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## ACROSS THE ISLAND

### Lucy Maud Stories Recalled In Book

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I CAME across an interesting story told by Lucy Maud Montgomery when I was reading a book loaned to me by my good friend, Jim Campbell of Park Corner.

The girl who became the Island's best known writer – for her Anne books and others – was teaching at Bideford, she said, and was boarding at the Methodist parsonage.

Its charming mistress flavored a layer cake with anodyne liniment one day.

“Never shall I forget the taste of that cake, and the fun we had over it”, Miss Montgomery reported. But the mistake was not discovered until tea time.

And here is the humorous part of it, “A strange minister was there to tea that night, and he ate every crumb of his piece of the cake. What he thought of it, we never discovered. Possibly he imagined it was simply some new fangled flavoring”, was the observation.

IT IS INTERESTING, I think, to find that Lucy Maud came to regret that she had Matthew die so early in the Anne of Green Gables story.

“If I were to write it over again, I would spare Matthew for several years. But when I wrote it I thought he must die. There might be a necessity for self sacrifice on Anne's part so Matthew joined the long procession of ghosts that haunt my literary past,” the author observed.

### ‘Wonderful Dream’ Came True

“THE DREAM I dreamt years ago at an old brown desk in school, had come true at last, after years of toil and struggle,” Lucy Maud wrote after a publisher finally accepted Anne of Green Gables, her first book.

“The realization is sweet”, she observed, “almost as sweet as the dream.”

Of the hundreds of letters she received from all over the world “some odd dozen were addressed to “Anne Shirley, Green Gables, Avonlea, Prince Edward Island”.

“They were written by little girls who had such touching faith in the real flesh and blood existence of Anne that I always hated to destroy it.”

The story of the Marco Polo has been told many times. And Lucy Maud tells that the old Norwegian captain of the Marco Polo had been a guest in the Montgomery house while they were temporarily delayed on the Island after the wreck.

### Bloody Story Of Pirate Ship

THE STORY of Cape Leforce which Lucy Maud told is new to me. France and England were at war and French privateers invested the Gulf. One of these was commanded by a captain named Leforce.

ONE NIGHT the captain and his crew came ashore and the captain and his men tried to come to a satisfactory division of the booty. The captain and the mate quarreled and it was arranged that they should fight a duel at sunrise.

But in the morning, as the ground was being paced off, the mate suddenly raised his pistol and shot Capt. Leforce dead.

"I don't know whether the mate was ever punished for his deed. Probably not," she observed, then added "It was merely a brief sentence in a long page of bloodshed."

The captain was buried by his crew on the spot where he had fallen, and I've often heard grandfather say that his father had seen the grave in his boyhood.

"It has long ago washed off into the waves, but the name still clings to the red headland," the author wrote many years ago in a series of mostly autobiographical stories she wrote for "Every Woman's World".

### Travel Limitations In Early Days

I LIKE, too, Lucy Maud's reference to the restrictions on travel in the days of her girlhood. This should be of particular interest to all readers who never experienced the limitations of travel with a horse and wagon.

Her travels as a girl consisted of "an occasional trip to Charlottetown, and another to Uncle John Campbell's at Park Corner – this was Jim's father.

"These were my only excursions beyond my horizon line, and both were looked on as great treasures", she wrote.

And listen to this:

"The trip to Park Corner was of comparatively in frequent occurrence, once a year and perhaps twice – it was 13 miles.

The trip to Charlottetown "was a very rare treat, once in three years", she wrote. "It loomed in about the same proportions then as a trip to Europe would now, or even before the war", she observed. She wrote the series of stories in the 1920's, and she had reference to the First Great War of 1914-18.

And the pace of travel has increased indescribably since those days of 60 years ago.

### Marco Polo Fastest Sailing Ship

THE MARCO POLO, she wrote was the fastest sailing vessel ever built. She was condemned in England under the Plimsoll bill. Her owners evaded the bill by selling her to a Norwegian Company. Then they chartered her to bring a cargo of deal plank to Quebec, an old story tells me.

On her return she was caught in a furious storm out in the Gulf, sprung a leak and became so waterlogged that the captain determined to run her on shore to save crew and cargo, one story relates.

"That day we had a terrible windstorm, and suddenly the news was spread that a vessel was coming ashore. Everyone who could rushed to the sandy shore and saw a magnificent sight: a large vessel coming straight on before the Northern gale with every stitch of her canvass set, it was said.

She grounded about 200 yards from the shore. As she struck the crew cut the rigging and the huge masts went over with a crash that was heard for a mile above the roaring of the sea.

The next day, the crew of 20 men got ashore and found boarding places about Cavendish. It was their special delight to get into a truck wagon and go galloping down the road, yelling at the top of their voices, she wrote.

### Wooley Heads, Thick Lips

OF THE MANY nationalities among the crew she was struck particularly by “two Tahitians whose woolly heads, thick lips and gold earrings were a never failing joy to us”.

The crew was in Cavendish for weeks, as there was a great deal of red tape over the affair.

The captain was “a delightful, gentlemanly old fellow who was idolized by his crew”, she wrote.

Interesting too is her recollection of “the night the crew members were paid off”. They saw “with eyes as big as owls, the parlor table covered with gold sovereigns which the captain paid out to the men. Never had we imagined there was so much wealth in the world”, was the writer’s comment.

The wreck occurred, apparently, when Lucy Maud was eight years old.

Many things about the Marco Polo were controversial. It was charged by many veteran seaman that the captain deliberately wrecked the ship by driving her ashore with her sails filled with wind. I know nothing about seamanship but I have since read opinions by veteran mariners – the late Capt. John Read of Borden was one – who explained that in their opinion this was not the case. There were sound reasons why the Marco Polo captain did what he did, these men claimed.