

**L. M. Montgomery**

L. McKenna and A. Campbell

As we browsed through some of the early numbers of *Red and White*, we came across a poem entitled "The Rising Tide." Of especial interest to us was the fact that the contributor of this poem was at that time visiting her native Province.

During her short stay, a reception was given in her honor at Government House and thus we made official recognition of Lucy Maud Montgomery as the one who did so much to make our Island famous. For through her novels, people have learned to love this province; they have come to see and enjoy the beautiful country-sides where Anne of Green Gables lived and still lives.

And yet, in spite of the honours and fame bestowed on her, she has remained one of ourselves; she still loves the scenes of her childhood, and, although she lives in another part of Canada, her heart still wanders by the sea shores and climbs the great sand dunes of Cavendish.

Lucy Maud Montgomery was born at Clifton, P. E. I., and followed the usual course of district school and Queen's Academy (now Prince of Wales College). She subsequently taught school for three years, at the same time writing for magazines. Then she gave up teaching to devote her time entirely to writing.

In 1908, *Anne of Green Gables*, her first novel, was published. It was a phenomenal success; everyone instantly fell in love with Anne and Miss Montgomery's fame was established. This book was followed by *Anne of Avonlea*, *Anne of the Island*, *Anne's House of Dreams*.

Three years after the appearance of *Anne of Green Gables*, Miss Montgomery married Rev. Ewan MacDonald and went to live in Ontario. From there, she has continued to write novels and short stories with Island settings. Although she is not so well known as a writer of poetry, she has produced some very beautiful verse and published one volume of poems, *The Watchman*. We present in this issue two of her more modern poems which she has been good enough to send us.

Honours have fallen thick upon her. Her talents were recognized and in 1923, she was elected a member of the Royal Society of Arts of Great Britain—the first Canadian woman to be made a fellow of that society. Last year she was made an Officer of the British Empire. Greatest of all her triumphs came when, three years ago, *Anne of Green Gables* was successfully produced on the screen.

What makes these books so charming and attractive is, more than anything else, their sweet simplicity. Following the poet's injunction, she has worked with what lies nearest—the common country people of the Island, with their proper customs, characteristics and peculiarities. The background is entirely authentic, she has not built up a false atmosphere, nor produced any strained "dialect" effect. *Anne of Green Gables*, the lovable, red headed orphan, follows the course of the average Island girl, who passes through the district school, attends Prince of Wales and teaches school before taking up a definite career.

Her characters are typical but more than typical. While Murilla and Matthew are representative, they are quite definitely characters who could not be duplicated—Murilla, who "puts the tea on to draw" when a neighbor drops in for a chat who is secretly fond of Anne and proud

of her accomplishments, and the shy, silent Matthew, who answers all Anne's strange questions with "Well, now, I dunno."

She is the most fanciful of authors, even the titles of her novels and their settings suggest mystery, call up dreamy visions.—"Anne of Avonlea," "Anne's House of Dreams," "Pat of Silver Bush," "Four Winds," "The Lake of Shining Waters." Anne herself is forever weaving strange fancies about everything, giving names to flowers, trees and brooks.

As this would indicate, there is a poetic vein in her prose—in fact we can not help wishing that she had devoted more of her time to poetry. Describing a scene, she says in *Anne's House of Dreams*,

"Cloud fleets rode at anchor along the horizon."

And again, "The days slipped by like golden beads on the necklace of the year."

In describing Island sea views she is at times magnificent:

"Beyond the bar the sea, calm and austere, dreamed in the afterlight. The little fishing village nestled in the cove where the sand dunes met the harbour shore, looked like a great opal in the haze the air was crisp with the compelling tang of the sea Far out along the horizon was the crinkled gray ribbon of a passing steamer's smoke."

In the combination of humour, pathos and tenderness, she resembles Dickens. Anne, who suffers keenly because of her sensitive nature, is constantly putting herself in the most ludicrous positions by her thoughtless actions. There is lovable old Captain Jim, and the sharp-tongued, soft-hearted Miss Cornelia. Weddings, births and deaths, laughter and tears—without all these her books would cease to live.

As one would expect, the creator of Anne has a delightful personality. Plain people are her favorites, common people her friends; for fame has not spoiled nor honours changed her. We find her closest friends enthusiastic about her total lack of *affection. One of these friends, herself a writer of note, says: "She is charming, and if all readers could meet her personally her books would run into hundreds of editions."

To young persons, and all young writers, she is kindness itself. When we communicated our desire for some-

* *affectation*

thing from her pen, she sent us these two poems. We feel that we have been unusually fortunate.

To A Desired Friend

L. M. Montgomery

I have a right to you
 In your face I read you witty, loving, loyal,
 Made for discontents divine, satisfactions royal,
 We will dare more greatly faring on a common way.
 I know that we can be young and old together,
 Playing life's great game with zest, caring little whether
 Gain or loss come of it so the game be worth the play.
 I would not be friends with all . . . friendship is too fine
 To be thus worn threadbare out . . . but you are mine !

I know we love the same things . . .
 Little wandering stars. . . all the timeless rapture
 Of a windy night when our thoughts are safe from capture,
 All the pale witcheries of old enchanted woods;
 We can walk the open road when rainy twilights linger
 Or when sunset touches us with a golden finger,
 Or be intimate with moonlight in gypsy solitudes;
 Shining autumns will be ours, white immortal Mays,
 Nights that will be purple pearls binding in our days.

We will give each other
 The right good gift of a laughter free from malice,
 Glowing words that fall blood-red as drops from a chalice,
 Daring to be silent, too, when we trust;
 We will be merry when the firelight purrs and flashes,
 We will sorrow together over the white ashes,
 When our high dreams have gone into the dust;
 Nice old rooms will nicer be for our jolly talks,
 Gardens will the dearer be for our remembered walks.

We have a right to each other . . .
 A right to the savour and tang of losing and keeping,
 A right to a fellowship in sowing and reaping . . .
 Oh, there will not be time for all we have to tell !
 We have lost too much in the years that are behind us,
 Let us take and hold now what is given to bind us . . .
 Here's my hand . . . take it as frankly . . . all will be well.
 Till the last lure beckons, till the road makes end
 You and I will keep our step, friend with friend.