

The Land of Lost Content: The Use of Fantasy in L. M. Montgomery's Novels

JANE COWAN FREDEMAN

Into my heart an air that kills
From yon far country blows:
What are those blue remembered hills,
What spires, what farms are those?

That is the land of lost content,
I see it shining plain,
The happy highways where I went
And cannot come again.

In a passage in *The Story Girl*, L. M. Montgomery elaborates on Housman's description of "the land of lost content," using "fairyland" as a metaphor both for the golden days of childhood and for the font from which creative artists, separated from the common run, continue to draw their imaginative powers:

"I wish there was such a place as fairyland--and a way to get to it," said Cecily.

"I think there *is* such a place as fairyland--in spite of Uncle Edward," said the Story Girl dreamily, "and I think there is a way of getting there too, if we could only find it."

Well, the Story Girl was right. There is such a place as fairyland--but only children can find the way to it. And they do not know that it is fairyland until they have grown so old that they forget the way. One bitter day, when they seek it and cannot find it, they realize what they have lost and that is the tragedy of life. On that day the gates of Eden are shut behind them and the age of gold is over. Henceforth they must dwell in the common light of common day. Only a few, who remain children at heart, can ever find that fair, lost path again, and blessed are they above mortals. They, and only they, can bring us tidings from that dear country where once we sojourned and from which we must evermore be exiles. The world calls them its singers and poets and artists and story-tellers; but they are just people who have never forgotten the way to fairyland. (pp. 165-66).

When she set out to write her first novel, Montgomery thought she might have "only a very moderate success I never dreamed that it would appeal to young and old. I thought girls in their teens might like to read it, that was the only audience I hoped to reach."¹ That she and so many others have been surprised by the breadth of her appeal--her novels remain so popular that of twenty-one only *Emily's Quest* is out of print in this country--is, I think, a measure of the failure of sophisticated readers to identify the universals in the world she created.

L. M. Montgomery was a romantic, in expression as well as thought, as the passage above amply illustrates, but in her description of childhood fancy, she continually keeps the real or adult world close to the surface. In the novels the reader finds not only more or less elaborate descriptions of the heroine's fantasy worlds but also constant, and frequently harsh, intrusions by adults who have lost fairyland and by a tribe of children who have never entered it. The disappointments and griefs, trivial or serious, imaginary or real, which characterize her novels may be seen as milestones on the road to the gateway of adulthood, the time of initiation when all but a privileged few must leave the "Golden Road."

There are dozens of children--"Pilgrims" Montgomery calls them--on this road in the novels, but it is mainly through the heroines--from the little-known Marigold Lesley, Jane Stuart, and Valancy Stirling, through Pat Gardiner and Emily Starr, to the Story Girl, Sara Stanley, and, of course, Anne--that the reader comes to appreciate both fairyland and its loss. Among the many characteristics these heroines and their foils share, the primary one is isolation or solitariness, even when they are apparently surrounded by family and friends. In order to comprehend Montgomery's purpose, the reader must recognize this shared condition; at the same time he must also understand the distinction made in the novels between fantasy and those true glimpses beyond the veil which separate the real from an ideal world. In *The Alpine Path*, Montgomery reveals many of the details of her own fantasies, but she also describes this visionary aspect:

It has always seemed to me, ever since early childhood, that, amid all the commonplaces of life, I was very near to a kingdom of ideal beauty. Between it and me hung only a thin veil. I could never draw it quite aside, but sometimes a wind fluttered it and I caught a glimpse of the enchanting realm beyond--only a glimpse, but those glimpses have made life worth while.²

Like their author, most of the heroines and their playmates either inhabit or create fantasy worlds, but only a few experience what Emily calls "the flash."

Most of the heroines' game-playing can be seen as a process by which they extend and enrich the boundaries of their childhood lives, but for some the fantasy is more completely escapist. Thus, though Valancy Stirling and Marigold Lesley are not typical in their use of the fantasy world, to exclude them from an examination of the theme of fairyland would both lessen the appreciation of Montgomery's reliance

on it in her work and suggest, by omission, that she did not recognize this purpose of fantasy. Both characters have in common that they are dominated and patronized by their relations; that their feelings seem never to be taken into consideration; that they are essentially friendless; and that they possess neither the beauty nor the charm and manner which are the saving graces in their real worlds.

