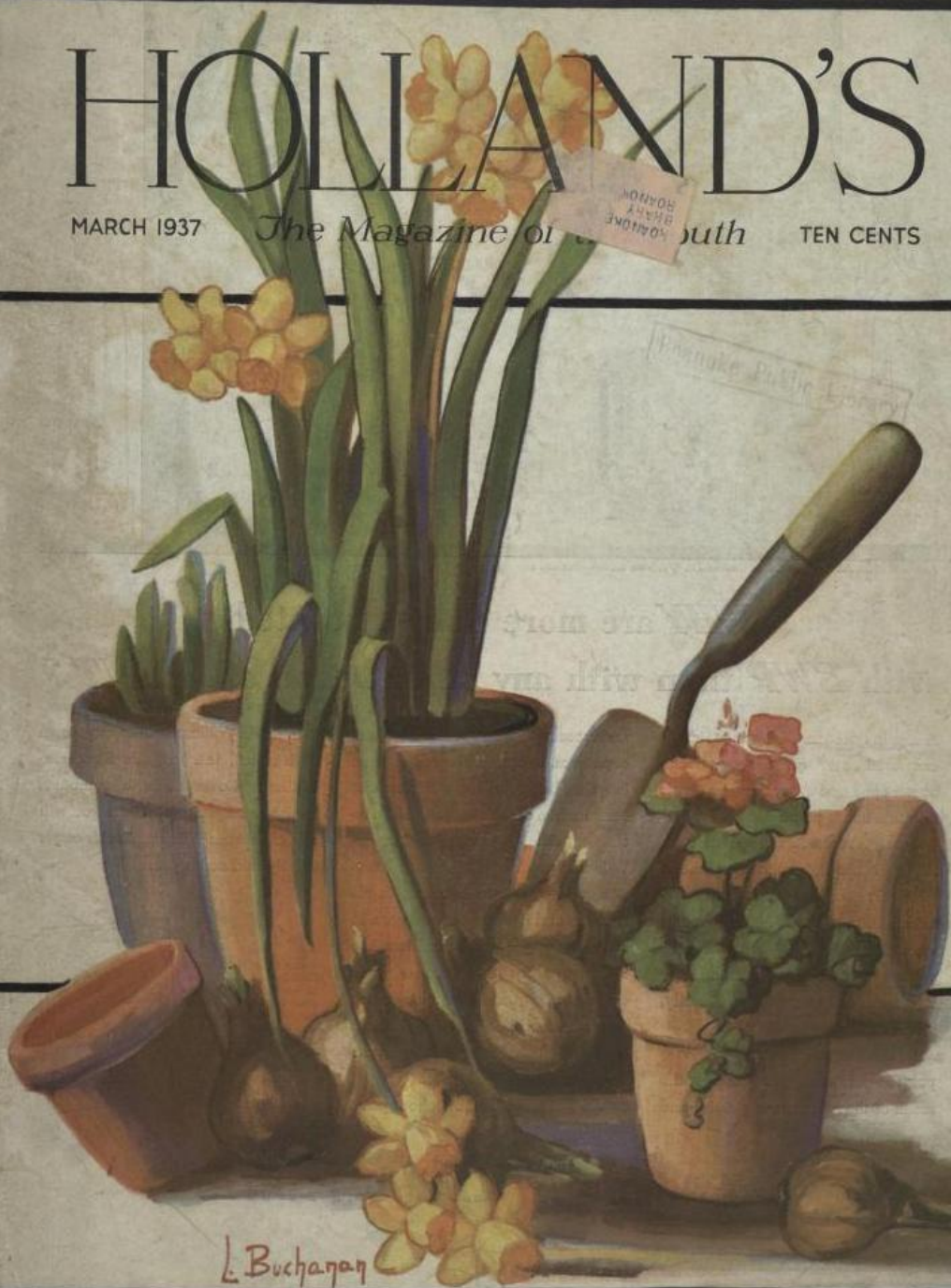


HOLLAND'S

MARCH 1937

The Magazine of Youth

TEN CENTS



L. Buchanan

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Here Comes the Bride

L. M. Montgomery

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The old church was never more dignified and gracious, inside or out. Clothed in the quiet serenity of old ivy, the gray-brown of its stones almost lustrous with the soft patina great age brings, it seemed charged with a special beneficence, a unique benediction, as though this particular wedding were somehow unusual.

