



“Fresh ways of doing things”: Landscape as a Space of Imaginative Potential and Freedom for White Colonial Girls.

Adventure: “she was by far the more expert on snowshoes” (*Daughters* 138)

- *A Heroine of the Sea*: Maudie fishes with a spear, snowshoes, and navigates the sea by boat.
- *Juliette, the Mail Carrier*: Juliette drives dogsleds, retrieves stolen goods, and explores a secret passageway.
- *Daughters of the Dominion*: Nell climbs a telegraph pole, snowshoes, and prevents a robbery.

Education: “a perfect prodigy of learning” (*Daughters* 24)

- *Daughters of the Dominion*: Nell teaches herself to read and write without a formal education, and she dreams of being a doctor.
- Nell's marriage to a professor at Royal Mount College becomes a proxy resolution for the education plot.

Domestic Responsibility: “her housewifely instincts were very strong” (*Daughters* 304)

- Maudie, Juliette, and Nell engage in various forms of handiwork (sewing, knitting, and mending) to survive in Canada.
- *Juliette, the Mail Carrier* and *Daughters of the Dominion*: Juliette and Nell both rescue men (whom they eventually marry) from near death and nurse them back to health.

Family: “I intend adopting all of you, so there!” (*Daughters* 273)

- *Daughters of the Dominion*: Nell adopts another woman (Gertrude) and her younger siblings, forming a queer family.
- *Juliette, the Mail Carrier*: Juliette provides for her two half-siblings while her father is ill.
- *A Heroine of the Sea*: After the death of their father, Maudie and her half-brothers reunite as a family.

Empire: “Canada is a great mother: there is room in her heart for the needy of every nation” (*Daughters* n.p.)

- Marchant either subjugates Indigenous characters to the protagonist (*Juliette, the Mail Carrier* and *A Heroine of the Sea*) or relegates their presence to extradiagetic action (*Daughters of the Dominion*) to advance the plot.
- Marchant's use of place names, telegraph and mail routes, and natural details encourages mental mapping.

Works Cited

- Marchant, Bessie. *Daughters of the Dominion: A Story of the Canadian Frontier*. Illustrated by William Rainey, Musson Book Co., 1908, PZ7 M33Dau.
- Marchant, Bessie. *Her Own Kin*. Illustrated by W.E. Wightman, Blackie and Son Limited, 1925, PZ7 M33He.
- Marchant, Bessie. *A Heroine of the Sea*. Illustrated by A.M. M'Lellan, Blackie and Son Limited, 1904, PZ7 M33Her.
- Marchant, Bessie. *Juliette, the Mail Carrier*. Illustrated by Richard Tod, Collin's Clear-Type Press, 1907, PZ7 M33Ju.
- Royde-Smith, Erica J. “Modern Girl Adventurers.” *The Times Literary Supplement*, no. 1972, 18 Nov. 1939, p. 676.

Acknowledgements

This research was supported by the Jamie Cassels Undergraduate Research Awards, University of Victoria and supervised by Dr. Mary Elizabeth Leighton. I would also like to thank the Special Collections librarians for all of their help.

Bessie Marchant's Turn-of-the-Century Girls' Adventure Fiction in Special Collections and at the Edge of Empire