Paradoxically, age seems to be irrelevant: Marigold is six when Sylvia appears, while Valancy still occupies her "blue castle" at twenty-nine. On the surface Sylvia parallels those imaginary playmates who are conjured up by almost all solitary children who have to rely on their imaginations, and the reactions of Marigold's mother and grandmother parallel those of most adults. Her weak and colourless mother, perhaps more dominated even than Marigold herself, sees no harm in a fantasy which gives her daughter such pleasure; "young grandmother," however, tries--first by persuasion and then by force--to deny Marigold entrance into the "land where wishes come true" by locking the "Magic Door" through which the child must pass before she can incant her "rhyme" and gain access to Sylvia. Only the intercession of the psychologist, Dr. Adam Clow, prevents Marigold from wasting away when she is deprived of the fantasy that has become life. To the statement that she is living falsehoods, Dr. Clow replies:

. . . They are truths to her. She sees things invisible to us She is not trying to deceive anybody. she has the wonderful gift of creation in an unusual degree. It is such a pity that she will lose it as she grows older--that she will have to forego its wonder and live, like us, in the light of common day (p. 116) 3

Marigold creates Sylvia because she has no playmates; her rare visits with relatives are not often successful; she is rejected at school; and there are no children living nearby in Harmony. It is only when the last of these conditions alters and she makes friends with Budge Guest that her world begins to change. Marigold has premonitions of this change, and her aunt, one of the rare, sympathetic adults, encourages her to keep her dream, "knowing that since Marigold had begun to think of Sylvia as a dream that the sad awakening is near" (p. 319). Seeking to retain Budge's friendship after a new boy arrives, Marigold foolishly confides to him all the details of Sylvia. She feels disloyal; he regards her fantasy as silly; and Sylvia disappears. But out of her grief, Marigold grows: "The old magic was gone forever--gone with Sylvia and the Hidden Land and all the dear, sweet fading dreams of childhood. But after all there were compensations She stood on her own ground" (pp. 327-28).

Valancy Stirling, too, learns to stand on her own ground when she exchanges dream for reality. However, given the differences in their ages and the implication that Marigold will have a normal adolescence, Valancy's problems will probably be seen as more serious by the reader. Acquaintance with her odious relatives--the mother whom she is afraid to offend, her uncle Benjamin for whose jokes she is the constant butt, and her beautiful cousin Olive--makes it obvious why she "had lived

spiritually in the Blue Castle ever since she could remember All that supported her through the boredom of her days was the hope of going on a dream spree at night" (pp. 4-5). But even when the story opens, it is Valancy's "day of fate," and she cannot "find the key of her Blue Castle." Thus, hers is not a story of fantasy but of maturation. It is important to recognize that here and throughout Montgomery's novels the reader does not share the solitary dreams. What Marigold and Sylvia laughed about is not revealed, and only the barest outlines of the series of lovers who inhabited Valancy's castle in Spain are sketched in. What is important is the process by which the real world overtakes the imaginary.

Valancy's change is as abrupt as Sylvia's disappearance. From the moment when plain "Doss," "twenty-nine, lonely, undesired, ill-favoured," learns from Dr. Trent's short note that with her heart condition she will be lucky to live out the year, she feels a curious freedom from her domineering clan. She resents rather than fears death, "not because she had no future but because she had no past" (p. 47). A "colourless nonentity," she had never had the "one wholly happy hour" which would allow her to be willing to die. In the remainder of the novel she sets out to please herself. "I shall never pretend anything again. I've breathed an atmosphere of fibs and pretences and evasions. . . . I may not be able to do much that I want to do but I won't do another thing that I don't . . ." (pp. 54-55). These lines and the situations that follow reveal the frank forthrightness which often puts Montgomery's younger heroines in awkward situations. Valancy's future actions do not involve her in the kinds of troubles caused by Anne's outspokenness to Mrs. Lynde or Emily's to Miss Brownell, but they do bring her freedom and life.

The beginnings of Valancy's rebellion are simple: she hacks to pieces the rosebush given to her for her birthday, which has, symbolically, refused to bloom; she will no longer attend the Anglican church, simply because it is expected of her; and she not only refuses to assume her expected role at the family dinner, but thinks and speaks a series of home truths. While her family is dismayed about the possible social repercussions, they attempt to humour her until she decides to become housekeeper for the town handyman and drunk, Roaring Abel Gay, and to nurse his dying daughter Cissy. In Abel's rough house she finds herself no longer superfluous. Among the things she does as she eases Cissy's last days is to tell her of the Blue Castle. And the frail girl, ostracized because she has had an illegitimate child as much as because of her father's behaviour, tells her "Everyone has a Blue Castle, I think Only everyone has a different name for it. I had mine--once" (p. 108).

