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This is the **Accepted Version** of a paper published in the  
British Journal of Canadian Studies:

Galletly, Sarah (2015) *L.M. Montgomery and Canadian  
mass-market magazines*. British Journal of Canadian  
Studies, 28 (2). pp. 145-165.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.3828/bjcs.2015.10>

## L.M. Montgomery and Canadian Mass-Market Magazines

### Abstract:

Despite L.M. Montgomery's voluminous presence in the North American periodical marketplace throughout her literary career, critical studies of Montgomery largely remain focused on her novels and journals. This article examines Montgomery's short fiction and feature submissions to the Canadian mass-market magazines *Chatelaine* and the *Canadian Home Journal*. It analyses the editorial commentary, page layout, and illustrations that appeared alongside the text of the stories themselves, to examine the way that Montgomery's work was framed and presented on the pages of periodicals. Through close analysis of a few of Montgomery's non-fiction contributions to *Chatelaine* it also explores the ways in which she shaped and controlled her public status as a 'celebrity' author late in her career. This article thus hopes to build towards a wider understanding of Montgomery's literary outputs and her successful navigation of the Canadian literary marketplace.

**Keywords:** Periodicals, Print Culture, Canadian Literature, Literary Celebrity, L.M. Montgomery

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L.M. (Lucy Maud) Montgomery (1874-1942) is best remembered today for her novel *Anne of Green Gables* (1908) and its many sequels. However, in the decade preceding this novel's publication, Montgomery achieved tremendous success in the field of periodical short fiction, publishing more than 300 stories. These early submissions were largely to Sunday school publications and rural papers, but through her persistence she soon found her work gaining entry to magazines of greater cultural and literary prominence. She continued writing such material until the late 1930s, alongside the publication of two books every three years. Nevertheless, despite Montgomery's conspicuous – and voluminous – presence in this literary market, critical studies of Montgomery remain focused on her novels and journals, ignoring the issues of cultural hierarchy and authorial prestige which emerge in different forms when her periodical short fiction is also taken into account.<sup>1</sup>

Building upon the work of the late Rea Wilmschurst who edited several collections of Montgomery's short stories for McClelland & Stewart in the 1980s and '90s,<sup>2</sup> and compiled an invaluable bibliography of Montgomery's periodical outputs,<sup>3</sup> I have already uncovered previously undocumented materials Montgomery submitted to mass-market publications.<sup>4</sup> This research is part of a larger project which aims to build towards a wider understanding of Montgomery's writing process through an exploration of the periodical origins of many of her short stories (and even some of her novels). Its periodical emphasis will draw attention to Montgomery's status as a 'canny businesswoman' (Gerson 1999: 51) through her successful transnational navigation of the North American literary marketplace. Although this article focuses on material Montgomery produced after the success of the *Anne* series, the larger project intends to draw attention to many of the materials she produced before 1908 as 'Montgomery's fame narrative [has] obscured the years of patient toil that allowed her to win her world wide audience' (York 2007: 79). However, this article will examine Montgomery's submissions (both fiction and non-fiction) to the Canadian mass-market mainstream

magazines *Chatelaine* and *Canadian Home Journal*, in order to explore not only her positioning within Canada's emerging periodical marketplace, but also the role her increasing fame played in her promotion and placement within these magazines. It will also endeavour to uncover her response to the changing tastes of a North American readership increasingly influenced by the political upheavals and gradually relaxing social mores of the early twentieth century.

Recent work by Faye Hammill, Michelle Smith and Hannah McGregor has drawn attention to mainstream magazines' value as a scholarly resource and how by 'examining authorial identity, textual complexity, and print cultural contexts, we [can] show how middlebrow magazines are a vibrant means of understanding middle-class culture's anxieties and aspirations' (McGregor and Smith 2014: 67). Drawing upon this research, my primary approach is derived from current directions in periodical studies which focus on studying magazines as texts in themselves, albeit multi-authored collage texts. In 'The Rise of Periodical Studies,' Sean Latham and Robert Scholes signal the dangers of seeing magazines 'merely as containers of discrete bits of information rather than autonomous objects of study' (2016: 517-18). My analysis of Montgomery's contributions to these mainstream magazines will place her stories and features in conversation with surrounding material on the page, such as adjacent advertisements and features, as well as exploring the function which 'relay texts' (McCracken 1993: 46) such as cover-page copy and editorials played in signalling and sending readers to specific Montgomery-related content within the issue (or even occasionally across issues). Potentially, this mode of reading will also enable me to gauge her complicity (whether consciously or not) with the larger, distinctly nationalist rhetoric of these magazines, and with their often conservative discourses of femininity. Montgomery was presented in rather conflicted terms by editors, as both a 'Canadian' author and a literary 'celebrity', but also as a wife, a mother and, very occasionally, as a minister's wife.

In *Decoding Women's Magazines* (1993), Ellen McCracken emphatically urges that women's magazines be understood as both 'business enterprises and cultural texts' (p. 3). Indeed, in a study of the most successful women's magazine of this era – *The Ladies Home Journal* – Jennifer Scanlon argues that the most significant change that the magazine underwent in the first decades of the twentieth century was in its definition of 'service' materials which 'increasingly focused on the training of skilled but ready consumers. The "home" in the magazine's title was increasingly defined as a site of consumption, with a woman consumer front and centre' (1995: 7). Richard Ohmann has commented on the growing visual appeal of advertisements during the early twentieth century and the marked increase in the ratio of picture to printed text in mainstream magazines as advertising 'texts themselves took on an artistic appearance [with] more blank space, larger type, and varied fonts highlight[ing] the physical appearance of words, in counterpoint to their discursive meanings' (1996: 180). This increased visual appeal aimed to draw the reader's eye from the article or fiction piece which first brought them to the page and emphasises the prioritising of magazine audiences' identities across this era as being composed of potential consumers rather than readers.

