Kathleen Blake Coleman a.k.a Catherine Ferguson Willis (1856-1915) arrived in Canada a well-educated but destitute Irish immigrant in 1884. To earn her living and support her two Canadian-born children, she juggled the androgynous and womanly aspects of her character to invent an intriguing public persona designed to draw readers of both sexes: "Kit" of the Toronto Daily Mail/Mail and Empire.

Although she was initially hired to lure female readers with timely and entertaining articles on household matters and fashion, she escaped the confines of her "Woman's Kingdom" page whenever she could and eventually became internationally famous as an adventurous travel writer and war correspondent (Spanish-American War of 1898). She was never an advocate of armed conflict, however, and devoted many angry, sad and blunt words to its evils.

In private life, she was a mother-journalist painfully trying to balance her domestic duties and her own literary ambition. Her experiences of life made her quick to sympathize with others, especially working women of all kinds, but her liberalism had its limits. She believed in the intellectual and economic equality of the sexes and helped other women succeed in journalism. But for professional and personal reasons, she remained aloof from the women’s movement itself and did not openly advocate suffrage until it became a respectable cause.