly because most Canadians have regarded writing as an idle hobby or as a doubtful and unrewarding profession. I have found it useful and stimulating both as a hobby and as a profession, and not without its rewards. I can tell you only of my own experience, of course. No one follows quite the same passage through life as another and consequently no one sees it in quite the same way.

As a boy in school my main interests were history and composition. All else was a bore. As a result I was a poor student, and probably it was just as well for me that after one year in high school I went off to sea. I had been brought up in a quiet and devout Anglican home and suddenly I stepped into quite another world. I felt like Alice, except that my wonderland was considerably more surprising than amusing, and peopled with real-life characters who behaved even more strangely in their way. I found people I liked and could admire, and many I could not, but I found them all of interest. Like any boy at a peep-show I wondered what made Punch and Judy say and do the things they did, and I came to know that it was all done by hidden strings, and there was a curtain that you had to get behind if you wanted to understand the antics that you saw on the little stage.

I had no notion of writing then, of course. I didn't give it a thought. I was too busy with life itself. But I know now that a deep interest in people and what makes them tick is the first thing a creative writer must have, and it is something he or she must never lose. The second thing is imagination, because you seldom find a story complete in actual life. What you find is an incident, a scene and certain characters that suggest the beginning of a story, or the middle, or perhaps the end, and your imagination must supply the missing pieces. "Giving your imagination free rein" is a very good phrase, but observe, there is a rein. That is for control. Otherwise like any spirited horse it will run away with you and end by throwing you in the dust with a most dismal flop.

These two things, then. The rest is a matter of hard work and patient experiment with the pen, trying to get down on paper the characters you have in mind, the things they said and did, the motives that caused them to act in this way, and the scene, the weather and the other things that made a background for them. It is the same whether you write of the present or the past. History is only a tale of men and women after all, and people involved in a human problem two hundred years ago acted pretty much as people would today. History itself is cold and brief. It tells ~~you~~ you that certain persons did certain remarkable things at a certain time and the result was so-and-so. It seldom or never tells you whether a man was tall or short, or whether he liked dogs or took snuff or was in love; or whether a woman was dark or fair, or whether she preferred to wear blue or green, or whether she sang or danced or was kind to her poor old Aunt Emma, or what books she read or if she could read at all. These things you have to find out by patient research in archives and attics, in musty and forgotten books and diaries and letters -- a problem in detection as good as anything in Sherlock Holmes. When you have found enough scattered pieces to form a pattern

you can begin to construct a tale that will enable your readers to see people involved in true events long ago, and often you can make clear the small circumstances of their lives that made those long dead people think and act the way they did. That is why historical fiction, written with an informed imagination, is such a fascinating field for the creative writer.

I began to write some years after I settled down in a small country village in Nova Scotia and married a young music teacher. My salary as book-keeper in a little wood-pulp mill hardly paid expenses and I had the urge to write. I knew nothing about writing but my soldier father (killed in France in '18) had given me a love of books and a Celtic imagination, and I think I had something of my mother's intuitive feeling for people and her sense of humor. My life had been cast first amongst sailors and dwellers in lonely places on the coast, and now I found myself in what had appeared at first sight a dull little country community. But when I looked about me I saw that the pattern of life here was anything but dull. There were the mill-hands amongst whom I worked, the lumbermen who cut the logs for the mill, the river-drivers who floated the logs down the streams. There was a group of Micmac Indians living nearby, and up the river and amongst the lakes one could find ancient Indian camp sites where a patient search turned up stone arrowheads and tools, and shards of primitive pottery and so on. A few miles down-river was the town of Liverpool, where a new paper-mill was being built, and where construction workers, paper-makers, mechanics and office-workers mingled with lobster-men, schooner-men and steamer crews. All of these people had wives, daughters, sisters, mothers or aunts who like the men had their own views of life and were not afraid to discuss them. And it was a woman, an elderly retired school-teacher, who first revealed to me the story of the Nova Scotia privateersmen in the wars between 1775 and 1815, and led my interest to other unwritten chapters of Nova Scotia history.