However, even with this increasingly consumer-driven emphasis, Ohmann has argued that the fiction presented in the pages of mainstream magazines 'stood in candidacy for admission to the category of literature' (p. 296). He continues: 'to offer readers the unfettered "best" fiction was to address them as culturally advanced individuals. More concretely, it was to imply that through consumption of a 10-cent magazine they could enter into much the same discourse of and about literature as had previously been monopolised by the elite monthlies' (p. 297). This construction of a community of readers with shared tastes and knowledge therefore reinforces these mainstream magazines' ability to provide their readers with only the 'best' and most culturally relevant materials. Montgomery's 'relevance' is thus

conveyed to her readers through her 'celebrity' status as an author already 'well-known to *Journal* readers' (*Canadian Home Journal* 1929: 84), or whose history and accomplishments 'most of us know' (*Chatelaine* 1930: 84).

In *Literary Celebrity in Canada* (2007), Lorraine York argues that Montgomery 'developed a strategic and remarkably intelligent negotiation with the celebrity processes that surrounded and, in part, tried to define her' (p. 76). This emerging form of 'literary celebrity' was largely influenced by the 'new models of fame emerging from Hollywood' which ensured that '[l]iterary celebrity was increasingly predicated on forms of public performance' (Hammill 2007: 2). Indeed, Benjamin Lefebvre's recent *The L.M. Montgomery Reader Volume 1: A Life in Print* (2013) argues Montgomery was a figure 'in total control' of her public persona 'as a rising celebrity author, as a minister's wife, as a reluctant feminist, as an established authority in Canada and beyond' (2013a: 5). Similarly, Holly E. Pike has argued that Montgomery's 'willingness to share information about herself shows that she had accepted and actively shaped her role as a celebrity' (2002: 246). Whilst this article will actively explore the ways in which Montgomery shaped and 'controlled' her public status as a celebrity author, particularly in articles she contributed to *Chatelaine* late in her career, it will also remain cognisant of the complications Montgomery faced when juggling her dual public and private roles.

*Chatelaine* (1928-) was launched in March 1928 by the Maclean Publishing Company (originally founded by John Bayne Maclean), to build upon the success of the company's existing titles *Maclean's* (1911-), *Canadian Homes and Gardens* (1924-62), and high-society magazine *Mayfair* (1927-1959). Until March 1932, the magazine was called *The Chatelaine*, its name having been selected in 1928 from submissions made by potential readers, for a prize of \$1000. Hammill and Smith have argued that this competition 'generated a feeling that the magazine would belong to Canadian women, with its contents determined by the

expressed interests of its readers. At the same time, the publicity surrounding the competition—which attracted 75,000 entries—was already creating an audience’ (2015: 59). *Chatelaine*’s first editor was Anne Elizabeth Wilson, a prolific contributor to *Maclean*’s, who lasted only eighteen months, but her successor, Byrne Hope Sanders, held the post for twenty-three years and helped define the tone and style that ensured *Chatelaine* remained distinctive in a marketplace already saturated with American women’s magazines. McGregor and Smith have argued that *Chatelaine*’s appearance in 1928 served as an ‘unabashed attempt to tap into the expanding market of female readers who belonged to Canada’s emerging urban middle class—or who aspired to be a part of it’ (2014: 69). Thus, the aspirational and culturally informative nature of *Chatelaine*, along with its nationalist agenda, allowed it to flourish, and the magazine still exists today (albeit in a form which has changed dramatically over time).

The *Canadian Home Journal* (1905-58) was originally published as *The Home Journal* by The Home Publishing Company, beginning with only 22 pages and the motto ‘Pro Domo et Patria’ (For Home and Country). It was briefly purchased by James Acton in 1906 before being acquired by the magazine’s advertising manager, Bill Rooke, who added ‘Canadian’ to the magazine’s title in June 1910 (Hammill and Smith 2015: 44; Sutherland 1989). After ten years under the ownership of Harold Gagnier (1912-22), Miller McKnight took over the company transitioning H. Gagnier Ltd into Consolidated Press Ltd, with whom the *Journal* was published for the rest of its print run (Hammill and Smith 2015: 44-5). The *Journal* was ultimately absorbed into *Chatelaine* (whose circulation numbers benefited greatly from the addition of the *Journal*’s subscription lists) when its holdings were sold to the Maclean Publishing Company in 1958. The *Journal* was edited by Jean Graham from its inception until 1930, Graham then being succeeded by Catherine Wilma Tait who took on the editorship until the 1940s. Montgomery herself publicly endorsed the *Canadian Home*

*Journal* in the early 1920s,<sup>5</sup> calling it ‘a capital magazine’ in an article titled ‘Prominent Canadian Women Commend Canadian Home Journal’ (n.d. ‘Prominent’: 163). Montgomery is quoted as claiming that the *Journal*

is growing better all the time. It is quite equal to the best of the household magazines published in any country to-day, and I wish every home-maker in Canada could have it regularly. I like your editorial pages especially. They always seem to touch on some vital problem of Canadian womanhood, and to present stimulating views from refreshing angles. A good clean, helpful and – last but decidedly not least – most interesting magazine, this of yours. (ibid.)

This article will now turn to Montgomery’s own contributions to this ‘capital magazine’ (ibid.).