Inside, the guests awaited Mendelssohn's soft notes that would still all but the faintest of their susurrant murmurs. The two immediate families, their relatives, friends, acquaintances, stood now in small clusters or alone, the collective reverberance of their words rising and falling in soothing waves of sound.

A bored reporter from the Evening Call is scribbling in notebook in back pew, writing last paragraphs from information received:

St. Jude's Church, Allandale, was thronged with guests this afternoon for the marriage of Evelyn, older daughter of Mr. and Mrs. James March, of Merestead, to Dr. Darcy Phillips, professor of biology on the faculty of Radford University, and son of Mrs. F. W. Phillips and the late Frederick Phillips, of Allandale. White 'mums and palms, with lighted candles on the altar, formed a charming background for the ceremony, which was performed by the Reverend Dr. Conrad Stephens, rector of St. Jude's. The beautiful bride, who was given away by her father, wore ivory satin, fashioned with a mid-Victorian line, and a halo of seed pearls held in place her wedding veil of rare old lace. She carried a cascade bouquet of lilies-of-the-valley and white orchids.

Miss Marnie March was maid of honor for her sister, and the three bridesmaids, Miss Rhea Bailey, Miss Betty Hayes, and Miss Janet Small, wore period gowns of silver cloth and picture hats of periwinkle blue with bouquets of blue iris. Mr. Garth Benham was best man, and the ushers were etc., etc., etc.

The reception afterwards was held at Merestead, the beautiful suburban home of Mr. and Mrs. March, where glowing roses made a colorful decoration for the attractive old rooms. The bride's table was centered with the handsome wedding cake made by Mary Hamilton, who has been at Merestead thirty years as cook, nurse, and beloved member of the household.

Mrs. March received her guests in a modish gown of gray with a slight train, smart hat of black straw, and corsage of deep purple Princess violets. Mrs. Frederick Phillips was in blue chiffon, matching hat, and corsage of yellow rosebuds.

Later the bride and groom left to spend their honeymoon at the groom's camp, Juniper Island, in Muskoka. The bride's going-away ensemble etc., etc., etc.

Among the guests present were Mrs. Helen Bailey, Miss Prue Davis, Mrs. Barbara Morse, Mr. Douglas March (great-uncle of the bride, a hearty octogenarian), Mrs. Ramsay Southam, etc., etc., etc.

Aunt Helen Bailey, sister of the bride's father and the mother of three unwedded and unbespoken daughters, among them one of the bridesmaids, thinking:

So Amy has really got Evelyn off her hands at last. What a relief it must be to her! A girl like Evelyn . . . past her first youth . . . with one of those skins that age early . . . and that affair with Elmer Owen . . . it's really quite a triumph to get her married, even to a poor young doctor like Darcy Phillips.

Amy was simply heartbroken when Evelyn's engagement to Elmer Owen was broken off. She tried to hide it, but everyone *knew*. Evelyn brazened it off very well. Of course she never cared a scrap for *him*. It was his money she was after. That girl hasn't a particle of heart . . . she couldn't love anyone.

I wonder what really went wrong between her and Elmer. Of course *his* parents never approved of it, but at one time he seemed quite taken with her. Amy certainly thought they had him trussed and skewered. How she used to purr over it! Such a ring! It must almost have killed Evelyn to give it back. It will be a long time before Darcy Phillips will be able to give her a square emerald.

It was really indelicate the way she snapped Darcy up the minute Elmer threw her over. But it's easy enough to get a man if you don't care what you do. My poor girls haven't the audacity necessary for today. They're sweet and well-bred and *womanly*, but that doesn't count any longer. You must know how to stalk your man.

Why don't they come? I've always thought St. Jude's had the hardest seats of any church in the world, and now I know it. Look at that mosquito on Morton Gray's fat jowl. *Doesn't* the man feel it? I wish I could give it a slap . . . my nerves are getting jumpy.

What a lot of guests! Dr. Stephens will know for once what it's like to see the church filled . . . Prue Davis has a new dress and is trying to look as if it were an ordinary occurrence. Poor Prue! . . . Barbara Morse is making nasty remarks about everybody. I know by the look on her face. The ruling passion. She'd gossip at a funeral, so why not at a fashionable wedding where everybody knows the bride is taking the groom as a consolation prize, and he is taking her heaven knows why—probably because she just went after him. They have fought like cat and dog all their lives. Evelyn has an indomitable will under all that surface sugar.