Kalea Furmanek Raposo

University of Victoria, Department of English

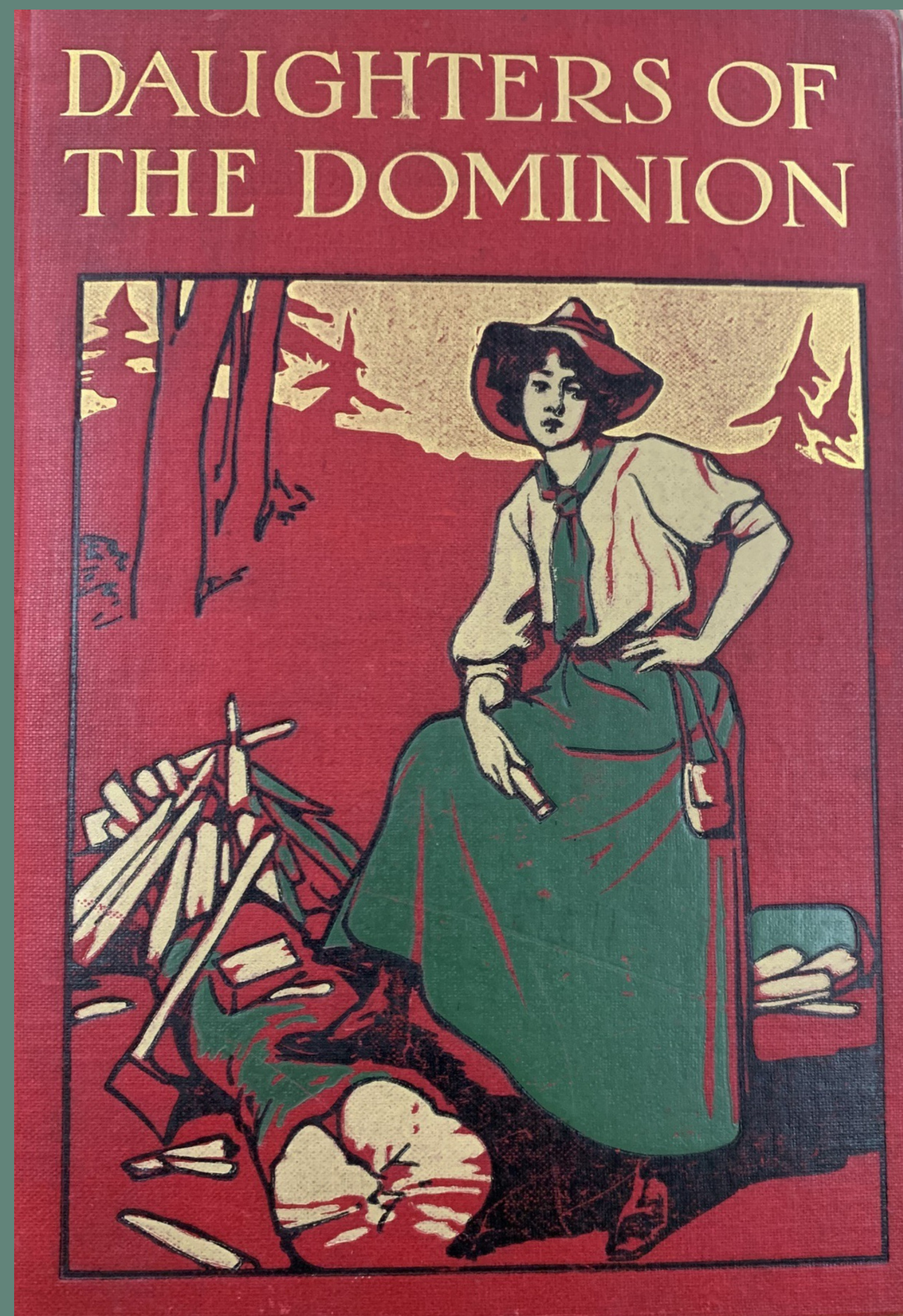
Spring 2023



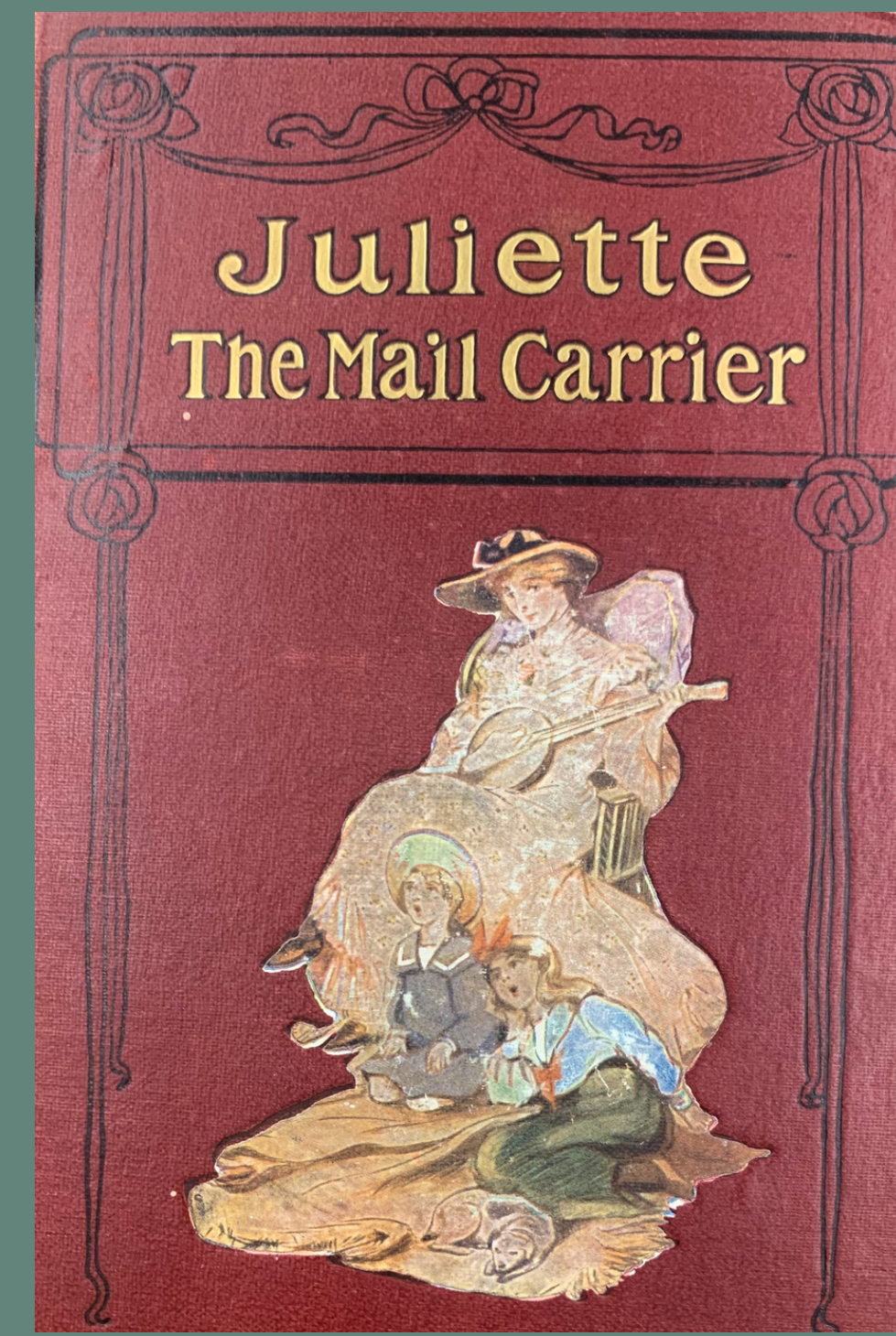
Methodology

I incorporate a book history approach, research in digitized primary source databases (such as GALE Primary Sources), and formal analysis to examine a selection of Marchant's novels set in Canada and held in the University of Victoria's Special Collections. My research contributes to a more complete understanding of girls' culture and the function of the adventure fiction genre in early 20th-century novels set in Canada at the turn of the century.