One of Montgomery’s earliest appearances in the *Canadian Home Journal* was in August 1918 with the story ‘Our Neighbors at the Tansy Patch.’<sup>6</sup> At this time, the *Journal* would promote forthcoming content in the preceding issue, presumably to try and draw occasional readers of the magazine to purchase the next issue. Thus, the ‘Announcement and Contents’ page of the July 1918 issue proudly announces that

From the time that little “Anne of Green Gables” came skipping into the hearts of Canadian readers, L. M. Montgomery’s stories have been eagerly sought. Something new from her pen is a treat, indeed, and her story,

OUR NEIGHBORS AT THE TANSY PATCH,

which will be published complete in one instalment in the August number, will be no exception. After you have read this exceedingly delightful sketch of rural country life you will feel you know the Conways – Timothy, Benjamin, better known as T.B., Joe, Aunt Lily, but most of all Granny—“every-one of them,” as Salome expressed it, “crazier than the others.”



Crazy they may have been, but very human and interesting when pictured by L. M. Montgomery. (p. 3)

Here, casual readers are being reassured that the story will be ‘complete in one instalment’ and thus they are guaranteed to be able to read the whole tale for the small cost of another issue. Indeed, the actual content of the story is considered of secondary importance to the readers’ chance to read anything ‘new’ from the pen of such an ‘eagerly sought’ author.

Positioned prominently as the first non-editorial feature of the August issue, the first page of the story features a large black and white illustration by E.J. Dinsmore, opposite a heavily illustrated full-page advertisement for Woodbury’s Facial Cream and Facial Powder. The story continues onto three more pages in the issue, the columns of Montgomery’s text surrounded by advertisements for household essentials such as Fairy Soap, Neōlin Soles, Knox Sparkling Gelatine, and B&B Adhesive Plaster Tape. The story itself is decidedly light-hearted, providing observational comedy through a well-to-do family’s scrutiny of their ‘crazy’ neighbours across the Tansy Patch, the mistress’s maid-of-all-work Salome providing the most scathing criticisms of their activities. However, through the course of the story, even the stony-hearted Salome is perceived to grow fond of the Conway family, remarking at the close of the story that ‘[w]hen all is said and done, ma’am ... them lunatics were interesting’ (Montgomery 1918: 39).

The light-hearted tone of this tale can still be found in Montgomery’s first fiction contribution from the 1930s to the *Journal*. By March of 1930, Montgomery has risen to the status of a ‘great Canadian author’ in the magazine’s contents page editorial (*Canadian Home Journal* 1930: 100), her story ‘A House Divided Against Itself’ still appearing as the first feature in the issue, this time opposite a full page advert for Fels-Naptha Soap. However, by this time Montgomery’s story is accompanied by two colour illustrations by R.W. Major,

with one illustration crossing two pages, ensuring Montgomery's story takes up three whole pages at the beginning of this issue, with hardly any advertising matter present. To balance this, the story concludes at the back of the issue and these pages are surrounded by adverts for Coleman Appliances, Paris Paté, B.O.T. Blanco toilet seats, Tycos Fever Thermometer, and Berry Brothers varnishes and finishes to name just a few.

The story itself explores the relationship of two elderly brothers living together and a question of pride and stubbornness that arises when one brother, Little George, brings home a statue of Aurora, the goddess of dawn, whom the other brother, Big George, finds idolatrous and obscene due to its apparent nakedness. They are eventually reconciled when Big George accidentally traps himself in a rock formation out on the beach and is found by Little George. By swallowing his pride and asking for help Big George is able to be reconciled with his brother, and the pair are able to live together again. The story ends with a rather racist joke, Montgomery drawing again on the prejudices of Big George, who announces upon seeing that his brother has painted the statue bronze to 'cover it up' that 'you can scrape it off again ... If I've gotter be looking at a naked woman day in and day out I want a white one for decency's sake!' (Montgomery 1930: 72). Montgomery herself was clearly fond of this morality tale, explaining in her correspondence of 1930 to Ephraim Weber her plans to turn the story into a 'sort of sideshow' in her forthcoming novel, *A Tangled Web* (Montgomery, in Tiessen and Tiessen 2006: 180).

In the summer of 1925, Montgomery wrote a series of stories for the *Delineator* which ran the following year month to month, relating to her regular correspondent Weber that these 'stories centre about a new little heroine "Marigold" and as she seems to be "taking" I think I'll write a book about her. For these four, 5000 word stories the *Delineator* paid me four hundred dollars apiece - \$1600 in all. I wrote dozens as good twenty years ago and was glad to get \$30 a piece for them!' (ibid.: 135).<sup>7</sup> However, the following year she

writes again to Weber in a letter dated 16 November, 1927, to describe a ‘nasty’ experience with the *Delineator*, relating how she was asked to write four more ‘Marigold’ stories by the then-editor of the periodical due to the success of the earlier instalments. She relates how ‘I was very busy and felt I could hardly take the time but the *advertising* value of being in the *Delineator* is great so I sat up o’ nights and wrote the new series’ (ibid: 154; emphasis in original). She claims he was ‘delighted’ with the stories, praising one as ‘the best story of its class he had ever read.’ However, following an editorial upheaval, the new editor swiftly informs her that ‘the new policy of the *Delineator* was to use only “highly sophisticated fiction” and consequently my stories could not be used!!’ (ibid). She explains to Weber that her frustration is not financial (she had been paid on submission of the stories), but that

I think I have been badly used and I told him so plainly. It was not for the money I had written the stories but, as afore said; for the advertising value. It is my first experience of the kind and I am sore about it. But there is nothing to do about it. I am in a rather embarrassing situation for I told my friends that the stories would be in the *Delineator* this winter and now I have to confess the humiliating truth or lie under the imputation of a foolish lie. (ibid.)

