

DECEMBER, 1903

# Men of To-morrow

A MAGAZINE  
For BOYS

THE LEADING  
BOYS' MAGAZINE  
OF AMERICA

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# Ted's Double

A Christmas Folly

L. M. Montgomery

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When Morris Stanley came east and Ted Stanley met him at the gate both boys looked at each other for a moment in a somewhat bewildered way.

“If you’re not me myself you must be my cousin Morris from the wild and woolly west,” said Ted, with a hearty handshake. “Welcome to Chestnut Hill, old fellow.”

“When I first got a glimpse of you,” said Morris with a smile, “I thought I had come on ahead of myself and got here first.”

In fact, the resemblance between the two boys was wonderful. They were the same in age, height and general build. Their features were similar and both had curly reddish hair, clear, blue-gray eyes and a healthy coloring. To be sure, when they were together a close observer could easily have detected some difference. Morris had a graver, more thoughtful expression than had rollicking Ted and was quieter in his manner, although as fond of fun and jokes as a boy could be.

This was his first visit east and the first occasion of his meeting with a host of uncles and aunts, cousins and second cousins. Morris had never spent so delightful a vacation. The prairie farm where he had lived all his life was so big a one and surrounded by so many still bigger ones that neighbors were few and far away. So Morris revelled in his host of eastern cousins and the comradeship he had always craved.

One day, when he had been at Chestnut Hill about six weeks, he found Ted rummaging over a huge pile of books in his “den”—said den being a corner of the big garret where Ted kept all his household gods and sojourned on rainy days. Both boys were very fond of the den. It was “such a jolly old place,” as untidy as they pleased, where nobody ever disturbed them or their traps, up under the eaves, with one small window looking out over the uplands of Chestnut Hill.

But this particular day was a sunny one and the sight of unstudious Ted up to his ears in books in the middle of vacation was one for which Morris was unprepared.

“Has anything serious happened?” he queried solemnly.

“You’d think so to look at me, wouldn’t you?” grinned Ted. “Well, something serious has happened, to be sure, but it has nothing to do with my present uncanny fit of bookishness. It simply occurred to me that the space taken up in this corner by all these books—whew, aren’t they dusty? Shade of Mary Jane!—would be much better filled by my collection of birds’ eggs. So I am patiently weeding them out. All that I shall need for college in the fall must be left and the rest I shall dump into the rag-room.”

“You’re a lucky chap, Ted,” said Morris with a sigh.

“Because I’m going to college?” queried Ted, blowing the dust from a venerable Julius Cæsar, “well, it is jolly. Wish you would come, too. Think there’s no chance of

it?”

Morris shook his head.

“Not a shadow of it. No use in talking about it, Ted. It only makes me grum.”

