

# The Green Gables Letters

from  
L. M. Montgomery  
to  
Ephraim Weber  
1905-1909

Lucy Maud Montgomery  
1960

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*Title:* The Green Gables Letters from L.M. Montgomery to Ephraim Weber 1905-1909

*Date of first publication:* 1960

*Author:* L. M. (Lucy Maud) Montgomery (1874-1942)

*Date first posted:* June 11, 2015

*Date last updated:* June 11, 2015

Faded Page eBook #20150636

This ebook was produced by: Alex White & the online Distributed Proofreaders Canada team at <http://www.pgdpCanada.net>

# The Green Gables Letters

*from* L.M. Montgomery  
*to* Ephraim Weber  
1905-1909

edited by

*Wilfrid Eggleston*

# Transcriber Note

*Ephraim Weber* (1870-1956) was a teacher and a writer. He started to correspond with L.M. Montgomery in 1902, without ever having met her, but by a fan letter. The first surviving letter is from 1905; the correspondence continued until her death forty years later.

These letters were first published by *Wilfred Eggleston* (1901-1985) in a book: *The Green Gables Letters from L.M. Montgomery to Ephraim Weber, 1905-1909*; published by *Ryerson Press* in 1960. A second edition was published by *Borealis Press* in 1981, with a new preface. All the prefatory material and the commentary are still under copyright, and have been omitted from this work. The reader is highly recommended to find a copy of the book, as the commentary contains many pieces of replies by Mr. Weber, which helps with understanding the context of each letter.

A second volume of letters was published as *After Green Gables: L.M. Montgomery's Letters to Ephraim Weber, 1916-1941*; by editors *Hildi Froese Tiessen* and *Paul Tiessen* in 2006 by the *University of Toronto Press*. These will remain under copyright in Canada until 2057.

## *The Letters*

Cavendish, P.E.I.,  
Tuesday,  
March 7, 1905.

My dear Mr. Weber:—

I picked up a paper today and read therein that sowing had begun in Alberta! Then I looked out of the window and saw drifts 20 ft. high!!!

We have had a perfectly awful winter here. The like has never been known even by that mythical personage the oldest inhabitant. We thought last winter terrible but it was not so bad as this. We have had nothing but storm after storm, train blockages, and irregular mails. In short, our accumulation of ills reminds me of the story about an old Scotch settler who came home one night to find his house burned down and his wife and children murdered by Indians. He sat down amid the ashes of his home and said, "Well, this is perfectly ridiculous!"

Surely, however, the worst is over now. They used to teach us in school that March is a spring month!

I went away from home for a visit early in February, just after your letter came and did not get back until a week ago. I've been trying to "catch up" ever since.

I, too, received a postal from Miriam at Xmas, saying that she would write me "*immediately* after the New Year." However, no letter has yet come to hand; her definition of "*immediately*" seems elastic. I envy her her Florida winter when I grow restless with my prison of drifts.

My principal amusement these days is prowling around up to my ears in snow with my camera. I have secured a lot of snow scenes, some of the big drifts, especially those in the woods are curious and beautiful in the extreme.

Oh, why don't you make "copy" of your adventures while looking for the mine? I'm sure there is material for a whole "shilling shocking" [sic] in that deserted shack with the fur coat! So you eat "Grape Nuts"? So do I and have 'em every morning for breakfast! Another taste in common!!

Am sure you must have felt badly over the loss of your mare. I can fully understand how anyone can grow strongly attached to a pet. I love horses, dogs and cats. As I'm situated now I can only keep a cat but I'd love to have *lots* of them all. The first *real* sorrow that ever came into my life was connected with the death of a pet. I was nine years old. I had a little grey kitten, a pretty playful little creature which I loved with the passionate intensity of a lonely child possessing no other companionship. My kitten died one day of poison. I shall *never* forget the agony I endured. I really almost went mad. I shrieked, writhed, wept, until the good people of the household verily believed me possessed. They could do nothing with me. It

was my baptism of sorrow and I was submerged beneath those waters of Marah. I have never laughed, in maturer days, over that tragic bereavement. It was too real—and symbolical. I had learned what pain was—a lesson we can never forget. It was the Alpha of life's suffering. Before that I had been a happy, unconscious little animal. From that time I began to have a soul!

You asked me in your letter a question rather hard to answer. It was "Where do you feel most yourself, in the woods or up in Charlottetown?"

Well, I feel most like myself in both places—if you understand the contradiction. There are two distinct sides to my nature. When I go to the woods the dreamy, solitary side comes uppermost and I love the woods best. But when I mingle with other people quite another aspect rules me. I am very fond of society, sparkling conversation, the good *human* times of life. These tastes find indulgence in my city experiences and I feel just as much at home there as in the wilds. I can slip from one to the other as easily as I can slip from one garment into another.

But as to being only "two of me" as you ask—bless the man, there's a hundred of me. (Association of ideas! Have you ever read *Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde* by Stevenson. It is well worth reading and enforces a strong lesson. If it ever comes your way read it.) *Revenons aux moutons!* Some of the "me's" are good, some *not*. It's better than being just two or three, I think—more exciting, more interesting. There are some people who are only *one*. They must find life as insufferable a bore as other people find them. By the way, have you ever read any scientific articles on the curious mental phenomena of "double personalities" or "double consciousness"? If you have, you will agree with me that they are very interesting and curious. But if you have not don't ask me to explain about it for I could not do so. I mean, it would require more of a technical vocabulary than I have at command as well as a clearer grasp of the manifestations of this strange thing.

I've been re-reading *Trilby* today. It is a favourite of mine. Have you ever read it? If so please tell me what you think of it. Such a storm of controversy raged about it when it came out first, about seven years ago. I talked about it with two ministers in the same day. Both were men whose critical opinions were worthy of respect. One said he thought it one of the most charming little stories he had ever read, so touching and pathetic, and said he had given it to his daughter to read. The other condemned it utterly saying it was "the canonization of the scarlet letter." For my own part I think it is a dear, delightful book, wherein some of my most beloved book-friends live. It ends up with some verses that I copied into my portfolio and read them every day. Here they are for you, if you don't already know them.

“A little work—a little play  
To keep us going—and so good day.

“A little warmth, a little light  
Of love’s bestowing—and so good-night.

“A little fun to match the sorrow  
Of each day’s growing and so good-morrow.

“A little trust that when we die  
We reap our sowing and so good-bye.”

Don’t dare to say you don’t like them!!!

Tonight, coming home from a tramp over snowy hills I halted a moment to look over the orchard fence at my flower bed. Not that I could see much of it—it is heaped over with a snowdrift fifteen feet deep, gleaming in the twilight like a mausoleum of marble built over buried dreams. What are my tulips and daffodils and peonies doing down under it, I wonder—the dear things. My only consolation on some of those terribly stormy days this winter was to get out a flower catalogue and plan my next summer’s garden!!

By the way, what do you think I got in the mail today, sent me by a friend in Scotland? No less than a sprig of mountain tansy picked on the grave of the celebrated “Black Dwarf.” Wasn’t I proud? A whole Scottish “loch” wouldn’t [have] delighted me more.

I suppose you will wonder if I’m doing any writing at all just now. Oh yes, I peg away a couple hours every day, and have had the usual run of moderate successes. But I’ve made a discovery! Nothing less than a really truly Canadian affair that opens its eyes and says “papa” and “mamma.”

In January I had a letter from the editor of the “Sunday School Publications,” Confederation Life Bldg., Toronto, Can., saying that they published three papers for young people of varying ages and asking me for stories. I sent a short girls’ story—about 2500 words—and got five dollars for it. They pay regular rates and are especially anxious for Canadian contributions. They publish sketches and essays also. Write them for samples of the papers and try your luck with them. They are very good papers, much the type of *Forward*. I really didn’t think we had anything so up-to-date in Canada.

I got into another new mag, *The National* of Boston, lately, with a short story. It



is to pay on publication. It is a good second-classer. Don't know what its rates are.

*The Sunday School Times*, your pet, sent me \$6 for a poem "The Choice" recently. Let me know if you see it when it comes out. If not I'll send you a copy.

The C.E. *World* also took a poem and sent \$4 for it. This is the first time I've got into it with poetry.

I made *nearly* \$600 last year—\$591.85 to be exact. Shan't be content till I reach the thousand mark though.

I got a *Lippincott* today—the March no. Don't know why they sent it. Thought at first it must be because my verses were in it but they weren't. Do you see it regularly? If so please keep a lookout for them as I want to know when they appear. I have just started this sheet to say bi-bi on, because I'm out of "nerve." So will just say it and stop.

Yours sincerely,

L. M. Montgomery.

P.S. I believe you asked me to go skating with you. Sorry, but I can't skate. Never had a chance to learn somehow. Ta-ta all the same.

L.M.M.

P.S. No. 2. I received the *Outlook* you sent and enjoyed it very much. Thanks! Do you want it back? If so, I'll return it. If you have the March *Lippincott* read "The Second Nocturne of St. Patrick" if you want a good laugh. I think I've discovered why the mag. was sent to me. There is a "Walnut" in it by a friend of mine—Lucy Lincoln Montgomery—and she probably sent it to me. Did I ever tell you about her?

L.M.M.

Cavendish, P.E.I.  
Monday Evening,  
May 8, 1905.

My dear Mr. W.:—

I've been painting and housecleaning all day and have expended so much grey matter in the process that I'm afraid I haven't very much left for a letter. Nevertheless, I'll "do my best" and, as used to be stated in the copybooks of childhood "angels can do no more." Isn't it rather nice to know that there is at least one particular in which we can all be angelic. By the way, what is your conception of an angel?

(Perhaps it is taking an unfair advantage of a fellow-creature to fire off such a question at you on the second page of a letter when in the nature of things you'd still be looking for introductory platitudes.)

I hope that some day the man or men who are responsible for *my* conception will be given over to my hands, if so be that they still live. I refer to the people who drew and published the pictures of angels which used to adorn the Sunday-school papers of my childhood. When I think of an angel I can't help seeing one of those pictures—a creature wearing a sort of nightgown with big goosy(?)—looking wings branching out from their shoulders and a mop of untidy hair streaming over their backs. I should like to think of angels as Marie Corelli does—creatures shaped of rainbow light, but I can't. Those impressions of susceptible childhood are too strong.

At the present moment I'd rather be a girl than an angel if angels can't have mayflowers. I'm surrounded with them—mayflowers, I mean. A vaseful on each side of me and a big jugful on the shelf over my head. Oh, they are divine! A lot of us went up to the barrens Saturday and picked great basketfuls. Today I read that Henry Ward Beecher said once "Flowers are the sweetest things God ever made and forgot to put souls into." But I don't believe He forgot! I believe they *have* souls. I've known roses that I expect to meet in heaven.

Oh yes, yes, spring *has* come. You can't imagine how glad I was to see it. We had such a *terrible* winter. It was like being born again to see the drifts go and the catkins bud on the willows. I know exactly what I shall feel like on the resurrection morning! And I'm gardening, too. Three weeks ago I went out amid slush and took the spruce boughs off my tulip and daffodil bed. I didn't expect any of them would

be up so soon—but when I lifted the boughs there were the dear green spikes up two inches. I felt just like a prayer when I saw them! There are big buds on them now and they will be out in full bloom in a week. It's lovely to be out poking into the moist earth again. In regard to your thoughts on the ministry of pain; yes, I agree with you in regard to one kind of pain. There are two kinds, don't you think! The pain God sends to us and the pain we bring on ourselves; the former is the fire of heaven, the latter the flame of hell. God's pain is indeed one of his ministering spirits. Great mysteries of soul-birth and soul growth are bound up in it and if we have the courage and the endurance to make a friend of it it will bring great gifts to us. But the pain we bring on ourselves through folly or wilfulness or even simple blindness! Ah, it is horrible; it is degrading; there is no fine, high ministry in it; it burns and scars and defaces for our punishment. The child whose father punishes it justly will be the better for that punishment; but if it picks up a red-hot coal in its hand its suffering will *not* better it—only make it a little wiser perhaps with the sorry wisdom of experience.

Perhaps you are one of the fortunate ones who never picks up red-hot coals—whose only knowledge of pain is taught by the suffering God sends. If so, you won't feel the truth of some of these remarks. I'm not; I'm always picking up the coals because they sparkle and look pretty. And then come the blisters!

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I agree with you that all literature should be read in its own tongue. Much *must* be lost in translation—all the subtle shades of meaning which go back to the very root-words of the language. Its body may be translated but, as you say, its soul is lost in the transition. The coarser meaning may be expressed; the finer cannot be.

As for the Bible, the same limitations must apply to it. You know to be frank, I do *not* look upon the Bible as a book inspired *by* God. I look upon it as a book much of which is inspired *with* God—a collection of the myths, history, poetry, ethics and philosophy of a singularly spiritual (taking into account the period in which they lived) people whose superior conception of the Great Intelligence fitted them to be the mouthpieces of that Intelligence. The Jews made a specialty of religion as the Egyptians of architecture, the Greeks of literature or the Romans of war. As a result they were pre-eminent in it. Their conception of God was naturally marred by the errors of all human conceptions of the Inconceivable. But still it remains as great and wonderful and striking as the rock-temple of Ipsambul. There have been finer, nobler, more truthful conceptions since. But that does not affect the grandeur of it, in contrast to the reeking idolatry of the nations which surrounded them.