This incident is significant for the insight it give us, not only into the periodical origins of Montgomery’s novel *Magic for Marigold* (1929), but also into the potentially decreasing demand for Montgomery’s fiction, this new editor clearly choosing to value his need for ‘highly sophisticated fiction’ over the sales boost that a new series of stories by a highly popular ‘celebrity’ author such as Montgomery would doubtless have provided the publication. Given this rejection, I would argue that the Marigold stories that appeared in both *Canadian Home Journal* and *Chatelaine* in 1928 and 1929 may well have had their origins in these earlier stories originally intended for the *Delineator*.

Notably, these Marigold stories (‘One of Us,’ published in *Canadian Home Journal* in February 1928; ‘The Punishment of Billy,’ issued in *Canadian Home Journal* in February

1929; and 'It' appearing in *Chatelaine* April 1929), all focus on visits Marigold makes to locations outside of her home locale of Cloud of Pines, these visits to friends or family providing discrete incidents where she makes new acquaintances or encounters new perspectives, thus allowing Montgomery to frame and market them to magazine editors as individual stories rather than as part of a larger novel or story collection. Montgomery's first Marigold contribution to the *Journal* 'One of Us' is accompanied by the teaser '[a]n Idyll of Childhood in which three little girls play "Saint" and exude piety. Brimming over with enjoyment, it carries a lesson for all' (Montgomery 1928: 8). The story focuses on Marigold's fascination with Paula Pengelly, a girl of obsessive piety who is ultimately revealed to be a fraud, her apparent abstemiousness undermined when Marigold sees her stealing (and then consuming) an entire cake in complete contradiction to her earlier calls for restraint and self-denial with regard to food and one's general behaviour. By the time of the second Marigold story's appearance, editorial commentary was becoming more commonplace in the *Journal* and Montgomery's contribution is clearly signposted: '[a]nother writer famous for her Maritime stories, contributes this month, and one well-known to "*Journal*" readers, *L. M. Montgomery*. In her story "*The Punishment of Billy*," a story for old and young alike, as all *L. M. Montgomery* stories are, you won't be the least bit disappointed in what happened to this mischievous young nephew' (*Canadian Home Journal* 1929: 84, emphasis in original). In this brief tale, the young Billy is 'punished' by his severely-strict Aunt Min for skipping church and for encouraging Marigold to join him in his bad behaviour by being sent to live with his more warm-hearted Aunt Nora (a fate he has always secretly desired). Billy's character is redeemed in this tale through his willingness to own up to his deception when he realises his lies might impact others, something Marigold is seen to greatly admire about him.

In their comparisons of Canadian middlebrow magazines Hammill and Smith have argued that the *Journal* 'evinced an attitude of authority over its readers,' taking a more

religious and family-oriented perspective than *Chatelaine*, since ‘the *Journal* was much more likely to publish articles written by ministers, and to refer to religious authorities, or directly to the Bible, when it came to questions of child-rearing, marriage, and community’ (2015: 44). ‘One of Us’ and ‘The Punishment of Billy’ both first appear as two-page spreads surrounded by several black and white illustrations to help increase the visual appeal of the stories. This editorial decision was presumably designed to encourage readers to share these stories with their own children, the texts themselves enabling discussion of the moral and religious implications of Marigold’s friends’ actions. It should also be noted that Montgomery’s presence was signposted on the cover of both issues in a list of authors found along the bottom of the cover page; her name clearly designed to draw in potential readers and encourage non-subscribers to purchase the *Journal*.

The Marigold story published in *The Chatelaine* – ‘It’ – focuses once again on pride: the tagline for the story reads ‘[a]nd its effect on the pride of the Lesleys’ (Montgomery 1929b: 21). ‘It’ is featured quite late in the issue’s front matter, more than twenty pages in, though this may have been due to the story’s focus on a misunderstanding surrounding potential head lice Marigold may have contracted, a topic some readers may have reacted to as squeamishly as Marigold’s aunts in the story do. Montgomery herself clearly found such fussiness unnecessary, the story being designed to encourage the reader to agree with Marigold (who has worried that she has contracted a disease due to her aunts’ overreactions): ‘[p]shaw, is that all? ... I guess I got It when I changed hats with that new girl day before yesterday’ (p. 58). Although it might seem unusual for Montgomery to tackle such an issue given her fiction’s regular association with narratives of wholesomeness and moral ‘cleanliness’,<sup>8</sup> I would argue that by ensuring the reader is on the side of Marigold rather than her Aunts, we are reassured that her heroine’s reactions reflect an admirable lack of

vanity rather than her predicament serving as an indicator of any moral degradation or neglect.

'It' first appears opposite a full page advertisement for 'A House of Simple English Type' offered by Molesworth, West & Secord, Registered Architects. The placement of this advert next to Montgomery's story was likely deliberate given that one of the main features of the house mentioned are its 'Quaint Gables,' clearly designed to appeal to readers of Montgomery's fiction who might have fantasised about living in a gabled house much like her heroine Anne's. Also of note is the placement of the story's continuing pages next to the conclusions of articles on 'The Personal Note in Easter Eggs' and 'The Harlequin Flowers,' the positioning of this material clearly designed to draw readers back in to the magazine to read the surrounding material given their appreciation for Montgomery's gentle tale of childhood innocence. Given this story's focus on childhood it is also perhaps unsurprising that the continuing pages also feature an advert for The Young Canada Boosters' Club, alongside advertisements for Vicks, Lysol, and Woolnough Corsetiers.