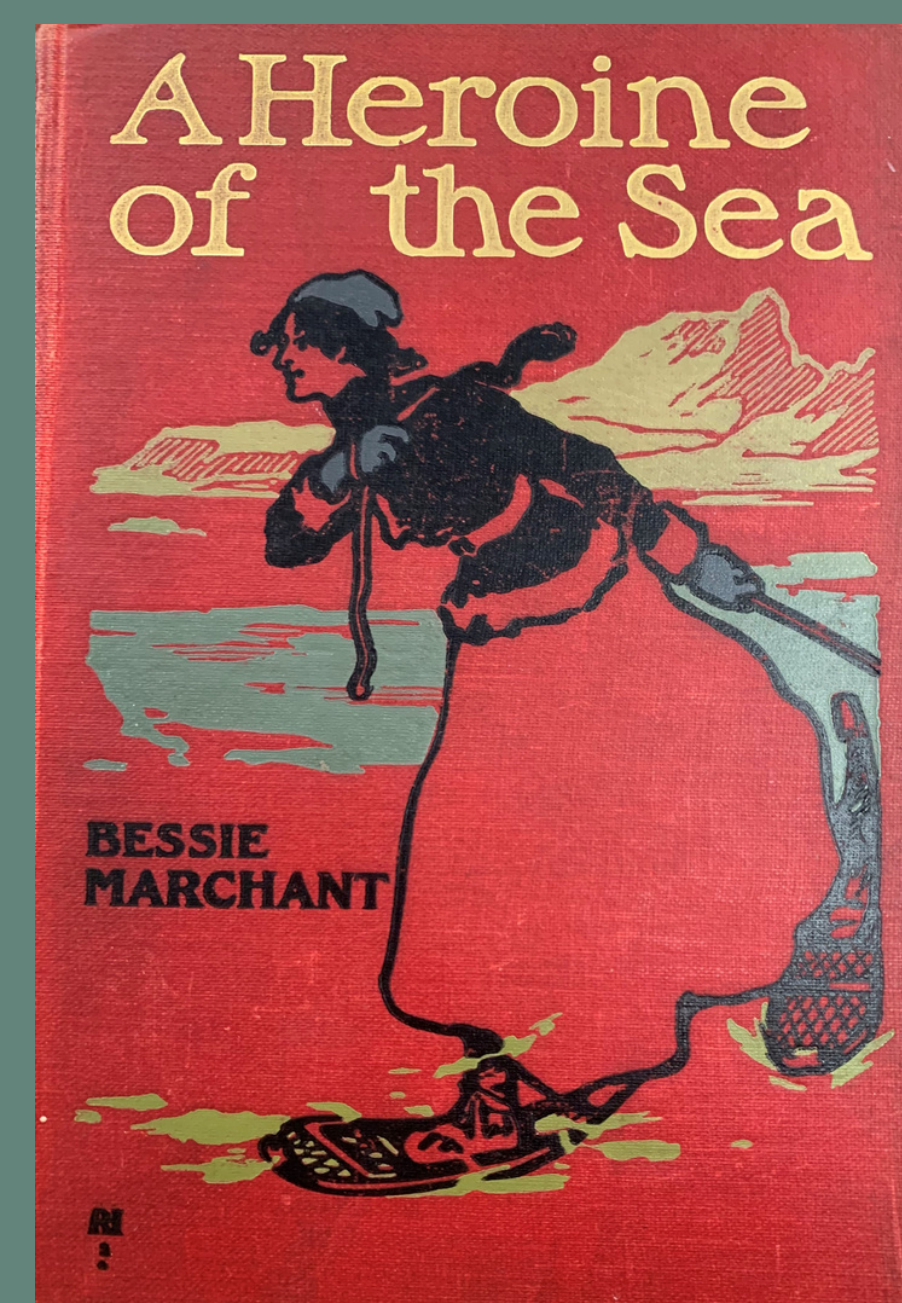
Marchant expands possibilities for girls' action by valuing adventures in education and domesticity as much as dangerous physical tasks that her heroines perform.



Daughters of the Dominion (1908)