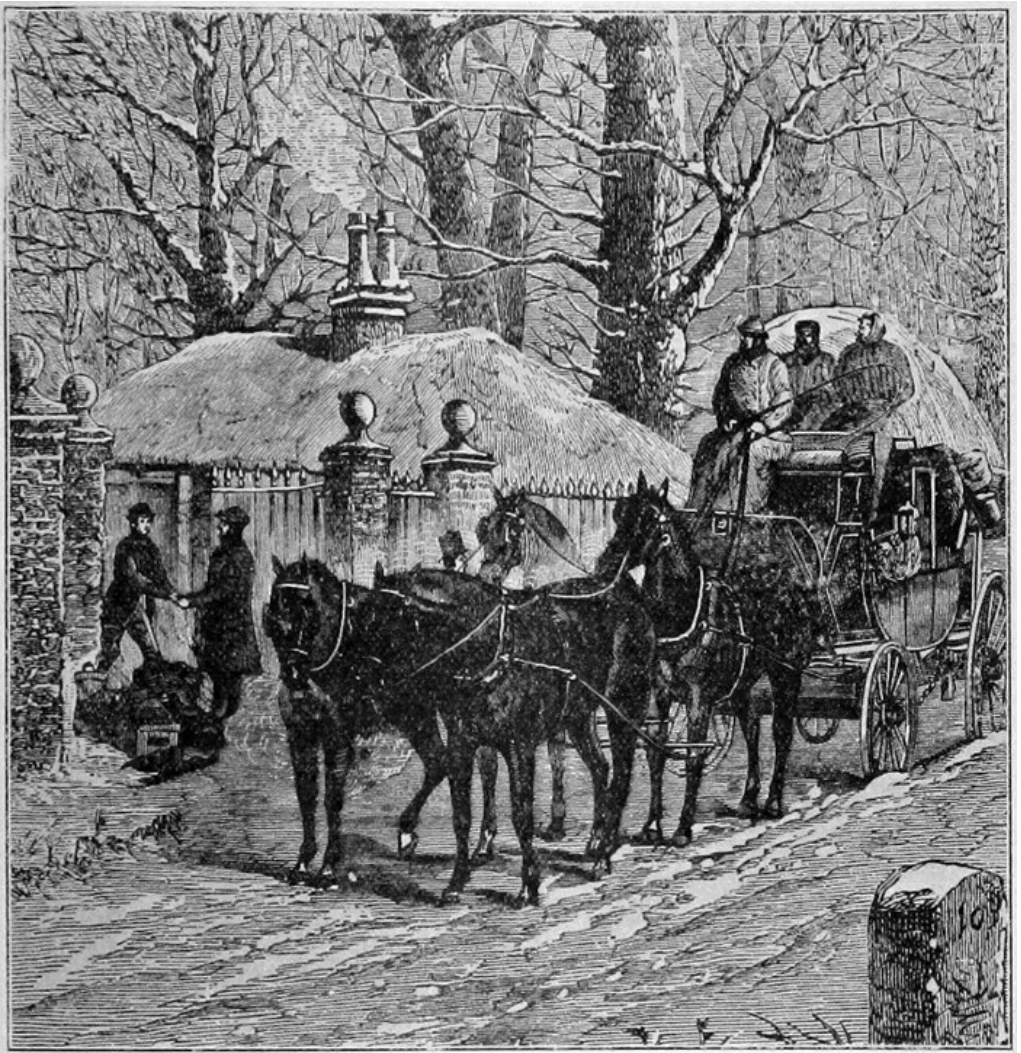
In the brief silence that followed Ted sorted out some ill-used English classics and Morris ruminated gloomily. To go to college was his greatest desire, but he knew it could not be granted. The crops had failed for three years on the prairie farm. Morris knew that when he went home in the fall he was to take a position as clerk in one of the big department stores in the nearest city and he hated the prospect sturdily, even while he congratulated himself on being able to get it and so lighten his father’s burden somewhat.

“What is the serious thing that has happened?” he asked at last, recalling that part of Ted’s speech.

“I’ve had a letter from Great-Aunt Deborah, inviting me to tea with her at her residence in Rexford on Christmas day.”

“I don’t see anything dreadful in that.”

“Enviably blindness! You don’t know Great-Aunt Deborah. I’d rather be invited to sup with the king of the cannibal islands. Besides, Christmas morning is the day of the ice hockey game at Moorland and I’ve been looking forward to it for weeks.”



*“Welcome to Chestnut Hill, old fellow”*

“Well, don’t go to your Great-Aunt Deborah’s, then,” suggested Morris.

“My son, you do not appear to realize that Great-Aunt Deborah’s invitations are like unto royalty’s—they are commands and must be obeyed under penalty of her eternal displeasure. But don’t say ‘your Great-Aunt Deborah’ in a tone which implies that I have a monopoly in great-aunts. She is your great-aunt as well as mine, Mistress Deborah Stanley is.”

“How is it that I’ve never seen her, then?” asked Morris. “I thought I had met all my relatives to the third and fourth generations of late.”

“There is a bit of family history involved in the answer to that. Great-Aunt Deborah knows you are here, but she doesn’t like you because you are the son of your father. Did you ever hear Uncle Chester speak of his Aunt Deborah?”

“Not that I remember.”