Both of the *Journal's* Marigold tales were heavily illustrated and presented in double-page spreads, the shortness of these stories limiting their surrounding advertisements to one page at the back of both issues. While 'One of Us' concludes surrounded by expected advertisements for Keen's Mustard ('For Dishes on your luncheon menu!') and Chase & Sandborn's Seal Brand Coffee ('The King of Coffees'), 'The Punishment of Billy' (1929a) closes almost inundated with surrounding advertising material. The high proportion of haberdashery materials on this page (Celanese Fabrics, Priscilla Bias Fold Tape, the Hemstitcher Co.) can be explained by its appearance between full page adverts for Butterick dress patterns showcasing 'The Verve That Means Smartness' and 'In Street and Sport Ensembles' (p.76) and 'Chic for Those Young and Even Younger' (p. 78). Significantly, although both stories advertisements appear to share a common emphasis on household

goods, only the 'Billy' story appears surrounded by more aspirational, beauty products such as Mary T. Goldman's Hair Color Restorer and Princess Skin Food, perhaps suggesting that the *Journal* preferred to focus on advertising more practical, domestic products around Montgomery's more child-centric fiction.

In contrast with these earlier submissions, Montgomery's stories in the *Journal* in the 1930s are largely aimed at a more adult audience. Although 'Tomorrow Comes' (1934b) features a child protagonist, her innocent perspective is utilised to emphasise the folly of her parents' decision to allow other family members to keep them apart, thus depriving the child of a traditional, more nurturing upbringing. 'The Mirror' (1931a) offers a rare example of Montgomery's utilisation of supernatural tropes in her short stories, the protagonist Hilary learning the truth about her intended husband from a mirror she has avoided since childhood due to its ability to reveal things to members of her family.

'The Mirror,' described as '[a] story of life, love and death' (Montgomery *ibid*: 8), featured as a double-spread in the February issue of the *Journal* and was accompanied by a large, decorative cross-page black and white illustration as well as a corner-page illustration of Hilary looking into the mirror itself. Later pages of the story were displayed opposite the *Journal*'s 'Health and the Home' full-page feature by 'M.D.' (p. 79) and Eleanor Dare's advice page 'You Were Asking?' (p. 80). These were both popular features in the *Journal* that may have led readers back to the start of the issue to read Montgomery's story in its entirety. The story's continuation was thus surrounded by adverts for Campana's Italian Balm, Bovril, Laco Mazda Lamps and Absorbine Jr., to maximise the potential advertising value of these pages given their higher level of re-readability. A similar tactic can be seen with Montgomery's story 'The Road to Yesterday' (1934a) which was later reprinted in a short story collection of the same name. Here, the first three pages of the story are heavily illustrated (this time in colour), with the story's resolution appearing alongside features on

‘Beautiful Bermuda’ (p. 30), a full page advert for Cream of Wheat (p. 31), and a feature on how to ‘Use your Christmas Money’ (p. 49), complete with a large advert for the King Edward Hotel (‘Where they all go in Toronto’). The placement of such advertisements is significant as advertisers would likely have viewed placement alongside a story by an author as well known as Montgomery as an accomplishment, with hopes of boosting their own sales through tangential association with Montgomery’s own prestige, or in the case of more household based products, perhaps her aforementioned reputation for wholesomeness and cleanliness.

By the time of *The Chatelaine*’s launch in the March of 1928, Montgomery had already been established as a literary celebrity and regular contributor to the popular periodical press of the era, though the presence of her stories in more up-market magazines was still rather rare.<sup>9</sup> However, given the ability her name alone held to help boost magazine sales, it is unsurprising that Montgomery featured three times in *Chatelaine*’s first volume alone: firstly in a two-issue in-depth biographical feature (May and June), and again for a short fiction contribution titled ‘A Dinner of Herbs’ (October). The two-issue feature on Montgomery was titled ‘The Best Known Woman in Prince Edward Island’ and authored by Maude Petitt Hill, a regular contributor to mainstream Canadian magazines throughout the early twentieth century. Although these articles offer very little fresh insight into Montgomery from a biographical standpoint (almost all of the material and quotations are taken from Montgomery’s earlier biographical essay ‘The Alpine Path’ which first appeared in *Everywoman’s World* in 1917),<sup>10</sup> it nevertheless offers great insight into the magazine’s attempts to construct its intended readership and set markers of literary taste and merit in these early stages of *Chatelaine*’s development.

The first instalment of this feature appeared as a double-page spread featured early in the magazine’s front-matter before any of the issue’s fiction contributions, yet notably after a



piece by Judge Emily Murphy on ‘Companionate Marriage’ (the only feature mentioned on the issue’s cover). The opening pages of Petitt’s article are surrounded with photographs of ‘Little Maude [sic] Montgomery’ and idyllic Prince Edward Island (PEI) scenery. Even the article’s continuation at the back of the magazine is accompanied by a photograph of the ‘[t]he gabled house where L. M. Montgomery lived as a little girl – undoubtedly one of her inspirations for “Anne of Green Gables”’ (Petitt Hill 1928a: 65). The assured nature of these captions is intriguing, especially given this article signals that no actual interaction with the author was obtained prior to its publication. Indeed, Petitt Hill opens her article by admitting that whilst on holiday in PEI with her family, she misses an opportunity to meet Montgomery face to face and hear her talk at a local church (Montgomery herself was based in Norval, Ontario, and made very few visits back to PEI late in her career) due to bad weather preventing cross-island travel. Instead, Petitt Hill is forced to rely on interviews with a group of women who all claim to have grown up with Montgomery, one interviewee referred to only as ‘another woman’ commenting ‘[w]ell, she was never like other people ... Her mind was always different from the rest of us. It’s possible that even in her babyhood she would be able to take in impressions that we could not’ (p. 8).