I read a very fine book recently by Newman Smith, *Through Science to Faith*.

He leaves revelation entirely out of the question and essays to prove a Directing Intelligence working towards a certain goal, and resulting immortality by the conclusions of science alone. The book pleased me much. It is so sane, so guarded, so logical. If it were mine I would send it to you but it is only a borrowed book. Keep the title in mind and read it if you ever get a chance.

While I have drifted into this subject I'm going to ask you a very old question. Will you answer it frankly: "What think ye of Christ?" Don't be afraid to say what you think. I'll respond as frankly. Do you believe he was God incarnate? Do you believe he rose from the dead literally?

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My mountain tansy was from the grave of the Black Dwarf. Don't you recall Scott's famous novel of that name? It was founded on fact. The Dwarf really existed and this tansy grew on his grave. I bought the novel recently to be able to paste the tansy on the title page!

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I've been on a debauch of books for a fortnight. A long-delayed grist of books for our library arrived and I've simply read myself stupid and soggy over them. The best was Jack London's *Sea Wolf*—a powerful thing but revolting in some respects. He can write, that fellow.

Recently, gardening, housecleaning, etc. has pushed literary work to the wall. I must sober up from book-saturation, get work done and take up my pen again. Had a lot of acceptances lately, nothing worthy particular mention except the taking of a story by the Associated Sunday Magazines. This concern seems to be flourishing. At first they sent me only \$25 for a story but this time they sent \$40. The story was "The Schoolmaster's Love Letters" and is something of a new departure in style for me. For this reason will try and send you a copy of it when published if possible.

*McClure's* can hold on to a thing, can't they? Fortunately one hasn't to wait until publication for their checks.

I got into a new mag. lately, *The Pilgrim*, of Battle Creek, Michigan. It is a good affair and has good names in it. They took a short story to be paid for on publication.

No, don't give up writing; it's the best method of soul cultivation there is; even if you never published another thing the writing of it would bring you a beatitude.

I haven't heard from Miriam. Nor do I really wish to, now. Don't misunderstand me. I enjoyed my correspondence with her and was sorry it lapsed. But it has lapsed so long now that the old interest has died out and it seems to me rather impossible to get up a new interest should she re-open it—like rekindling an outburnt fire. The gap

has grown too wide.

I must go now for some friends have called. Wish I could send you the scent of the mayflowers in this letter. Or of a pale pink tea rose that is nodding over my shoulder.

Yours sincerely,  
L. M. Montgomery.

Cavendish, P.E.I.,  
Wednesday Evening,  
June 28, 1905.

Dear Mr. W.:—

I think your Alberta snowstorm in which you got caught has arrived here. Not that it is exactly snowing but it is almost cold enough to. We have had a dismal two days' northeast storm of wind and rain and my religion is at present Calvinistic to the back bone. I feel exactly as the old lady did who said, "The Universalists think all the world is going to be saved but *we Presbyterians hope* for better things!"

I'm down here by the kitchen fire because my den is really too cold to be comfy. I can't even get out to see my garden the orchard grass is so dripping wet.

The tulips are gone. I cut the last one yesterday. They were lovely while they lasted. There is nothing out just now; it's a sort of betwixt and between time; but there are lots of buds of roses, lilies and peonies. You ask what is my favourite flower. The carnation; and of carnations the pink carnation. I was in town last week and bought a couple of dozen cut carnations to bring home with me. I've just been revelling in them ever since. They combine perfect beauty of form and colour with perfection of perfume, to a degree that only the rose, and not always the rose, can rival. You say you don't like a bouquet which has no white in it. Well, I don't like *bouquets* at all in the sense of several varieties of flowers being bound together. I never mix flowers and very seldom colours. In a tall glass vase or low bowl, as suits the flower, I put a few blossoms of one kind with a bit of foliage or fern and then sit back and adore them. At the most I never put more than *two* kinds together. More would swear at each other, seems to me. You like the red rose best? I don't quarrel with your taste. I can quite understand a person liking red roses best. I don't, simply because I don't fancy red as a colour in anything except nasturtiums. The pink roses are my favourites—deep pink at heart, shading to almost white on the outer petals like a blush dying away. We have an old-fashioned hardy June rose in our garden here, a pink one, which for purity of colour surpasses anything I ever saw. It is only semi-double and loses its beauty when fully expanded but its half open buds are things to thank God for.

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Glad you liked "The Choice." No, I didn't invent the metre. Saw it somewhere

and fancied it. It is effective but hard to handle on account of the triple rhyme and the accent falling on the first syllable of the rhyme. Don't ask me to label the metre! I couldn't if I tried. I don't know a *solitary thing* about the names of metres. When I begin to write a poem the words seem to fall naturally into the rhythm best suited to the idea and I just *let* them fall and devote my energies to hunting out rhymes which I do in a very mechanical and cold-blooded way, using a little rhyming dictionary I made myself. (Tennyson used a rhyming dictionary you know. How nice to be like him in something!!) Sometimes I write a whole poem without a single rhyme in it. Then, when I've caged my ideas I substitute end words that rhyme and there you are!

What do you think! I got a letter from Miriam today. Everything comes to those who will but wait. I was glad to hear from her. The letter was very Miriamesque. I must answer her soon although I feel rather out of touch with her as a correspondent. She wrote quite frankly upon the subject of her marriage but, unless she has also written so to you, I shall not discuss it as she probably meant it to be regarded as confidential although not explicitly saying so. She seems to be happy with a decent, non-rapturous workaday happiness that isn't such a bad thing as the world goes.

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Thank you for your frank answer to my question of the Christ. I share your views. I'd like to discuss the matter but it's too big a subject to be handled by letter. I never say much about it to anybody. Like you, I *cannot* accept the *divinity* of Christ. I regard him as immeasurably the greatest of all great teachers and as the son of God in the same sense that any man inspired of God is a son of God. Further than this I cannot, as yet at least, go. I believe that He was truly sent from and of God, as are all great teachers. And possibly he may also stand as an emblem of man in his highest and yet-to-be-attained development—the perfect flower of the tree of life blooming before its time as an earnest of what may be.

It seems to me that the discovery of the processes of evolution dealt the death blow to the old theology of Christ dying for Adam's sin. If man rose up from a lower form, as all scientists now agree, there was no "fall" and consequently no need of any "sacrifice" to square God and man.

The idea that Christ must have been a wilful imposter if he were not divine does not disturb me. Even if the gospels, written 30, 50, 60 or 80 years after his death, give us his words and meaning correctly—a very doubtful thing in my opinion—it does not disturb me to believe that he, in common with most great teachers and reformers, had an element of fanaticism—for want of a better word—in his

character. It seems to me that it is a necessary ingredient in a highly-organized, sensitive character to enable it to make headway against a brutal world and all its sins and follies. Without it, it could not stand against its foes.

But, as I have said, the subject is too big for a letter. I'll meddle with it no further—in bulk, at least. Now and then, I may jot down a detail or so, as it occurs to me.

I received your second letter the very day I got a couple of extra *Sunday* mags, that I had sent for, one of which I meant for you but didn't send it since you already had it. No, I don't remember where or how the idea came to me. When I come across an idea for story or poem—or rather when an idea for such comes across me, which seems the better way to put it—I at once jot it down in my notebook. Weeks, months, often *years* after, when I want an idea to work up I go to the notebook and select one that suits my mood or magazine. I found the germ of the "Letters" in an old Halifax note book, inscribed as follows "Man writes love letters to girl, not intending to send them. Jealous woman sends them. Girl loves him." That's all I know about it now.

I've been very busy all June, writing. Got a good deal done. *Gunters Magazine*, New York, a new concern, sent me \$25 for a short story. I was surprised to get such a good price as I did not think the Magazine was any great shakes, judging by its contents.

The *National* sent \$10 for story accepted last winter which is to be published in July. Will try to send you copy. The *Designer* sent \$20 for a story and *Modern Women* \$15. Their prices seem to be rising. What with a number of smaller checks here & there I picked up over \$100 since June came in. Wish I could do as well every month but there's generally a famine after a feast.

This sheet is started just to say good-bye in a decent space. I shall not try to spread any ideas over it. Good luck and good cheer, comrade.

Fraternally yours,  
L. M. Montgomery.



Cavendish, P.E.I.,  
Sunday Evening,  
April 8, 1906.

My dear Mr. W.:—

I've just roused up from a long twilight visit to my castle in Spain. For the past hour I have been lying on a couch in my den beside a dying fire—that is, my *body* was lying there but my soul was far away in a dreamland of imagination, where everything lost or missed in my present existence is mine. What a blessing it is that we can so *dream into* life the things we desire! Are you too an owner of a Spanish castle? And how often do you let yourself visit your estate? I go there in the twilight, being too busy at other times to remember my duties as Chatelaine. Outside, it is a cold, blustery April rain, the air all mist the ground all mud. But in fancy I've been far away beyond the mud and mist to “cloudless realms and starry skies.”

Now for your letter.

Yes, our Literary Society paper—the *Cavendish Literary Annual*—came off on schedule time and was fairly good, though we—the editors—“say it as oughtn't.” We had a number of contributions from various writers, one all the way from Scotland so our table of contents was quite cosmopolitan.

I was concerned at what you said about your inability to write. Surely you've let yourself drift into dangerous shallows. Perhaps you are spending *too much* time in your castles in Spain! If so, adopt my plan—seek them only at twilight or midnight and accept your exile at other times. There is no power that so speedily rusts as that of expression. *So to work at once, stick to it*, write something *every day*, even if you burn it up after writing it. Otherwise you'll atrophy to a certainty. There! I hate giving advice as cordially as I hate taking it. I'm glad that's over!!!!

My flowers are all done—the daffodils and hyacinths at least. But I've some house roses coming out and a big Easter lily. I've been coaxing the latter along with an eye to next Sunday and I think it is going to be out in time. I'm expecting great things of it for it was a big bulb and has grown thriftily.

Oh, yes, it *is* fascinating to suppose that we go from one existence to another, with the restful sleep of so-called death between! To me, the idea is a thousand fold [more] attractive than that of the Christian's heaven with its unending *spiritual* joys. I'd rather *live as it is in this world*, accepting all its ups and downs, its sorrows and

pains for its joys and delights, than such. Besides, even the ideas of people who call themselves devout Christians about heaven are almost ludicrously vague and shapeless—and they don't seem to find the prospect especially inviting either. At least, they never seem in any hurry to go there—far from it. And how illogical they are. For example: I was recently talking to a middle-aged woman who had lost a young sister from death. She said “it was so sad to see a young person die, *without having lived their life.*”

Now, if that woman had believed that there was no future life her remark would have been just and logical. But she believes—or would tell you she believed—that her sister had gone straight to heaven and that she was much better off and that heaven was a much happier place than this world. Now, if this were a sincere vital belief with her why should she or anyone regret—on behalf of the dead person, I mean—that the life had not been fully lived here! It *does* seem to me that the instinct of humanity thus gives the lie to the conceptions of the theologians. I have not made my meaning particularly plain in all this. I hope you will be able to grasp the idea in spite of its clumsy presentation. These subjects, however, cannot be well discussed by letter. They demand personal contact where objections etc. can be stated and discussed at once.

I agree with you that sunflowers seem masculine, and I would add another. To me the common red clover of our hay fields always seems masculine. The fine white or faintly tinged pink clover is a little lady but the big chubby red clovers are sturdy country lads.

No, I've never heard from Miriam. She did not even acknowledge the little booklet of verse I sent at Xmas but she may not have received it. By “faring passably well” do you refer to her health or her circumstances. She was suffering much from rheumatism when I last heard from her.

No, I don't think I can define what it is that Ruskin lacks, although I feel it acutely. I admit all his good qualities. But then

If(s)he be not fair to me  
What care I how fair (s)he be,

to mis-apply an old couplet very illustrative of human nature. Perhaps, as you suggest, it is a sense of humour. He does take himself so terribly in earnest over things that are only of secondary importance after all. In one of his books, *Beauty and Nature*, he says some exquisite things about the sky for which I could almost find it to give him a place in my heart.

Thank you for the *Cosmopolitan* and Markham's poem. I enjoyed it with

qualifications. It possesses great beauty—but it is the secondary beauty of complexity not the primary beauty of simplicity. I don't altogether understand your question marks. Do you mean that you disagree with the ideas expressed or disapprove of the method of their expression?

I don't like his calling her *Virgilia*—which is a Roman name—when the whole spirit of the poem seems to throw it back to a primal time of earth's childhood before Rome or even Egypt had a name. His ideas don't seem to be especially well connected—I think he sometimes sacrifices sense to rhyme. Then in his fourth verse

One afternoon the stars were slipping  
Pearl after pearl to the bowl of night

rather pointedly suggests Omar's lines

Morning in the bowl of night,  
Has flung the stone that puts the stars to flight.

The line

To turn from love is the world's one treason,

is good and true when taken in the widest sense. On the whole, I liked the poem, got pleasure from its perusal and thank you for sending it.