During this time, too, Valancy comes to know the mysterious Barney Snaith, a figure around whom the town has woven lurid tales. In time she recognizes that she loves him and suddenly feels a woman, "justified to herself." After Cissy dies, not wanting to live what she thinks are her last few weeks or months at home, Valancy gives him the doctor's letter and asks him to marry her. When to her surprise he agrees, she goes with him to his island. At her first glimpse of the shack

surrounded by pines in the moonlight, she recognizes her blue castle. For a time she lives utterly happy in a world of freedom, "a world where time was not--which was young with immortal youth--where there was neither past nor future but only the present" (p. 179).

But this dream, too, must end. With the series of coincidences, dramas, and revelations which mark her work, Montgomery brings the novel to a happy conclusion. First, Valancy learns she had received the wrong letter and is not in danger of death. Then she discovers that Barney Snaith is both the son of the millionaire supplier of Redfern's patent medicines and the John Foster who authored the nature books she has immersed herself in. Feeling that she has tricked him, Valancy returns home, only, of course, to have Barney, now aware of his own deep feelings, come after her. Finally matured, Valancy is able to leave her second blue castle and enter fully into the real world.

Although the plots of many of the greatest English novelists are full of coincidences and happy endings, Montgomery is frequently condemned for employing these obvious devices. Montgomery believed in a personal "City of Fulfilment" and an incident in her career at the Halifax *Echo*, which she was to elaborate in *Emily's Quest*, reveals how it affected her work. The ending of a serial having been lost, Montgomery was requested to provide one. Years later she saw the original, "about as different from mine as anything could possible be." In the novel the original author arrives at Emily's door in a rage to tell her, "My story was barbarously mutilated. A happy ending. Horrible. My ending was sorrowful and artistic. A happy ending can never be artistic" (p. 183). L. M. Montgomery did not agree, any more than did Dickens, who transformed *Great Expectations* into a totally different work by the substitution of the second, happy ending.

For all their differences, Valancy and Marigold illustrate the primary theme of Montgomery's work, the encroachment of the real world on the child and the need to leave childhood behind. Only two, the Story Girl and Emily Starr, will not become exiles from fairyland, though for all a contented future is envisioned. Her heroines share further common traits which serve to accentuate their solitude.

Perhaps to mark the individuality of growth and perhaps because it echoed her own experience, with the exception of Pat Gardiner all Montgomery's heroines are isolated from the normal pattern of family life. Marigold and Valancy have only one living parent, and neither mother is able or willing to help her child. Jane Stuart believes her situation to be the same until she learns that her parents are separated. Anne, Emily, and Kilmeny are orphans living with elderly people who cannot, even when they try, comprehend their private worlds. The Story Girl whose mother is dead and whose father is abroad, is a further variation; her home is with an aunt and uncle, near, but not with, her numerous cousins.

Many minor characters share this particular difference from their peers, and the reader is frequently invited to enlarge upon their fantasies as well. In *The Story Girl* for example, the hired boy, Peter, is

an orphan, while Beverley and Felix King and the mournful Sara Ray all have only one living parent. Jane Stuart's Toronto friend, Jody, is an orphan. Ilse Burnley and Teddy Kent have only single parents, both embittered by the way in which they lost their mates, and the fourth of the New Moon group, Perry Miller, is an orphan from Stovepipe Town. In this group the other dream worlds are more clear. Ilse is to be an elocutionist (a story-teller); Teddy, an artist, and Perry, a lawyer and politician. Even Pat Gardiner's friend, Hilary Gordon, has been deserted by his mother and is kept by his aunt and uncle in the spirit of "duty" which sheds such dark clouds over these young lives. To this list could be added, among others, Gay Penhallow, Brian Dark, and a number of other characters from *A Tangled Web*, but each of their stories is only a small part of that complex plot.