Is that really Jim's old Uncle Douglas there? Well, I suppose they can have all their country cousins, since the groom's only Darcy: but if it had been Elmer, I'll be bound they'd have been kept in the background. Uncle Douglas is evidently enjoying himself . . . and expecting to enjoy himself more. A wedding feast is a wedding feast, no matter how it comes about . . . *What* is Rose Osgood wearing? She must simply have put her hand in the family rag-bag and pulled out the first thing she grabbed.

There goes Wagner at last, thank goodness. Here they come. Four ushers . . . four bridesmaids . . . two flower girls and a page. Humph! Well, I hope everything's paid for. Those white 'mums must have cost a small fortune. Where Jim finds the money!

Evelyn's looking well, but she shouldn't have had her dress cut that way . . . it gives her sway back away. Positively triumphant . . . no shrinking violet about *her*. I remember the day Amy gave the coming-out tea for her *débutante* daughter. And was she awkward! But, of course, seven seasons should give anyone poise.

Darcy isn't much to look at . . . his face is too long . . . but poor Rhea looks quite as well as the other bridesmaids. That shade of blue is so trying . . . probably Evelyn selected it for that reason. Marnie looks like a gypsy as usual . . . only gypsies aren't *quite* so plump, are they? Amy'll find it even harder to get *her* settled than Evelyn.

"I will" . . . oh, my dear, you needn't *shout* it. Everybody knows you "will" only too willingly. Darcy was your last chance. Well, a professor's salary is better than an old maid's pension, no doubt. There, they're off to the vestry . . . "Mrs. Darcy Phillips" . . . you can see it sticking out all over her. I'm sure I hope she'll be happy, poor girl. But it doesn't seem to me that anyone can be very happy when she's simply marrying one man to save her face because another jilted her.

Now for the reception . . . and the presents . . . and the usual silly remarks . . . and then the trip to Muskoka in Darcy's new flivver. Wonder if the reporter will mention that the car is a flivver. Some difference between that and Elmer's fifteen-thousand-dollar streamliner . . . or even Jim's old limousine. But Evelyn will have to come down to a good many things. Jim always spoiled his family.

Prue Davis, a bit passé and envious of all brides in general, thinking:

It seems so funny to think Evelyn is marrying Darcy Phillips after all, when she's used him so abominably for years. He's only a poor young professor . . . but any

port in a storm. She's twenty-five, and looks it. Darcy is nice and clever . . . there was a time when I might have caught him on the rebound . . . after one of the worst of their quarrels . . . but I always drop my bread butter side down. And of course the minute Evelyn crooked her fingers he came to heel. It's just a way she has of looking up under her eyelids . . . oh, well, some people have all the luck.

I hope I won't get this dress spotted . . . heaven knows when I'll get another. There they come . . . Evelyn looks well . . . she always knew how to wear her clothes, I'll say that for her. But I never liked that ash-blonde hair. Heigh-ho! *I* found a gray hair today. Oh, things are so beastly cruel. Prue Davis, haven't you any pride? Throw your head back and look as if you were sitting on the top of the world.

Thank heaven, that's over! I wish the reception were over, too . . . I'm beginning to hate going to such things. "What, Prue Davis *still!*" . . . "When are we going to attend *your* wedding?" . . . Apart from remarks like that, nobody ever talks to me. My looks have gone, and it's no use having brains. When I say a clever thing to people, they look startled and uncomfortable. I should just like to be quiet for years and years . . . not have to go on pretending to be bright and happy and quite, *quite* satisfied.

Evelyn's doing it well . . . you'd think to look at her there had never been anyone but Darcy Phillips in her life.

"How do you do, Mrs. Thompson? Yes, wasn't it a lovely wedding? Such a charming bride! Oh, *me!* I'm not so easy to please as some girls are, you know. And independence is *very* sweet, Mrs. Thompson."

Cousin Barbara Morse, to her friend:

"It seems to me I've been here for hours . . . yes, I came early. I wanted to get an aisle seat. Besides, it's really fun looking at everybody as they come in. They will be late of course . . . none of Jim's family ever was on time. *Everybody* seems to have been invited . . .