By the way, a literary correspondent of mine in New York writes me that he has a personal acquaintance with Markham and that the latter is suffering from "swelled head."

I've been scribbling away. Had a story in April *Gunters*. Will send you a copy by and by if possible. I haven't been paid for it yet but I got \$25 for a former one there.

I enclose a copy of my verses in a recent number of *Lippincotts*.

The *American Home* recently sent me \$18 for a short 3,000 word story. This is surprisingly good pay for such a concern. Their price is *ten cents a year*. You remember I sold them a serial once. Last week I got a letter from them urging me to write them an 18,000 word serial. So I'm trying to do it and have almost got it done. It's a sensational tale about a lost ruby and I shall be ashamed of it but shall expect a liberal check.

Over a year ago I wrote an article, "The Old South Orchard." It wasn't a story but just a sort of essay relating fictional incidents about an old homestead garden. I sent it to the *N.Y. Xian Advocate* which acknowledged. As time went on I flattered myself it was accepted—as that is their method usually—and as good as credited

myself with the usual \$5 check. Just a *year* from date of sending it came back without a word of explanation or apology. I was furious and meditated sending a sarcastic note to the editor suggesting that he expurgate the word *Christian* from his paper's name. However, I calmed down and sent the MS to *Outing*, New York. Yesterday I got a letter offering a cent a word (about \$40) for the article and asking for more like it. The editor said he admired its "fine simplicity" and wanted to know if I had any intentions of working material up into a book, as the Outing Co. published books etc. *Outing* is a fine magazine and I'm tickled over the outcome and quite ready to bless the *Xian Advocate* man for his unintentional good turn.

*The Churchman*, New York, is paying good rates now. Sent me \$9 apiece for a couple of 2000 word kid's stories.

Recently I've been dipping into history and am reading Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*. Last night I read his two famous chapters on Christianity. He impressed me as having attained perfection in the art of saying one thing and meaning the very opposite. He defends and praises the Xian religion and every word is a subtle sneer. Have you ever read it? It's a massive work and makes me dizzy thinking of the amount of research and drudgery it must have entailed.

It's time to say goodnight. So consider it said.

Ever your sincere friend,  
L. M. Montgomery.

Cavendish, P.E.I.,  
Thursday Evening,  
June 21, 1906.

My dear Mr. W.:—

Your letter has been lying in my portfolio for over a fortnight waiting a chance to be answered. From this you would infer I was a very busy person, wouldn't you? Well, in truth I am. Not that I'm doing much worth while but I really seem rushed to death with a lot of little wretched duties that have to be done for peace' sake and eat up all the spare time. However, I've a breathing space tonight and I'm going to make the most of it. But it will be merely a scribble—not a letter.

I'm all played out! We had a Sunday School Convention in C. yesterday—a species of religious dissipation which beats a midnight dance all hollow for taking the stamina out of one. I feel tired down to my toes. For about eight consecutive hours yesterday I listened to reports, discussed methods, heard addresses, played in the choir, or sat up stiffly, dressed in my best and looked attentive. Some of the features were interesting—others bored me. All in all, I don't believe I shall be a whit the better Sunday School Teacher for it—and I'm sure I'm the worse Christian today! I feel positively impish and quite ready to persecute anyone who doesn't agree with me in creed!

Was sorry to hear of your accident but if it had as good an aftermath as you say perhaps it was well it happened and you ought to be congratulated rather than condoled with. Isn't it odd how often things like that turn out to be blessings in disguise, while on the other hand things seemingly desirable and which please us most mightily at first draw after them a train of most unrighteous consequences. Is it all a chance medley—or is it Providence?

Yes, my N.Y. correspondent is a literary man—Gerald Carlton, who has written a lot of novels. They are *not* literature—very sensational etc. But his letters are all right. He is an elderly man and a retired British army officer but an Irishman by birth. He is the personal friend of a personal friend of mine in Halifax and it was thus I became acquainted with him. He seems to have had a wide acquaintance among writers—knew R. L. Stevenson, Wilkie Collins and that set intimately.

I finished my serial and sent it to the *American Home*. I haven't heard from it officially yet but in a note from the editor about another matter he said he would

report on the story soon and he thought the report would be favourable—a cryptic utterance that inspires me with hope.

*Gunters* sent me \$35 for the “Education of Sally.” I sent you a copy recently. They accepted another story last week and it is to be published in September. I’ve been doing a lot of work for juveniles and scooping in several checks of \$8 and \$10. In April the *Youth’s Companion* took a poem and sent \$12. They have four of mine on hand now, two of them for over two years. *Outing* sent \$38 for my orchard article. Last week the *National* accepted a ghost story to be published in September, price \$10. The *Housekeeper*, Minneapolis, accepted a story yesterday and sent a check for \$25. This is a new place as I never landed them before. I’ve had a lot of my MSS. go astray this winter—never had such a time. I always keep a copy of course but the loss of time—and possible checks—is very annoying.

I had a letter from Miss C. last week. She, too, concocted a serial for *Am. Home* but hadn’t heard from it.

I have invested in a new type writer. My old one, only a second-hand to begin with, was about worn out so I traded it off for a practically new one—an “Empire.” It does fine work. But it has a different keyboard and so I have to learn all over again and I’m very slow. But this is a universal keyboard so when I do get expert at it I’ll be able to write on any of the high-priced machines.

No, I had no MS in San Francisco. That ’quake was terrible. I suppose in a few weeks we will be inundated with stories of it and next year a whole flood of novels. Well, it would make a great subject—and require a great pen to do it justice.

Some callers have just come in. I must go down and as I will not have time to write any more tonight I’ll finish this up although it is the merest apology for a letter. Next time I’ll try to redeem my reputation.

Very sincerely yours,  
L. M. Montgomery.

Monday Evening,  
Seven O'clock,  
October 8, 1906.

My dear Mr. W.:—

This is perfectly dreadful! But I *won't* apologize. I haven't had time, that is the simple fact. It seems almost uncanny that I have a spare hour tonight. Your letter has been haunting me like a reproachful spectre in the background of consciousness for weeks. Never mind, the long autumn and winter evenings are at hand and I shall behave ever so much better.

It has been awfully cold today and I've gone about with my teeth chattering. But we have had the loveliest fall, ever since the first of September—all purple and gold and mellowness in earth, air and sky.

Well, today I laughed until I cried. I only wish you had been handy to laugh too. You certainly would have laughed—or wept! Perhaps the latter would have been more fitting. It was certainly enough to make angels weep.

I received back a rejected MS. from *Lippincotts' Magazine*. This was not what I laughed over—or wept over either, being too well accustomed to that. But I thought it seemed much bulkier than it should so before putting it away in my desk I examined it and found that another MS had been returned with it—not mine, but, as the rejection slip showed, some Miss Richardson's of Philadelphia. I read it—and good heavens!

Anything like it I never heard of nor imagined. If I had not seen it “with my own eyes” I could not have believed that such stuff could ever be offered for publication in all seriousness—and to such a magazine as *Lippincotts* [at] that. Oh, I *wish* you could see it! Look here—you *shall* see it—you *must* see it! I'll send it to you in a separate parcel and you'll bless me forever for it. You can return it to me as soon as you've read it and I'll send it to the author. When you read it you will understand that delay is of no moment and you will also realize that my action in sending it to you justifies itself. If it doesn't kill you you'll enjoy it I think. I did, at least. Great masterpieces of humour have amused me less! Remember that this MS was offered in all seriousness to a first-rate American Magazine. I shall never growl at an Editor again. No matter what Editors do, they should not be blamed when they have to read such AWFUL stuff. It's a wonder they don't all have nervous prostration.

Perhaps they *don't* read it though. Probably they never went beyond the first page of this. And yet the rejection slip was typewritten—said to be a mark of special favour!!!—while I got merely a printed slip. Probably the editor felt grateful to the author for a good laugh.

*The American Home* cashed up Saturday Oct. 6, after holding up my serial ever since last April. They sent me *eighty dollars* for it. It was fully all—and more—that it was worth for it was sensational trash. The last serial they bought from me, though of the same length, only brought in \$40. It was about 20,000 words long and I wrote it in two weeks.

I have been home all summer. Last week I went to town for three days and had an enjoyable little outing. You say you wonder why I don't travel. It is simply because I cannot leave home. Grandma is 82 and I cannot leave her, for even a week's cruise. We live all alone and there is no one I can get to stay with her. I am very much tied down but it cannot be helped. Some day I hope to be able to see a bit of the world.

I've been writing busily all summer, mostly it must be admitted, juvenile and S. School work. I picked up enough ten and fifteen dollar checks to make it worth while. *Holland's Magazine*, Texas, and *The Pilgrim*, Detroit, were two new places I got into. The former paid \$3 for a short 2000 word sketch and the latter promises ten on publication for a 3000 word story. I have done a good deal for *East and West* of Toronto. They only pay \$5 per story so I just send them second-rates. Often they send me pictures and ask me to write stories to suit. I *loathe* doing this—but still I do it! The other day I had a letter from the *American Messenger* asking me for my photograph to be published among their contributors in their December announcement number! The *Boy's World* asked me for four stories for 1907. *East and West* also asked me to write a 6 chapter serial for them but I declined. They would only pay \$5 per chapter and in the same time I could write six short stories for American papers that would net \$10 apiece.

Yes, I teach a Sunday School class—but I don't like it much. I have a class of half grown girls but they seem stupid and commonplace. They never dream of asking a question, much as I have tried to induce them to, and all their idea of "studying" a lesson seems to be to learn the printed questions in the quarterlies off by heart. I never can get them to give an answer in their own words and I don't believe they ever get one scrap of real good out of the lesson. I have to follow the old traditional paths of thought & expression or I would get into hot water immediately. Cavendish is wholesomely (?) old-fashioned and orthodox.

By the way, do you notice how that word "orthodox" is degenerating? With the



preceding generation it was a term of honour and commendation. With ours, it is tinged with contempt. With the next generation it will be a term of reproach. Even words have to follow the inevitable natural law of rise, perihelion and decline.

My N.Y. correspondent is, to speak frankly, not much account. I don't care for his letters very much. He is the personal friend of a personal friend of mine and that is how I "met" him. If he were any good I would try to arrange a correspondence between you and him but I assure you it would not be worth while. I think that, personally, he is a fine, upright, clean-minded man, but intellectually he is only a cipher and our correspondence is *not interesting*, that's all. He has known quite a lot of famous writers though and seems to make his living out of journalism, etc. No, *Outing* hasn't published my sketch yet—won't till next summer. I had a story in September *Gunters* but I haven't been paid for it yet. They are always slow. I'm always expecting them to smash up, they publish such trash.

I like my Empire typewriter very much. Yes, it's a visible machine and does excellent work. A "universal keyboard" means a keyboard common to all the standard machines—that is, the arrangement of letters, etc. is the same and if you learn to write on one you can write on them all. My former machine did not have this keyboard so that I had to learn all over again when I got my Empire. But I'm getting pretty "slick" at it now.

A caller has just come in and I must close though I had a few more things to comment on. What do you think of the spelling reform agitation and Roosevelt's action thereon? Have you read Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*? If not, *don't*—if you ever want to eat sausages or canned goods again!! It is *hideous*, morally as well as physically!

Ever your friend,  
L. M. Montgomery.

Cavendish, P.E.I.,  
Sunday Evening,  
December 16, 1906.

My dear Mr. W.:—

This is good weather for writing letters! As for sending them, that is a horse of another colour. We have a mail now just when the mailman can get along—every third day as a rule. Between times we have storms.

This is the evening of a very dull sleepy Sunday. We had no service near and couldn't have gone to it if there had been owing to last night's storm. I did start out after tea, grimly determined to do a constitutional; but had to give up and come back, the drifts proving too much for me. So I'll write letters tonight for my Presbyterian ancestors are so thickly snowed over that I don't think they'll be able to turn in their graves because of it.

I thought you'd have a smile or two over that MS I sent. I re-read it before sending it to its owner and I laughed until I nearly cried. Your definition of "incoherent grasshopperishness" expressed all that criticism could say of it. Had I been the editor of *Lippincotts* I think I'd have bought the story and published it in the Walnuts and Wine department. Certainly nothing could be funnier.

No, I haven't any flowers outside *now*. But I have some indoors. I have a lovely 'mum out—seven or eight great fluffy pale pink flowers out on it. The 'mum is a society lady, all frills and chiffons and languid grace. My bulbs are beginning to bloom too and I expect a continuance of them right through the winter. My Roman Narcissus and white hyacinths are out now. The latter are the sweetest things God ever made. They seem more like the souls of flowers than like flowers themselves. Yes, I like tall flowers too—and glowing deep-tinted riotous ones—and *every kind*. But I love best the flowers I coax into bloom myself, be they tall or small, white or rosy. It seems as if I were taking a hand in creation—giving life to those unsightly bulbs that hide such rainbow possibilities in their cores. Isn't it strange how such ugly things can give birth to such beauty—the old mystery of good, like a white lily, springing out of the muck and mire of evil. It is possible that evil is necessary to the blossoming of good, just as the dirty clay and foul-smelling fertilizers are necessary to the unfolding of those blossoms! There's a theological problem for you!