These interviews are followed by a detailed history of Montgomery’s family heritage, Petitt’s commentary on Montgomery’s childhood focusing extensively on the idyllic qualities of PEI and the sheltered nature of her upbringing. Such material is presumably designed to heighten the romantic qualities of her stories and reinforce their ‘authenticity’ by reminding readers of Montgomery’s own childhood experiences and extended time spent on the Island caring for her grandmother. As Petitt Hill outlines,

It was not a life that would lure most girls in the early twenties who had tasted a little of the world, that quiet life in her grandmother’s home. But it was her duty, and she was Scotch! So there for thirteen years she stayed, with the exception of one-year spent as a proof reader for

the *Halifax Daily Echo*. That year, no doubt, gave her valuable and helpful experience, but we believe it was those silent twelve years that gave us her books. (p. 65)

Here Petitt Hill clearly draws a line between the modern girl of the day whom the readers themselves would be familiar with and Montgomery's own girlhood which is heavily tinged with a romantic sense of nostalgia for a simpler time, as well as for a time when there was a clearer sense of feminine duty (in Petitt Hill's view at least).

Intriguingly, the subject of the feature shifts from 'L. M. Montgomery' to 'Mrs. Ewan Macdonald' in the second instalment of Petitt Hill's article, as its focus turns to the publication of *Anne of Green Gables*, Montgomery's marriage and the birth of her children. Petitt Hill's voice in the text also becomes more prominent as she gradually moves away from repeating existing biographical material on Montgomery towards offering her own opinions on Montgomery's literary contributions throughout her career. Indeed, Petitt Hill's comments on the *Emily* trilogy are surprisingly critical. She argues that this series is 'less popular' than the *Anne* series, due to Montgomery's decision to make her heroine an aspiring author:

By reason of the fact that Emily has, in her later books, *Emily Climbs* and *Emily's Quest*, developed into a writer, she is perhaps less popular than if she had followed an ordinary walk in life. One of the rest of us might picture herself filling it, then! For after all a story about a writer doesn't appeal to such a large class as one about a fisherman's wife or a farmer's daughter. (1928b: 41)

Here, Petitt appears to be again distancing the readership of *Chatelaine* ('the rest of us') from Montgomery, although this time it is not their 'modern' values and experiences that contrast with her own, but rather their 'ordinariness' when compared to an autobiographical heroine

whose journey mirrors Montgomery's own rise to literary fame that sets her apart from her readers.

Although all of Montgomery's contributions to the *Canadian Home Journal* were short stories, she contributed a series of essays to *Chatelaine* in the 1930s where she offered her opinions on subjects as varied as the 'problem' of the 'teen-age girl,' the role of the minister's wife (from the 'insider' perspective of the wife herself), and her views of the two film adaptations of *Anne of Green Gables*. As early as 1917, Montgomery had commented to Weber in their correspondence that she had 'written a good many articles for Canadian magazines – more to help them out a bit than because of any profit there was in it, considering the value of my time to me' (25 November, 1917; Tiessen and Tiessen 2006: 67). Given the pressures on her time, it is perhaps surprising that Montgomery contributed so many articles to *Chatelaine* in the 1930s, though doubtless given the almost-instant success that *Chatelaine* achieved, these articles were likely contributed more for their 'advertising value' to Montgomery herself, rather than 'to help them out.' It is also worth remembering that by the 1930s, mass-market magazine titles were all capitalised by advertising revenue and therefore would have been in a position to pay authors considerably more than any Canadian title could have done in 1917.

In *Authors and Audiences* (2000), Clarence Karr outlines how '[f]or Montgomery, the domestic and the professional were separate spheres. The children learned quickly not to intrude when she was writing. She never carried her professional life into the parish work or relationships' (20). A rare exception to this can be seen in Montgomery's contribution to the October issue of *Chatelaine* in 1931, 'An Open Letter from a Minister's Wife.' Sanders' editorial for the issue draws attention to Montgomery's contribution, positioning it as the first in a series of articles addressing issues surrounding women and the church:

How many ministers' wives will warm to L. M. Montgomery's open letter in this issue? Mrs. MacDonald, as this far-famed writer is known in private life, is mistress of the Manse, in Norval, Ontario, and through many years of service in Canada knows whereof she speaks. Nellie McClung from the West is going to present in an early issue<sup>11</sup> the opposite viewpoint – that of the women of the congregation. Interesting articles, don't you think? (1931: 84)

Here, Sanders is clearly trying to polarise the opinions of these two women, known to readers for their status as popular authors of the era, reassuring the readers that they will receive a 'balanced' view of the figure of the minister's wife by obtaining an 'insider' perspective as well as that of an 'outsider.' Both authors' novels were largely lauded for the 'cleanliness' and moral uprightness of their fiction, which must doubtless have helped valorise their opinions on what many readers would have considered a potentially sensitive issue.

Montgomery's article appeared in the magazine as its first non-fiction feature. The full-page article was accompanied by two black and white illustrations by Edith McLaren, while the opposite page offered a decidedly conservative feature by Laura Elston on 'This Movie Rumpus' with the leading tagline '[w]hy all the excitement about movies in Canada, asks this writer when, after all it is nothing but a gigantic business which must cater to mass entertainment?' Montgomery's own article deliberately reinforces her status as both a professional author and a minister's wife, describing her as 'L. M. Montgomery, Author of "Anne of Green Gables," and one of the most noted minister's wives in the Dominion answers the question: – "*What does the minister's wife expect from the women of the congregation?*"' (Montgomery 1931b: 8, emphasis in original). The extent to which Montgomery herself was a 'noted minister's wife' is debatable, her determination to separate these two elements of her 'professional' duties ensuring it was rarely something she publicised. Nevertheless, the reiteration of her role reassures the reader of her authority to

talk on the issue, while also humanising her to readers who may only have known of her as a celebrity author.