In short there was an almost bewildering amount of material close at hand, quite apart from my own experiences at sea. But first I had to learn to write. The only prizes I had won at school were for English composition, but all that seemed far away and inadequate. There were correspondence courses to be had in short story writing and so on; but I felt (and I think I was right) that mass teaching of this kind was probably organized for profit by people who had failed as writers themselves, and at best I should find myself groping along the same groove with a thousand others. I wanted to write about Nova Scotia and the sea, because that was what I knew; and I wanted to write about it in my own way, not the way somebody else thought I should write.

So I began to analyze the books and writers I liked. I asked myself why I liked them, because I knew that something (not always the same thing) about each of these authors and their style and their choice of material struck a responsive chord in me, and I had to discover what made me tick before I could attempt to disclose the clockwork in other people. My own choice was dictated simply by a haphazard collection of books I enjoyed for one reason or another, and the authors made an odd lot on that account. For example "Sam Slick", R.L. Stevenson, some of Kipling, Joseph Conrad (he was wonderful), T. E. Lawrence, Somerset Maugham (who had a cynical view of life but whose knowledge of people and natural conversational style appealed to me) and in a lesser but still important view such queerly assorted people as "Archie" MacMechan and Hector "Saki" Munro and the man who called himself O. Henry.

Then, like anybody learning to play the piano or some other instrument I began to practise "scales". That is to say I began to sit alone, with pen and paper, setting down in the best way I could the detail of some incident or scene that had caught my attention in my daily life. Perhaps it was something that had made me laugh. Why? I wrote the whole thing down as if I were trying to convey to a (quite mythical) cousin in Australia this simple passage in my life, with the object of making him see it and laugh too. Perhaps it was just the description of a scene, the mill where I worked, a patch of woods along the road, a view from

the river bank looking down towards the village. Or it was a group of people coming out of church, and their oddly disconnected remarks, the sort of person who made each remark, and something about him or her, a hat or a necktie or a dress or an umbrella that caught my eye and remained for me the one distinctive thing about that person in the few moments I had to observe.

Practice of this kind does two things. It sharpens your observation and memory, and it steadily improves your "hand". After a time observation becomes instinctive. You don't go about the world staring at people and things with the deliberate object of putting them into a story, but subconsciously your mind tucks away little sketches and bits of dialogue and so on; and afterwards, days, months, often years later, when you are wrestling with a story and something is missing, certain pieces emerge from the mysterious recess in your mind and fall exactly into place, even though the story you are writing may have nothing to do with the places or people you originally saw.

I still play "scales" for practice, just as a pianist must, whatever his experience or success, if he wishes to keep fit between concerts. Also there are times when one's mind goes dull, perhaps from working on one thing too long, so that nothing seems clear ahead and all that you have written so far seems stale and worthless. Then, for me at any rate, there is just one thing to do. I turn aside from what I was writing or thinking and begin to describe the little group in the barber's-shop yesterday afternoon, or something insignificant that happened to me a long time ago, or my own views of the political situation in the Far East -- anything at all that opens the mysterious channel between my mind and fingertips. I am playing "scales" at this moment, as I write this letter to you, because here again I am trying to put on paper and make clear to somebody else the things I see.

Now with regard to the three particular questions you ask, with their formidable titles and sub-titles!

#### Standards for the Work

Educational, mental, social, etc. You must remember that the summit of my own formal education was Grade Ten in the old Halifax Academy. Like Mr. Churchill I have "picked up a little knowledge here and there along the way." At any rate I have always been a hungry reader, and I think that is most important. Of course to write with any competence you must have a good working knowledge of grammar and composition. By that I don't mean memorizing a lot of rules, however much that may be required for school examinations. English grammar was my worst subject at school, I could never remember the unwieldy rules and I couldn't repeat a single one today. Yet I managed to do well at composition. I suppose I learned to "play by ear" so to speak -- in other words much reading gave me an instinctive grasp of the principles. Later on when I began to analyze the books I liked, and examined the workmanship apart from the subject matter, I found that a good phrase, a well constructed sentence or paragraph, had a ring that was unmitigable; and the arrangement of these sentences and paragraphs had a certain logical order in the author's progress towards the point he was trying to make. They were like soldiers on the road, every word an individual with its own color, taste and feel, and the individuals grouped in platoons, and the platoons in companies, and the companies in a battalion, and the whole procession moving with an easy rhythm towards a certain destination.

