

The Matchmaker

Lucy Maud Montgomery

The Canadian Home Journal
September 1919

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The Matchmaker

L. M. Montgomery

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“There is not a single baby in Lancaster,” said Mrs. Churchill. “There is not one young married couple in Lancaster. And, what’s worse, nobody is getting married or has any notion of getting married. It’s a disheartening state of affairs.”

Mrs. Churchill was talking to her friend, Mrs. Mildred Burnham, as they sat on her verandah in the clear, spring twilight. They were both middle-aged widows and had been chums since they had shared the same desk at school. Mrs. Burnham was a tall, thin lady, who admitted that she had a sensitive disposition. Mrs. Churchill, who was a large, placid, slow-moving person, never jarred on this sensitiveness; so they were very fond of each other.

“Well,” said Mrs. Burnham, “all the people who have been married in Lancaster for the last ten years have gone away. Just now there doesn’t seem to be any candidates. What young folks there are hereabouts are *too* young—except Alden Churchill and this new niece of yours—what’s her name?”

“Stella Chase.”

“Now, if *they* would take a notion to each other?” suggested Mrs. Burnham.

Mrs. Churchill gazed earnestly at the rose in her filet crochet. She had already made up her mind that her nephew Alden should marry her niece Stella, but matchmaking is something requiring subtlety and discretion, and there are things you do not tell, even to your intimate friend.

“I don’t suppose there’s much chance of that,” she said, “and if they did it wouldn’t be any use. Mary will never let Alden marry as long as she can keep him from it—the property is hers until he marries and then it goes to him, you know. And as for Richard, he has never let poor Stella have a beau in her life. All the young men who ever tried to come to see her he simply terrified out of their senses with sarcasm. He is the most sarcastic creature you ever heard of. Stella can’t manage him—her mother before her couldn’t manage him. They didn’t know how. He goes by contraries, but neither of them ever seemed to catch on to that.”

“I thought Miss Chase seemed very devoted to her father.”

“Oh, she is. She adores him. He is a most agreeable man when he gets his own way about everything. He and I get on beautifully. *I* know the secret of coming it over him. I’m real glad they’ve moved up here from Clancy. They’re such company for me. Stella is a very sweet girl. I always loved her, and her mother was my favorite sister. Poor Lisette!”

“She died young?”

“Yes—when Stella was only eight. Richard brought Stella up himself. I don’t wonder they’re everything to each other. But he should have more sense about

Stella's marrying. He must know he can't live forever—though to hear him talk you'd think he meant to; he's an old man—he wasn't young when he married. And what is Stella to do after he's gone? Just shrivel up, I suppose."

"It's a shame," agreed Mrs. Burnham. "I don't hold with old folks spoiling young folks' lives like that."

"And Alden's another whose life is going to be spoiled. Mary is *determined* he shan't marry. Every time he's gone about with a girl she puts a stop to it somehow."

"Do you s'pose it's all her doings?" queried Mrs. Burnham, rather drily. "Some folks think Alden is very changeable. I've heard him called a flirt."

"Alden is handsome and the girls chase him," cried Mrs. Churchill, up in arms against any criticism of her favorite. "I don't blame him for stringing them along a bit and dropping them when he's taught them a lesson. But there's been one or two nice girls he really liked and Mary just blocked it every time. She told me so herself—told me she went to the Bible—she's always 'going to the Bible,' you know—and turned up a verse, and every time it was a warning against Alden getting married. I've no patience with her and her odd ways. Why can't she go to church and be a decent creature like the rest of us in Lancaster? But no, she must set up a religion for herself, consisting of 'going to the Bible.' Last fall, when that valuable horse took sick—worth four hundred if he was a dollar—instead of sending for the Clancy vet. as we all begged her to do she 'went to the Bible'—and turned up a verse, 'The Lord gave and the Lord taketh away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.' So send for the vet. she would not—and the horse died. Fancy applying that verse in such a way! I call it irreverent."

Mrs. Churchill paused, being rather out of breath. Her sister-in-law's vagaries always made her impatient.

"Alden isn't much like his mother," said Mrs. Burnham.

"Alden's like his father—a finer man never stepped. Why he ever married Mary was something we could never fathom. Of course, she had lots of money but *that* wasn't the reason. George was really in love with her. I don't know how Alden stands his mother's whims. *He* rather plumes himself on his liberal views—believes in evolution and that sort of stuff. Going, are you? What's your hurry?"