"*Why* doesn't Mattie Powell get those terrible moles removed? Electrolysis does it so nicely. How fat Mabel is getting! But *I* needn't talk. *I never* get weighed now. It simply won't do . . . I'm blue for a week afterwards. Jane Morris told me she took four inches off her hips, living on just buttermilk. I wonder . . .

"Look at Carry Ware . . . that stringy old chiffon . . . And wouldn't you swear her hat was bought at the five-and-ten? You'd have thought she'd have got something new for a wedding at least . . . Even Min Carstairs has a new dress. I hear the Carstairs have come into some money. That rose and silver is far too young

for her.

C an you tell me how Sue MacKenzie contrives to look thirty-five when she's forty-seven? She *must* have had her face lifted. When *she* was married—it was a house wedding—her father made her go back upstairs after she had made her entrance, and wash the powder off her face. If he could see her now! He was such an odd man, my dear . . . the queer things he would do when he got mad . . . said nothing, but burned rugs and sawed up chairs . . . Prue Davis wears well, but she must be getting on. I always feel so sorry for the girls who are on the shelf at a time like this.

“There's old Mary Hamilton in the back of the church . . . of course, the eats are all in the hands of the caterers. Jim's family have always made an absurd fuss over Mary. Why, when Jim got his first car, nothing would do Mary but she must learn to drive it, too, and they actually let her! I'm told she's been fined for speeding times out of number. Oh, yes, Irish for a thousand years . . . devoted to the bride and all that. Look at her, staring at everybody . . .

“If they don't come soon I'll be carried out screaming . . . it's ten minutes past the time now. I hope Darcy hasn't faded out of the picture like Elmer. *Look* at the Walter Starrocks! Will you ever forget the day *they* were married, and him standing there with his coat-tails all over cat hairs? Walter's getting pouches under his eyes

. . .

“At last! . . . I don't care for those halo veils, but Evelyn always wanted the very latest fad. That shade certainly doesn't become Marnie. She's the plain sister . . . so she'll make the best match, take my word for it.

“Darcy looks as if he'd carried her off from a hundred rivals instead of being Hobson's choice . . . he's positively ugly, I think, except for his eyes . . . but I believe the women with ugly husbands have the best of it. They don't have to be everlastingly scheming how to hold them.

“Well, it really went off very well. I'm glad, for Amy's sake. She's so fussy over small things. No doubt she's been praying for fine weather every night for a month.”

Uncle Douglas March, thinking:

Lot of lean women here . . . skinny, very skinny. Never see anything of fine figures nowadays. That was back in the days when girls wore bangs and balloon sleeves . . . and were the same girls underneath. Old St. Jude's is dolled up all right. I must take in all the fixings to tell ma. Too bad she couldn't have come.

Some difference between this and my father's wedding. *His* dad gave him a fourteen-year-old horse and a two-year-old colt, a set of harness, a bobsled, and some provisions. He paid twenty dollars for his clothes and minister and license . . . bought some chairs, a table, a bed, and an old stove. Thrashed all day and was married in the evening. *Her* dad gave her twenty-five dollars and a cow. Well, well, what do we work and slave for if it isn't to give the tads something better than the old folks had?

Here they come. Evelyn fills the eye all right. When she ain't in sight I never can believe she's really as pretty as I remember her. That's Jim's nose . . . she's a chip off the old block. Just as well . . . though Amy is a nice old puss . . . always liked her. Nice-looking boy Evelyn's got, too . . . not too handsome . . . sort of dependable looking.

Some dress. Ma was married in nun's veiling. Does anybody ever wear nun's veiling now? Such a pretty name . . . and pretty stuff. Ah, it's times like this makes a body realize how long it is since he was young. My day's over . . . but I've had it, I've had it!

If there ain't old Mollie Hamilton back there, grinning like the frisky old girl she always was! She was a russet-haired jade when Amy got her, and now she's gray as a badger. They don't hatch her breed of cats nowadays.

Now for the spread. "Don't you eat things you can't digest, pa," ma told me. "You can digest anything if you have the courage to, ma," says I. A pretty wedding . . . a pretty wedding! And a happy bride. I've lived long enough to know the real thing when I see it. They'll stay married.

Cynical guest, thinking:

H'mm . . . white 'mums and palms . . . they've done it very well . . . everybody here who should be . . . no end of relations . . . I hope the groom won't be kissed to death . . . even old Uncle Douglas from the farm . . . how they must have hated having him! Poor Prue Davis, smiling with her lips but not her eyes . . . hope deferred maketh the heart sick . . . if she only knew how well off she is! Who in the world is smelling of mothballs this time of year?