The article itself is written in a decidedly informal tone, Montgomery drawing readers in to share her experiences and relating how ‘[w]hen, twenty years ago, I married a minister, my friends groaned in unison, “So much is expected of a minister’s wife!” I was not ignorant of this, having been brought up in a community where I had heard several ministers’ wives discussed, favourably and unfavourably’ (ibid). Here Montgomery immediately draws attention to the extreme scrutiny all ministers' wives face and the weight of local community expectations upon them. Throughout the article Montgomery repeatedly attempts to humanise the figure of the minister’s wife, drawing attention to her own fallibility – ‘after all, the woman who never makes mistakes may be an admirable woman but somehow I think she would be an unlovable one, too’ (ibid.) – as well as her sensitivity to others’ opinions: ‘[b]ecause ministers’ wives have feelings that are remarkably like the feelings of other women, and injustice and misunderstanding hurt us very keenly’ (ibid.: 53). Perhaps most unusually in her attempts to remove this figure from her pedestal, Montgomery draws attention to the readers’ roles in maintaining their relationships with their local minister’s wife. She reminds *Chatelaine*’s readers early in the article that ‘nothing is one-sided. If the congregation has a right to expect certain things of the minister’s wife she has an equal right to expect certain things of them. This is what *The Chatelaine* – May her shadow never grow less! – has asked me to write about, and I will try to present as briefly as possible the “minister’s wife” side of the expectations’ (p. 8). Nevertheless, Montgomery falls back on the traditional rhetoric of ‘service’ when discussing minister’s wives, reassuring readers that despite her comments and concerns over the congregation’s treatment of these women this ‘special opportunity’ to serve them remains ‘a privilege and not a duty’ (ibid.), arguably

diffusing her potentially subversive attempt to draw readers to consider their own role and responsibilities to their church and ministers' families.

Montgomery's essay 'Is this My Anne?' (1935) is particularly unusual for the ways in which it works to reassert Montgomery's 'authority' as the author of the *Anne of Green Gables* films' source material (note the capitalisation of 'my' in the title), even though she repeatedly asserts the fact she had no influence on the films' scripts or their representations of Anne. In her opening editorial, Sanders teases Montgomery's potentially uncomfortable position as '**[a]n authoress goes to her movie.** L. M. Montgomery, who, thirty years ago began the story of "Anne of Green Gables" – went recently to a preview of the screen feature which has been made of her story. How did she like it? What did she think of the things Hollywood had done to her story? Mrs. Montgomery tells you herself' (Sanders 1935: 2; emphasis in original). Wendy Roy has argued that '[m]any Canadians of the 1930s and 1940s were first exposed to *Anne of Green Gables* through [the 1934] film' (2014: 17), suggesting that Montgomery may have been persuaded to write this article, at least in part, to remind readers of the true origins of her heroine, as well as to promote and sell copies of her own books. Even the layout of the feature's first page, which places a black and white photograph of Montgomery above the text of the article and an accompanying photograph of the actress playing Anne Shirley<sup>12</sup> in the bottom right corner, appears to reinforce Montgomery's position as an authority on these film adaptations, literally *looking down* on the article's content from her elevated position on the page.

Montgomery's essay begins in a rather self-effacing tone by reminding the reader that back when she first formulated the character of Anne '[a]t that time "movies" were not even dreamed of; and if they had been, it would never have occurred to me that my simple little story of life in the Maritimes, nine miles from a railroad and twenty miles from a town, would make its appearance in them' (Montgomery 1935: 18). However, once the subject of

the films themselves is broached she is quick to criticise, especially with regard to Anne's first appearance: '[i]n 1921 Anne appeared in the "silent" pictures. Mary Miles Minter starred as Anne, but I did not like her. She was too "sugary sweet" – not a scrap like my gingery Anne' (ibid). Montgomery then continues to list her various grievances about the film, though always couching her dissatisfaction in the film's inability to recreate 'her' vision of characters, rather than directly criticising the film itself. Perhaps unsurprisingly given the article's publication before the release of the new Anne feature film – this article itself clearly designed to help publicise its release – Montgomery is far less critical of the upcoming 'talkie' version of Anne:

The other day I sat and watch the "talkie" with mingled feelings. On the whole I liked it much better than the silent picture. Naturally, no picture can, in the very nature of things, reflect the characters and setting just as the author has conceived them. So at times I had the sensation of watching a story written by somebody else. (ibid.: 22)

With this Montgomery again distances herself from these films, reminding the readers she was sent a copy of the script but 'had no "say" in it in any way or in any features of the story' (ibid). Indeed, Montgomery's 'real' view of the film remains elusive to the reader as whilst she relates how '[t]o see one's own story on the screen certainly provides plenty of "thrills,"' she nevertheless closes her essay with the qualifying statement, '[b]ut one always wonders!' (ibid.). By exploring these *Chatelaine* articles Montgomery wrote late in her career I hope to have drawn attention to some of the tensions Montgomery faced in 'controlling' the public perceptions of both herself and her work. In particular, Montgomery's article on her less publicised role as a minister's wife reinforces the complications she faced in trying to balance her burgeoning 'celebrity' status with her need to adhere to the modest, unassuming behaviour expected of a minister's wife in her private life.