"Well," sighed Mrs. Burnham. "I find that if I'm out in the dew much my neuralgia troubles me considerable. We're getting old, Ellen."

"To be sure we are," agreed Mrs. Churchill. "*My* rheumatism takes hold this spring, too, if I'm not mighty careful. Good-night—mind the step."

Mrs. Churchill continued rocking on her verandah, crocheting, and plotting.

When her brother-in-law, Richard Chase, had moved from Clancy to Lancaster, Mrs. Churchill had been delighted. She was very fond of Stella and, as Clancy was ten miles away, she had never been able to see as much of her as she wished. And she had made up her mind that Stella and Alden Churchill must be married off to each other by hook or by crook. Stella was twenty-four and Alden was thirty and it was high time they were married, so Mrs. Churchill thought.

“I’ve no doubt I can bring it about,” she said to herself. “But I’ll have to be careful—it would never do to let one of them suspect a thing. It’s going to mean a lot of trouble and bother—and some fibbing, as well, I’m afraid. But it’s all in a good cause. Neither Alden nor Stella will ever get married to anybody if I don’t lend a hand, that’s certain. And they won’t take a fancy to each other without some help, that’s equally certain. Stella isn’t the kind of girl Alden *thinks* he fancies—he imagines he likes the high-colored, laughing ones. But we’ll see, Ellen,—we’ll see. I know how to deal with pigheaded people of all sorts.”

Mrs. Churchill laughed comfortably. Then she decided she must get to work at once. Stella had been living in Lancaster for three weeks and the new minister was casting sheep’s eyes at her. Mrs. Churchill had caught him at it. She did not like *him*—he was too anaemic and short-sighted—she was not going to help *him* to Stella. Besides, Alden, who hadn’t been dangling after any girl all winter, might begin at any moment. There was a new and handsome school-teacher down on the Base Line Road and spring was a dangerous time. If Alden began a new flirtation he would have no eyes for Stella.

As yet, they were not even acquainted. The first thing to do was to have them meet each other. How was this to be managed? It must be brought about in some way absolutely innocent in appearance. Mrs. Churchill racked her kindly brains but could think of only one way. She must give a party and invite them both. She did not like the way. She was intensely proud of her beautiful, beautifully-kept house, with its nice furnishings and the old heirlooms that had come down to her through three generations. She hated the thought of its being torn up by preparations for a party and desecrated by a horde of young romps. The Lancaster boys and girls were such romps. But a good cause demands sacrifices. Mrs. Churchill sent out her invitations, alleging that she was giving the party as a farewell send-off for her cousin Alice’s daughter, Janet, who was going away to teach in the city. Janet, who hadn’t expected Aunt Ellen to come out like this, was rather pleased. But Mrs. Churchill’s other cousin, Elizabeth, two of whose daughters had gone away without any such farewell party, was bitterly jealous and offended, and never forgave Ellen.

Mrs. Churchill cleaned her house from attic to cellar for the event and did all the cooking for the supper herself, help being impossible to get in Lancaster. She was woefully tired the night before the party. Every bone in her body ached, her head ached, her eyes ached. But instead of going to bed she sat out on the verandah, in the chilly spring night, and talked to Alden, who had dropped in, but would not go into the house. Mrs. Churchill was very anxious to have a talk with him, so she braved the damp and the chill.

Alden sat on the verandah steps with his bare head thrown back against the post. He was, as his aunt had said, a very handsome fellow—tall, broad-shouldered, with a marble-white face, that never tanned, and dead-black hair and eyes. He had a laughing, velvety voice which no girl could hear without a heart-beat, and a dangerous way of listening to a woman—*any* woman—as if she were saying something he had thirsted all his life to hear. He had gone to Midland Academy for three years and had thought of going to college. But his mother refused to let him go, alleging Biblical reasons, and Alden had settled down contentedly enough on the farm. He liked farming; it was free, out-of-doors, independent work; he had his mother's knack of making money and his father's attractive personality. It was no wonder he was considered a matrimonial prize.

"Alden, I want to ask a favor of you," said Mrs. Churchill. "Will you do it for me?"

"Sure, Aunt Ellen," he answered heartily. "Just name it. You know I'd do anything for you." Alden was very fond of his Aunt Ellen and would really have done a good deal for her.

"I'm afraid it will bore you," said Mrs. Churchill anxiously. "But it's just this—I want you to see that Stella Chase has a good time at the party to-morrow night. I'm so afraid she won't. She doesn't know the young people here—and they're all so much younger than she is—at least the boys are. Ask her to dance and see that she isn't left alone and out of things. She's so shy with strangers. I do want her to have a good time."