Here they come . . . Evelyn looks well . . . her profile and her eyelashes always carried her . . . and those clear-cut features wear well . . . "off with the old love and on with the new" . . . engaged to Elmer Owen two months ago and now marrying a man she's hated all her life. I suppose all this wedding was really planned out for Elmer, even to the dress. Amy looks worried . . . Well, I had to see both my

daughters marry the wrong man.

Marnie's quite sparkling . . . she's got twice the pep Evelyn has, but nobody ever looks twice at her when Evelyn's around . . . maybe she'll have a chance, now that Evelyn's going.

Jim is doing everything very correctly . . . a well-trained husband . . . he was crazy about me before he met Amy . . . if I'd married him, he'd have been more successful . . . but would he have been so happy? I couldn't have made him believe himself a wonder, as Amy has done.

I'm sure Dr. Stephens is sorry he can't spin the ceremony out as he does his sermons . . . he has perfected the art of preaching for fifty minutes and saying nothing. That stately old dowager in blue chiffon, with the pearls, must be Darcy's mother. She has devoted her life to him, they say . . . and now she's got to hand him over to a chit of a girl. How she must hate Evelyn! Osler was right when he said everybody should be chloroformed at forty . . . women anyhow. What a sight Rhea Bailey is . . . those big, gaunt girls should never wear flimsy dresses . . .

"For better, for worse" . . . that sounds wonderful, but . . . is there really such a thing as love in the world? I used to believe it. Before I married Ramsay I used to lie awake nights and think about him. Well, I did it after we were married, too, but not for the same reason. I wonder how his new marriage is turning out.

Well, it's over . . . I give them three years before the divorce.

Mother of bride, thinking, rather disconnectedly:

I *won't* cry . . . I've always said I wouldn't cry when my girls got married . . . but *what* are we going to do without darling Evelyn? Thank goodness, Jim hasn't got in the wrong place . . . Evie does look rather pale . . . I *told* her she should make up a little. I remember I was a dreadful brick red while I was being married . . . of course, a bride who made up in those days would have been beyond the pale . . . Marnie looks very well . . . happiness becomes the child . . .

How wonderfully everything has turned out! I never liked Evie's engagement to Elmer . . . though he is such a dear boy . . . I always felt her heart wasn't in it . . . but Marnie loves him . . . it's too bad he couldn't have been here . . . but, of course, it would have looked queer . . . people wouldn't have understood . . . it would never do to announce the engagement yet . . .

I always loved Darcy . . . he isn't rich . . . but they won't be any poorer than Jim and I were when we started out . . . It seems like yesterday that we had Evie's coming-out tea . . . how sweet she was . . . just shy enough to seem really like a bud.

Patricia Miller and that artist son of hers are here after all . . . I do hope he won't be annoyed because we didn't hang the picture he sent . . . but we really couldn't tell which was right side up.

I hope the reception will go off nicely . . . I hope they won't notice the worn place in the hall carpet . . . I hope the bills won't be too terrible. I didn't want all those roses in the reception room . . . but Jim was so determined his daughter should have a nice wedding. Dear Jim, he's always worshiped his girls . . . we've been very happy, he and I, though we've had our ups and downs . . . he's pronouncing them man and wife . . . I won't cry . . . I *won't* . . .

Mother of the groom, calmly reflecting:

My darling boy! How well he looks! I don't know if she's just the one I'd have chosen for him . . . but if he's happy! If his dear father could have lived to see this day! I'm glad I decided on that black-walnut dining-room furniture in the Dutch design for my present . . . I had only one bridesmaid when I was married . . . she wore a picture hat of white lace and tulle with a drooping brim . . . Darcy is kissing his wife . . . she has a sweet face . . . she *does* love him What would the world be without youth?

Father of the bride, thinking:

My little girl looks very beautiful. A trifle pale . . . but I never like a made-up bride. Thank heaven decent skirts are in again. It doesn't seem long since Amy and I were standing like that. Evie isn't so pretty a bride as her mother was, after all. That dress becomes Amy . . . she looks as young as any of them . . . a wonderful woman. I suppose we'll soon have to face the loss of Marnie too. Well, well, mother and I were alone once, and I guess we can stand being alone again.