All of this, which I picked up in such a blind fashion, is taught in high school ( I hope); but I think there is no substitute for study of good authors from a purely personal point of view, a continual self-questioning as to why you are pleased or impressed or revolted by this or that treatment of a scene or a conversation or a piece of action. Because to write creatively yourself you must first discover what mental strings vibrate in you at the vision of this or that, and you cannot write naturally until you have found the general approach to a subject that comes naturally to your mind and a style that comes naturally to your hand.

There is a danger in study of this kind, of course -- the danger of imitation -- but that is not serious. Robert Louis Stevenson began by imitating

the writers he admired in matters of style, and was frank to admit it afterwards. The point is that if you have a truly creative bent you will not be satisfied for long with imitation, even if it is unconscious imitation. After a time (and after a lot of "scales" played under these various influences) your own instinct will lead your hand to a style that is yours as much as your style of walking or ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ penning your signature. Then you have a tool that you will be able to use with increasing familiarity and skill, and from that time you can devote your whole attention to story material.

The choice of material depends entirely on yourself, the sort of person you are, your tastes and interests, your emotions, your observation of life and the impressions you draw from it through your own experience as the years go by. My life has been spent largely amongst men and women who lived close to the earth and the sea, and on the inner side I was always keen on history, so these two circumstances provided me with my material. But you must not suppose that it is necessary to wander about to find material for your pen. As you know, Jane Austen, the Bronte sisters and the woman who called herself George Eliot wrote splendid tales without making thrilling journeys through darkest Africa or joining an expedition to the Pole. The stuff of life is close about you always. You have only to recognize it.

#### The Ladder to Success.

I am still fumbling my way up that rickety contraption, so I can tell only what I have seen of it so far. First you ask, How to break into print? There is no formula. Some begin as newspaper reporters. Some watch for the short-story or novel contests open to beginners which are offered by certain magazines and publishing houses. Martha Oatenso got her start in such a way with her Canadian novel of the prairies, "Wild Geese"; and Mazo de la Roche after one or two unsuccessful attempts jumped right to the top of the ladder with her novel "Jalna", which won the prize and publication offered by the "Atlantic Monthly". However for most of us the way to publication is that of writing tales or articles and mailing them to the editors of magazines for consideration in the ordinary ~~xxx~~ course of their business.

My own "break" was a quaint affair. After writing some unsatisfactory things, entirely imitative, aimed at one or two American magazines that specialized in stories of adventure about the world, I determined to do what I really wanted -- to write about Nova Scotian things and people, and in my own way. I wrote a short story based on a local incident and worked very hard to get the effect I wanted. In all I think I re-wrote the story five or six times. I sent it to a Canadian magazine, whose editor not only rejected it but wrote me a two-page letter to tell all that was wrong with it and to explain how I should have written it. He was being kind. He might have sent it back with just a printed rejection slip. But I was angry, because I wanted to write my way and not his or anybody else's way; and I was discouraged, because his was the leading Canadian magazine, and if I couldn't sell a genuine Nova Scotian story to a Canadian magazine there was no hope of selling it anywhere else. I was working as an accountant all day and doing my writing at night, and I felt that if I couldn't write my own way there was no pleasure in writing at all. So I threw the story aside and contented my writing urge for the next two years in compiling a brief account of the Norse voyages to America and ~~the~~ another of the privateer "Rover", both of which were printed and bound in small editions for private distribution by the company for which I worked.

Then (after two years, remember) on a sudden whim I dug out that rejected short story and sent it to Blackwood's Magazine, which is published in Edinburgh, Scotland. I knew that Blackwood's had a high literary standard, so this was sheer audacity; but I knew also that Blackwood's liked to print a certain number of tales from the dominions and colonies. I expected a flat rejection. Instead I had a letter from the editor, ~~accepting~~ my story (he printed it without changing so much as a comma) and asking for more. In a magnificent burst of self-confidence I then sent him several things that I had written before  
as ~~scales~~

as "scales", and I knew in my heart that they were poorly constructed and full of improbabilities. He rejected them all. However he asked to see more work in the style of the first story I had sent him. I then wrote (and re-wrote again and again) a new story with Nova Scotia characters and background, which he accepted and printed without change, as before. That was the beginning of a long and happy connection with this famous magazine, which led eventually to a wider field and a career.