In her introduction to a special issue of *Modernism/Modernity*, Ann Ardis argues that '[s]cholarship that both attends to the material history of print culture and resists the centripetal forces of disciplinary expertise can unsettle many great divides ... [such as] the divides between both "literature" and ... journalism and between high and low culture ... as well as the divide between auratic "art" and "everyday life"' (2012: v-vi). With this work I hope to demonstrate the potential benefits of new forms of analysis that focus on Montgomery's short fiction and its origins as periodical fiction. In acknowledging these stories and their material basis as fiction designed to appeal to mainstream magazines whose readers were targeted as upwardly mobile, educated consumers, it is essential to acknowledge the work advertising and editorial matter played in constructing not only Montgomery's literary celebrity persona but also her intended readership. Through close analysis of the feature articles she also submitted to the magazines, as well as how Montgomery herself was portrayed in editorials and author profiles, this article has also interrogated the extent to which Montgomery 'controlled' her own status as both a public figure and a 'celebrity' author. This article hopes to encourage further exploration of the mediating role mass-market magazines played in instructing their readers in how 'to cope with the transition from traditional to modern, and to find a comfortable compromise between them' and to help them 'make sense of their lives in a rapidly changing world' (Vipond 1989: 10), much as Montgomery herself was forced to late in her own writing career.

### **Acknowledgements**

I would like to acknowledge Dr. Benjamin Lefebvre's role in introducing me to this topic and offering valuable insight in the early stages of this research, and thank Professor Faye Hammill for her productive comments on an early draft of this article.



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### Notes

<sup>1</sup> In recent years we have seen an increased scholarly interest in Montgomery's short fiction, as can be noticed in Trinna S. Frever's 2008 study and Christiana Salah's 2013 article, for instance. However, only Clarence Karr (2000) and Elizabeth Waterston (2008) deal with the origin of these stories as periodical fiction in any sustained manner. Even so, Karr's study focuses more on Montgomery's business acumen and navigation of the literary

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marketplace, whilst Waterston's work only explores the short-story collections *Chronicles of Avonlea* (1912) and *Further Chronicles of Avonlea* (1920).

as can be noticed in Christiana Salah's 'Girls in Bonds: Prehensile Place and the Domestic Gothic in L.M.

<sup>2</sup> These collections were organised thematically and titled (in chronological order): *Akin to Anne: Tales of Other Orphans* (1988), *Along the Shore: Tales by the Sea* (1989), *Among the Shadows: Tales of the Darker Side* (1990), *After Many Days: Tales of Time Passed* (1991), *Against the Odds: Tales of Achievement* (1993), *At the Altar: Matrimonial Tales* (1994), *Across the Miles: Tales of Correspondence* (1995), *Christmas with Anne and Other Holiday Stories* (1995).

<sup>3</sup> Wilmshurst initially published her findings in 1983, and later compiled her work with Ruth Weber Russell and Delbert W. Russell's research on Montgomery's novels to produce *Lucy Maud Montgomery: A Preliminary Bibliography* (1986).

<sup>4</sup> The magazines I have been examining were obtained through my relationship with the AHRC-funded 'Magazines, Travel and Middlebrow Culture in Canada 1925-1960' project and its lead investigators, Professor Faye Hammill and Dr. Michelle Smith (<http://www.middlebrowcanada.org/>); and through my own archival research in Canada and the UK.

<sup>5</sup> Dating attributed to Benjamin Lefebvre (2013b: 177).

<sup>6</sup> Although I have been able to access the contents pages of almost all of *Chatelaine's* print run from 1928 up until Montgomery's death, accessing the issues of the *Canadian Home Journal* has proved more problematic. Although the majority of the issues from the 1920s and '30s have been located and checked for content, earlier issues, especially covering the periods 1905-9 and 1912-18, have been harder to source. It is thus unlikely that this story was Montgomery's first appearance in the *Journal*, especially given that this story's front matter refers to Montgomery as the '[a]uthor of "Anne of Green Gables," "Anne of Avonlea," and "The Cats of the Tansy Patch"' (Montgomery 1918: 7), presumably signposting an earlier story she submitted to the *Journal*.

<sup>7</sup> In her letter to Ephraim Weber dated 18 July, 1926, Montgomery refers to 'four stories' being published with her new character Marigold (Tiessen and Tiessen 2006: 135). However, Wilmshurst's bibliography suggests that the *Delineator* actually published five Marigold stories in the April, May, June, July and August issues of 1926 (potentially six if we also include 'Too Few Cooks' published in February 1926 which supposedly amalgamates chapters of *Emily of New Moon* with material from Chapter 17 of *Magic for Marigold*).

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<sup>8</sup> In an interview in 1924 Montgomery famously praised the fact that the '[o]ne thing that can be said about Canadian literature is that it is clean ... There are very few stories published in Canada that mothers could not give to their daughters' (*Bookseller and Stationer* 1924: 54).

<sup>9</sup> It should be noted that although successful submission to these magazines was arguably more competitive and usually better paid than Montgomery's earliest submissions to juvenile and Sunday school periodicals, Montgomery's own periodical output dropped steadily throughout the 1920s and '30s. As her novels became more and more successful, her decision to submit stories and articles to magazines in the latter half of her career largely focused on the '*advertising value*' (emphasis in the original) these opportunities afforded her rather than their financial reward, especially when the time taken to write such material was also taken into account (Tiessen and Tiessen 2006: 154).

<sup>10</sup> A brief analysis of Montgomery's construction of her newfound celebrity status in 'The Alpine Path' can be found in Lorraine York's *Literary Celebrity in Canada* (2007: 80).

<sup>11</sup> The McClung article appeared in the December 1931 issue and was titled 'The Minister's Wife.'

<sup>12</sup> It is worth noting here that the actress Dawn O'Day who took on the role of Anne, legally changed her name to 'Anne Shirley' before the release of the 1934 RKO *Anne of Green Gables* film (Hammill 2007: 101).