The best man, thinking:

You'll never see me in a scrape like this . . . though that little bridesmaid *is cute* . . . slant eyes like a fairy's . . . twinkling like a little dark star . . . but he travels the fastest who travels alone. Bride looks a bit icy . . . rather like a cool white nun.

Wonder why Darcy's so goofy about her. The gods grant my shoes don't creak going down the aisle, like Hal Crowder's did . . . and that I won't drop the wedding ring, like Joe Raynor . . . it rolled to the feet of the very girl the groom had jilted. They've done the decorations rather well.

It's over . . . Darcy's sewed up . . . poor Darcy!

Maid of honor, thinking:

How lonesome it's going to be without darling Evie . . . she's always been so sweet to me. But I'll have Elmer. I *can't* understand how Evie could ever have preferred Darcy to him, but am I thankful she did! Darcy's a good egg . . . though I never could bear the way he laughs. He sounds so sneery, though he doesn't mean to.

Oh, it's dreadful . . . and wonderful . . . and heavenly to love anyone as I love Elmer! We Marches care so horribly when we do care. Those awful weeks when I thought he was going to marry Evie! To think I ever called him a magazine-ad man! Oh, I hope I won't get any fatter . . . I'll take nothing but orange juice for breakfast after this. That *must* make some difference.

What a bombshell it would be if Elmer and I were getting married today, too, as he wanted. But I had to get my breath after finding myself engaged to him . . . we won't have a fuss like this anyway . . . Oh, how frightfully solemn the service is . . . "until death you do part" . . . Does that make me thrill! Oh, Elmer!

The groom, thinking:

Will she really come, after the beastly way I've treated her? Jealous young idiot! I suppose Mollie's somewhere back there . . . God bless her . . . *she's coming!* And I have to stand here like a stick instead of rushing to meet her and crushing her in my arms! . . . How beautiful she is! . . . God help me to make her happy . . . make me worthy of her . . . "I will" . . . it's over . . . she's my wife . . . *my wife!* . . .

The bride, thinking:

Is this just some wonderful dream . . . will I wake up presently and find I've got to marry Elmer? Oh, if anything were to happen yet to prevent it . . . the minister dropping dead . . . To think he always loved me when I thought he hated me . . . Oh, just suppose Mollie hadn't caught him!

Marnie looks so sweet. I hope she'll be almost as happy a bride as I am . . . she couldn't be *quite* so happy, of course . . . nobody could.

How beautifully solemn this is . . . Oh, his voice saying "I will" . . . "*I will*" . . . There, I hope everybody heard me . . . no bride in the world ever said it more gladly . . . *I am his wife!*

Reverend Conrad Stephens, thinking:

I have a feeling these two people I have just married are perfectly happy. What a pity one has this feeling so seldom.

Mary Hamilton, age fifty-five, to her crony Nora Connor:

"Sure and one advantage av the back sate is ye can be seeing iverybody and iverything without getting a crick in yer neck. Evie, bless her heart, did be wanting me to sit up in front wid the rist av the guests, but I know me place better than that.

"It's the proud and happy woman I am this blissed day, Nora Connor. I've been seeing a miracle happen . . . siveral av thim, in fact. Like iverything else they do be going by threes. It's little I was ixpecting innything like this two months ago, wid me pet going to marry the wrong wan and Marnie breaking her liddle heart and iverything so crisscross I did think the Good Man Above couldn't be straightening it out Himsilf.

"There niver was innyone but Evie for Darcy and niver innyone but Darcy for Evie, and don't iver be letting innyone tell ye different, Nora Connor. Oh, yes, I know they did be fighting all their lives. That's some folks' way o' courting. They wouldn't be fighting if they didn't be caring.

"They did begin it the first day they iver saw each other, whin he was tin and she was siven, and she flung a big gob av mud at him bekase he was taken up wid a liddle cousin av his that mad eyes at him. Thin he turned the hose on her. Oh, oh, the tithery-i we did be having!

"And ivery summer the same, whin we wint to the lake. The way they did be fighting was a family joke, wid him spiling her hand pies . . . just bekase he did be thinking she was more int'risted in thim than in him . . . and her knocking over his sand castles for the same reason . . . though she didn't know it hersilf.