The heroines also tend to be isolated or differentiated from the other girls in the books by their plainness and by the oddity of their clothes, aspects almost as frequently commented upon as the gratitude expected from them by their surrogate and real parents. The truism that beauty is only skin deep is documented dramatically in Montgomery's novels where internal rather than external beauty is a prerequisite for the final emergence of the character; frequently too, it separates those other characters who recognize the depth and uniqueness of the heroines' visions and dreams from those who are incapable of doing so. Though all recognize that they are "nae beauties," Anne seems more keenly self-conscious about her carrot hair and freckles, and in none of the other novels are the episodes involving the recognition of plainness so hilarious as the hair-dying scene in *Anne of Green Gables*. The burden falls lightest on Marigold and Pat; neither are jealous children, and the former's most earnest hope is to have her hair bobbed, while Pat learns at eleven that her eyes, her smile, and her capacity for love will carry her further than any amount of golden curls. Emily's good points are like Pat's, though she inwardly rages, like Anne, at her old-fashioned clothes and earnestly wants the "band" she feels will make her prettier. The Story Girl's too long and too white face is more than compensated for by the rainbow voice which in the future, the reader is told, will make kings delight to honour her. The boyish Beverly King wonders how it is that she cast the beautiful Felicity in the shade:

I looked at her and wondered why it was not enough that she should be so pretty and capable of making such turnovers. If only she were more interesting! Felicity had not a particle of the nameless charm and allurements which hung about every motion of the Story Girl, and made itself manifest in her lightest word and most careless glance. (p. 40)

Beverly is, of course, narrating in retrospect, but throughout the two novels, the effects of the Story Girl on children and adults alike are manifest.

The naming of places, trees, and objects is another personal trait which Montgomery transfers to her heroines. Whether or not these secret names are shared with others, it is the meaning the heroine invests them with that makes them live. Thus, for example, Diana

Barry, though she wants to share Anne's games, lacks the depth of Anne's feelings to actualize for herself the "Lake of Shining Waters," "White Way of Delight," and "Dryad's Bubble," among others. So, too, all of the children and adults in *The Story Girl* know the names of the trees in the old orchard, but only she can revivify the long gone people for whom they were named and create the sensation Beverley says the children could feel but were unable to analyze. The orchard was different because "it blossomed not only apple blossoms but all the love, faith, joy, pure happiness, and pure sorrow of those who had made it and walked there" (p. 56).

The betrayal or outgrowing of these childhood names often separates the heroine from her peers. Just as Budge thought Sylvia "silly," so there comes a day when Pat's beloved brother Sid turns his back on their "Secret Field" by showing it to May Binnie to whom it is only "a hole in the woods." For Pat, May is the equivalent of Anne's Josie Pye, and through her and the many other stodgy, unimaginative, or cruel children, L. M. Montgomery introduces a view of childhood which contradicts the assumption that all children are inhabitants of fairyland. The view is more akin to the one expressed in e. e. cummings's lyric "anyone lived in a pretty how town." There only the children--and not all of them--can recognize the love between anyone and no one:

children guessed (but only a few
and down they forgot as up they grew
.....
and only the snow can begin to explain
how children are apt to forget to remember

Sid was one of the few, but "down he forgot" by the time he married May. Pat's story illustrates another use of emblematic names. Throughout both books her home, "Silver Bush," represents everything to Pat. She thinks she is free and happy to have it alone when she finally decides not to marry David Kirk, but after Rae's departure and Judy's death, there are signs that for Pat, too, things must change. Alone, she decides to light up the house:

It did not like to be dark and silent. Yet she paused for a moment on the door-step, the prey of a sudden fancy. That shut door was a door of dreams through which she might slip into the Silver Bush of long ago A world utterly passed away might be her universe. (p. 328)

Pat knows the fancy is "nonsense," but it cannot be dissipated until the emblem is gone. Her dreams go through fire as Silver Bush burns: "nothing was left . . . her heart was like an unlighted room and nothing, *she thought she knew*, could ever illumine it again" (p. 331, italics added). Silver Bush and her devotion to it were not her life but her protection against it, as she finally recognizes when Hilary Gordon, who has not forgotten to remember, comes to her among the ashes to tell her that he has built her a new home by another sea.