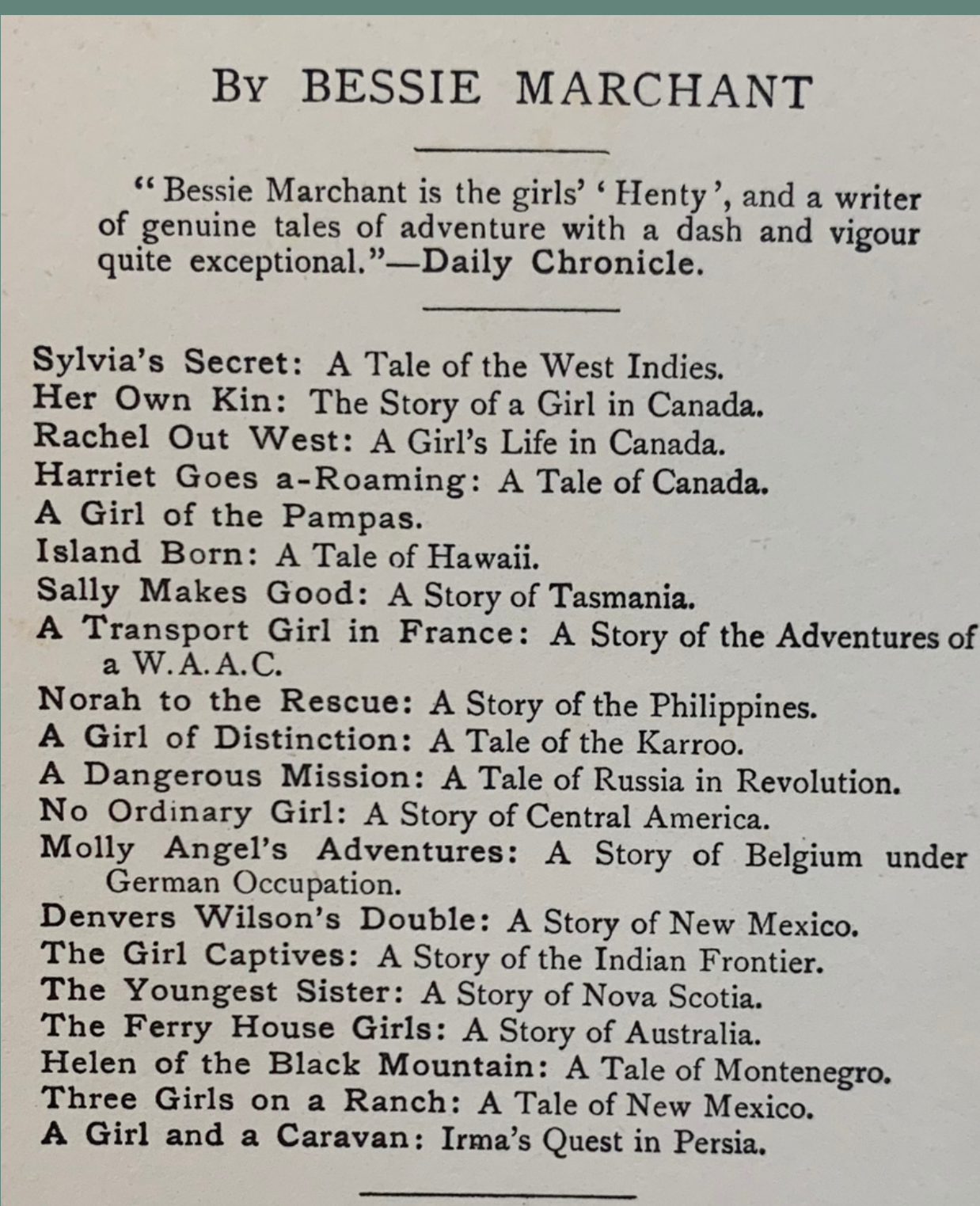
Juliette, the Mail Carrier (1907)



A Heroine of the Sea (1904)

“A Christmas without a story by ‘the girl’s Henty’ Miss Bessie Marchant is indeed a wartime deprivation.”

–“Modern Girl Adventures,” *The Times Literary Supplement*, 19 Nov 1939



Born: 1862 Kent, England

Died: 1941 Oxfordshire, England

Publications: 150 novels between 1894 and 1941

Marchant set her adventure stories in foreign locales such as India, South Africa, Central America, Australia, and Canada (at least 30 of her novels are set in Canada). However, she never left England herself.

These texts center on young white woman's role in Canada, where they have more opportunities for social mobility than in England.

Her Own Kin (1925)