IF THE LIGHT HAD LASTED

By WARWICK J. PRICE

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THE clock in the chapel tower struck five. An upper schooler, on his way to the racquet court, looked up, smiling, congratulating himself on his freedom from study hours, and wondering how long the October sun would allow play. It was yet well above the trees; if he hurried, he might have an hour.

The sunshine flooded the little landscape with that mellow radiance it squanders only in the first most glorious days of Indian summer. It flamed along the hills in purple, and crimson, and gold; it painted a more brilliant green the long, sloping sward about the chapel, and then, climbing up the great dormitory, filled the Under Master's room with warmth and cheerfulness.

The under-master looked up from his sick bed and for a long minute gazed thoughtfully out into the great blue vault, scarcely broken by a few thin, motionless cloud arabesques. It seemed so infinitely far away—and yet so terribly near. Then he came back again to the page in his hand:

It isn't what one hasn't got
That ought to quench the light of life.
It's what one loses, is it not?
It's death, or treason in a wife;
It's finding one's unhappy lot.

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From what you haven't gaily turn
To what you have; the world's alive,
Still pulses beat, still passions burn;
There's still to work, there's still to strive;
The cure is easy to discern.

* * * * * * *

So don't be gloomy, don't be glum,
Nor give a thought to what you lack;
Take what you have, no longer dumb
Nor idle, hit misfortune back,
And own that I have reason; come!

Again the invalid's eyes wandered out into the narrow glimpse of God's good world that his little window gave. "Good advice, Mr. Stephen, and I've tried to follow it; but I guess it's just a trifle late now. I don't think I've been 'glum' very often—and no one has known it when I have been. I don't believe I've often dwelt on all I hadn't. And I do think I've hit as often and as hard at Milady Misfortune as I could. But she's won at last." Then he added, "Perhaps she hasn't, but it's hard not to believe so."

Absent-mindedly he closed the book and lay looking at it. It was a thin little volume of verse by a Cambridge man. "Quo Musa Tendis," he read on the little signboard title.

"I hope the muse has traveled pleasanter roads for Stephen than for me. I'd be thankful if even so small a book as this might carry my name on, though for only one short generation."

There was a water-color painted on the cover, a sea view done in dark blue on the light cloth ground. He remembered so plainly the afternoon when that had been done. It was the mother's work, and he had been sitting by, writing. It was August, and the dusty roads and fields made the shaded room acceptable. He had found vacation work up among the foothills, and she had come to the little farmhouse to be near him. There had been worries for both, but now he only recalled the deep pleasures of that loving companionship, and wondered if he had half appreciated it.

He put down the book and lay back upon his pillow, but with wide eyes and the sick brain so busy. Nothing about him but had some story to tell, some scene to repaint for him. Nor would one have guessed the young master's empty pocket from seeing the room. But the pretty furniture and the rugs, with all their warmth of color, had been in the old home before the father's failure; the pictures were the accumulation of college years, when a generous allowance was a monthly surety; the books—he had always bought books, from the days of the worn and loved "Boys of '76" to that latest and handsomest "Anacreon" of Bullen's. Perhaps it was his extravagance; if so, it was his only one, and in the long separation from all those he most loved, he had these true friends at least always by him.

The sun fell aslant the long shelves opposite him. It almost seemed the books were smiling, so cheerfully did the gildings glance back his light. There was dear old "Elia," two volumes of him, in gray boards as prim as his own Quaker folk, and type as clear as his own laugh. The invalid had found him in a Broadway basement shop during one of those flying trips down from Yale. "Cheap at seven dollars!" and the hotel bill was sent after him to New Haven. And there was the Bachelor with his Reveries beside a sea-coal fire. His life had had sadness in it, too, but now he only suggested those long, lazy afternoons on the lake, the little boat drifting on into the sunset, and just those two, Bachelor and student, aboard. That delightful dreamer of "Prue and I" was there, the old bookkeeper in the white cravat, with Prue sweetly smiling on one arm, and Aurelia proudly glancing on the other; and Adam Moss, his Kentucky cousin, with a little basket of heart-shaped strawberries. Both had much to say of those all too short rainy afternoons, and cups of her fragrant tea, and the cozy, confidential chats between chapters. There, too, was sweet little Lorna Doone, and Kipling galloping through the memory like one of his own East Indian troopers. ("Kamal is out with 20 men to raise the border-side," hummed the invalid.) Bret Harte, Moliere, Keats, Eugene Field, Shelby, Austin Dobson, an odd companionship, but all dear, he could see them all, and he tried to get up, to go out and handle them once more. But he was too weak, and fell back on the pillow again with a little sigh.

