

The Testing of Ralph Mason

RALPH MASON stood at the door of the dean's office as he waited quietly for the two freshmen who stood at the desk to finish their business. He held in his nervous grasp a crumpled slip of paper, at which he stole one or two glances, full of doubt and apprehension.

Yes, it was certainly true; no mistake about it. It stated plainly, "You are requested to report at the office of the dean before twelve on Tuesday."

As the freshmen hurried out as fast as decorum would permit, their faces crimson and downcast, Ralph's heart gave a bound. What could it mean? Was a reprimand in store for him?

His clear glance met the grave, dark eyes of the dean of the university inquiringly.

"Sit down, Mason! I see you are anxious, and I will not keep you in suspense. The matter is just this: the committee recommends you for the Dalmy scholarship—Latin, you understand. It isn't much financially, but it's big in honor, and only goes to a student whose general average for two years is 'cum laude.' I congratulate you!"

Young Mason's ears fairly buzzed with the tumult in his brain. "Is it possible? O Doctor Farrel, how I thank you!"

The dean smiled. "You chose a classic course at your matriculation, and when you have your A.B., the scholarship will privilege you to take an added year for A.M. With a year or so at another university, when you have finished here, you will be eligible to the appointment of Latin instructor with the salary of fifteen hundred the first year, at your alma mater. Not a bad future for a young student in

Mr. Gains will take your desk as assistant manager next Monday."

"I have worked in that office forty years, and in all that time have lost just seven days! I have never been late, I am doing exactly the work I did ten years ago, and more than half the younger men in the office are doing, yet they say they must have a younger man. I am only sixty-five!"

The strong men seemed suddenly old and broken. He tried to rise, but his body was bent with helplessness. Ralph glanced appealingly at his mother, and together they assisted the sick man to his room. Here, after an hour of soothing and petting, he fell into a deep sleep of exhaustion which lasted for hours.

Walter waited for his mother in the library.

"Not a word to him about the scholarship," he implored. "It would add to his distress. We must change our plans, mother. I have already made a new one. You remember last year Mr. Daggett offered to take me into his establishment, and with a salary at the start, because of my educational advantages, would teach me the coffee business in all its details. He said my knowledge of French and Spanish would be invaluable. Father declined, but Mr. Daggett told me that if the next year or two we changed our minds, the offer was still open. I shall see him this afternoon, and tell him all about it. Father needs me!"

His mother burst into tears. "How can I see you sacrifice such bright prospects? Perhaps we can do something. Let me try to borrow the money. Your future is at stake!"

"Mother, it isn't the future that I think of just now; it's the present. You have done so much for me. I have had

To the Leagues of the Manitoba Conference

DEAR FELLOW WORKERS:

The time is now upon us when we should be perfecting our plans for our winter's work. I would like to offer a few suggestions.

In many parts of our Conference the Church is planning for very aggressive work along evangelistic lines. As a League let us be a positive factor in this work, give your best thought and endeavor in it, and be on such friendly terms with our Leader, Christ, that we can introduce Him to our friends in such a way that they will become His companions. Work for those who need you and need you most.

This year let us do for missions something which will be worthy of all that has been done for us. The young people of each District should have a representative in some part of the missionary work of our Church, and I am looking forward to a union of the Sunday School and League forces, which will make this achievement possible. In our far away look do not let us forget the needy at home, the young about us who may not be able to converse in our tongue. Win their confidence by showing that you are their friend. Plan something of work along this line. Do not neglect this.

Do something for the purpose of educating our young people as to the value of our national resources, and the proper use of them. Train ourselves and them along the line of what contribution can we make to our nation that will enable it more perfectly to fulfil its God-appointed destiny, and not the mere selfish idea, "What can I get out of it?" Let this training be constructive in its nature. Do not look upon the League as something only to draw help from, but rather as a living agency, through which there may come the life of Christ to our fellows.

Fellow workers, win success this year in our work.

Minnedosa, Man.

B. W. ALLISON, President.

these troubled times of unrest. Its all due to your own standing. You can thank yourself!"

Ralph laughed nervously. "Four more years of study! Oh, I am so glad! I think with his assured position at the insurance office father will arrange it for me financially. He will be delighted to do just what you suggest, Doctor Farrel."

The two shook hands, and Mason hurried out, glowing and radiant. As he stepped into the open air, the keen December wind struck him in the face. He buttoned up his coat, and almost ran the eight squares to his home, arriving in time for luncheon. The good news was quickly told to his mother, and the two were soon busy with plans for the next four years.

"Yes, indeed! Your father will be more than willing! With strict economy we may contrive to have the last year of all spent at a school in Germany. You will more than repay us for the slight sacrifices."

While they were talking in high spirits, a noise at the door startled both. Mr. Mason appeared in the doorway, pale, haggard, and almost reelng.

His wife started to her feet. "O Henry! What is it? You are ill! What has happened?"

He dropped into a chair and buried his face in his hands. Then lifting his head with a groan, he cried, "O Elizabeth and Ralph! how can I tell you? How can we face this awful disaster? Read that!"

He extended a sheet of paper, which his wife seized, while he murmured brokenly, "They did not even tell me! They placed that on my desk at noon."

With misty eyes Mrs. Mason read, "Your services are no longer required. Enclosed please find three months' salary.

my high school training, and nearly three years at the university. I am almost twenty-one. You could not struggle on for four years while I would be studying, and father must not be harassed. His mind would be vastly relieved to know that I had started in a fine concern at a salary, with good prospects of advancement. I must, mother; it is the only way!"

The arrangement was quickly made. Not to one human being did Ralph betray the pain and anguish that the giving up of his dearest ambitions cost him. Parting with his class, and last of all the dean, was the hardest outward test. Even the quiet, well-poised head of the great institution was moved as he heard the story. His eyes were dim with tears as he arose to take Ralph's hand and say briefly, "I would do the same, Mason. I hope, God bless you, I am glad that the university is turning out men!" With a strong handclasp, the two parted, and Ralph hurried out, unable to speak.

But the shock had been too great for Mr. Mason. He kept his bed, complaining only of being tired, and in a few weeks died, leaving Ralph his small savings, and Mrs. Mason at the last to express to her his regret that it would be so little, he suddenly brightened and declared triumphantly, "But I leave you rich, Elizabeth! in our boy. I do not worry. You will have our Ralph, and you cannot be comfortless."

And the boy, standing mute with grief in the shadow near the bed, knew that these parting words of his father more than compensated for the sacrifice of his dearest ambitions, for honor and success in the proud little world of the university.—*Elizabeth Ferguson Seat, in Service.*