I smiled over one question in your letter. Do I do any housework? Well, rather—

about all that is done here. I like it, too, except the rougher parts, and I'm very fond of cooking, etc., etc.

Well, I must tell you my *great news* right off. I think I've mortified the flesh sufficiently by holding it back till the fifth page. Two weeks ago *Everybody's* accepted a short story of mine and sent me *one hundred dollars* for it! It was about 5000 words long and humorous. It had also been rejected twice, once by a magazine that pays \$30 per story and once by a magazine that pays *ten*. Next? Of course I felt pleasantly tickled.

After this other successes seem small but I've got into several new places. The *Blue Book*, published by the Red Book Co. of Chicago, took a story for ten dollars. The *Housekeeper* (but I'd got into this before) paid \$20 for an oft-rejected story. The *Rural Magazine*, Chicago, accepted a rural story to be paid for on publication. *Watson's Magazine* New York sent \$10 for a poem lately. I never got more than \$5 or four from them for a poem before, but this was a long Christmas one. So far this year I've made over seven hundred dollars.

Did you ever read a children's fairy tale *Through the Looking Glass*? It's quite a classic in its way and the most delicious nonsense. One of the characters has by long practice become able "to believe seven impossible things every morning before breakfast." But this faculty is not confined to the "Red Queen," I imagine, judging from the beliefs some people entertain!

I haven't got hold of many new books of late. One of the few was *The Future Life* by a noted French writer. It was interesting but not at all conclusive and left me with the conviction that the author, great scientist and all as he is, doesn't really know a thing more about the future life than I myself know—or than anybody else knows for that matter. Argument or evidence can't prove it—only the soul speaking in us can assure us of its own immortality. But in what shape is that immortality to be! Will *I* be *I*? Isn't it strange—the horror with which we shrink from the thought of losing our individuality? Total annihilation would be preferable to becoming anybody else, even though that anybody else might be a hundred-fold better and nobler than ourselves.

Lately I've been thrashing out a new conception of life after death but so far I haven't got to the stage where I can express it clearly in words. I don't mean that it's a *belief*—no, no, merely a theory. I don't think I have really any *belief* in any particular kind of a future life. I believe that there *is* life after death, that's all.

I have nothing more to say. Since the first of November I've hardly been out of our own yard—never once more than a mile from home. The weather last month was all rain—this month it's all snow. So I'm going to cut this letter right off here and

now. Thanks for your last picture postal. Best wishes for the Xmas season.

Yours sincerely,

L. M. Montgomery.

Cavendish, P.E.I.,  
Thursday,  
May 2, 1907.

My dear Mr. W.:—

We are just in the middle of housecleaning! I fear that statement will be more or less wasted on a mere *man*. If it were made to a woman she would appreciate the compliment of my sitting down to write her after a day of it. For the past four days I've been scrubbing and whitewashing and digging out old corners and I feel as if all the dust I've stirred up and swept out and washed off has got into my soul and settled there and will remain there forever, making it hopelessly black and grimy and unwholesome. Of course I *know* it won't but knowing is such a different thing from *believing*.

Well, I must simply tell you my *great news* right off! To pretend indifference and try to answer your letter first would be an affectation of which I shall not be guilty. I am blatantly pleased and proud and happy and I shan't make any pretence of not being so.

Well, last fall and winter I went to work and wrote a *book*. I didn't squeak a word to anyone about it because I feared desperately I wouldn't find a publisher for it. When I got it finished and typewritten I sent it to the L. C. Page Co. of Boston and a fortnight ago, after two months of suspense I got a letter from them accepting my book and offering to publish it on the 10-per cent royalty basis!

Don't stick up your ears now, imagining that the great Canadian novel has been written at last. Nothing of the sort. It is merely a juvenilish story, ostensibly for girls; [but] as I found the MS. rather interesting while reading it over lately I am not without hope that grown-ups may like it a little. Its title is *Anne of Green Gables* and the publishers seem to think it will succeed as they want me to go right to work on a sequel to it. I don't know whether I can do that and make it worth while however.

The Page Co. is a good company. Not one of the top-notchers, of course, such as Harpers or Macmillans: but it has published several successful books by well-known authors, including Charles G. D. Roberts and Bliss Carman.

I signed the contract today; it is a fearsomely legal looking document all red seals and "saiDs" and "whereases." There is only one clause in it I don't altogether like. I

have to bind myself to give them the refusal of all the books I may write for the next five years. The insertion of such a clause is rather complimentary, I suppose, but I'd rather not have to agree to it. However, I've done so and the rest is on the knees of the gods. I don't suppose the book will be out before the fall.

While I'm on the "trade" subject I might as well finish with it. I've had several successes lately; formerly I would have been delighted over them but now they are quite cast in the shade by my big fish.

*The Housekeeper*, Minneapolis, have accepted [a] 20,000 word serial. I am to be paid the tenth of May. Don't know what I will get but they pay well for short stories. I want you to see this story but it won't be out till next year and they want my photo to publish in their prospectus! Ha-hum!

The *Home Magazine*, Indianapolis, published by the Reader Co., recently accepted a short story to be paid for on publication. This is a new place for me.

The *Blue Book*, Chicago, paid \$20 for a short story. The editor also asked me to write a 12,000 word serial of mystery and adventure but I told him I couldn't. I haven't the knack of such stories so it's no use my wasting time over them.

I got my check—for \$35—from *Gunters* at last. They have another of my stories in their April number and I presume I shall have a hard time to get my cash also. I don't intend to send them any more.

There, that's enough about *me* and *my doings*. Now for your letter.

I nearly had a fit over the wanderings of my last letter. Guess I'd better typewrite the address on this if the western mail clerks are so badly afflicted with myopia.

You ask if I am ever troubled with friends I like not liking each other. Yes and yes *and* yes! I should think I know all about it. It is terrible, isn't it? Sometimes my spirit fairly cringes within me at the horror of it. I have two friends in especial whom I love and who hate each other and we are all three constantly being thrown together and my friendship with each is more or less spoiled and embittered by their antagonism.

Have you heard from Miss C. lately? I had a letter from her saying she was ill and answered at once. This was some time ago and I have not had a line from her since so I fear she is no better and perhaps worse. I am so sorry for I liked her personality very much. If I were sure her address was still the same I would write again but I do not know if it is. I suppose you never hear from Mrs. Watrous [Miriam Zieber]? Or do you?

Yes, I've read Trench's *Study of Words*—studied it at college in fact. I liked the book tremendously—although as you say I was amused at some of his orthodox biases. Words and languages are the most fascinating things in the world. It's

marvellous how a language grows and develops along natural and unvarying lines. The development of its grammatical structure seems like a miracle to me. I read the other day in a magazine whose assertions carry weight that some of the most degraded and savage tribes possess languages which have a complicated and involved syntax. *How* did they get it? Well, I suppose it *grew* just as grew their bodily structure which is likewise as wonderful as that of more civilized peoples.

I congratulate you on discovering the—Bible! I did it a year ago, though and have been reading it—really, *reading* it—ever since; but as my rate of progression is slower than yours you will soon outstrip me. I can't get over much more than seven chapters a Sunday—I'm just beginning the Psalms now. *It is* a wonderful book—the crystallized wisdom and philosophy and experience of the most deeply religious people who ever existed. Could anything be more vital and truer to our own experience than this: "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick"? Could anything express a more majestic conception of God than, "Thou who inhabitest the *halls* of Eternity"? What more beautiful than the sentence about the rainbow, "the hands of the Most High have bended it"—what more pathetic than "the heart knoweth its own bitterness and a stranger intermeddleth not with its joy"? *Job* is a magnificent thing. Fancy the stinging irony of "Ye are the people and wisdom will die with you"! When I was a child a school teacher gave me a *whipping* because I used the expression "by the skin of my teeth." He said it was slang. If I had but known then what I know now!!! It is in *Job*—those very words. *Ruth* is a delightful thing: "Where thou goest I will go: thy people shall be my people and thy God my God: the Lord judge between us if aught but death part thee and me." Was ever the loving self-sacrifice and self-effacement of womanhood better or more exquisitely expressed?

I received your "buffalo" postal. I forget whether I sent one in return. If I did not it was because I was—and am—out of them. I can't get any nearer than Ch'Town twenty-five miles away, so I can't always return one promptly.

Fourteen pages isn't bad for a girl who has been housecleaning all day! I wonder if it's absolutely necessary to houseclean? I wonder if nine-tenths of the things we think so necessary really are so! But I shall go on housecleaning and wondering! I may have given up belief in fore-ordination and election and the Virgin Birth; *but* I have not and never shall be guilty of the heresy of asserting that it is not vital to existence that the house should be torn up once a year and scrubbed! Perish the thought.

Yours sincerely,  
L. M. Montgomery.

Cavendish, P.E.I.,  
Sunday Afternoon,  
Nov. 10, 1907.

My dear Mr. W.:—

I did not dream when I received your letter that I should be this long in answering it—but time has slipped away so fast. October is my busiest month—full of bulb planting (delicious), housecleaning (ugh-urr-gru-u), sewing (non-excitably nice), etc., etc., etc. This rainy Sunday afternoon I am going to write some letters.

Though raining now it was fine this forenoon—oh! so fine—sunny and mild as a day in June. I hied me away to the woods—away back into sun-washed alleys carpeted with fallen gold and glades where the moss is green and vivid yet. The woods are *getting ready* to sleep—they are not *yet* asleep but they are disrobing and are having all sorts of little bed-time conferences and whisperings and good-nights. I can more nearly expect to come face to face with a dryad at this time of the year than any other. They are lurking behind every tree trunk—a dozen times I wheeled sharply around convinced that if I could only turn quick enough I should catch one peeping after me. Oh, keep your great vast prairies where never a wood-nymph could hide. I am content with my bosky lanes and the purple peopled shadows under my firs.

Three evenings ago I went to the shore. We had a wild storm of wind and rain the day before but this evening was clear, cold, with an air of marvellous purity. The sunset was lovely beyond words. I drank its beauty in as I walked down the old shore lane and my soul was filled with a nameless exhilaration. I seemed borne on the wings of a rapturous ecstasy into the seventh heaven. I had left the world and the cares of the world so far behind me that they seemed like a forgotten dream.

The shore was clean-washed after the storm and not a wind stirred but there was a silver surf on, dashing on the sands in a splendid white turmoil. Oh, the glory of that far gaze across the tossing waters, which were the only restless thing in all that vast stillness and peace. It was a moment worth living through weeks of storm and stress for.

There is a great *solitude* about such a shore. The *woods* are never solitary—they are full of whispering, beckoning friendly life. But the sea is a mighty soul forever moaning of some great unshareable sorrow that shuts it up into itself for all



eternity. You can never pierce into its great mystery—you can only wander, awed and spellbound on the outer fringe of it. The woods call to you with a hundred voices but the sea has only one—a mighty voice that drowns your soul in its majestic music. The woods are human but the sea is of the company of the archangels.

I thought of Emerson's lines as I stood there that wonderful night.

The gods talk in the breath of the wold  
They talk in the shaken pine  
And they fill the long reach of the old seashore  
With a dialogue divine.  
And the poet who overhears  
Some random word they say  
Is the fated man of men  
Whom the ages must obey.

I shall never hear that random word—my ear is not attuned to its lofty thunder. But I can always *listen* and haply by times I shall catch the faint far-off echo of it and even that will flood my soul with its supernal joy.

You spoke of death in your letter. When I said my friend had had a hard time I did not mean the actual dying—which came to her suddenly and easily—but the long weeks of horrible suffering preceding it. *That* is the real tragedy of death. I, too, hope that death will come to me *suddenly*. I don't want to *know* it is coming. I envy those who die in their sleep. You speak of chloroform. I *love* taking ether—have taken it several times for having teeth extracted. I love the sensation of going under its influence and when I come out of it I never feel one unpleasant after effect. My dentist tells me he never knew anybody like me in this respect. Just at the moment when I return to consciousness I have a fleeting *sensation* of having had the most beautiful time somewhere. Did I ever tell you of my last experience in this line? If I did pardon the repetition and skip it.

Just as I was “coming out” I heard myself saying—I put it this way because it was not *I* who said it—at least not the consciousness that is dictating these words. *This* consciousness heard *something* else speaking through my lips:

“Oh doctor, heaven is so interesting I'm sorry you called me back. I could write—a—a—a—”

I heard myself halt for a suitable word. I heard the dentist laughingly suggest “a book?”

“A book!” I heard myself scornfully casting this aside. “I could write a *lifetime* on the experiences I've been having.”

And with this *I* came into my own, wide-awake and conscious, with no recollection of any such “experiences.”

Wasn't it odd? I've often thought about it. It did more than anything I ever heard or read to convince me of the separate existence of the soul. And yet it raised other difficulties. For that soul was *not* I—not, as aforesaid, the consciousness that is writing to you now. But all this is more or less awkward to define. Such things can't be expressed in the symbols of earth—no words have been invented suitable for the conveyance of just exactly what I felt and how I felt it in that experience. Quite likely you will receive a wrong or at the best an utterly inadequate conception of it.

Ah, I agree with all you say of “soul moods”—states that can't be expressed or communicated because words are too clumsy!

