



# VICK'S FAMILY MAGAZINE

## Cash Prizes for Stories AND OTHER ARTICLES

It is always our aim to publish in *Vick's Family Magazine* the best stories and articles obtainable, and to attract the best writers we have decided to offer several *Cash Prizes*. The articles and stories wanted are so varied in character, as to make it possible for nearly everyone who has good thought, to compete in the contest.

### NO. 1.—SHORT STORIES.

First Prize \$50.00. Second Prize \$20.00. Third \$10.00. Fourth, fifth and sixth, \$5.00 each; the 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th and 11th, \$3.00 each. The stories must be of pure moral character and must not contain less than 2,000 or more than 5,000 words. We prefer to have scenes laid either in England or America.

### NO. 2.—CHILDREN'S STORIES.

First Prize \$15.00. Second Prize \$10.00. Third \$5.00. Fourth and fifth, \$3.00 each. Sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth and tenth, \$2.00 each. Stories must be suited for children between the ages of six and twelve years. We prefer them about animals, flowers or birds and such as will tend to make them kind to pets and animals, or give them an interest in studying nature.

### NO. 3.—FLORAL ARTICLES.

First Prize, \$15.00. Second Prize, \$10.00. Third, \$5.00. The 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th, \$3.00 each; the 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 14th, 15th, 16th, 17th and 18th, \$1.00 each. Articles may contain from 200 to 1,000 words. Must be concisely told and must be plain and practical. We prefer articles based on actual experience. They may treat of one or more house plants, garden flowers or shrubs suitable for any month of the year. Articles of from 500 to 1,000 words may be told in story form if you prefer.

### NO. 4.—HOUSEHOLD HINTS.

First Prize \$5.00. Second Prize \$2.50. Third Prize \$1.50; and 25 additional prizes of a year's subscription each. If you know of some easy way to do a certain kind of work or any valuable point about housework, arrangement of furniture, making of clothing, care of children, etc. etc., tell it for the benefit of our widowed readers. If you do not feel that you can write it as suitably, give us the facts and we will arrange them. It is information—practical points, that we want.

### NO. 5.—GARDEN POINTS.

First Prize \$5.00. Second Prize \$2.50. Third Prize \$1.50; and 25 additional prizes of a year's subscription each. Perhaps you have made a great success of some particular thing in your garden this year, tell us about it. Tell it in as few words as possible. We give the prizes for the best and most helpful information.

### NO. 6.—POULTRY HELPS.

First Prize \$3.00. Second Prize \$1.50. Third \$1.50; and 25 additional prizes of a year's subscription each. If you know some feature of poultry keeping or raising which would be helpful to our readers, write it out and send it in. Tell it briefly and plainly. It may treat of any feature of the business.

**DIRECTIONS.** Manuscript must be plainly written and on one side of paper only. Your letter must be addressed to **PRIZE DEPARTMENT, VICK'S FAMILY MAGAZINE, 40 STATE ST., ROCHESTER, N. Y.**, and the number of the contest plainly marked on the outside of the envelope. At the top of the first page of box, must appear the author's name and address, also number of words. If you desire box returned if not successful in winning a prize, sufficient postage must be enclosed for its return. Box should be sent in as soon as possible to give time to review carefully. Date of closing the contest will be announced later.

**CONDITIONS.** We reserve the right to buy at our regular cash rates any Man submitted. We desire only practical and helpful matter submitted, and to avoid mere triflers entering the contest we have made it a condition that all entering the contest must enclose 25 cents for a subscription to the magazine either for themselves or another person. All conditions are plainly given in this announcement and we cannot enter into correspondence with those desiring to enter the contest.



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# Teddy's Mother

L. M. Montgomery

First published *Vick's Family Magazine*, September 1902.

It was a public holiday, and almost everybody in Dalton had gone to see the football game at Seyton between the Dalton "Wanderers" and the Seyton College men.

But William Fielding had decided to spend the day in his office. His wife and his two daughters were in Europe; he did not care for football, and there was good deal of extra work to be done.

"I'll have a good look into those papers in the C. & R. railroad case today," he thought, as he entered his office.

The big building seemed unusually quiet and hushed. He reflected with satisfaction that he was not likely to be disturbed by callers.