"And no better whin they did be growing up . . . worse if innything, wid her mocking and twitting him, and him sneering at her . . . both av thim going white wid jealousy whiniver ayther av thim looked at innybody ilse. The tantrums they'd be

taking whin they would not spake to one another for wakes! Iverbody thought they hated each other . . . iverbody but ould Mollie Hamilton, cooking in the kitchen and fading thim up whin they crept in for a snack in the odd times when they was on fair terms.

Didn't I be seeing how it was? . . . Him crazy mad about her and thinking she had no use for him, and her up to her pretty eyes in love wid him and thinking she was the last girl he'd iver look at. But thinks I, 'They're young, and it'll all come right in the ind,' and in the manetime better a clane fight than the moonlighting and flirting and petting that wint on wid the rist av the summer fry. Sure and I used to laugh at the spitting and snarling av thim so much I didn't be nading a dose av midicine once a year.

'But in the ind, Nora darling, it didn't be inny laughing matter; for they did have a tarrible quarrel, and Darcy wint off to college without making up. He niver come home for two years, and it's worried I was; for the time was passing, and him such a gr-r-rand young man wid thim smoky gray eyes av him. Evie hild her head high and pretended she didn't care; but the years did be slipping, and her frinds marrying off, and the world getting big and lonely.

'Thin last winter she ups and goes to the city for a visit, and comes home engaged to Elmer Owen. Ye could av knocked me down wid a feather, Nora Connor! For I did be knowing she didn't love him.

'"He's my choice, Mollie," she says, grandlike. 'Oh, oh! If ye have to choose him, he's not the right man,' sez I. 'There's no ch'ice wid the right man,' sez I. 'Ye just *belong*'—like Darcy and yersilf, I'd av liked to add, but dassn't.

'Av coorse iveryone begun saying she was taking Elmer bekase he was a millionaire, and talking av it as a wonderful match for her, till I could av died wid rage and spite. I was all built up to hate me fine Elmer whin he come in June. But I couldn't kape it up, for he was a rale nice liddle chap in spite av his money, and we all liked him, aven Evie.

Marnie hild off a bit at first . . . ah, there's the gr-r-rand girl for ye, Nora Connor. Evie is be way av being me favorite, bekase I looked after her whin she was a baby and her mother so sick . . . sure and she's always seemed like me own.

'But Marnie's a swate thing, and whin she took to moping, it worried me. She couldn't bear the talk av the widding . . . and me thinking it was bekase she felt so bad over Evie's going and maybe a bit sore at Elmer bekase he said, 'Hello, gypsy,' whin Evie introduced thim. 'Hello, magazine-ad man,' sez Marnie. It's the blind thing

I was, Nora Connor, but whin ye look back on things ye can see thim as ye couldn't whin they was under yer nose. Though I couldn't put me finger on what was missing.

"Innyway, iverything was smooth as crame on top, and they got all their plans made, and Elmer wint back to the city. And after he was gone, I wint into Marnie's room to swape, thinking she was out, and there she was sitting crying . . . crying so pretty . . . no noise . . . only just the big tears rolling down her nice liddle brown chakes.

"Darlint, what do be wrong?" sez I. 'Oh, nothing much,' sez she, 'only I'm in love wid the man me sister's going to marry . . . and I'm to be her maid av honor . . . and I wish I was dead, Mollie dear.'

"Was I tuk aback, Nora Connor? I was. Nothing could I think av to say, only, stupidlike, 'There's a lot av min in the world, darlint. Why be getting in such a pother over one?' 'Bekase he's the only one for me,' sez me poor Marnie. 'But ye nadn't worry, Mollie. Evelyn isn't going to know this. Oh, oh, Mollie,' she sez, getting recklesslike, 'whin I saw him first I said "magazine-ad" man, and now I could kiss his shoes. But no one'll iver know it ixcept you, Mollie, and if you iver tell, I'll slaughter you in cold blood.'

"Tell, was it? If I could av done inny good by telling, I'd av told fast enough; but I couldn't, so I hild me tongue. And thin, on top av all that, as soon as the engagement was announced, comes me fine Darcy, raging mad but cold as ice. I did be hearing it all as they fought it out on the verandy. Short and swate it was.