So “if I die before you do, you'll write my life”? No, you won't! Nobody shall. I'd haunt you if you did. Biography is a *screaming farce*. No man or woman was *ever* truly depicted. Biographies, even the best, are one—or at the most two-sided—and every human being has half a dozen different sides. It must always be that way until some medium of communication is found for “soul moods.” And I know I wouldn't want some of *my* soul moods depicted—no, nor any of them—for the evil ones would shame me and the good ones would be desecrated by revelation.

I am pegging away at my new book. Can't say definitely when my first one will be out. There is some hitch at present with the illustrating—artist sick or overworked or something of the sort. My “sequel” is moving on fairly well. I have everything *blocked out*—the complete skeleton, down to the last chapter. All the characters are living in my mind, all the incidents have happened, all the “talk” has been talked. I have only to write about them now.

I'm not doing much hack work. Sold a S.S. serial of seven chapters to the Toronto *East and West*. Got \$40 only. It was far too cheap but Miss Fraser had been pestering me so long for a serial that I sent her one for patriotism's sweet sake. If my book succeeds I'll certainly cut out Sunday School stuff, though of course I'll keep on with adult magazines.

I'm going to tell you something. I hope it won't prove too much of a shock! The *Canadian Magazine* pays for *poetry* now. I sent it an old poem to get rid of it—the poem. It had been peddled to every American magazine and I gave it up in despair. The C.M. sent me two whole dollars for it—and asked for more! Certainly, Canada is forging ahead.

The *Westminster*, Toronto, also pays small sums for prose. I got \$3 for a sketch. Your western sketches ought to take with them.

I enclose a *Youth's Companion* poem. Do you know I haven't written a single

line of verse since July. I'm going to try to write a poem tomorrow though.

Do you know I was nearly run over by an *automobile* last night! Automobiles in Cavendish! There is no such thing as solitude left on earth!

Glad you told me about your horses. I'm sure you must love them. I only have a cat—"Daffy." But he's a *peach*! Really, he's everything a cat should be, except that he hasn't one spark of affection in his soul. But then somebody has said, "The highest joy a human being can experience is *to love disinterestedly*." *Daffy*, therefore, gives this joy to me, since I cannot hope for any return of the affection I bestow on him. The only things *he* loves are his stomach and a certain cushion in a sunny corner. He is enormous in size, with a very fine coat of grey striped fur, black points and a magnificent plummy tail. He is a mighty hunter and catches and devours *squirrels* every day. As I love squirrels also I am torn between two affections.

Well, it is nearly dark and time I was getting ready for church, since I'm organist and must sit up on the choir platform and face the audience during the service. So I dare not slur my toilette but must appear point device. At our last choir practice we practised up "Behold, the Bridegroom Cometh" for a collection anthem. Yesterday I had to summon an extra session of the choir to learn a new piece since the "supply" who preaches for us tonight really *is* a bridegroom, having been married only last week! It would have been a good joke to let the thing go on but I thought the poor man might feel insulted and ministers are so scarce that we dare not play any tricks with our chances of getting one.

Bi-bi,

Yours fraternally,  
L. M. Montgomery.

Cavendish, P.E.I.,  
Monday Evening,  
March 2, 1908.

My dear Mr. Weber:—

No, we are not snowed in! On the contrary, we have no snow at all. We have had very little snow at any time this winter and three weeks ago a thaw took away what little there was. Since then we have been bumping about in wagons or staying at home anathematizing the weather clerk. We have had a phenomenally mild and fine winter—not one storm and very few cold days. Last Saturday morning I started out, walked five miles, spent the day with a friend, and walked home again in the evening—not bad for the dead of winter.

I have been trying to get time to answer your letter for several weeks but never could get enough to do it all at once and I cannot bear to write a letter in sections if I can possibly help it. For the past month I have been extra busy with the somewhat tedious but after all most delightful task of reading and correcting the proofs of my book. I sent the last batch back Friday, and the book is to be out about the fifteenth. I'll send you a copy and you can flesh your maiden sword of book criticism in it, always remembering that it is a story written more especially for girls and not pretending to be of any intrinsic interest to adults.

In regard to literature I've been jogging on as usual at the same old grind—an hour in the morning at magazine work, an hour in the afternoon at the typewriter, an hour in the evening at the sequel to my book. I have the latter about half done but I can't get it to suit me as well as the first. There seems to be more of a "made to order" flavour about it and less of spontaneity.

I sold the *Youth's Companion* a poem in December, "The Exile," and got ten dollars for it. I enclose a copy. *Christian Endeavour World* sent \$15 for a story. I notice the journals are raising their prices. They have risen fifty per cent these last two years. I had an article entitled "The Old South Orchard" in the January *Outing*. Soon after I received a letter from an American gentleman asking me where that orchard was "because he was determined to visit it if such a thing were possible." I wrote back and told him that I was sorry to have to state that the location of the orchard was on the estates of my *chateau en Espagne*.

Last week the *Blue Book*, Chicago, sent \$20 for a short story and *Forward*

sent \$6 for an insignificant June poem that had been declined so often by little magazines that pay from one to two dollars for a poem that I was very nearly putting it in the stove. “The Wind Bloweth Where It Listeth”—and so do editors. To all appearances, you can’t account for one any more than the other!

No, we don’t feel the “stringency” here at all. We suffer some disadvantages from our detached position but we have the compensating advantages. We are sufficient unto ourselves and seldom feel the worse of financial panics—at least, not unless they extend over several years. The partial failure of the western crops has blown us good as the Gov’t is buying seed grain from us at high prices. I hope you will succeed in escaping from the trouble incident on the “squeeze” and I shall be glad to hear that you have done so.

I am amused and interested in the “owder true tale” you told of the “Mr. A+Miss B., etc.” entanglement. But I fear it is too complicated for my pen. Kipling would glory in such a plot. Real life puts fiction to shame in the queer situations it evolves. Things *won’t* go by rule. Your story reminds me of the old nursery tale of my childhood where the pig wouldn’t go, the stick wouldn’t beat the pig, the fire wouldn’t burn the stick, etc. But in the end it wound up happily by everything beginning to do what was wanted of it. I fear few of the “real” stories develop so satisfactorily. Generally folks go on wanting something all their life or—far greater tragedy still—get it after they have outgrown the wish for it and find nothing but the outward husk of their desire left. Have you ever read *The Story of an African Farm*? There is a little incident in it of a child who longed for a box of beautifully coloured spools her mother had. One day her mother gave her the box and, wild with joy, she rushed away to open it. Alas, the spools were there—but all the beautiful coloured threads were gone. I fear life gives us many boxes of spools.

Thank you for your tract on the sympathy of religions. I enjoyed it much and agreed with it. Am returning it as requested under separate wrapper. Hope I haven’t inconvenienced you by my delay. I was keeping it to show a friend who did not come until very recently. Sometimes I wonder whether religion has been a curse or blessing to the world. It has much that is beautiful in it but it seems also to have caused hideous suffering. Jesus spoke no truer word than “I have not come to send peace but a sword.” Most religions have set men at variance with each other. Nothing is so bitter and relentless as the “theologicum odium.” There are queer contradictions in these matters. I know an old lady who is one of the sweetest kindest creatures alive. She would not harm a fly and I have seen her weep bitterly over the sufferings of a wounded cat. But it puts her into a simple fury to even hint that a merciful and loving God will hardly burn for all eternity the great majority of his

creatures. I cannot understand this attitude on the part of so many. Nothing seems to enrage some people so much as any attempt to take away or mitigate their dearly beloved hell.

I've been re-reading a very fascinating book lately,—*The Law of Psychic Phenomena*. Probably I've mentioned it before. I do wish you could read it. If it were mine I would send it to you but it is not. I'd love to try some of the experiments in it with some mutually interested friend. I *have* tried one or two, such as I could try alone, and have had success too. For example, I told a friend of mine that I meant to try to make her dream of me some night. She was to mark it down in the morning if she did but she was not to know the night I was to make the attempt. One night before I went to sleep I began repeating in thought "I'll make So-and-So dream of me tonight" and kept it up, thinking of nothing else until I went to sleep. She *did* dream of me that night. It may have only been a coincidence. Let us try it. When you receive this try to make me dream of you some night and if I do I'll carefully observe the date and let you know the result. Also, I'll try to make you dream of me after I think this letter has had time to reach you. It would be better to will that the dream should be horrible as we would be more likely to remember it. It is claimed that we only remember the dreams that we dream just before awakening. An unpleasant dream would probably awake us. If we can succeed it will be very interesting as establishing the possibility of mind acting upon mind, independent of matter and in defiance of time and space. Of course it will be well to remember the difference in the time between here and Alberta. It's about two or three hours, isn't it? Midnight out there would be between two and three here. So if you command your "subjective mind" to make mine dream of you during those hours it would probably contribute to the success of the experiment. I have also been trying some little experiments in "mental healing" on myself, by impressing ideas on my "subjective mind" before going to sleep, and there is certainly something in it. The book explains it all by purely natural laws and discards all "supernatural" explanations. It explains "Christian Science" along the same lines, also all manifestations of so-called spiritualism. I have found one thing anyway beyond dispute—it is a cure for insomnia. If I keep saying a thing over to myself persistently before I go to sleep one night, the next night I can put myself *at once* to sleep again by beginning to say it. The book mentions this as self-hypnotism. I believe fully that a person's "subjective mind" has great power over that person's body and objective mind but I am not at all convinced that it can influence another person. If you can make me dream of you or vice versa it will go far to convince me. Well, good-night. Laugh at my experiments if you will. They cost nothing.

Yours sincerely,  
L. M. Montgomery.

Cavendish, P.E.I.,  
Sunday morning,  
April 5, 1908.

My dear Mr. W.:—

I am going to answer your letter over the heads of several others having the prior claim of previous receipt because there are some parts of it I want to discuss before they grow cold with keeping.

I am very sorry to learn that you are still “on the rocks” of trouble. But as I can do nothing save express sincere sympathy and hope that you will find a way out of your difficulties, I will simply say that I do so sympathize and hope and leave it so.

I have not tried to make you “dream” yet but shall some of these times. I *did* dream of you one night—March 14th—but as you say you did not try to make me there was nothing in that. It was a foolish dream. I was visiting at an uncle’s and my aunt asked me to “go to the granary and get some wheat for the hens.” I went and when I opened the door you were sitting on a keg inside. I don’t know how I knew it was you but I did and I was not at all surprised to see you there. You at once began telling me that you had been all through the Boer War and were giving me an account of your South African campaign when I woke up!

Dreams are usually very unaccountable. I had such a silly one one night last week. I dreamed I was *haunted by the ghost of a hat!* Everywhere I went I was attended by a black hat floating in the air beside my head. When I tried to grasp it my hand went through it in the most approved ghostly fashion. I was not frightened only annoyed because of the comment it provoked—since the hat seemed to be visible to all!

My book hasn’t come yet but I am expecting it every day now. The clipping I enclose was taken from a New York paper—a publisher’s foreword, of course, so counting for nothing as far as honest criticism is concerned. Of course, I don’t expect there will be much criticism of any sort, good or bad. The reviews don’t often take account of such small fry as juvenile books. I wonder what Miriam would have to say about my book if she knew. I’d love, just out of sheer curiosity, to hear her frank opinion of it. She has never written me since I sent her *my* frank criticism [on what] she sent for review—but perhaps that had nothing to do with her not writing. Do you ever hear from her now? I often think of her—she was a unique character in



many ways, as expressed in her letters. Well, well, you know what the old Quaker lady said, “Everybody’s queer but thee and me—and thee’s a little queer!”

As for photograph, well, I have none of mine on hand just now and don’t know when I will have any. I can’t get to town for more than a day at a time twice a year and there I’m always too tired and worried to bother with photos. But whenever I do I’ll remember you, and shall hope to have one of yours in exchange.

Yes, I only do three hours’ literary work a day—two hours’ writing and one typewriting. I write fast, having “thought out” plot and dialogue while I go about my household work. I think the magazines really are raising their pay. Everything has gone up so I suppose they have to fall in line too. Yesterday I got \$35 for an old serial from the *Housewife*. It was five or six chapters long and was much peddled, —name, “Four Winds.”

Your experience with Mr. Tyner amused me very much. I have met so many men of his type. I remember one time, when I was teaching school up west I went home to dinner one day and found a “preacher” there who evidently modelled his religion after “Pansy’s” fairy tales. As I sat down at the table, his very first words to me, after the formal “How do you do?” of introduction, were “*Do you live by faith?*” Although tolerably familiar with the jargon of his type I honestly didn’t know what he meant, and seeing my puzzled expression he translated “Are you a Christian?” I admit I was furious at his impertinence and bad taste. I coldly said, “I might answer that question, sir, if I were not afraid that you would thereby feel encouraged to ask me if I expected to be married soon and how much money I have in the bank—since they are certainly less sacred subjects.”

I don’t think the creature had brains enough to understand my snub. He answered that he would not think of asking questions upon *personal* subjects!!!