"Oh, I'll do my best," said Alden readily.

"But you mustn't fall in love with her, you know," said Mrs. Churchill, laughing carefully.

"Have a heart, Aunt Ellen. Why not?"

"I'm in earnest. It wouldn't do at all, Alden."

"Why not?" persisted Alden.

"Well"—confidentially—"I think the new minister has taken quite a shine to her."

“That conceited young ass!” exploded Alden, with unexpected warmth.

Mrs. Churchill looked mild rebuke.

“Why, Alden, he’s a very nice young man—*so* clever and well-educated. It’s only that kind of man who would have any chance at all with Stella’s father, you know.”

“That so?” asked Alden, relapsing into his indifference.

“Yes: and I don’t even know if *he* would. Richard thinks there’s nobody alive good enough for Stella. He simply wouldn’t let her *look* at a farmer like you. So I don’t want you to make trouble for yourself falling in love with a girl you could never get. I’m just giving you a friendly warning.”

“Oh, thanks—thanks! What sort of a girl is she anyhow? Looks good?”

“If you’d gone to church as often as you should, Alden, you’d have seen her before now. She’s not a beauty. Stella is my favorite niece but I can see what she lacks. She’s pale and delicate—she’d never do for a farmer’s wife. That’s why I’d like to see her and the minister make a match of it. To be sure, she’s too fond of dress—she’s positively extravagant. But they say Mr. Paxton has money of his own. To my thinking, it would be an ideal match, and that’s why I don’t want you to spoil it.”

“Why didn’t you invite Paxton to your spree and tell him to give Stella a good time?” demanded Alden rather truculently.

“You know I couldn’t ask the minister to a dance, Alden. Now, don’t be cranky—and do see that Stella has a nice time.”

“Oh, I’ll see that she has a rip-roaring time. Good-night, Aunt Ellen.”

Alden swung off abruptly. Left alone, Mrs. Churchill chuckled.

“Now, if *I* know anything of human nature, that boy will sail right in to show me and Richard that he can get Stella if he wants her, in spite of us. And he rose right to my bait about the minister. I declare, it’s easy to manage men if you’re half cute. Dear me, this shoulder of mine is starting up. I suppose I’ll have a bad night.”

She had a rather bad night, but the next evening she was a gallant and smiling hostess. Her party was a success. Everybody seemed to have a good time. Stella certainly had. Alden saw to that—almost too zealously for good form, his aunt thought. It was going a little too strong for a first meeting that after supper Alden should whisk Stella off to a dim corner of the verandah and keep her there for an hour. But, on the whole, Mrs. Churchill was satisfied when she thought things over the next morning. To be sure, the parlor carpet had been practically ruined by two spilled saucerfuls of ice-cream: her grandmother’s Bristol glass candlesticks had

been broken to smithereens; and one of the girls had upset a pitcherful of rainwater in the spareroom which had soaked downwards and discolored the dining-room ceiling in a tragic fashion; but on the credit side of the ledger was the fact that, unless all signs failed, Alden had fallen in love with Stella. Mrs. Churchill thought the balance was in her favor.

Later, on, she discovered another and more serious debit item. In a fortnight it transpired that Mrs. Burnham was deeply offended because she had not been asked to the party. That it was strictly a young people's party, and that no elderly people were invited, did not matter. Mrs. Burnham's sensitive nature was terribly hurt, and she told sundry neighbors that she would never feel the same to Ellen Churchill again. She came no more for friendly evening calls and was frostily polite when they met elsewhere, Mrs. Churchill was very blue about it. She missed Mildred terribly, though she thought she was absurdly unreasonable. But she was repaid on the evening she came upon Alden and Stella, loitering along arm in arm in the leafy by-road east of the village which Lancaster folks called Lover's Lane. Mrs. Churchill perked right up. She had not been able to find out if her party had produced any lasting results. Now it was evident things were going all right. Alden was caught; but what about Stella? Mrs. Churchill knew that her niece was not the sort of girl to fall ripely into any young man's outstretched hand. She had a spice of her father's contrariness, which in her worked out in a charming independence.

Stella came to see her aunt the next evening and they sat on the verandah steps. Beside Stella the big "bridal wreath" shrub banked up on its June-tide whiteness, making a beautiful background for the girl. Stella was a pale, slender thing, shy but intensely sweet. She had large, purplish-grey eyes, with very black lashes and brows, and when she was excited a wild-rose hue spread over her cheeks. She was not considered pretty but nobody ever forgot her face.

