

swered—"Yes, sir," suspending further words to bite off a string.

"Does it pay a young man of your capabilities?"

"Yes, sir, it pays for the time. I cannot afford to stay here longer than till I can find a situation. Mr. Litchfield has been unfortunate, and his wife is very ill; he is a neighbor of ours, and I am glad to have the privilege of helping him a bit. I am looking out for a chance for myself all the time."

"Come into my store," said Mr. Wing, of the large wholesale house of Wing, Rich & Co., and he named promptly a salary in advance of that the Hathertons had paid. "Come to-morrow, if you like; and if Mr. Low, whom you will probably see, tells you we do not want any more help, tell him you have an engagement with me."

That night when Hal went home it was with the announcement—"Another friend of father's has turned up, Edna!"

"Is he coming here, Hal?"

It cannot be denied that there was a slight shade of anxiety on the sister's face. Within the past six months two gentlemen, strangers to them, but designating themselves friends of her father, had, being in town, come and taken up an abode with them. The second had brought his little boy with him, was himself an invalid, and Edna's kind heart could not see him suffer without taking active measures for his relief. He prolonged his stay some time after making the discovery that Hal was giving up his own bed to him and sleeping in a closet, also that Edna, whose failing health would not allow her to continue teaching, did all the work for their little household, having help only one day in the week from old Margaret. It is hoped that, under the circumstances, the reader will not form an erroneous idea of Edna's hospitality, if a slightly anxious tone was betrayed in the interrogation.

"A new kind of a friend, Eddy," rejoined Hal. "Offers me a situation, and a hundred dollars more than the Hathertons gave me. Says I can come to-morrow, but was willing I should stay and help Mr. Litchfield the week out. Mrs. Litchfield is better to-day. She sent word for me to come to the door, she wanted to thank me for bringing the geraniums you sent. She is a pleasant-speaking little woman. I declare, it makes me feel bad, Eddy, to have them so grateful for the little I've done. It seems as though they were not used to kindness. They have done so much for others, too. Benton told me about it."

"Hal!" spoke Edna, as he was vanishing through a door.

"Did you speak to me?"

"You did not tell me where you are going—the new friend's name."

"Did I not? It's a good name, Eddy. Jonas Wing."

"Of the firm of Wing, Rich & Co?"

"Exactly"

"Why, that is a much larger, older house than the Hathertons, even."

"It is indeed. I never should have thought of asking employment there, unless I wanted the experience as initiatory to office-seeking in Washington. There is about as much red-tape ceremony in one instance as in the other. Always a host of applicants."

And Alice came; and though the loss of the old situation, like all unpleasant subjects, had been banished her first recreating hours, not so the gain of the new, which was discussed with happy hopefulness, while Hal busied himself in his usual little attentions to his sisters' comfort, and Edna flitted here and there cheerfully busy with the tea arrangements.

The next morning a conversation occurred between Jonas Wing and Mr. Low.

"I have engaged a new man; a young fellow, Ellerton. Has been at Hatherton's till within a few days. He comes Monday. Make note of it, that he does not get turned off."

"Allow me to suggest sir, that first vacancies have been promised to—"

"That's not the point," interrupted Mr. Wing. "There is no vacancy, but I've had my eye on Ellerton some time, and I want him. Perhaps you remember that little matter I had with the Hathertons. I couldn't get it put in shape. At length I went myself. Don't think they knew me. I explained what I wanted. Pierson was out; couldn't get anything done. I noticed Ellerton overheard and paid attention to the conversation. Next time I went with the same result. They're getting very slack over there. Pierson was out again. Ellerton stepped forward; not obtrusively, however. 'I know what this gentleman wants. I can do it myself if you will trust me.' His tone spoke capability. 'Let him try,' said I. And I never saw better business capacity evinced by so young a man. He ferreted out the tangle like a lawyer, and it was not in his department, either. Used to know his father. I like his mettle. Let him come." And, turning to his letters, the interview was signified to be concluded.