“Well, when your father and mine were boys your father was Great-Aunt Deborah’s favorite nephew. She was always very eccentric, father says, but Uncle Chester got along with her beautifully. She intended to make him her heir—she’s worth a pot of money, you know. Well, when your father married it made her very angry. She wanted him to marry someone else—the daughter of the man she had once expected to marry herself, I believe. They had a bitter quarrel and it ended in Great-Aunt Deborah forbidding your father ever to speak to her or cross her threshold again. He took her at her word—father says that is really what she has never forgiven him for—and went out west. She had never allowed his name to be spoken in her hearing since. Very vindictive lady, our Great-Aunt Deborah! She’s always been rather fond of me. Father says it is because I’m so like what your father was. When we met she used to pat me on the head and give me peppermints. I haven’t seen her for two years. She’ll think I’ve grown a bit. Christmas happens to be her birthday too. I shall have to go of course. Father insists on it. And I shall miss the hockey game.”

Ted fired a harmless Virgil across the den and scowled. At the same moment he saw himself and Morris reflected in the long, cracked mirror which hung at the other end of the garret.

“Chris-to-pher Col-um-bus!” he said. “Morris Stanley, hearken unto me and lend me your ears. If you have a proper cousinly regard for me I shall be able to eat my cake and have it too. I shall go to the game at Moorland and you shall go to tea with Great-Aunt Deborah at Rexford.”

“But she hasn’t invited me—and doesn’t want me,” objected Morris.

“Morris, my friend, you are singularly lacking in quickness of comprehension. You will go, not as Morris Stanley but as Theodore Stanley—to wit, myself. Great-Aunt Deborah will never know the difference. No more will anybody else. I always knew we didn’t look so much alike for nothing.”

Morris stared and then went off in a shout of laughter.

“But Ted—oh, I really can’t do that. I’d be discovered—and besides—”

“No, you wouldn’t. Now don’t refuse to help a fellow out, Morris. I’d do as much for you. You don’t care about the game and I do. And no harm can be done.”

At first Morris protested, but Ted eagerly overruled all his objections and in the end he consented. The spice of mischief in the plan commended it to him. Besides,

he was conscious of a curiosity to see Great-Aunt Deborah.

"I'll go," he said, "but if Great-Aunt Deborah discovers that I am a rank imposter and takes some fearful and summary vengeance I trust you to break the news gently to my parents."

On Saturday afternoon Morris and Ted both set off. At the cross roads they parted and Ted trudged down the hills to Moorland while Morris steadily footed his way to Rexford. He did not feel altogether comfortable, but it was too late to back out now.

Mrs. Deborah Stanley lived in an old-fashioned but picturesque house on the outskirts of Rexford. Morris admired the beautiful grounds as he walked up the serpentine drive under the chestnuts. He felt rather nervous but his love of mischief bubbled up within him and primed him for the ordeal. It also lent an added sparkle to his eyes as he went up the steps.

Great-Aunt Deborah met him at the door.

"I am glad to see you, Theodore," she said with a kindly handshake.