"I was very sorry to see you strolling in Lover's Lane with Alden Churchill yesterday evening, Stella," said Mrs. Churchill severely.

Stella turned a startled face towards her aunt.

"Why?"

"He isn't the right kind of beau for you at all, Stella."

"He is your nephew, Aunt Ellen—and I thought you were so fond of him."

"He's my nephew by marriage—and I like him well enough. But he's not good enough for you, Stella. He has no *family* behind him. Why, his mother's grandfather *hanged himself*; and her father made his money hawking a medicine he concocted himself around the country. The Churchills all felt dreadful bad when George

Churchill married her—and the Churchills themselves weren't strong on family. I have to admit that, though I did marry one myself. But that's not the worst. Alden's awfully fickle, Stella. No girl can hold him long. Lots have tried and they all failed. I don't want to see you left like that the minute his fancy veers. Now, just take your aunty's advice, darling, and have nothing to do with him. You know how fond and proud of you I am."

"I know you've always been awfully good to me, Aunt Ellen," said Stella slowly, "but I think you're mistaken about Alden."

"No fear. I've known him for thirty years and you've known him for two weeks: Which of us is most likely to understand him? He'll act as if he was mad about you for a few months and then he'll drop you. You can't hold him—you're not his type. He likes the bouncing, jolly girls—like the Base Line teacher for example."

"Oh—well—I must be going home," said Stella vaguely. "Father will be lonesome."

When she had gone, Mrs. Churchill chuckled again.

"Now, if *I* know anything of human nature, Miss Stella has gone off, vowing she'll show meddling old aunts that she *can* hold Alden, and that no Base Line schoolma'am shall ever get her claws on him. That little toss of her head and that flush on her cheeks told me that. *I* can read these young geese like a book."

When it became a matter of common gossip that Alden Churchill was "going with" Stella Chase Mrs. Churchill looked out of her door one night with a sigh.

"The wind is east and I wish I could stay home to-night and nurse my rheumatism but I must go a-matchmaking. It's high time I tried my hand on Mary. She'll be the hardest nut to crack. But *I* know how to tackle her. Everyone has a weak point and I found Mary's out long ago."

The Churchill farm was a mile and a half from Lancaster, and Mrs. Churchill was very tired when she got there. Mrs. Mary Churchill did not welcome her too effusively either—she never did. The two sisters-in-law had never cared much for each other. But Aunt Ellen did not worry over Mary's coolness. She sat down in a rocker and took out her file, while Mary sat opposite to her in a stiff-backed chair, folded her long thin hands, and gazed steadily at her. Mary Churchill was tall and thin and austere. She had a prominent chin and a long, compressed mouth. She never wasted words and she never gossiped. So Ellen found it somewhat difficult to work up to her subject naturally, but she managed it through the medium of the new minister, whom Mary did not like.

"He is not a spiritual man," said Mary coldly. "He believes the kingdom of

heaven can be taken by brains. It cannot.”

“He’s a very clever young fellow,” said Ellen, rocking placidly. “His sermons are remarkable.”

“I heard but one and do not wish to hear more. My soul sought food and was given a lecture.”

“Oh, well, Mary, you know other people don’t think and feel as you do. Mr. Paxton is a fine young man. He has quite a notion of my niece Stella Chase, too. I’m hoping it will be a match.”

“Do you mean a marriage?” asked Mary.

Ellen shrugged her plump shoulders.

“Now, Mary, you understand what I mean well enough. And it would be just the thing. Stella is especially fitted to be a minister’s wife. By the way, I hear that Alden is going with her a bit. You ought to put a stop to that, Mary.”

“Why?” asked Mary, without the flicker of an eyelid.

“Because it isn’t a bit of use,” responded Ellen energetically. “He could never get her in this world. Her father doesn’t think anyone is good enough for her—except a minister or doctor or something like that. He’d show a plain farmer to the door in a moment. You’d better tell Alden to give up all notion of Stella Chase, Mary. He’ll find himself thrown over before long and made a laughing stock of, if he doesn’t. Look at all the girls that have flirted with him and then dropped him. If that goes on much longer he’ll never get a decent wife. No nice girl wants shopworn goods.”

“No girl ever dropped my son,” said Mary, compressing her thin lips. “It was always the other way about. My son could marry any woman he chose—any woman, Ellen Churchill.”

