

roll,' Ellis thought. And he made a wry face as he recalled those he had seen in the office, his future associates. No one thought it a privilege to be an employee of this house; so the mere appearance of those who were there was against them.

'I mustn't stay here long enough to look like them,' he decided. 'But there seems to be no choice but go there till something better offers.'

So he began work the week before his sister's school opened. It was hard to persuade her that it was wise to give up her own employment till he should prove himself able to retain his position, and thus take her place in the partial support of their mother. The arguments of mother and son finally prevailed on her, however, and she began her last year of training. But not until she said:

'Remember, I am ready to take up my old work at any time, Ellis. It may be you will find it impossible to make ends meet.'

She meant it kindly, of course; but her words hurt. Ellis determined that he would suffer anything before he would tell her he could not fulfill his part of the contract made when their father died.

He soon found that conditions in the Elberon Desk Company's office were trying. Not only were the other employees uncongenial, twitting him because he quietly attended to his own affairs and was silent when, by their own uncouth language, they tempted him to careless speech, but slights were put on him by Mr. Marshall, the office manager. He was treated more like an office boy than a stenographer. The tasks of others were given to him; it was often eight o'clock before he could go home, in consequence of the insolent demands of one and another of the men who seemed to have Mr. Marshall's favor.

All this, Ellis decided, could be borne, so long as his sister was thus given her longed-for school privileges. But when he was asked to do things that were contrary to the ideas of right and wrong he had learned in his home, it was a different matter. One morning, when a complaint came from a disappointed customer that a desk promised for delivery a week before had not been heard from, Mr. Marshall told Ellis to mail the customer a copy of a telegram sent, according to the letter-book, ten days earlier, in which it was stated that the promise could not be kept because of a strike in the factory. Ellis knew there had been no strike, and he could find no record of any such telegram.

'I have looked in the letter-book, Mr. Marshall, and I cannot find that we sent the message of which you speak,' he said. 'Are you sure of the date?'

'Of course you can find no record of it,' was the contemptuous reply. 'But you can write what I tell you, can't you? What do we pay you for?'

Ellis wrote the letter. But now that his eyes were opened to what was meant by the complaints made of his employers' untrustworthy business methods, he determined that he must find other work. The Elberon Desk Company's office was not the place for a Christian stenographer.

He did not think it wise to give up his position until a new place was secured; but he was sure that, before long he would be able to turn his back on the uncomfortable office. He was doomed to disappointment. His search for work, conducted at the noon hour, and the evenings when this was possible, was without result. No one wanted a stenographer. It was now late in October, and everywhere he went he found that arrangements for the winter had been made.

He had about made up his mind that he must content himself where he was until spring, when he was asked to tell a lie in his own name. The letter was dictated by Mr. Mitchell, and he was told to sign it. Expostulation was useless.

'Sign the letter, or give up your place!' was the inexorable demand of his employer. 'It's now five o'clock; you can have till tomorrow morning to think it over.'

He did think as he walked home, and he could see but one course for him; he must resign; he could not lie at the command of any man. He had about made up his mind to this when he reached home. There he found a letter from Ellen with this paragraph for him:

'I am proud of Ellis. How well he is filling the place of bread-winner for the family! I see I was wrong in thinking he couldn't do

the work. Now, dismissing all doubt, I am preparing for a year of earnest study.'

How could he resign after that message? Suppose he should fail to secure other work? Then Ellen would have to give up her school, and he would be disgraced.

After dinner, feeling that he must talk to some one about his problem, he went out. He felt he could not talk to his mother, though it had been his habit to go to her in every difficulty. This concerned her too deeply, and he was sure her advice would be given against her own interest.

So he sought Tom Monroe. To him he told the whole story. When he had finished, Tom said:

'I don't think there is any doubt about what you ought to do. It isn't pleasant to work at the Elberon, but it would be awfully hard to bring Ellen home from school after the effort you have made to get her there. I think it is one of the cases where, of two evils, one should choose the least.'

Ellis was surprised. He had expected other counsel. He told Tom his reasons for feeling it was not best to follow his advice. For fifteen minutes he argued, until, finally, his chum was convinced, and his own convictions of what was right were strengthened. At last, as he rose to go, he said:

'Well, old fellow, I'll do it. At nine tomorrow morning I'll tell Mr. Mitchell I cannot do as he tells me about that letter. I know the result. At five minutes past nine I'll be on the street, looking for work.'

In the morning he was tempted to reconsider his decision. But the sight of his mother's calm, peaceful face, and her look of pride in him as she bade him good-by, strengthened his purpose.

'A fellow can't go far wrong when he feels his mother's eyes on him; that is, if his

mother is anything like mine,' he thought.

The interview in the office was brief, Mr. Mitchell eyed him sternly as he walked to his desk.

'That letter must go out by the first mail, Buford,' he said. 'Hurry it up.'

'Mr. Mitchell, I have not changed my mind. I cannot write that letter.'

'O-o-h! you can't, eh? Well, you can hunt for a job, then. And a nice time you'll have of it, without a recommendation.'

Ellis felt very unheroic as he walked out of the store. Where should he look for work? He had already applied at every likely place.

He was walking down the street, his eyes on the pavement, when a man overtook him, and spoke to him. Looking up, he recognized Mr. Norcross, of Norcross & Bentley.

'Mr. Buford, I believe? You were in our office not long ago, were you not? Well, if you still wish employment, perhaps you will care to report to Mr. Davis for duty.'

'But, Mr. Norcross,' the surprised Ellis answered, 'Mr. Davis will ask me for a recommendation, and I have none to offer.'

'I've explained to Mr. Davis,' Mr. Norcross replied, smiling. 'He expects you this morning. I've told him about a little discussion you and Tom Monroe had last night. I was in the next room with Mr. Monroe at the time. You were talking so loud I could not help hearing; and I am glad I did hear. You told me what time to watch for you as you came out of your former employer's door.'

'Good old Ellen!' was Ellis' thankful thought. 'She won't have to leave school, after all!'

The most momentous truth of religion is that Christ is in the Christian.—Henry Drummond.



—Sunday Reading for the Young.