Most of the other novels and short stories can be explicated more satisfactorily if this aspect of the characters and plot is given the attention it deserves. There has as yet appeared little criticism of *The Road to Yesterday*. In her review of the book in *Canadian Literature*, Frances Frazer incisively identifies the strengths and weaknesses of L. M. Montgomery's fiction. "Deft characterization," "effectively specific, tart dialogue," and "tough humorous realism" are indeed counter-balanced by "constant wish-fulfillments," "just and beautiful endings," and "sugared romanticism."⁴ However, if the stories are read, as they all can be, as illustrations of the conflict between fantasy and reality, the endings cannot be dismissed as "individually delightful but cumulatively rather sickening." Instead, they are illustrations of how fantasy perpetuated can sour a life for an adult who will not let it go--"A Dream Come True" and "The Reconciliation"--or preserve it for a child who needs it--"An Afternoon with Mr. Jenkins" and "The Cheated Child." Indeed, the late awakening from fantasy can be a happy event for more than one character, as in "Penelope Struts Her Theories," "The Pot and the Kettle," and "Here Comes the Bride."

One character above all others illustrates and summarizes the workings of fantasy in Montgomery's novels--Emily Starr, whose story is told in a trilogy in many ways superior to the far longer Anne series. Though L. M. Montgomery was and still is identified with Anne, any reader of *The Alpine Path* will recognize at once that Emily's biography, appearance, and career more nearly parallel her own. Despite superficial similarities, however, it is dangerous to press character analogues in the novels too closely. Montgomery would have endorsed wholeheartedly Thomas Wolfe's disclaimer in the proem to *Look Homeward Angel* that whereas "all serious work in fiction is autobiographical . . . fiction is not fact," and "a novelist may turn over half the people in a town to make a single figure in his novel." Like Wolfe, Montgomery meditated no man's or girl's--especially not her own--portrait in her books, as she makes plain in *The Alpine Path*: "Now for my own part, I have never, during all the years I have studied human nature, met one human being who could, as a whole, be put into a book without injuring it."⁵ She is to be included in this stricture, and those incidents in Emily's life which do or do not accord with her own are therefore not noted.

The eight-year-old Emily to whom the reader is introduced in *Emily of New Moon* has all the accoutrements of a full-blown child of fantasy. For companions she has the Wind Woman, Emily-in-the-glass, and various trees. But above all she has her writing, through which she can record her joys and dissipate her sorrows, and "the flash."

It couldn't be described--not even to Father, who always seemed a little puzzled by it. Emily never spoke of it to anyone else. It had always seemed to Emily, ever since she could remember, that she was very, very near to a world of wonderful beauty. Between it and herself hung only a thin curtain; she could never draw the curtain aside--but sometimes, just for a moment, a wing fluttered it and then it was as if she caught a glimpse of the enchanting realm beyond--only a glimpse--and

heard a note of unearthly music.

This moment came rarely--went swiftly, leaving her breathless with the inexpressible delight of it. She could never recall it--never summon it--never pretend it; but the wonder of it stayed with her for days . . . (p. 7)

At her father's death, Emily is turned over to her mother's reluctant family, who eventually draw lots to decide who must take her. The first impressions Emily makes on them are even more unpropitious than Anne's on Marilla. But from the moment when "the flash" returns and with it "courage and hope" for "her cold little soul," Emily never falters in her sense of justice or in her forthrightness. When her Aunt Elizabeth demands to see the account book in which she keeps her writings, she burns it; when her father is called a failure, she retaliates. So, too, as she settles into New Moon, she learns she can master both the children--who reject her "because you ain't a bit like us"--and even her aunt Elizabeth, when "some formidable power in [her] soul" brings Archibald Murray's expression to her face.

After various minor disappointments, she is soon friends with Ilse, Teddy, and Perry, and the characteristics of the fantasy worlds of Montgomery's other heroines begin to become part of the way in which she enlarges her solitary imaginings. Names are provided in abundance for their haunts, the most important among them for the future being "The Disappointed House" and the Roads of Today, Yesterday, and Tomorrow. Play-acting, though frowned upon, flourishes, and she has repeated clashes with her first teacher and her aunt over her writing, particularly of "untrue" things, as time passes. But these reactions are compensated for by her relationships with such adults as Aunt Laura, who sympathizes without understanding, "queer" Cousin Jimmy, who soon becomes the provider of the Jimmy books in which her fancies take form, and Mr. Carpenter, who recognizes her talent and savagely corrects her writing.