Later in the day he remembered that he had not read the letter which he had found in his box on the way down town. It was addressed to him in a somewhat tremulous hand, and bore the post office stamp of a little village at the other side of the continent.

"Mother writes a good hand for a woman of her age," he thought, as he opened it.

The letter was short and written on cheap, blue-lined paper, with frequent lapses of spelling and grammar. It told all the simple home news and bits of gossip about neighbors whom he had half forgotten. On the last page the handwriting grew shakier. She was feeling "terrible lonesome" she wrote.

"It seems so long since I've seen you, William. Can't you come home for a spell this summer when Marion is in Europe? You haven't been home for ten years, William, I'm thinking. I do so long to see my dear boy."

Mr. Fielding frowned slightly as he folded the letter up. He drummed his fingers on the desk. His mother's request had come at a peculiarly inconvenient time. To be sure, he had often felt that he ought to go and see her. But he had always been too busy; he could not spare the time. A trip East to be worth while at all would take at least two months.

"I can't possibly go this summer, anyhow," he reflected impatiently. "Those nine cases are coming on next month. I suppose Morton could attend to them, but I should hardly care to trust them solely to him. Then there's the house to look after while Marion is away—and I've promised Tremayne to spend my vacation hunting silver tips in the mountains with him. Mother must wait until next summer. I'll write her just how it is—she'll understand. Mother was always a famous hand to understand a fellow."

But he did not feel altogether satisfied as he began his letter. He determined to write a good, long, newsy letter by way of a salve to his conscience, remembering

with some shame the hasty scrawls he had fallen into the habit of sending her. A rap at the door interrupted him.

“Come in,” he called, impatiently, wondering who it could be.

The figure that appeared in the doorway was quaint enough to provoke a smile. A little old woman—such a tiny scrap of a woman, with delicate, bleached features and bright, dark eyes. Under a very old-fashioned bonnet of quilted black satin her silvery hair was twisted down over her ears in a fashion which Mr. Fielding remembered seeing old ladies wear in his boyhood. Her dress was a dull-colored print, plain and neat, and she wore a gay Paisley shawl. In one hand she carried a huge bunch of sweet peas, and in the other a small covered basket.

She flashed a quick glance over the room.

“Oh, ain’t Teddy here?” she faltered, disappointedly.

Teddy! Mr. Fielding remembered that young Wyndham, the clever young lawyer next door, was called Teddy by his friends. This was probably his mother. He knew that Wyndham belonged in the country.

He rose and offered the little lady a chair.

“If you mean Mr. Wyndham, his office is next door. But I’m afraid you won’t find him there, either. I think he has gone to the football match at Seyton. This is a public holiday, you know.”

“No, I didn’t know, sir.” There was a tremor in her voice and her lips quivered suddenly. “If I’d known it I wouldn’t have come. Do you know when Teddy will be back?”

“Not before night I’m afraid, Mrs. Wyndham.

“The game won’t be over until late in the afternoon, and I believe there is to be a banquet in the evening.”

“And I must go home on the afternoon train. I won’t see Teddy at all!

“Well, I s’pose it serves me right for not sending him word I was coming. Ted always likes me to send him word so he can meet me at the train and look after me. But I thought I’d just like to surprise him, and anyhow, I took the notion sudden-like this morning. And I’ve brought him a basket of jelly tarts—Ted is so fond of jelly tarts—and this posey. Ted likes flowers. Maybe you’d like to keep ’em, sir. ’Tisn’t no use lugging them back—they’d only fade.”

She gave a little choke of disappointment, in spite of her efforts to suppress it. Mr. Fielding felt as uncomfortable as if he had been responsible. He got up briskly and took the flowers.

“Thank you, Mrs. Wyndham. Your sweet peas are beautiful and remind me of those which used to grow in my mother’s garden away down East. I’m not so

fortunate as Ted—my mother is too far away to drop in and see me.”

“I guess she wishes she could often enough. She must miss you dreadful,” said his visitor simply. “It don’t seem’s if I could live if I didn’t see Ted every once in a little while. He knows that, and he comes out ’most every week, for all he’s so busy. If he can’t come, he sends a great long letter just full of fun and jokes. Teddy is an awful good son, sir.”