“Oh!” said Ellen’s tongue. Her tone said, “of course I am too polite to contradict you but you have not changed my opinion.” Mary Churchill understood the tone and her white, shrivelled face warmed a little. Ellen went away soon after, very well satisfied with the interview.

“Of course, one can’t count on Mary,” she reflected, “but if *I* know anything of human nature I’ve worried her a little. She doesn’t like the idea of folks thinking Alden is the jilted one. I s’pose she’s busy turning up Bible verses now to solve the problem. Lord, how my shoulders ache! East winds were invented by the old Nick. But I feel I’ve done Alden and Stella a good turn to-night. There’s only Richard to manipulate now. I wonder if he has the slightest idea that Stella and Alden are going together. Not likely. Stella would never dare take Alden to the house, of course. I’ll tackle Richard next week.”

Mrs. Churchill tackled him, according to programme. He was sitting in his little library reading, but he put his book aside when his sister-in-law came in. He was always courteous to her and they got on surprisingly well. He was a small, thin man, with an unkempt shock of grey hair and little, twinkling, deep-set eyes.

Ellen sat down but said she could not stay long—she had just run up to borrow Stella’s recipe for snow pudding.

“I’ll sit a minute to cool off. It’s dreadful hot to-night. Likely there’ll be a thunderstorm. Mercy, that cat is bigger than ever!”

Richard Chase had a familiar in the shape of a huge black cat. It always sat on the arm of his chair while he read. When he put his book away it climbed over into his lap. He stroked it tenderly.

“Lucifer gives the world assurance of a cat,” he said. “Don’t you, Lucifer? Look at your Aunt Ellen, Lucifer—observe the baleful glances she is casting upon you, from orbs created to express only kindness and affection.”

“Don’t you call me that beast’s Aunt Ellen,” protested Mrs. Churchill sharply. “A joke’s a joke, but that is carrying things too far.”

“Wouldn’t you rather be Lucifer’s aunt than Neddy Churchill’s aunt?” queried Richard Chase plaintively. “Neddy Churchill is a glutton and a wine-bibber, isn’t he? You’ve often given me a catalogue of his crimes. Wouldn’t you rather be aunt to a fine, up-standing cat like Lucifer with a blameless record where whiskey and tabbies are concerned?”

“Poor Ned is a human being,” retorted Mrs. Churchill. “I can’t abide cats. It’s the only fault I have to find with Alden Churchill. He’s got the strangest liking for cats, too. Lord knows where he got it—his mother and father loathed them as I do.”

“What a sensible young man he must be,” said Richard Chase ironically.

“Sensible! Well, he’s sensible enough—except in the matter of cats and evolution—another thing he didn’t inherit from his mother!”

“Do you know, Ellen,” said Richard Chase solemnly, “I have a secret leaning towards evolution myself.”

“So you’ve told me for the last thirty years,” retorted Mrs. Churchill. “Well, believe what you like, Richard. Thank God, nobody could ever make *me* believe that I was descended from a monkey.”

“You don’t look it, I confess, you comely woman,” said Richard Chase. “I see no simian resemblances in your rosy, comfortable, eminently respectable physiognomy. Still, your great-grandmother a million times removed swung herself from branch to branch by her tail. Science proves that, Ellen—like it or leave it.”

“I’ll leave it then. I’m not going to argue with you on that or any point. I’ve got

my own religion and no ape-ancestors figure in *it*. By the way, Richard, Stella doesn't look as well this summer as I'd like to see her."

"She always feels the hot weather a good deal. She'll pick up when it's cooler."

"I hope so. Loretta picked up every summer but the last, Richard, don't forget that. Stella has her mother's constitution. She's far from strong. It's just as well she isn't likely to marry."

"Why isn't she likely to marry? I asked from curiosity, Ellen—rank curiosity. The processes of feminine thought are intensely interesting to me. From what premises or data do you draw the conclusion, in your own delightful, off-hand way, that Stella is not likely to marry?"

"Well, Richard, to put it plainly, she isn't the kind of girl that is popular with the men. She's a dear, sweet, good girl but she doesn't take with them."

"She has had admirers. I have spent much of my substance in the purchase and maintenance of shot guns and bull dogs."

"They admired your money bags, I fancy. They were easily discouraged, too. Just one broadside of sarcasm from you and off they went. If they had really wanted Stella they wouldn't have wilted for that—any more than for your imaginary bull dogs. No, Richard, we might as well admit that Stella isn't the girl to win desirable beaus—especially when she's getting on in years. Loretta wasn't, you know. She never had a beau till you came along."