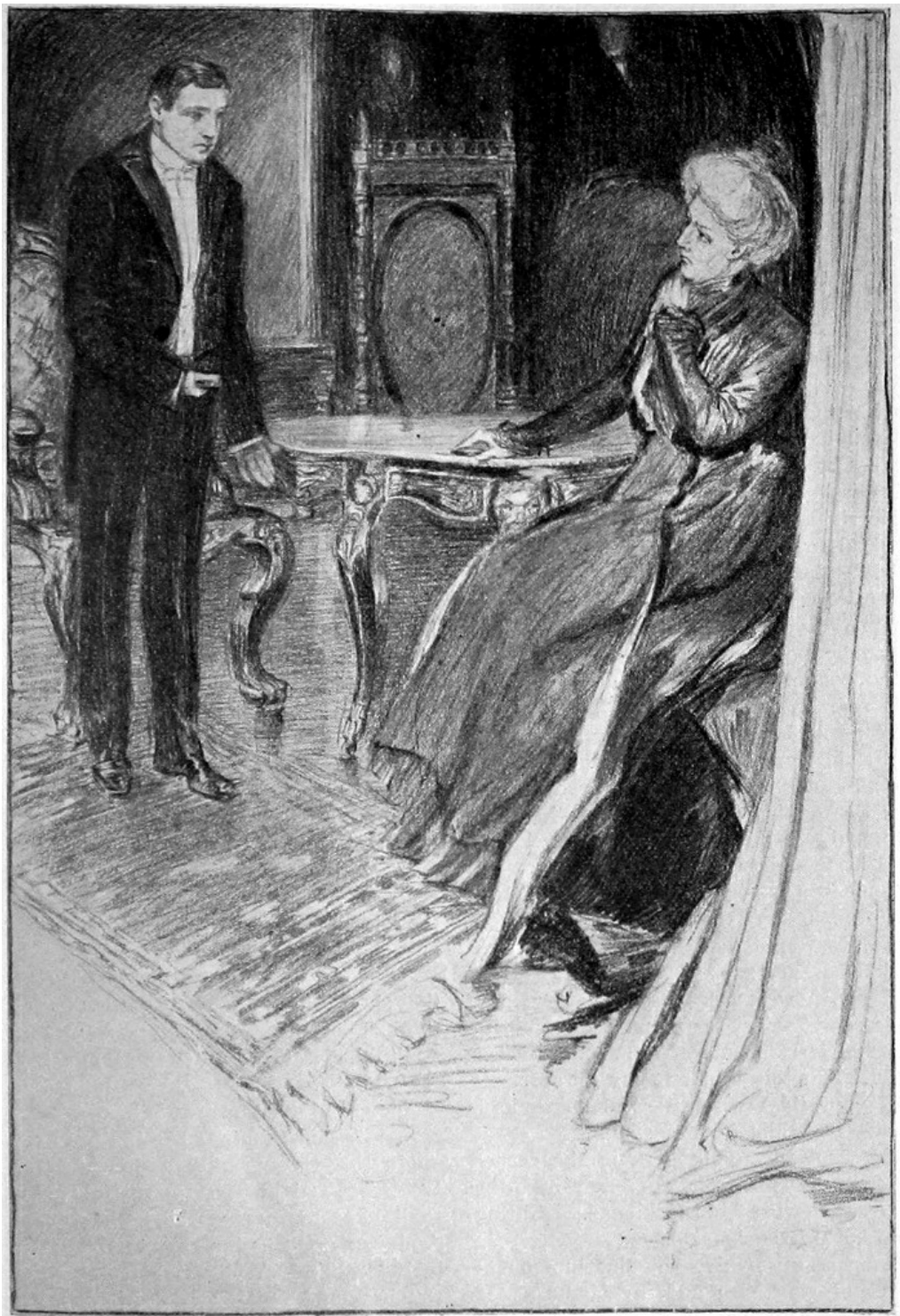
"And I am glad to see you, Aunt Deborah," said Morris sincerely enough, "and to wish you many happy returns of the day."

The appearance of his great-aunt was a surprise to Morris who had somehow imbibed from Ted an impression very different from the reality.

True, she had, as Ted had warned him, eyes like a hawk, so keen and piercing that Morris trembled for the success of his ruse; but they were dark, handsome eyes as well. She was richly dressed and had a great deal of snow-white hair arranged in puffs so carefully as to betoken that Great-Aunt Deborah had a pet vanity yet. Altogether Morris liked her looks, as he would have said.

He was taken into a big, gloomy room full of quaint old furniture, and here they talked for an hour. Morris talked well, even under the handicap of talking as if he were Ted. He was not free from an unpleasant dread that he might inadvertently say something that would "give him away" and several of Great-Aunt Deborah's questions were rather hard to answer. As he told Ted afterwards, "I had to take some liberties with your imagination."





*"I can't take that watch, Aunt Deborah"*

But on the whole he got on very cleverly, although he felt the reverse of comfortable. If only Great-Aunt Deborah were not so kind! If she had been cranky and crotchety as he had expected, the joke would have had a much better flavor.

His bad quarter of an hour came after tea when Great-Aunt Deborah said abruptly,

"You have a cousin staying with you I hear—Chester Stanley's son. What sort of a boy is he?"