I call myself a Christian, in that I believe in Christ’s teachings and do my poor best to live up to them. I am a member of the church believing that with all its mistakes and weakness it is the greatest power for good in the world and I shall always do what I can to help its cause. But oh, this hideous cant of “being washed in the blood.” To me that phrase always summons up a disgusting physical picture that revolts me.

By the way, just for the sake of curiosity I read *Bob Ingersoll’s* lectures recently. I expected to be horribly shocked for when I was a child it was “aut Ingersoll aut diabolus.” Well, I was amazed. With the exception of his disbelief in a personal God, Christ’s divinity and eternal punishment—and as you know, the last two would not be exceptions with all ministers—everything he states would be admitted openly or tacitly by any minister under 40 years of age today. He was howled down because

he believed in evolution and denied that the garden of Eden was a historical fact, because he denied predestination, and stated that the God of the old testament was not a deity worthy of undiluted love and admiration and denied the verbal inspiration of the Bible. These were his principal “heresies.” However, the lectures were rather blatant and vulgar and his views were stated in an offensive fashion. If they were clothed in more considerate language they might be—and are—preached from the majority of pulpits today. He minces up poor old Talmage without mercy and I was with him there for I abhor Talmage and all his works—or rather sermons, for I don’t think he ever *did* anything but preach vapid sensational sermons. Grandma adores Talmage’s sermons—reads them every Sunday and cries over them! Well, I don’t object—but I must be excused from sharing in her enthusiasm.

I don’t think Kipling is “written out.” I think he is just in a transition period and that he will emerge from it with something better than he has yet done. Still, of course he may not. I don’t think our writers of today have the “staying power” of the older novelists. They are more of sky-rockets than of calm planetary continuance. When a man begins “playing to the gallery” he is done for.

No, *McClure’s* have never printed my story yet. Of course they paid for it at acceptance. It is probably lying forgotten in the dusty corner of some editorial safe. *Everybody’s* published my story last April. I thought you’d seen it. I mailed you an old copy of it yesterday. I don’t think it was worth a hundred dollars—but I didn’t send the check back and ask them to make it fifty, for all that!! I understand that a lady elocutionist in New York has made quite a hit with it on the platform. This letter is a fearful scrawl. I have such bad ink that I have to write large or it will blot everything. I’m written out—like Kipling—and must close. I’m going to read the Bible now—I’ve got as far along as Isaiah. He is splendid, isn’t he? But what calamity howlers those old prophets were. And they never did any good with their scolding.

Yours sincerely,  
L. M. Montgomery.

Cavendish, P.E.I.,  
Thursday Evening,  
Sept. 10, 1908.

My dear Mr. Weber:—

I know my correspondents all think I'm dead. I'm not—but I'm so tired and worn out, after a summer of steady grind, that I might almost as well be, as far as real *living* is concerned. To tell the truth, I feel horribly “played out.”

You see, Anne seems to have hit the public taste. She has gone through four editions in three months. As a result, the publishers have been urging me to have the second volume ready for them by October—in fact insisting upon it. I have been writing “like mad” all through the hottest summer we have ever had. I finished the book last week and am now typewriting it, which means from three to four hours' pounding every day—excessively wearisome work; I expect it will take me a month to get it done—if I last so long.

Thank you for your kind remarks on Anne. I suppose she's all right but I'm so horribly tired of her that I can't see a single merit in her or the book and can't really convince myself that people are sincere when they praise her. You did not make the criticism I expected you to make and which a couple of the reviews did make—that the ending was too conventional. It was; and if I had known I was to be asked to write a second Anne book I wouldn't have “ended” it at all but just “stopped.” However, I didn't know and so finished it up as best I could.

There has been some spice in my life so far this summer reading the reviews. So far I have received *sixty*, two were harsh, one contemptuous, two mixed praise and blame and the remaining fifty-five were kind and flattering beyond my highest expectations. So I feel satisfied as far as that goes. I wish you could see the reviews; but as you can't I'll copy the main points herewith. Don't think me extremely *vain* for doing so. I know you are interested in your fellow-writer's adventures. I enclose the Toronto *Globe* review of which I have a spare copy and you may keep it.

Phila. *Inquirer*. “A wholesome and stimulating book.”

Montreal *Herald*. “A book which will appeal to the whole English speaking world—one of the most attractive figures Canadian fiction has produced.”

Boston *Transcript*. “Anne is one of the most delightful girls that has appeared for many a day. She is positively irresistible.”

St. John *Globe*. “A truly delightful little girl.”

Pittsburg *Chronicle*. “Those who enjoy originality, quaintness, and character portrayal of a high order will make a grievous mistake if they ignore *Anne of Green Gables*! The heroine is one of the cleverest creations in recent fiction.”

Boston *Herald*. “It could only have been written by a woman of deep and wide sympathy with child nature. A delightful story.”

Detroit *Saturday Night*. “Here’s to your good fortune, Anne. You will brighten many a career and darken nary a one.”

Montreal *Star*. “The most fascinating book of the season.”

*Record Herald*, Chicago. “Here is a literary bouquet full of life and naturalness and quiet humour and pathos.”

Milwaukee, *Free Press*. “Anne has the elusive charm of personality. Every word she utters partakes of it and every one of her quaint expressive ways. She is full of flavour. A better book for girls there could hardly be for it possesses a freshness and vivacity very rare indeed among books for girls, or indeed among any books for children.”

N.Y. *American*. “An idyllic story, one of the most delightful books we have read for many a day.”

Phila. *North American*. “One of the most delightful characters in juvenile fiction—with graceful touches of fancy and in an original and captivating vein of humour.”

Brooklyn *Times*. “Anne is very funny but she is not convincing.”

N.Y. *Times*. “A mawkish, tiresome impossible heroine, combining the sentimentality of an Alfred Austin with the vocabulary of a Bernard Shaw. Anne is a bore.”

N.Y. *World*. “The people in this book are delightfully studied and it is a pleasure to know them.”

*The Outlook*. “One of the best books for girls we have seen this long time, with plenty of character and originality.”

Buffalo *News*. “A story after the true lover’s heart—full of absorbing interest from first to last.”

Boston *Budget*. “A very engaging miss. She is too precocious a youngster for real life but very diverting as a book heroine. The story is fresh and entertaining and the author is to be congratulated on her maiden effort.”

Chicago *Inter-Ocean*. “The most notable thing about the book is the accurate and sympathetic observation of nature.”

Well, I fancy you’re tired of this—so I’ll let you off. One intended criticism in an otherwise favourable review tickled me immensely. “This is a very charming story but

the author has missed an opportunity in her setting. Although this is Prince Edward Island which is virgin ground for a story writer, there is *nothing in the book distinctive of the place*. The scene might as well be laid in any New England village.”

The italics are mine. I suppose the critic imagines that I am some American who laid the scene of her story in P.E. Island by way of getting something new in geography but who has no real knowledge of the weird and uncanny lives led by the inhabitants thereof! Another review said, “What most impresses an American is how these people of Canada *resemble ourselves*.”

*What did that poor man suppose we were like down here???*

Now, I'll take your letter and answer your questions just as they come. You say you warrant I had to do a “great deal of inventing.” Verily, yes. And not only inventing but combining and harmonizing and shading, etc., etc., etc. You *can't* describe people *exactly* as they are. The *details* would be true, the *tout ensemble* utterly false. I have been told my characters are marvellously “true to life”—nay, Cavendish readers have got them all fitted to real Cavendish people. Yet there isn't a portrait in the book. They are all “composites.”

Yes, Anne's success at school *is* too good for literary art. But the book was written for *girls* and must please them to be a *financial* success. They would insist on some such development and I can't afford—yet, at least—to defy too openly the standards of my public. Some day I shall try to write a book that satisfies me wholly. In a book for the young it wouldn't do to have the hero “fail tremendously,” as you say. They couldn't understand or sympathize with that. It would take older people. I do not think I'll ever be able to write stories for mature people. My gift such as it is seems to lie along literature for the young.

Yes, I took a great deal of pains with my style. I revised and re-wrote and altered words until I nearly bewildered myself.

In regard to the illustration. I thought the *second* one the best in the book—the one where she arrives at Green Gables. In it she looks almost exactly as I imagined her looking. However, I suppose the illustrations, lacking as they are in many respects, are about as good as most of those in present day fiction. The one I resented most is the bridge scene. Although in the chapter Anne is distinctly described as having “short rings of hair” she is depicted with streaming tresses!

I don't know the number of copies in an edition. That will come in the financial settling up at the end of the year. The first one would probably be small, the others larger. The publishers write me that orders have been held up for weeks waiting for the fourth edition, so that it would probably be quite a large one.

Yes, the publishers seem to be pushing the advertising well. They turn everything to account. In July a big party of Orangemen were going on a picnic. At the Boston North St. station, they saw a copy of *Anne of Green Gables* bound in green on a newsstand. They took, or pretended to take—they were likely half drunk—the title as a personal insult, marched across to the Page building, the band playing horrible dirges, and nearly mobbed the place. One of the editors came out and told them that although the title might be offensive “the heroine, Anne, had hair of a distinct orange hue.” Thereupon they “adopted” Anne as their mascot, gave her three cheers and went on their way rejoicing.

The Page Co. published an account of this incident in a dozen different papers from Boston to California. They have also set out posters and booklets galore. I am well satisfied with my publishers as far as everything has gone so far.

I pay \$5 for 100 clippings to the bureau, and have found them very satisfactory.

I don't like my new Anne book as well as the first but that may be, as you say, because I'm so soaked and sated with her. I can see no freshness or interest in it. But, I suppose if I took the greatest masterpiece in fiction and read it over, say, a hundred times, one after the other with no interval between, I wouldn't find much of either in it also. I felt the same, though not so strongly, when I finished *Anne*. But I am really convinced that it is not so good from an *artistic* standpoint, though it may prove popular and interesting enough. I had to write it too hurriedly—and the *freshness* of the *idea* was gone. It didn't *grow* as the first book did. I simply *built* it. Anne, grown-up, couldn't be made as quaint and unexpected as the child Anne. The book deals with her experiences while teaching for two years in Avonlea school. The publishers wanted this—and I'm awfully afraid if the thing takes, they'll want me to write her through college. The idea makes me sick. I feel like the magician in the Eastern story who became the slave of the “jinn” he had conjured out of a bottle. If I'm to be dragged at Anne's chariot wheels the rest of my life I'll bitterly repent having “created” her.

As for Miriam—no, don't mention my book to her—unless she asks you what I'm doing. In which case you may tell her the simple facts. If she ever refers to it let me know, for curiosity's sake, what she says.

I have received a lot of nice letters from people about Anne. The editor of the Montreal *Herald* wrote me such a kind and encouraging letter, as did also the *Globe* (Toronto) Editor. I've been pestered with letters from “tourists” who “want to meet me.” I've snubbed all these latter politely, because I don't want to be met. I had a letter from a lunatic in New York yesterday. You may remember a *very* minor character in Anne is called *Priscilla Grant*. Well, it seems his great-great-

grandmother was called Priscilla Grant and he wants me to write a book about the girl in my story and call it “Priscilla Grant.” And if I do, he’ll “do all he can to push it.” (He’s a book seller.)

Well, there has been a great deal of pleasure in all this! But it has its seamy side as well. I won’t say much of it as I don’t want to think of it. I’ll only say this. If you want to find out just how much *envy* and *petty spite* and *meanness* exists in people, even people who call themselves your friends, just write a successful book or do something they can’t do, and you’ll find out! Sometimes I feel sick at heart. But not all are such, thank God. I have many true friends who rejoice at my success, such as it is. But *most* of them are outside my clan connections.

But I’m not well. It was no joke, what I said at the start about feeling played out. I feel so utterly. I’m tired—deadly tired—all the time—just as tired when I wake in the morning as when I go to bed at night—tired body, soul and spirit. I have constant head-aches and no appetite. It’s not all due to literary work, although I suppose that helped it on. We had a houseful of guests all summer, the weather was fearfully hot and I was very much worried in one way or another almost constantly. When I get the book done (by the way, I can’t settle on a name for it and think I’ll leave it to the publishers to christen) I’m going to take a good rest and not write a word for two months. I wish I could get away for a trip and change but that is impossible as I can’t leave grandma.

I’ve been feeling rather worse since a shock I got three weeks ago. One very hot windy day our kitchen roof took fire. There was nobody here but grandma and myself. I dragged a ladder from the barn, hoisted it against the roof (at an ordinary time I couldn’t have lifted it from the ground) went up with a pail of water and succeeded in putting the fire out. Then I collapsed and had to go to bed. My nerves have been in rags ever since and I can’t hear a door slam without jumping and screaming. Nice state to be in! Well, I’m taking a “tonic” and hope it will do half it claims on the label.

I’m through. This is the most appallingly egotistical letter I ever wrote. It’s all about myself and my wretched book. But if I hadn’t written about that I’d have *simply nothing else* to write about except social gossip that would be Greek to you.

Perhaps some day I’ll be rested and leisurely and able to “imagine” something worth writing you a letter about. Oh, that reminds me. I wish I’d never written about “kindred spirits” in my book. Every freak who has written to me about it, claims to be a “kindred spirit.” I’m going to dedicate my new book to “kindred spirits.” *You*, therefore, will have a share in it. But many folks will *think* they have who *haven’t*.