Are ye going to sell yersilf for money? I'll not belave it until I hear it from yer own lips,' sez he. 'I'm going to marry Elmer Owen,' sez Evie, 'and I love him.' 'Ye lie,' sez Darcy . . . Not over-polite, Nora Connor, was it now? . . . And Evie sez, icier than himself, and white wid rage, 'Get out av me sight, Darcy Phillips, and stay out av it!' 'I'll take ye at yer word,' sez Darcy. 'I'm going to New York tonight, and ye'll niver see me again, Evelyn March.'

"Did ye iver be seeing the like?

"Wid that he wint. And me poor pet comes inty me kitchen and looks at me, still holding her head high but wid a face like death. 'He's gone, Mollie,' she sez, 'and he'll niver come back. And I wish I was dead.'

"Do ye want him to come back?" sez I. 'No lies now, me pet. A lie do be a rifuge I'm not blaming inny woman for taking betimes, but this do be too sarious for it. Iverything's snarled up, and I'm going to straighten it out wid a jerk, but I'm wanting to know where I stand first.'

"I do want him back . . . and he's the only one I've iver loved or iver will love

. . . There's the truth for you at last. But it's too late. His train laves in fifteen minutes. I wudn't give in . . . me pride wudn't let me . . . and he's gone . . . he's gone!

I'd picked that day to clane me oil stove, and was by way av being a sight, Nora Connor; but I had no time to change inty me latest from Paris. Out I wint to the garage . . . inty the liddle runabout I hops.

"I tuk a pace off the garage door as I backed out, and just shaved the lily pond; but me only worry was could I be getting to the station afore that train wint. Niver could I do it be the highway, but there did be a witch's road I knew av.

"Down the highway I wint at the rate av no man's business, thanking hiven there was no speed cops in sight . . . niver before did I have the satisfaction av hitting it up to sivinty. Just afore I reached me side cut I did be seeing a black cat looking as if he intinded to cross the road, and me heart stood still. But luck was wid me, for he changed his mind and I slewed round into me cut.

"'Twas by way av being a gr-r-and ride, Nora Connor. Niver will I be knowing the like agin, I'm thinking. I skimmed over a plowed field and tore through a brook and up a muddy lane and through the back yard av the Wilson farmhouse.

"I'm swearing I motored slap inty a cow, though where she wint whin I struck her I'll niver be telling ye. I slipped through the haystacks, and I wint right over an acre av sparrowgrass wid no bumps to spake av . . . and thin up looms a spruce hedge and a wire fence beyant it.

"I mint to stop and run for it . . . the station was just on the other side . . . but I was a bit icensed like, and did be putting me foot in the accelerator instid av the brake. I wint slap through the hedge and the fince and bang inty the ind av the station. But the hedge and the fince had slowed me up a bit and no rale harm was done the station.

"Darcy was just stepping on the train. I grabbed him by the arm and I sez, 'Darcy Phillips, Evelyn do be breaking her liddle heart for ye and ye get straight back to her . . . and if I iver hear of inny more jawing and fighting betwane ye, I'll give ye both a good spanking, for it's clane tired I am av all yer nonsense and misunderstanding. It's time ye both grew up. Now, not one yap out av ye,' sez I, 'but do as ye're told.'

"Well, ye can be seeing for yirsilf what come av it. The insurance company was rale rasonable . . . but ye haven't heard the whole wonder. Whin Evie told Elmer she couldn't iver be marrying him bekase she was going to marry Darcy, he tuk it rale cool and just said, 'He's the brother-in-law I'd have picked.'

She didn't know what he was maning. But he turned up the nixt wake wid his fine blue car and its shining wire wheels; and I've been hearing that the moment he did be seeing Marnie first, whin he come to plan the widding wid Evie, he knew he'd made a mistake, but he was too much av a gintleman to let on. He'd have gone through wid it widout moving a single hair if he'd had to.

“Here they come . . . sure and me pet lights up the church . . . so just be shutting up yer yap, Nora Connor, till they're married safe . . .

“That do be a load lifted from me mind. Do ye be coming home wid me, Nora Connor, and having a cup av tay in me kitchen, and I'll see ye get a sight av the prisints. Did ye iver see a prettier bride? It's mesilf that's knowing there niver was a happier one. Poor, is it? Have sinse, Nora Connor. I'm telling ye they're rich beyant the drames av avarice.”

TRANSCRIBER NOTES

Mis-spelled words and printer errors have been fixed.

[The end of *Here Comes the Bride* by L. M. (Lucy Maud) Montgomery]