Morris blushed so hotly that he felt thankful to the gloom.

"He's—he's—oh, he's rather a jolly chap," he answered confused. "A good deal like me they say."

"You are very like what his father was at your age," said Great-Aunt Deborah, half sharply, half-tenderly. "He was my favorite nephew until he disobeyed me. Well, Theodore I am glad to have seen you this afternoon. You have improved a great deal. As for this cousin of yours, what does he intend to make of himself? Is he clever? Does he intend to go to college?"

"I—I—can hardly say," stammered Morris. "No, I don't think he is going to college. He would like to but—well, I don't think he is going."

"Can't afford it I suppose. Chester Stanley is poor," said Great-Aunt Deborah with a certain jarring note of satisfaction in her voice. "But this is not to my purpose. It is of yourself I wish to speak, Theodore. I have something to give you."

She went to an old desk in the corner and took out two cases, one brand-new, the other somewhat old-fashioned. Sitting down by Morris she said,

"I am going to give you this in remembrance of your visit and my birthday. It is very good of you to give up your other plans and spend the afternoon with me. After this you must come oftener. Here is your present, Theodore."

It was a beautiful gold watch with Ted's monogram on the back. Morris took it foolishly. If floors ever did open to swallow up boys he wished the one he was on would do so then.

"Thank you, Aunt Deborah," he stammered. But Great-Aunt Deborah did not notice his embarrassment. She was fumbling with the stiff catch of the other case which on being opened revealed another watch of very elaborate although old-fashioned design and ornamentation.

"This watch," she said, "I had made twenty years ago for your Uncle Chester. When he disregarded my wishes I did not give it to him. It is as good as ever for all practical purposes. Take it to your cousin, Morris Stanley, with his Great-Aunt

Deborah's love.”

She held it out to Morris, but instead of taking it he stood up suddenly with a very grave, determined face.

“I can't take that watch, Aunt Deborah,” he said quietly. “I'm not Ted—I am Morris. I—I—Ted wanted to go to the game at Moorland to-day so I agreed to come here in his place. I thought it a good joke at the time. I see now that it was a dishonorable trick. I am very sorry for it, Aunt Deborah.”

“So you ought to be!” Aunt Deborah spoke sharply. At first she had looked amazed, then angry. But now her keen old eyes were twinkling. “I suppose you thought it was smart to play a trick on an old woman.”

“Oh, no,” said Morris quickly. “I never thought of it in that way, although I did think it a joke. Please forgive me. And don't blame Ted. It—it was mostly my fault.”

“You and Ted are a pair of graceless scamps,” said Aunt Deborah severely. “I ought to be very angry with you both. I feel sure Ted put you up to this. But I shall have to forgive you both I suppose. And you are Chester Stanley's son! You look like him. Well, go home—take your watches and be off. Tell Ted he is to come here next Saturday afternoon and get his scolding. As for you, well, if you care to come back any time I will be glad to see you, Morris. I am an old crank but even cranks can be amiable at times. Now go.”

Morris went. He felt rather bewildered. When he got home he told Ted the whole story.

“Jee-rusalem!” said the latter. “Won't Great-Aunt Deborah give me a combing down when she sees me. I suppose I deserve it. She treated you pretty white anyhow. And those watches are dandies. It is the most astonishing thing that she wasn't furious at you when you blurted out that confession. Are you going to see her again?”

“Of course I am. I like Great-Aunt Deborah,” said Morris.

He did go, not once only but often. There was no denying that somehow or other Morris had found his way to Great-Aunt Deborah's heart. And when he went back west the departmental clerkship had vanished forever from his horizon. He was to go to college in the fall. Great-Aunt Deborah had said so and her will was law.

“Great-Aunt Deborah is a brick,” said Ted when they parted. “I repent in sackcloth and ashes of anything I ever said to the contrary. Good-bye till next month, old chap. Won't we waken the old university up, though!”

## TRANSCRIBER NOTES

Mis-spelled words and printer errors have been fixed.

[The end of *Ted's Double: A Christmas Folly* by L. M. (Lucy Maud) Montgomery]