Yours tiredly, headachely, listlessly, don’t careishly—but *not* hopelessly,

L. M. Montgomery.



Cavendish, P.E.I.,  
Tuesday Evening,  
December 22, 1908.

Thermometer 5 below zero. A raging snowstorm to boot. Frost on window panes. Wind wailing in chimney. A box of white Roman hyacinths sending out alien whiffs of old summers.

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My dear Mr. Weber:—

When I received your last letter on October 29th, I said to myself, "For once I'm going to be decent and I'll answer this letter next week." What is more, I really meant it. Yet here it is December 22nd. Well, I couldn't help it, that is all there is to it. I've been so busy—and so tired. I'm still the latter. I'd love to go to bed and stay there for a whole month, doing nothing, seeing nothing and *thinking* nothing. I really don't feel at all well—and yet there is nothing the matter with me. I've simply "gone stale." If you've ever experienced the feeling I'm sure of your sympathy. If you haven't it's quite indescribable and I won't try to describe it. Instead I'll just pick up my notebook, turn back to the entry of my last letter to you and discuss the jottings of any possibly interesting happenings since. I daresay the most of the letter will be about that detestable *Anne*. There doesn't seem to be anything but her in my life just now and I'm so horribly tired of her that I could wish in all truth and candour that I'd never written her, if it were not for just two things. One of these things is a letter I received last month from a poor little cripple in Ohio who wrote to thank me for writing *Anne* because she said it had taught her how to endure her long lonely days of imprisonment by just "imagining things." And the other is that *Anne* has gone through six editions and that must mean a decent check when pay day comes!

Well, it was September when I last wrote. We had the most exquisite autumn here this year. October was more beautiful than any June I ever remember. I couldn't help enjoying it, tired and rushed as I was. Every morning before sitting down to my typewriter I'd take a walk over the hill and feel almost like I should feel for a little while. November was also a decent month as Novembers go, but December has been very cold. Today as aforesaid has been a big storm. We are drifted up, have had no mail, and were it not for my hyacinths I should feel inclined to stop being an optimist.

Well, I've done my duty by the weather, haven't I? Of course, one had to mention it. 'Twouldn't be lucky not to.

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I beg leave to call your attention to a new and original thought which you have not probably heard before. It is this—"every rose has its thorn." This refers to a brief and cryptic entry in my notebook for September 12th, which entry I am not going to disclose but which I shall take as a concealed text to hang a few comments on.

I've written a successful book, which will probably bring me in some hard cash. This fact has many results. One of the results is this. An old schoolgirl chum, on whom I have always been on friendly terms, suddenly becomes cool, says spiteful things of me and my book, displays incivility and rudeness to me whenever we meet and finally withdraws herself into lofty disregard of my existence. I have not "put on airs" about my book at all. Why then should she behave so? Some people say she is jealous. I hate to think so but am forced to do so. Whatever be the cause I have lost an old friend. You will say such "friendship" is not real and is better lost. I agree with you. Nevertheless, old affections rooted in childhood are lasting things and I have felt a good deal of pain over my friend's attitude.

Again, if you have lived all your life in a little village where everybody is every whit as good and clever and successful as everybody else, and if you are foolish enough to do something which the others in the village cannot do, especially if that something brings you in a small modicum of fame and fortune a certain class of people will take it as a personal insult to themselves, will belittle you and your accomplishment in every way and will go out of their way to make sure that you are informed of their opinions. I could not begin to tell you all the petty flings of malice and spite of which I have been the target of late, even among some of my own relations.

Well, I mustn't growl about this. I tell it to you merely that you need not be afraid I ought to sacrifice something dear to the gods to avert their envy. My sunshine is not so unclouded as to be a "weather breeder."

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I've been doing very little "free lance work" since I wrote. After I finished my book MS I took a six weeks' rest from all literary [work]. It did not do me the good I had hoped. Indeed, I think I would have been better at work. I had only more time for morbid brooding over certain worries and troubles that have been ever present in my life for the past six years. They are caused by people and circumstances over which I have no control, so I am quite helpless in regard to them and when I get run-down I take a too morbid view of them. Last week I began work again by blocking

out a short serial for girls.

In September the *Youth's Companion* took a poem and sent ten dollars for it, and the *Red Book* sent \$25 for a story. In October the *Pictorial Review* of New York published a short story I had sent them in June and never heard from since. It was a much peddled tale, brazen from many rejections. They sent me fifty dollars for it. It was not worth ten. It *must* have been on *Anne's* merits this tale sold. Well, I'll soon be done peddling off my old MSS. I'm almost completely sold out of them now. In future I'm going to cut out all "hack work" and write up only ideas which appeal to me. Thanks to *Anne's* success I expect to be able to afford this, even should it prove a losing venture. But I don't think it will. I believe if I write solely to please myself it will "take" better than writing to please somebody else. I wrote *Anne* that way and I believe it's the only way to appeal to a large audience. But of course a writer who is struggling up can seldom afford to do this at first. I've served a long and hard apprenticeship—how hard no one knows but myself. The world only hears of my successes. It *doesn't* hear of all my early buffets and repulses.

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Letters! Don't mention them. I have often read of the way authors were pestered with letters but now I realize it acutely. It *has* become a pest. At first I was delighted when once or twice a week I got a nice kind letter saying nice things of *Anne*; but now they come, four or five a day, all waiting an answer. I'm tired of writing them—I can't attend properly to my personal correspondence because of them. Of course they are all nice and some of them are from people I am very proud to think like my book. I think I wrote you about Mark Twain's letter. Bliss Carman and Sir Louis Davies also wrote me very kind and flattering epistles. No, I see by my notebook Mark Twain's letter came after I wrote you. He wrote me that in *Anne* I had created "the dearest, and most lovable child in fiction since the immortal Alice." Do you think I wasn't *proud* of Mark's encomium? Oh, perhaps not!

*Anne* went into her sixth edition on December first. Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons, London, has brought out an English Edition. I had a letter from William Briggs Toronto today asking to be permitted to publish my next book. I could not do this if I wished since I signed an agreement with Page's to give them the refusal of all my books for five years. But even if I were free I wouldn't give the MS. to a Canadian firm. It is much better financially to have it published in the States.

The reviews keep coming in as usual. Success seems, as usual, to have succeeded—that is they are almost all favourable now. Since I last wrote I have had only two unfavourable ones. One said nobody over 14 years of age would find the book of interest. In reference to that I might quote what T. H. Leavitt, Inspector of

Public Libraries for Ontario, wrote me, "It is usually a sign of dotage when an old man falls in love with a young girl; but there are exceptions, such as in my case. I am not ashamed to say that I am the old man and *Anne of Green Gables* is the young girl."

He must be over 14!

The other review wasn't very bad—just rather contemptuous. It wound up by quoting a speech of Anne's and then said, "Further than this the present reviewer did not follow the adventures of this infant prodigy so he cannot tell of what further marvels Anne was capable."

Will you believe that "this" was just to the end of the *fifth* chapter?

But I don't think some of the favourable reviewers could have read the book very carefully either. A very flattering review started off as follows: "The scene of this charming story is laid in Victoria Island near Nova Scotia. So far away, we may doubt the existence of Victoria Island but the geographies assure us of the reality of Nova Scotia. But it does not matter whether there is a Victoria Island or not; all that matters is that this is the most delightful book, etc."

What do you make of that?

*The Bookman* has Anne listed as one of the six "best sellers" in ten different cities. This seems to me rather like something I've dreamed. I can't really believe it.

I finished typewriting my new book the first of November and sent it to Boston the middle of the month. Haven't heard from their readers yet but don't suppose they'll reject it exactly. It's not as good as *Anne* but not so much worse as to be turned down I think.

Typewriting it almost finished me. I'd have hired it done but I knew nobody could ever make the MS. out, with its innumerable alterations, interlineations and complex notes to be inserted in scores of places. But you don't know how wretchedly tired I was when I finished. I'll never consent to be so hurried again. "What shall it profit a woman if she gain a big royalty and lose her own soul!"—getting in place of it a horrible sort of "aching void" that doesn't care enough about anything to take the trouble of it?

I suppose your threshing experiences of which you wrote so graphically are over now. (I've dropped the notebook and taken up your letter.) It must be very hard work—but at least it seems to give you a good appetite—which is what writing stories at high pressure *doesn't*. I haven't tasted anything that tasted *good* for two months. I eat by way of disagreeable duty. However, in the morning, judging by appearances now I'll have to go out and shovel snow and that honest toil will probably make me honestly hungry. "We've all got troubles of our own." *David*

*Harum* says “a reasonable amount of fleas is good for a dog—keeps him from brooding on being a dog.” The trouble is, we all think we have an *unreasonable* amount of fleas—and who is to judge?

I’m so deathly tired I’m going to stop writing for tonight though it isn’t very late yet. I’ll finish tomorrow night if possible.

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Wednesday, Dec. 23.

I hope *this* isn’t going to last all winter—more storm and bitter frost. I *did* shovel snow as predicted—there’s no one we can get to do this for us—but it’s all drifted back again. No mail still—and I’m ready to tear out my hair in handfuls!

Really, this has been a hard day. I haven’t felt very well and am “tired” than ever tonight. But I shall try to finish this letter—nay, I *will* finish it, even if I just have to “stop short.”

Yes, I want to see you settle down to some congenial work as soon as possible. Shake off as many of your metaphorical fleas as possible, resolve to “grin and bear” the unshakeable ones, and “hoe in.” Nothing but steady, persistent labour will win in literature. “Dogged does it.” Why not try your hand on some essays on prairie life—the inwardness and outwardness of it, treating the subject delicately, analytically, *intimately*, exhaustively, and try your luck with William Briggs. Ten or twelve would make a book. Write on the prairie in all its aspects—by day, by night, in winter and summer, etc., etc., etc. Make each essay about three or four thousand words long and put all the airy fancy and thought into it that you can. Call the whole book *The Northern Silence* and write a title essay on that subject. Don’t be in a hurry—write just when you feel in the mood for it.

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Eight O’clock.

Here it is two hours later. A Christmas caller came in bringing a *duck* and a box of candy. (Write an essay on “Christmas on the Prairie” for your book!) It’s really very hard to give good advice under such circumstances. But I was about through anyhow. Really, I’m in earnest. I think you could do it all right. There are many sentences and ideas in your various letters which could be worked admirably into such a series and if you decide to try it I’ll copy them out and send them to you.

I must close now, for another caller has come and I do not expect to have any more spare time till after Xmas. I am enclosing the proof of the review that appeared in *National*. You may keep it. Also, as soon as I can get an envelope to fit it I’ll send you a souvenir copy of my “Island Hymn,” with music.

The best wishes of the season to you,

Yours very cordially,  
L. M. Montgomery.

P.S. Have you heard lately from Miriam? L.M.M.

Cavendish, P.E.I.,  
Sunday Evening,  
March 28, 1909.

My dear Mr. Weber:

Three weeks ago I took your letter out of the box where I keep unanswered epistles and said, "I'll write Mr. W. tonight." Yet here it is three weeks later. Somehow, I never could get sufficient time all at once and I can't write a decent letter in shreds and patches. I'm writing all this not as an apology. But merely as a statement of fact.

I can't find the entry in my notebook where I wrote you last so I'll begin at "this" end of it and work backward crab fashion till I come to it. This will probably result in a rather heterogeneous epistle but "needs must, etc."

Beginning with today then, it has really been doleful in the extreme. It has been pouring rain all day and this coming on a lot of recent March snow has made fearful slush, slump and mud. The world hereabouts is so ugly that it hurts me to look on it. One can hardly believe that in a few weeks it will be all bridling and smiling in wedding finery of pink and green. God hasten the time, say I, for I long for dry ground for woodland rambles and shore reveries.

I've just stumbled by accident on the entry I couldn't find, so will just begin where I left off last time.

The New Year opened sadly for me with the sudden and unexpected death of my favourite aunt. Aunt Mary was a sort of second mother to me—a sweet, fine, brave, plucky little woman who had lived a more truly heroic life than many of the heroes and heroines of history. She had a very dissipated husband and all the care of providing for and educating her family of six fell on her. She did it so triumphantly that every one of them is today occupying an honourable social station and a prosperous financial condition. Then, her work done and tired out, she died—"after life's fitful fever she sleeps well." If she could have but lived ten years to enjoy the ease and pleasure her children were so eager to give her!

I felt her death bitterly; but these things can't be written about!

I have not been especially well this winter. Yet I hate to complain when there is so much worse suffering everywhere. I've been very nervous and at times somewhat morbid. The doctor says my nervous system is run down and requires a course of

raw eggs and cod liver oil. I find I'm improving under such regimen and this last month I've been much better, though I still get very tired far too easily and quickly.

Signed the agreement for my new book the other day, on the same terms as before. It is to be called *Anne of Avonlea*—the publishers' christening. I wanted it *The Later Adventures of Anne*. It is not to be out before next fall. They write me that *Anne* is still selling as well as ever and they do not wish to give her a rival as long as that continues.

