

smaller than the other boys, and it was only his conductor's persistence that gained him a hearing at all.

"How old are you? You're too young," said Mrs. Hennessy, all in one breath.

"I'm strong, though I am small," replied the boy; "and I'm a good worker, too."

Peggy had rescued him just as his uncle was about to hire him to the owner of a low public-house in the town, and he was haunted by the fear that they would seek him out again and clinch their bargain before he had found a hirer for himself.

"And—" Christie glanced at the other competitors and instinctively lowered his voice, "by reason of being young, I wouldn't be asking big wages."

Mrs. Hennessy turned again to look at the boy whose case she had thought to have dismissed.

"I give £2 the quarter," she said.

"I was asking the half of that," replied Christie tentatively, "and you'll find me handy."

"Who had you hired last term?" she questioned.

"The boy's face clouded over, and despite his efforts his voice trembled.

"I—I wasn't hired—"

Then again Peggy came to his aid. "He's an orphan, God help him," and, lower, she added: "Hurry, then, Mrs. Hennessy, dear, and say the word, for I see that rascal Patsy Kearney coming to take him off to his low shebeen unless you've got him hired first."

"Will you do what you're told?" asked Mrs. Hennessy, "and mind, now, you're to 'ma'am' me and 'sir' Hughie."

"I will—ma'am," replied Christie, his face lighting up.

And so, after some further converse, his fate was sealed. Half an hour later he was seated at Peggy's side on the car, their united weights hardly balancing Mrs. Hennessy's portly form, and the old mare was taking them slowly homeward.

Before they had reached their destination Peggy had learnt much of her protégé's past, but some weeks had passed by before he gave her his full confidence and told her of the ambition of his life. His father had been a