

Several stories revealed on this page comment on courtship and marriage. Beneath the comic poem "A Duet" Montgomery placed the announcement of her Uncle Leander's engagement to the woman who was to be his third wife. The title of the more melancholy poem "After the Ball" may deliberately

echo the popular song "After the Ball Is Over," which Maud quoted on the preceding page. A bouquet of flowers picked in 1890, when young Maud was on her way to Prince Albert with Grandfather Montgomery, marks an especially happy surprise: In Regina, her father joined them to travel on to Prince Albert.



Suitors

It is ironic that a woman who received more than a dozen marriage proposals and even more declarations of passion should end up marrying a man she did not love intensely. Having secretly accepted the Rev. Ewan Macdonald's proposal in October of 1906, the almost thirty-two-year-old Montgomery wrote that same day in her journal: "Perfect and rapturous happiness, such as marriage with a man I loved intensely would give me, I have ceased to hope for." She had felt rapturous happiness with Herman Leard when she was twenty-three, but they were both engaged to other people, and she did not consider him her equal in either intellect or ambition. The unfulfilled romance with Herman was to be the touchstone for passion for the rest of her life, and against which she would measure her physical attraction to Oliver Macneill in 1909.

Maud's first declaration of love came in her early teens, and Nate Lockhart continued to write to her well into his Acadia University years. When she was sixteen, visiting her father in Prince Albert, she was sent an anonymous Christmas present by one boy; welcomed the attentions of her best friend's brother, Willie Pritchard; and deflected the proposal of her teacher, John A. Mustard. At least three Cavendish youths – Jack Laird, Henry McLure, and Alec Macneill – pursued her; and while she was teaching, Lem McLeod and Lou Dystant proposed, as did Edwin Simpson, to whom she was so miserably engaged while she was trysting with Herman. Imagine the havoc in the Belmont Simpson family: She rejected, then accepted, then rejected Ed; his brother Fulton became obsessed with her; and she drove about with another brother, Alf.

By the time Ewan Macdonald came to Cavendish in 1903, perhaps Montgomery was tired of the struggle she had identified between "the passionate Montgomery blood and the Puritan Macneill conscience" and had opted optimistically for a comfortable match of backgrounds and ambitions.

With the Christmas greetings of the Editor

A DUET.
 BARIitone—Now we're engaged, if you have brothers,
 By that I mean the men whom
 you've refused,
 They must be on a footing with the
 others,
 I won't have any mild endear-
 ments now,
 Now we're engaged.
 SOPRANO—If you had any sister and I knew it,
 I mean a girl who said she'd be
 your sister,
 She should be taught how not to do it,
 And comprehend that you can
 quite resist her,
 Now we're engaged.
 BARIitone—As if I wished to look at other head-
 lines,
 Now you are mine.
 SOPRANO—As though I cared for men
 Compared to you! I hope I know my
 duties!
 Of course we used to flirt, but that
 was then,
 Now we're engaged.
 BARIitone—Who was the man with tapered hand
 and waist?
 SOPRANO—Who was the girl with honest
 trimmed with pink?
 BARIitone—I would inform you, but I am unable.
 SOPRANO—I'd tell his name, but really I can't
 think,
 Now we're engaged.
 BARIitone—Now some are lighting in conversa-
 tion,
 Under dim colored lights and
 tragic lovers.
 SOPRANO—Now we were reading sentimental
 stories
 To girls and giving them bonbons
 and flowers,
 Now we're engaged.
 BARIitone—I shall not tolerate the least flirta-
 tion,
 I warn you fairly,
 SOPRANO—Please don't be estranged,
 But ought we sometimes take a
 brief vacation,
 Now we're engaged!
 —Janice Blada.

After the Ball.
 They sat and combed their beautiful hair,
 Their long bright tresses, one by one,
 As they laughed and talked in the chamber
 there.
 After the revel was done
 Idly they talked of waltz and quadrille
 My they talked, like other girls,
 Who over the fire, when all is still,
 Combs out their locks and curls.
 Robe of satin and Brussels lace,
 Knots of flowers and ribbons, too,
 Scattered about in every place,
 For the revel is through.
 And Maud and Madge in robes of white,
 The prettiest nightgowns under the sun,
 Stockingless, slipperless, sit in the night,
 For the revel is done.
 Sit and comb their beautiful hair,
 Those wonderful waves of brown and gold,
 Till the fire is out in the chamber there
 And the little bare feet are cold.
 Then out of the gathering winter chill,
 All out of the bitter St. Agnes weather,
 While the fire is out and the house is still,
 Maud and Madge together—
 Maud and Madge in robes of white,
 The prettiest nightgowns under the sun,
 Carried away from the chilly night,
 After the revel is done.
 Float along in a splendid dream
 To a golden gittern's tinkling tune,
 While a thousand lustres shimmering stream
 In a palace's grand saloon.
 Ring of jewels and flutter of lace,
 And where warmer than mask.

Men and women with beautiful faces
 And eyes of tropical dusk—
 And one face shining out like a star,
 One face haunting the dreams of each,
 And one voice sweeter than others are,
 Breaking into silvery speech—
 Telling, through lips of bearded bloom,
 An old, old story over again,
 As down the royal banquet room,
 To the golden gittern's strain,
 Two and two they dreamily walk,
 While an unseen spirit walks beside,
 And, all unknown to the lover's talk,
 He claimeth one for a bride.
 O Maud and Madge, dream on together,
 With never a pang of jealous feud!
 For, ere the bitter St. Agnes weather
 Shall whitens another year—
 Bred for the bridal and bed for the tomb,
 Braided brown hair of—
 There'll be only one of y— for the bloom
 Of the bearded lips to press—
 Only one for the bridal pearls,
 The robe of satin and Brussels lace,
 Only one to blush through her curls
 At the sight of a lover's face.
 O beautiful Madge in your bridal white
 For you the revel has just begun,
 But for her who sleeps in your arms tonight
 The revel of life is done.
 But, robed and crowned with your saintly
 blue,
 Queen of heaven and taste of the sun,
 O beautiful Maud, you'll never miss
 The kisses another has—
 —Neva Perry.

*Eng. B. J. Robinson, Cavendish
 Recd. by Maud.*

*Picked on Princess St.
 between Regina and
 Prince Albert.*