From this early experience I drew several lessons that I have kept before me ever since:

- (1) Never send an editor anything but your best, no matter what toil and pains it may cost, and have the courage to destroy what is not your best.
- (2) If the story is your absolute best, have confidence in it.
- (3) No two editors think alike, no two magazines are quite alike, and what one editor considers worthless may strike another as just the thing he wants. Therefore do not despair if someone rejects your work or suggests changes that strike you as foreign to your principles or your sense of what is soundly written work. Editors even change their minds. The Canadian editor who condemned my first story was glad some years later to buy it at second-hand, long after it had appeared in Blackwood's, and to pay me twice the price that was current when I first sent the story to him.

Some short-story writers never attempt a novel. Some novelists have never written a short story. Nevertheless I think that practice in the short story is a very good preparation for writing novels. In both you have to use your observation of life and your imagination about plot; but in the short story you have only a limited space, you have to make every phrase, every word, have taste or color or feel or smell, if you are to fit your whole tale into this small frame. (Most magazines set a rigid limit, which may be 3,000, 4,000 or 5,000 words.) This teaches you not to ramble, not to use words or paragraphs that do not contribute something of value to your plot or atmosphere; and the result is clarity and vigor (which are priceless things) in your style.

When you have written your first short story and satisfied yourself that it has genuine interest as well as good workmanship, send it to a magazine that uses stories of its kind. In other words, don't send a rattling adventure story to "Home and Garden", or a simple tale about a school-girl's problems (or a woman's for that matter) to a magazine like "Blue Book". There are many magazines and the field is wide, especially in the United States, although I should try the Canadian magazines first. And keep on writing and trying until you get one or two acceptances, even though the magazines that accept may not be leaders in their field or generous in the matter of payment.

After your work has appeared once or twice in these you may consider the next step, which is of course a more prominent magazine. Magazines are divided roughly into two classes; those that print on cheap unglazed paper, which are called "pulp"; and those that print on good glazed paper, with illustrations often in color, which are called "slicks". The "slick" magazines, like Maclean's or Saturday Evening Post or Ladies' Home Journal, pay the best rates -- and the American magazines pay far more than the Canadian.

Always type your stories, or have them typed, on standard business paper (like this). Use only one side of the paper, with margins of at least an inch, and the typing double-spaced -- not single-spaced like this letter. Don't use fancy ribbon or pins to fasten the sheets together. Use an ordinary removable paper clip. Mail your manuscript in a large manila envelope the full size of the sheets, so that it will lie flat on the editor's desk. Remember that editors are busy people, and if you want their best attention make your manuscript easy to read in every way.

On the first sheet of your manuscript put nothing but the title of the story, the number of words it contains, and your own name and address. And be sure to enclose a stamped and self-addressed envelope so that the manuscript will be returned to you properly if it is rejected.



You may prefer always to deal direct with editors in this way, mailing the manuscripts (I should say typescripts) back and forth. With my novels I deal direct with the publishers. With short stories I prefer to use the services of a professional agent, who submits the typescript (often in person) to magazine editors, and tries not only to sell it but to get the highest possible price for it. When he gets an acceptance he collects the money, deducts 10% for his fee, and remits the rest to me.

There are many agents, and a lot of them are unscrupulous. The best of them handle nothing but what they consider first-rate work, because they have the entry into editorial offices on that understanding. In fact the best of them will not handle beginners' work except in cases of exceptional merit. That is why it is important to get your first one or two stories accepted "on your own". When your work has actually appeared in magazines of fairly wide circulation, the best agents will be glad to handle your further work and to introduce it to the editors of better publications. And here is a caution. Beware of agents who advertize their services and offer to handle your work for a fee that you pay yourself in advance. Most of these are frauds. If your story is worthwhile a good agent will be willing to handle it in the hope that he can sell it and collect his commission on the actual sale.