Mr. Fielding felt still more uncomfortable as he hunted out a glass for his sweet peas. Perhaps the contrast between his conduct and Ted’s came home to him sharply. The little lady, who was evidently fond of talking, went on:

“As I came along on the train I was just thinking what good times we’d have today. Last time he was out Teddy promised me a drive in the park next time I came to town. I’m real disappointed—but it’s all my own fault. I should have remembered ’twas a holiday.”

The gentle, little voice ended in a sigh. The lawyer noticed that she looked very tired. Under the impulse of a sudden idea, he said:

“Mrs. Wyndham, I think you must let me act as Ted’s proxy today. You will be my little mother and I’ll give you as good a time as possible. You shall have your drive in the park.”

Mrs. Wyndham looked at him doubtfully, yet eagerly.

“Oh, sir—but you’re busy—”

“No, I’m not—or I oughtn’t to be. I am beginning to think I’m a very unpatriotic citizen, pegging away here instead of enjoying my holiday. We will have a splendid time. My name is Fielding, and I assure you I’m considered a very respectable person. The first thing is lunch. I know you’re hungry, and so am I. So come along. Remember, I’m to be your son for the day.”

A pink flush of delight spread over her tiny face.

“I guess you know what mothers like,” she said gleefully. “And I know how much your mother must think of you, and you of her, when you’re so good to other boys’ mothers. Oh, I’m real glad to go with you, sir. I don’t know anybody here and I always feel kind of bewildered when I haven’t Ted to stick to. May I leave these jelly tarts here?”

“Yes, I’ll lock them up in my desk,” said Mr. Fielding, boyishly, “Ted’ll get them when he comes.”

She gave herself up to enjoyment with the abandon of a child. Her clear little laugh trilled out continually. She chattered to him as she might have done to Ted, telling him all the ins and outs of the farm at home. She did not often take a holiday, she assured him. Her husband was dead and she had run the farm for years; Ted

was her only son—such a good, kind, clever boy.

“There ain’t many like him, if I do say it myself,” she declared proudly.

They had lunch together in an uptown restaurant whose splendor nearly took her breath away. Then Mr. Fielding telephoned for his own luxurious carriage, and they went for their drive in the park. The busy, middle-aged lawyer felt like a boy again. He found himself talking to her of his own mother, describing the little down east village where he was born, and relating some scrapes of his school days that made her laugh.

“That’s so much like Ted. Such a boy for mischief as he was—not bad mischief, though. How proud your mother must be of you! And how often she must think of you! It is such a comfort to have a good son, who doesn’t forget his mother. I’m awful sorry for the poor mothers whose boys get kind of careless-like and neglectful—not writing to them or going to see them as often as they might.”

When the drive was over he took her to the train. “Such a good time as I’ve had,” she said gratefully. “Ted himself couldn’t have given me a better treat.”

“I think our holiday has been a success,” said Mr. Fielding, genially. “I know I’ve enjoyed being Ted’s proxy ever so much.”

“Ted always kisses me good-bye,” she said archly. Mr. Fielding laughed and bent over the little old lady.

“There! That’s one for Ted, and here’s another for my mother. Good-bye and safe home to you.”

From the window of the car she beckoned to him as the train started.

“Them jelly tarts,” she whispered, “I forgot about ’em. You keep ’em for yourself. Ted’ll have such good things at the banquet that he won’t want ’em.” When Mr. Fielding went back to his office he saw his half-written letter to his mother lying on his desk. He tore it in two and flung it in the waste basket. Then he sat down and wrote:

“Dear Little Mother: Your letter came today. This is not an answer to it, but merely a note to say I’ll answer it in person. I am going East as soon as I can make the necessary arrangements and you may look for me within a week or so after receiving this. We will have a real, good long visit together. With much love,

“Your affectionate son,  
“William Fielding.”

“So much to the credit of Ted’s mother,” he said with a smile. “And now for

some of those tarts.”

*American Messenger.*

## TRANSCRIBER NOTES

Mis-spelled words and printer errors have been fixed.

[The end of *Teddy's Mother* by L. M. (Lucy Maud) Montgomery]