

Perfection
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Fire

February 15, 1936

My dear, dear Miss Maggie:

Again I write to you to sorrow and sympathize with you in the loss of another beloved brother. I learned of Dr. Iglehart's death through Aunt Jig who deplored the loss of such a fine and useful life.

I think I have told you before, but again I want to state to you that in all my travels, by land and by sea, and in the breadth of my acquaintanceship, in my friendships and my observation, your family stands out preeminently as the finest example in the quality of character, of high morality and of intelligence, that I have yet encountered. I realize, of course, that boyhood memories are apt to make lasting impressions on the human mind and to fix opinions of what is good and what is not good. I believe, however, in the case of your fine and noble family that the passage of time and the multiplicity of acquaintances have only served to accentuate and to place in preeminent view within my mental vision, those same noble qualities which have so fully impressed all who knew you slightly or who loved you greatly for two generations.

I often consider the lofty mind and character of your father and of the qualities and ideals which he transmitted to his large family and how these same lofty aims and depths of character have spread out fanwise in the growth which has affected for good innumerable lives. For instance, my early ideas of religion and my love of the church which has stayed with me always, directly springs I believe, in about equal proportions from you and from my mother. You and your family have had the faculty of inculcating ideals and of receiving the love and admiration of all who knew you or your lives. Your father, therefore, and his sons and daughters have left a heritage which is a part of the glory of our people and it is only because such people as the Iglehart family have lived and labored and loved and transmitted the aspirations and the ideals to others, that we have, as a people, been able to, even to the limited extent, maintain our private and public principles of morality and right living.

I do not think of Dr. Iglehart as one who started from nothing and made of himself a distinguished physician and a useful citizen. He did that in a measure full and running over but he did more in the fullest measure, in that he fulfilled the obligations of his birth and of his training and he passed on to his children, and I trust to his children's children, the bright flame of the torch which he received from his father and which was so tenderly cared for through his training and environment.

You, I know, sorrow for those loved ones who you have seen pass before you into the eternal life. On the other hand I know of no one who can in greater measure take full satisfaction, indeed more than satisfaction, who can glory in the beauty of the lives of the family with which you grew up and which has been bound together by such strong and lasting ties. We believe, in the comfort of our faith, that we will be rewarded in accordance with the work we have done on earth and in that measure I know of no one who can take more comfort in the lives which your loved ones have lived than you. I do not believe, as did early generations, that our lives are simply trainings for the hereafter but I believe that the Christian religion was given us to set up guides and principles to govern our actions in this world, will determine our reward in the hereafter. That is to say that the reward of a future life is more or less of a selfish reward as pertaining to the individual but the lives which we live on earth affect not only ourselves individually but all who come within the sphere or orbit of our influence for good or for bad.

For my own self I bear willing and humble testimony to the influence which you and yours have had on me from my childhood days down to the present time and I most assuredly believe that that same influence for good has been exerted and repeated indefinitely.

I had the pleasure of attending the South River Club dinner with Dr. Iglehart last November 21st and noted with pleasure the delight which all the members showed in having him attend this dinner after the illness which he had previously gone through. It showed the pleasure which they enjoyed in the beauty of his character as well as the companionship which they derived for the association with his intellect. He was a distinguished man, with his reputation firmly planted on the rock of good work. He was also the fine product of a fine race and the world suffers from his removal from its active ways.

In the case of an active life such as I have led for over thirty years with work and events crowding it and with necessarily a large acquaintance, events and things and people are apt to become confused because after a short passage of time new events and people and things have crowded into one's mind and life. In spite of this, certain things and certain people stand out as beacons in one's life. That is supremely true of your family in my life.

I think of Paul, boyant, strong, vigorous, able, a leader in my own profession of engineering, cut down by bad health and

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finally by death in the prime of a useful and active career, leaving behind him a clear record and an example for his children and his children's children; Mrs. Sellman, good and calm and the model of a wife and mother; of Miss Miriam, beautiful in mind and character and body, who, with you, constituted the feminine ideals of my boyhood and young manhood; of Berry, who has just left you, able, distinguished, physician, good citizen, good son, good brother, good husband, good father, a leader in his profession, in his church and in his State; what a fine constructive record he has left to his children and to you, his devoted sister; of Tom, who has so recently left you and who though burdened for so many years with ill health stands out in mind and character as the embodiment of the masculine virtues of manliness, goodness and unselfishness and chivalrous regard for others. He might well have occupied a seat of honor at King Arthur's round table. And now you, with your strength and your brilliant mind and your beautiful faith, carry on by the same paths of virtue and of goodness and of mental excellence which all of your family have nobly followed.

All of you have influenced me in a superlative degree and have influenced others greatly though it is hard to believe that they could be influenced more than I have been by the example set me.

And so, my dear, while I sorrow with you in the loneliness and bereavement which you feel for the brothers and sisters and for this last brother who has just left you, I know of no other who can in a greater degree and probably in an equal degree take such satisfaction in contemplation of the lives of these who have been so near and dear to you. You can consider their lives with the most profound thankfulness and satisfaction and can rest in the complete assurance that they have entered into the life hereafter, receiving to the fullest extent all of the joys of that unknown felicity which we look forward to with hope.

May joins me in love to you and Miss Sally. May the world long be enriched by your presence within it.

Lovingly yours,

Original Signed:

JOHN LANSDALE

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