Motionless, with closed eyes, he lay there while the sun moved across the shelves, across the etching of Fortuny's "Death Bed," and left the room in twilight. Then the sick man turned to the table by him, and taking up the paper began to write:

"Dearest Mother—This is my good-by. I had prayed I might not have to write it, perhaps not even say it—yet. But it has seemed best otherwise. It's hard throwing down one's work at twenty-six, and it just beginning to show. But that, too, is best somehow, and now there's one less to think of and plan for, if one less to love.

"O, dearest, dearest mother, I had dreamed it all so differently. The mine was to prove the lucky, making stroke. The dad and thee, dear, were to have your home once more, and I was to be with you—and perhaps (I prayed) a fourth. I had even imagined that home; the long lawn, the water at its foot, a great west-looking library, and the sweetest little bay-windowed room upstairs for Her. And dear daddy was to have his newspapers three times a day, and a horse as good as the Duke—perhaps even the Duke himself—for those early morning rides, and I once more astride of Punch. And up in the studio thee was to paint just for us. I was to write something worth the name. There was to be music again in the house, and home-love everywhere.

"But now I've got to give it all up—give everything up—and remain forever just a young school teacher who tried and failed. It's a pretty insignificant tragedy, after all.

"But to thee, dearest, I must ever be thy loving boy. Still the boy, dear, remember me so, as in those sweet, dim days before trouble came, and while I was yet young enough to climb into thy lap.

"I am only a boy. A man would be braver, and not cry out. But it is so, so hard. Hopes, plans, work, waiting—now, nothing.

"Dearest, I love thee so; if I only knew! And I've tried to grow more worthy of the great love thee has given me. Well, I'll know soon how well or ill I have succeeded. God bless thee! God bless thee! Remember I love thee so truly and fondly! Goodby. I do love thee so!

"BEN.

"Give this book to Kate, and the note."

This was folded and addressed with a name. Then on another sheet:

"Dear Kate—May I write you one more note? You've always been so sweet and interested in my work and striving, and you've let me write just when I wanted to and as I felt. You can never know now how much good that has done me; how much courage and hope you've led me to. But it's all so, and though it's all come to nothing at the last, yet I want to write you just once more and thank you, and tell you how I love you.

"It can't be but that you have guessed it; it is no new thing. Perhaps I should have told you before, but my pride slipped in a score of times and dragged me back. 'You're poor yet, and in debt. Keep quiet a while longer.' Once I thought it was all coming right. It really did seem that I had at last reached the crest of the long, long climb. I could almost see the broad-stretching land of peace and love spreading away at my feet. But the crest proved scarce a resting place, and I had to start the climb again. Now I've no time to win that crest with all its dearest reward. I must drop out to the side—thanking God, I suppose, that, tired as I am, I am not mud-stained—and say good-by.

"I should not have written this, perhaps, but I did so want to. I hated to feel that you might never know the true, deep, pure love that has so long been all your own; that would have found its highest happiness in a lifetime's service of devotion—and that now merely comes with my good-by.

"Remember me sometimes. Forgive this note. And once more, dear, good-by.

"BEN."

The sick man lay back on his pillow and again closed his eyes. The clock in the chapel tower struck six. The sun dropped below the hills. The upper schooler came out of the racquet court. "It was a pretty well-played game," he said to his comrade. "If the light had lasted just a little while longer, I should have won."

Health Affected by Variations of Light?

The variation in solar light occurs mostly in the blue and violet and in the invisible rays beyond the violet, the rays that we call "ultraviolet." This suggests some alluring speculations. Ultraviolet rays are known to be powerful toward living matter. They can kill bacteria. In mild doses they will cure rickets and some other diseases. It is they which produce most of the sunburn.

Put these facts together. Ultraviolet rays affect life. The amount of ultraviolet coming from the sun is variable. Does this mean that some of the obscure, day-by-day variations of health can be due to this? Some days everybody seems happy and cheerful. Other days everybody is depressed. Still other days are breeders of "nerves." Maybe the ultraviolet does it. Maybe not. Doubtless the investigators will find out presently.—Edward E. Free in the Forum.

FARM TELEPHONE SERVICE VALUED AT $127 A YEAR

"John N. Cadby, executive-secr tary of the Wisconsin Utilities Association, has completed a survey estimating the average daily value of telephone service to the average farmer in Wisconsin and presents his calculations in the following form," says the Public Service Magazine.

