

## MRS. KATHLEEN WALLACE

Mrs. Kathleen Wallace, a novelist of pleasant and unaffected accomplishment and in later years the author of a number of attractive books for children, died on Friday at the age of 76.

The daughter of William and [Susan] Coates, Kathleen Montgomery Coates was born on September 11, 1891, in Cambridge, where her father was a noted mathematical coach of his day and a Fellow of Queens'. She was educated at Girton. In 1917 she married Major James Hill Wallace, O.B.E., of North Gower, Ontario, Canada, with whom, after they had spent the first two years of peace in Canada, she went to China. She stayed there until 1927, when they both returned to England.

China, which she loved, and Cambridge, which she loved no less, between them provided the background of perhaps a half of her total output of fiction. Though her writing lacked something of distinction, she was observant and sympathetic, had a nice feminine feeling for the romantic verities, and was almost always pleasant and easy to read. Absorbed in the care and upbringing of her family, she did not produce her first novel until 1930. This was *I Walk Alone*, which had a Chinese setting and enjoyed a fair success for a first novel. Three years later came *Without a Stair*, in which the Chinese or Anglo-Chinese background was touched in with growing confidence. The most satisfying of the Anglo-Chinese novels, and possibly the best book she wrote, is *Ancestral Tablet* (1938), which brings a warm human tolerance to a picture of the Chinese scene, with the changes and chances of English family life in the foreground, in the years before the revolution of 1911.

The Cambridge novels include *Grace on their Doorsteps*, *And after that, the Dark*, and *Time Changes the Tune*, the last of these published in 1948. After that she brought out

only one more work of ordinary full-length fiction. But among the 20 or so volumes which she produced, some of them perhaps too much inclined towards the sentimental, two essays in “fictionalized biography” deserve to be mentioned, *Immortal Wheat* (the Brontës) and *This is Your Home* (Mary Kingsley). Always noticeably good with children in her novels, she had in recent years turned her hand successfully to children’s books of the type of *The House with a Key* and *Findings are Keepings*.

Mrs. Wallace’s husband died in 1953. There were four sons of the marriage.

(*The Times*, 31 March 1958)