After you have sold your short stories to magazines for a year or two, and acquired the skill and confidence that go with actual publication, you should ask yourself the question, Where do I go from here? The points you will have to consider will run something like this -- and you will have to consider them again and again as time goes on:

- (1) I wish to make my living as a writer of fiction. If my object is simply money and nothing else, then the writing of tales for popular "slick" magazines is the surest and best field. For an acceptable short story the top "slicks" will pay \$1,000 and up. The editors of popular magazines like to see a good off-the-beaten-track story now and then but as a rule they wish their stories to conform to a certain pattern. Thus for the numerous women's magazines the pattern is the familiar "boy-meets-girl", or the humors or worries or tragedies of husbands and wives. Consequently all fiction in the "slick" class must be written with a definite "slant" towards this or that magazine. If I can continue to do this successfully I shall be well paid. Nevertheless I shall be in a rut, from which after some years I may not be able to emerge. Is this what I really want?
- (2) I wish to make my living as a writer but I also wish my work to have some permanence. Magazines are simply read and thrown away, and their authors are forgotten. I have succeeded with short stories and have learned a lot more about my craft. Am I ready now to tackle the writing of books?
- (3) There are all kinds of books, fiction and non-fiction. In the United States something like 15,000 new titles are published every year. In Britain the figure is even larger. All of these books compete with each other for the attention of the public.
- (4) A novel runs to at least 80,000 words and usually much more, compared with a maximum of 5,000 words for the short story. Moreover the characters, the plot and setting require much more careful thought and labor than in the production of short stories. The writing of a novel with reasonable care will take six months at least, probably a year. Some novelists take years.
- (5) Suppose I undertake a novel. I shall have to support myself while I am writing it by turning aside frequently to produce short stories and articles. This means a double burden, and I must be prepared to spend months on end working not less than twelve hours a day, for I must gather material as well as write it. When I am working on the novel, and the plot is moving well in my mind, I must stay with it lest I break the thread, even if it means working twenty or thirty hours on end. I must do this because there will be other times when my mind goes dull and will not respond, or will yield only mediocre stuff that eventually I must reject and throw into the wastebasket.

(6) When, after all this labor, I have finished the novel, I must seek a publisher for it. When I have found a publisher who is willing to risk his money on producing it, I shall have to depend for my own pay on the caprice of the public. My pay will be in the form of royalties at the rate of 10% to 15% of the retail price of the book. That is to say, if the book sells for \$5.00 I shall receive 50 cents, and if the publisher sells more than 5,000 copies I may receive 45 cents per copy. Publishing costs are high, and today if a publisher sells less than 7,000 copies of a book he loses money. Hence every novel is a gamble for the publisher -- and for the writer. (Note: My first novel, "His Majesty's Yankees", took two years of research and writing. I gave up my whole time and thought to it -- no articles or short stories on the side. During that time it cost me at least \$5,000 to support my family on a very modest scale. The royalties I received in the first ~~two~~ two years after publication came to exactly \$2755.15! My small savings-account at the bank was demolished).

(7) Suppose I have written and published two or three novels about children. The question is still, where do I go from here? It may be that my talent is for writing about children and I cannot write successfully about anything else. In that case I have no further choice. But my interests are wider. My interest is in humanity as a whole, and not in one section or period of time. In that case I should go on and tackle something else. ~~XXXXX~~ Success as a writer does not mean merely success at one thing if I have other capabilities that I fail to use, for in that case I have not climbed the ladder at all, but simply parked myself on a nice convenient platform on the way. What is success, anyway? A famous name? A lot of money? Kipling had both those things when he was in his twenties. So did Somerset Maugham. But both of them went on to explore their talents and to write creatively in other ways for the rest of their lives. Anything short of that would have been failure.