As fire insurance and prevention	$ .05
As accident and health insurance	.10
As aid in most advantageous marketing of products	.10
Visiting with friends and relatives	.05
Getting important news quickly	.01
Getting long distance calls and telegrams more easily and promptly	.01
Arranging for extra help when needed	.03
	$ .35

"'At the rate of 35 cents per day, the value of the telephone would run to $127.75 per year, or $10.60 per month,' said Mr. Cadby. 'Compared with the actual charge of $2 or $3.50 per month for this service, the potential charge affords quite a contrast.'"

SAILSBURY'S NEW POST-OFFICE

HANDSOME BUILDING FORMALLY OPENED ON TUESDAY FOR GENERAL USE

Salisbury's handsome new Postoffice Building was formally opened Monday, when the city's mail business was transferred to the new quarters. The office for the past twenty years has been in the Masonic Temple.

The new Federal building cost $105,000. The structure, of terra cotta and brick, is of attractive design and occupies the center of a complete block purchased by the Government. The site is opposite the Wicomico County Courthouse and is bounded by Main, Baptist, Court and Water streets.

The first floor contains a spacious lobby, postmaster's office, workrooms, carriers' compartment, money order and registry departments, general delivery and parcel post sections, receiving and loading rooms and depository vaults.

In the basement are offices of the United States Deputy Collector of Internal Revenue, C. Emmett Adams; District Postoffice Inspector J. E. Sentman and a civil service examination room. There, also, are rest rooms and shower baths for the twenty-five employes of the office.

The initial appropriation for the building was secured in 1916, when James T. Truitt was postmaster, but the advent of the war halted all preparations for construction. Two years ago $30,000 was added to the original appropriation by the Treasury Department.

The postal business in recent years grew so rapidly that the office was forced on numerous occasions to secure additional space in the Masonic Temple. Last year receipts at the Salisbury office exceeded $70,000.

MONEY TO LOAN

IN SUMS TO SUIT ON GOOD REAL ESTATE.

JOHN D. URIE, Atty.

MARYLAND FOREST FIRES

ALTHOUGH INCREASE IS MARKED SINCE HUNTING SEASON, THEY ARE BECOME LESS

Despite an increase in the number of forest fires in Maryland since the opening of hunting season, November 10, records of the State Department of Forestry show a marked reduction in the total number of fires for the season as compared with the fall of 1924, according to an announcement yesterday by John R. Curry, assistant State Forester.

The recent increase is attributed by Mr. Curry to carelessness on the part of hunters. The seasonal decrease, he said, is due to favorable weather conditions and an aroused public sentiment.

Statistics show that thus far this season forest fires have cost the State and owners $50,000 less than in the fall of 1924. Less than a fifth as many fires have occurred during the present season and the losses amounted to only one-thirteenth of the amount for the corresponding period last year.

In the fall of 1924 there were 173 fires involving a total loss of $52,886, the records show. So far this season thirty-two fires have been reported and the total loss is estimated at $4,100. Last year 22,474 acres of forest land were burned over, as compared with 2,077 this year.

The total cost to the department of fire suppression in the fall of last year was $2,440.56. To date this season it has been $410.95.

Mr. Curry said Montgomery and Allegany counties in particular suffer heavily from fires caused by the carelessness of hunters.

"Frequent and timely rains," he said, "have kept the forests in good condition, but a few dry days will increase the danger of fire materially."

—Two new postage stamps, one bearing the likeness of Woodrow Wilson, the other that of Benjamin Harrison, will be placed on sale soon by the Postoffice Department. The Wilson stamp is of 17 cents denomination and the Harrison of 13 cents.

Subscription to the Transcript $1.50 per annum.

Dairymen!

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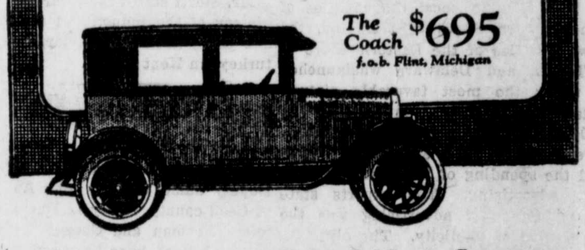
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Very sturdy with guaranteed Uskide soles and heels. Regular $3.50 value. For this sale $1.98

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Ladies' Velvet Pumps
In flat and medium heels, very new and dressy, worth $5. For this sale $2.98

Ladies' Patent Leather Pumps
In flat Military and high heels, in all the newest styles. All new and advanced styles. For this sale $2.98

In this sale will be included all
Men's, Womens' and Children's Hosiery
At greatly Sweeping Reductions.

Misses Tan Lace School Shoes
Size 11½ to 2 Sells regular for $3.00 For this Sale $1.98

Ladies' Rubbers
Made by U. S. Rubber Co. Sells for $1.25. For this sale 69c

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Opposite A&P Grocery Store. Chestertown, Maryland.

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