I had *such* a funny letter from a man the other day who had read my book. He seems rather an illiterate person but his letter was passable till it came to the postscript. "I am a married man so you will understand that my motive in writing to you is only friendship." There's a thoughtful man for you! *He* is not going to arouse any vain hopes in the bosom of a poor literary spinster!

The flood of letters continues. Some of them are very nice. A great many English people have written to me. I enclose a few criticisms from English papers.

In February I got my first royalty cheque for the amount due me up to the close of the year. It was for seventeen hundred and thirty dollars. Not bad for the first six months of a new book by an unknown author, I think. I get nine cents out of the wholesale price of 90c. It seems rather disproportionate to the publisher's share; but I suppose when you consider that they've got to run their business out of the profits as well as make up for what they lose on books that don't succeed it is not likely they clear much more than the author after all.

If you can get hold of a book by Bliss Carman called *The Making of Personality*, read it. I know you'll find it both delightful and helpful. I did. A friend lent it to me lately and I thought so much of it I'm going to send for it for my own library. It embodies a fine and excellent philosophy of life and has the charm of beautiful literary finish besides.

Now for your letter:—

So you have removed to Vancouver. You don't exactly say you like it, or the reverse. I've heard much in its praise but I don't fancy I'd like to live there. I have a lawyer uncle there, my mother's brother, Chester B. Macneill. So you are—or were—rooming at a Christian Scientist's. Well, I hope her "science" will guard her unlocked doors! It is laughable to see the extremes to which the human mind will go. I believe there is a good deal in mental healing, where no organic disease is present, but I fear 'twould prove a poor defence against a sneak thief were he "so disposed." Are you following the Emmanuel Movement in Boston? I am and feel considerable interest in it. It is practically Christian Science purged of its absurdities. Last fall I was reading some of its articles and decided to try to cure myself of sick headaches,



from which I had suffered every few weeks for eight years. I've been to several doctors and tried all sorts of medicines—got eyeglasses but though there was a very slight improvement it was not a cure and did not last. Well, I began last November. Every night when I found myself dropping off to sleep I would repeat to myself "Remove the cause of my headaches." I really hadn't the least faith in it. But it is a simple fact that I have never had a headache since I began! I discontinued the "treatment" after a month but there has been no return of the headaches. I am not *altogether* convinced—it is possibly only a coincidence and they might have stopped anyhow. But I am "almost persuaded" that it was the mental suggestion which did it. Anyhow "faith" had nothing to do with it, for I had none.

I have been trying to cure my nervous trouble but can't see that it did any good—although perhaps my present improvement is the result of it instead of my tonics!

Did you get the copy of my Island Hymn? I sent it to Didsbury before I knew of your change of location. I believe it was sung and presented as a stage picture at a concert in the Opera House in town the other night. The author and composer were called before the curtain and cheered. But only the composer could respond. The author couldn't go. She had to stay home and wish she could.

In regard to photos—I intend to have some new ones taken in the spring and *if* they are decent I will send you one. My pictures seldom resemble me. I am a petite person with very delicate features; my photos, at least the "head and bust" ones represent me usually as a strapping personage with quite a large pronounced face. The last one I had taken—the one that has been so generously scattered over the continent in magazines and advertisements, was considered good of me. I sat for one the other day as the Page Co. insisted on a new one for the *Book News Monthly*. They wanted a head and shoulders picture and the result is not like me, though passable as a picture. I am not having any finished from it. I shall be very much pleased to have one of yours in return any time you may be ready to send it.

You have my sympathy in regard to your father's death. I have had a double experience of those brutal telegrams announcing the death of a dear one. They are like a blow in the face. A letter softens it a little but a telegram cannot. I think a sudden death is hard on the survivors; but I agree with you fully that is the most desirable of deaths for the one most vitally concerned. I pray I may die so. I don't want to *know* I'm going to die. And yet I have a horrible fear that I'll die by inches, as you say. When I read of someone having died in his sleep I always envy him. What a strange thing this death is. We all know we are going to die sometime but the knowledge never worries us or clouds our happiness here, as a general thing. Theologians have done much to surround death with horror and dread. If we listened

to Nature's teachings we should be happier, truly believing (I hold) that death is simply a falling asleep, probably with awakening to some happy and useful existence, at the worst an endless and dreamless repose. Isn't the Christian (?) doctrine of eternal torment as *hellish* as the idea it teaches? How could men ever have so libelled God? They must have judged Him from their own evil hearts. *They* would have tortured their enemies eternally if they could. God had power, therefore He would. Such seems to have been their argument. I admit that a consciousness of sin and remorse is a hell in itself. But I believe that "as long as a human soul lives it can turn to God and goodness if it so will." Nobody *wilfully* chooses evil. We choose it because we deceive ourselves into thinking it good and pleasant. When we find that it isn't we turn from it. Sometimes, in the case of bad habits, we cannot turn from it. But I believe that only lasts while the physical body on which the habit is impressed lasts. When it is destroyed the habit will also be destroyed and the liberated soul will get "another chance," with the warning of its bitter experiences.

Well, we believe and believe. Some day we'll know—or else there will be no curiosity.

I find I'm getting tired. I can't write as long at a stretch without growing weary as I could formerly. So I'll say good-night. I'm going to address this to Didsbury as I'm not certain where you may be. They will probably forward it.

Yours faithfully,  
L. M. Montgomery.

P.S. Please do not mention to anyone how much my royalty was.

Cavendish, P.E.I.,  
Thursday Evening,  
Sept. 2, 1909.

My dear Mr. Weber:—

I have been waiting for weeks in the vain hope of getting enough time to write you a decent letter “at one fell swoop,” and not simply by fits and starts—five minutes now and ten minutes later on, as most of my letters have been written this summer. We have had a houseful of company and I’ve been *so* busy!

This is a good evening for letter writing, insomuch as it is pouring rain, and therefore I am not likely to be interrupted by callers. But I have a cold and headache and so am not exactly in the mood for writing. But I must not delay any longer, for I want to acknowledge your photo which came a few days ago and I was vastly pleased to get. I cannot, of course, judge if it is “true to life” but it looks as if it ought to be. Thank you very much for it. I have one to send you in return, but I shall not forward it until I am sure your present address will “stay put” long enough for you to get it, or it may go astray. When you receive this letter drop me a postal with your permanent address and I’ll forward the photo “immediately and to order.” My friends like it. They say it is very like me in the face but my figure looks much too stout in it. I’m really very slight.

Well, I’ve been very busy all summer and yet I’ve accomplished *nothing*. A satisfactory epitome of a summer, is it not? Our guests left last week, however, and now I mean to settle down, if possible, to a good autumn’s work. I’ve begun work at a new book, with a new heroine. It’s to be called *The Story Girl* and I have the *first sentence* and the last paragraph written!

The new Anne book is out—I got my copies day before yesterday. We soon get used to things. I was quite wild with excitement last year on the day my first book came. But I took this one very coolly and it caused merely a momentary ripple on the day’s surface. Its “get-up” is very similar to the first. You’re to get a copy. I ordered it sent to you direct from the publishers to “Calgary, Alberta,” so be on the look-out for it if you move on. I enclose an autograph card which you can paste on [the] fly-leaf if you wish.

I am glad they did not illustrate this book, except for the frontispiece. I did not like the illustrations in the first one. The painting of Anne Shirley will do. It isn’t “my”

Anne, but doesn't glaringly violate what she might be.

Now for your letter:—

So you attended a meeting of the World's Congress of Women! Do you know, I was actually asked to read a paper before that august assemblage in Toronto. I had no difficulty in refusing to do that; but I should have liked to attend the congress, if I could have got away. It would be a very broadening experience, I fancy.

As for the woman suffrage question, I feel very little interest in it. But I *do* believe that a woman with property of her own should have a voice in making the laws. Am I not as intelligent and capable of voting for my country's good as the Frenchman who chops my wood for me, and who may be able to tell his right hand from his left, but cannot read or write?

So you wish "married women everywhere were real companions to their husbands." So do I—as heartily as I wish that married men everywhere were real companions for their wives. You can't, as Emerson says, cut this matter off with only one side. It has to have two. As for "spheres," I believe anyone's sphere—whether man or woman—is where they can be happiest and do the best work. The majority of women are happiest and best placed at home, just as the majority of men are in the world. But there are exceptions to *both*. Some women are born for a public career, just as some men are *born to cook in a restaurant*. Yes, they are! And each has a right to fulfil the purpose of their birth. Sex seems to me to enter very little into the question. There is no sex in mind, I do believe, and—"let each one find his own," and her own, in business as well as matrimony.

Have you heard from Miriam lately? Does she ever mention me? Does she know about my books? Poor Miriam, I was reading over some of her hectic epistles the other day and enjoyed them as curious character studies. What sort of a husband has she got if he can't keep her decently.

Yes, I advise you to specialize on English and languages as soon as you can. This is the age of specialization and I believe you could do excellent work along that line (I see the *Bookman* has tabooed the expression "along that line"—consigned it to its "inferno," but it's too too convenient to give up), and would probably enjoy teaching it. I do not think you need give up "following the gleam" because you are going back to teaching again. Thank God, we can always follow the gleam, no matter what we do. I've tried to follow it for many a weary year—*how* weary, no one knows but myself, for I've always tried to keep my personal worries and crosses to myself, not allowing their bitterness to overflow into others' lives. But I've reached a bit of upland now and, looking back over the ascent, some things are made clear to me that have long puzzled me. But there's lots of climbing to do yet. I must take a long

breath and start anew. If I can only write my new book up to my conception of it, it will be away ahead of *Anne* from a literary point of view. But I know I shan't be able to—

Did ever on painter's canvas live  
The power of his fancy's dream?

Still, I'll do my best and it will surely be a step in advance. Do you likewise take heart of grace and "follow knowledge like a sinking star" to the utmost bound of your endeavour. You know what Keats says—

He ne'er is crowned  
With immortality who fears to follow  
Where airy voices lead.

Follow your "airy voices" fearlessly and they'll lead you to the heights.

The only thing I've written since May is a series of four articles on the words in the four seasons. I put a good deal of blood into them but don't know whether they're worth while after all. I don't know either just what magazine they'll do for. I enjoyed writing them so perhaps people will enjoy reading them. It's a fairly good test.

I've done a lot of "gadding" this summer, and it was really a horrible waste of time because there was no pleasure in it. Had there been, I'd have considered it a very wise use of time. I had to go out to tea and attend garden parties galore and I was generally bored to death, especially when people thought themselves bound to say something about my book. They all say practically the same thing and I say the same thing in reply and I'm tired of it. Then I talked gossip and made poor jokes and altogether wished I were home in my den with a book or a pen. Not that I don't enjoy *real* conversation. There is nothing I enjoy more. But it's not once in a thousand times I get it and anything else is like brown sugar in the god's nectar. "For every idle word ye speak ye shall give account in the day of judgment." May the Lord have mercy on my soul! I have talked idle words by the *million* this summer.

By the way, what a vital thought that is—like so many other thoughts in that wonderful old Bible. "*Idle* words." Not bad words, or bitter words, or wicked words! They have some strength and purpose and vitality in them that *almost* justifies them. But *idle* words,—words that desecrate the sacredness of language meant to convey heart and soul's deepest meaning to heart and soul, debased coin of speech that discredits the image and superscription of the godhead inscribed on it; weak words, silly words, *empty* words, "sounding brass and tinkling cymbals"—

yea, verily, 'tis of these we must give account, and who of us have not so sinned?

By the way, I had a good laugh today over a card that came to me addressed to "Miss Anne Shirley, care of Miss Marilla Cuthbert, Avonlea, Prince Edward Island, Canada, *Ontario*." In the correspondence space was written "Dear Anne, I am sending you a picture of the floral clock in our park at Detroit, Michigan, from a friend." No name was signed to it. The writing was very unformed so I presume it is from some kiddy who fondly imagines that all the people in books live "really and truly" somewhere. A p.o. clerk in town had written across it, "Try Miss Montgomery, Cavendish," so it reached me.

I think it was since I wrote you that I received a copy of the London *Spectator* reviewing Anne. It honoured me with a two column review and was exceedingly kind and flattering. I *did* feel flattered. The *Spectator* is supposed to be "the" review of England and praise or blame from it makes or mars. It wound up by solemnly warning me *not* to make a sequel so when it sees I've disregarded its advice I expect it will justify my warning by "slating" my new book. But I'd rather be *abused* by the *Spectator* than ignored,—or even *praised* by many inferior sheets. I can't really believe that my little yarn, written with an eye single to Sunday School scholars, should really have been taken notice of by the *Spectator*.

What are you doing in Calgary? Teaching? A cousin of mine, Laura McIntyre, has just gone to Calgary as a bride—Mrs. Ralph Aylesworth. If you come across her tell her to be good to you for my sake!

This new sheet is simply to say good-bye on. Write when the spirit moves. I'm always glad to hear from you, even if I am slow in answering. That isn't my fault but my misfortune.

Yours faithfully,  
L. M. Montgomery.



## TRANSCRIBER NOTES

Mis-spelled words and printer errors have been fixed.

Inconsistency in hyphenation has been retained.

[The end of *The Green Gables Letters from L.M. Montgomery to Ephraim Weber 1905-1909* by L. M. (Lucy Maud) Montgomery]