Above all there is Dean "Jarback" Priest, a college friend of her father's, who, perceiving an inner beauty which he describes as "prismatic--palpitating--elusive," calls her, poetically, Star. Their special relationship builds through the years. To Emily "Dean Priest was sealed of her tribe and she divined it instantly. He had a right to the inner sanctuary and she yielded it unquestioningly" (p. 279). For Dean, a different fantasy takes form: he "became a boy again with a boy's untainted vision," and he dreams of possessing his Star.

Dean Priest is probably the most difficult of L. M. Montgomery's characters to comprehend. The reader is not normally shown so much of the character of any of the heroines' lovers and is, consequently, not so torn when a choice between them comes. Perhaps Montgomery intended him as a figure to replace the equally sensitive Douglas Starr in Emily's life, for in certain ways he can be compared to the fathers her other heroines regain--the bohemian Blair Stanley, dissipating his talents and energies as he tells fascinating stories of his wanderings ar-

ound the world; and the stronger Andrew Stuart who encourages his child to grow as she will. However, despite his external deformity, the inner "strength and tenderness and humour"--with which Montgomery imbues Dean from the outset and which he constantly demonstrates--makes him equally suitable as lover.

In *Emily of New Moon*, Dean defines fairyland as "everything the heart desires." In *Emily's Quest* he has to lose his fantasy, though he comes close to having it in his grasp. Perhaps Dean is voicing Montgomery's feeling when he says at the time their engagement is broken, "I should have known that only youth can call to youth--and I was never young. If I ever had been, even though I am old now, I might have held you" (p. 128). But this explanation is not satisfactory; it could have been said to Pat by David Kirk. Dean's jealousy of Emily's work and his criticism of it, which led her to burn her first novel, provocatively entitled *A Seller of Dreams*, is perhaps intended to show more truly why he could never capture and hold her as Teddy Kent can.

Though the relationship between Emily and Teddy is not as fully developed as that with Dean, the reader is not unprepared for Emily's realization that she loves Teddy. Throughout their years apart, sufficient reminders of the days when they dreamed of sharing "The Disappointed House," when Emily always responded to Teddy's whistle, and when they vowed always to think of one another at the sight of Vega of the Lyre, are given to keep Teddy in mind, as do the intermittent references to the way in which Emily's eyes and smile continue to inform his paintings from his earliest days until he is recognized as an artist.

Emily's awareness of the totality of their bond comes as a result of one trait, occasionally implied in other heroines, but defined only in Emily. Closely connected with "the flash," but coming to her in dream or illness instead of waking hours, are moments of prescience. Through some kind of vision the child Emily had discovered the mystery of Ilse's mother's disappearance; in adolescence, she divines the location of a lost child; and, finally, calling to him through space, drawing "aside the veil of sense and time and see[ing] beyond," Emily saves Teddy from sailing on the *Flavian*. These moments are frightening and enervating for Emily, but through them

She *knew*, beyond any doubt or cavil or mockery, that she had seen Teddy--had saved, or tried to save him, from some unknown peril. And she knew, just as simply and just as surely that she loved him--had always loved him, with a love that lay at the very foundation of her being. (pp. 120-21)

Anne may be, in Bliss Carman's words, "one of the immortal children of fiction," and so she certainly has been for several generations of L. M. Montgomery's readers. But it is Emily who fully encompasses the complex fantasy worlds which Montgomery shaped in her novels.

NOTES

¹ L. M. Montgomery, *The Alpine Path* (Don Mills; Fitzhenry and

Whiteside, 1974), p. 76.

²*Ibid.*, pp. 47-48.

³Editions cited in this article are *Magic for Marigold* (McClelland and Stewart, 1929), *The Blue Castle* (McClelland and Stewart, 1926), *The Story Girl* (Ryerson, 1944), *Mistress Pat* (McClelland and Stewart, 1925), and *Emily's Quest* (McClelland and Stewart, 1927).

⁴F. Frazer, "Scarcely an End," *Canadian Literature* 63 (Winter 1975), 90-91. The publisher has done the author a disservice in a prefatory statement that the stories seem to be placed in "the immediate pre-World War II period," when in fact they can, with the exception of the last, clearly be dated to the days of *Rainbow Valley* and *Rilla of Ingleside* by the ages of the Blythe children mentioned. Walter's death at Courcellette (1917) is mentioned as a thing of the past in one story, and "The Road to Yesterday" is obviously in the twenties, but the rest are clearly pre-World War I or immediately after it.

⁵*The Alpine Path* p. 72.

Jane Cowan Fredeman is Editor of the University of British Columbia Press.