"But wasn't I worth waiting for? Surely Loretta was a wise young woman. You would not have me give my daughter to any Tom, Dick or Harry, would you—my Star, who, despite your somewhat disparaging remarks, is fit to shine in the palaces of kings?"

"We have no kings in this country," said Mrs. Churchill, getting up. "I'm not saying Stella isn't a lovely girl. I'm only saying the men are not likely to see it, and considering her constitution, I think it is decidedly a good thing. A good thing for you, too. You could never get on without her, you'd be as helpless as a baby. Well, I'm off. I know you are dying to get back to that book of yours."

"Admirable, clear-sighted woman! What a treasure you are for a sister-in-law! I admit it—I am dying. But no other but yourself would have been perspicacious enough to see it or amiable enough to save my life by acting upon it. Good-evening, pearl-of-in-laws."

"Of course, there's never any knowing what effect anything you've said has had on him," mused Mrs. Churchill, as she went down the street. "But if I know anything of human nature, he didn't like the idea of Stella not being popular with the men any too well, in spite of the fact that their grandfathers were monkeys. I think he'd like to

show me! Well, I've done all I can—I've interested Alden and Stella in each other and I've made Mary and Richard rather anxious for the match than otherwise. And now I'll just sit tight and watch how things go."

Two evenings later Stella came up to see her Aunt Ellen. It was a hot, smoky evening, so they sat on the verandah steps again. Stella seemed absent-minded and quiet. Presently she said abruptly, looking the while at a crystal-white star hanging over the Lombardy at the gate.

"Aunt Ellen, I want to tell you something."

"Yes, dear?"

"I am engaged to Alden Churchill," said Stella desperately. "We've been engaged ever since last Christmas. We've kept it secret just because it was so sweet to have such a secret. But we are going to be married next month."

Mrs. Churchill dropped her crochet and looked at Stella, who still continued to stare at the star. So she did not see the expression on her aunt's face. She went on, a little more easily.

"Alden and I met at a party in Clancy last September. We—we loved each other from the very first moment. He said he had always dreamed of me—had always been looking for me. He said to himself, 'There is my wife,' when he saw me come in at the door. And I—just felt the same. Oh, we are so happy, Aunt Ellen. The only cloud on our happiness has been your attitude about the matter."

"Bless me!" said Mrs. Churchill feebly.

"Won't you try to approve, Aunt Ellen? You've been like a mother to me. I'll feel so badly if I have to marry against your wish."

There was a sound of tears in Stella's voice. Mrs. Churchill picked her filet up blindly.

"Why—I don't care, child. I like Alden—he's a splendid fellow—only he has had the reputation of being a flirt——"

"But he isn't. He was just looking for the right one, don't you see, Auntie?—and he couldn't find her."

"How will your father regard it?"

"Oh, father is greatly pleased. He has known it all along. He took to Alden from the start. They used to argue for hours about evolution. Father said he always meant to let me marry as soon as the right one came along. I feel dreadfully about leaving him—but Cousin Delia Chase is coming to keep house for him and father likes her very much."

"And Alden's mother?"

“She is quite willing, too. When Alden told her last Christmas that we were engaged, she went to the Bible and the first verse she turned up was, ‘A man shall leave father and mother and cleave unto his wife.’ She said it was perfectly clear to her then what she ought to do and she consented at once. So you see everyone is pleased; and won’t you give us your good wishes, too, Aunty.”

“Oh, of course,” said Mrs. Churchill rather vaguely. There was not much heartiness in her voice and Stella went away a little disappointed. After she had gone Mrs. Churchill took stock of the preceding weeks.

She had burdened her conscience with innumerable fibs; she had confirmed her rheumatism; she had ruined her parlor carpet, destroyed two treasured heirlooms and spoiled her dining room ceiling; she had alienated the affections of her dearest friend, perhaps forever; she had given Richard Chase something to tease her about the rest of her life; she had put a weapon into Mary Churchill’s merciless hand, which, if she, Mrs. Churchill, knew anything about human nature, Mary would not fail to use upon occasion; she had got in wrong with Alden and Stella and could only get out by a confession too humiliating to make. And all for what? To bring about a marriage between two people who were already engaged.

“I have had enough of matchmaking,” said Mrs. Churchill firmly.

THE END.

TRANSCRIBER NOTES

Mis-spelled words and printer errors have been fixed.

[The end of *The Matchmaker* by L. M. (Lucy Maud) Montgomery]