Rewards of the Work

If you regard writing simply as a trade, the rewards are not high. It is true that some novelists make fortunes, and that crack short-story and article writers earn \$10,000 to \$30,000 a year from American magazines. But these are comparatively few. The number of writers is enormous, and most of them, if they figured up their time, are working for an hourly rate of pay that would shock any plumbers' or building-trades union. Indeed the majority of writers, including many novelists, have some other profession or source of income. All of these compete in the magazine and book field with those (like myself) who depend entirely on their writing for a living.

The Canadian writer is under several disadvantages, one of which is that his home market is small. There are few Canadian magazines, and the average Canadian seldom buys a book except in the cheap paper-backed form, which yields the author less than two cents per copy. So the Canadian author must write for the English-speaking public in the United States and Britain if he is to make a living. This means that he must compete with the writers of those countries in their own field -- and the British and American writers are numerous, able and energetic.

All of this is a challenge to the Canadian, and if he succeeds he has the satisfaction of knowing that he did it the hard way. I started to write in 1928, while working in the daytime as an accountant. A long industrial depression began soon afterwards and for ten years I had to keep on in that way. During that time I won some recognition as a writer of short stories in British and American magazines, and in 1938 I gave up my accounting and launched forth as a professional author. I say "launched" deliberately because I nearly sank financially several times in the next few years, but I kept on swimming, I asked no help from anyone and I paid my bills. Today I still have no security of income, each new book may sell well or it may not, but I write what I wish to write, I have been able to live happily with my family, we have a modest house and car, we travel a bit, I have been able to send my son to college and I hope next year to send my daughter, and

I have been able to make some provision for my old age. I could not ask more than that of a profession that has also brought me more honors than I deserve, and a multitude of friends. I have never wished to be rich, and in that I have never been disappointed.

But writing is more than a trade in any case, it is an art, and to succeed in art is more to be wished than riches. Some dilettantes who profess to worship art in literature look down their noses at authors who write for a living. This is silly, because most of the world's best literature has been written by authors doing just that. There is a wide difference between the author whose chief interest is money and has no principles or standards except perhaps a high standard of living, and the author who writes to satisfy a creative urge and, having done that, offers his product in the marketplace.

To the writer who holds himself or herself to a personal standard of excellence it is one of the hardest ways to make a living. It will seldom bring a fortune, although that is possible. But whether the work sells for much or little the writer's real reward is the pleasure of creation, as it is for any artist or craftsman. This, and the little glow at the heart when readers, some of them in far places, write their appreciation of the work. These are rewards that do not come to most trades and professions.

Perhaps most precious of all, there is the further reward of freedom. You may be a tough taskmaster to yourself (indeed you have to be if you are to succeed) but you take orders from no one else. Your life is your own, your time is your own to use as you wish. You choose your own material. You mould it in your own way. And if your living tastes are simple, as they should be, you are able to place your work before the world and say in effect, "Take it or leave it." I think the creative artist or writer is perhaps the only person in the world who has true independence.

Yours sincerely,

P.S. Last week as a relief from the story I had been working on, I prepared a lecture which I have promised to give in Charlottetown next month, thereby getting it off my mind until the time comes. I enclose a carbon copy. Much of it has nothing to do with the questions you ask, but I think perhaps in the latter half you may find some things that are pertinent. The cryptic marks in the right-hand margin are the result of an erratic paper-holder on my little typewriter!

Miss Moira Kerr,  
24 Oxford Street,  
Halifax, N.S.

(Note:- Moira graduated B.A. from Dalhousie University in 1959. She did some newspaper work afterwards. In 1968 she married an American professor, Jonathan W. Spurgeon Ph.D., of Kennewick in the state of Washington.)

24 Chestnut St.,  
Haldop, N. S.  
February 15, 1879

Dear Mr. Raddall,

How can I ever thank you enough! When I received your wonderful letter the other day, I could hardly believe that this great wealth of material had actually come into my hands. I do hope that the writing of it did not take too much of your very valuable time.

You can never know just how much this letter has helped me. Before it came, I was quite at my wits' end from trying to find information that would be pertinent to my chapter topics. Now, I have been able already to start writing, and it should not be too long before I can pass in the complete book. Then, too, I think your idea of scales is very interesting. I am going to start writing them right away. Thank you again for your great kindness to me.

Yours sincerely,  
Moira Kerr