

of the drudging boy of all work that he had been before. 'And to help around generally for odds and ends.' The young fellow's face fell. That sounded rather too much like an errand boy's work. But he brightened up and asked where he should begin. For an hour or two he was busy helping the clerks. By and by Mr. Adams came into the back part of the store where his new sub-clerk was engaged in marking a keg.

'Almost through there, Mathers?' he asked. 'Well, I wish you'd tackle the back storeroom. It's in such confusion, and we've all been too busy to see to it properly.'

'You want it put in order?' asked Andrew, doubtfully. He foresaw more sweeping, etc., than seemed dignified for a sub-clerk.

'Yes, it needs it decidedly,' and the merchant passed on. He wondered how Andrew would hold out; he was 'the best of the lot, so far,' he thought, regretfully. For the trial was coming, and by the boy's face it looked rather dubious.

Andrew explored the old back room, and decided on what he considered a most brilliant scheme. Calling the errand boy aside, he told him about the storeroom, and showed him a bright half dollar. Jim was tempted, and accepted the offer, promising to have the place ready that afternoon at the earliest hour possible. But there were so many errands to be done that by three o'clock Jim had found not a minute's leisure, and Mr. Adams, as ill-luck would have it, happened to go to the storeroom for something he wanted about that time, and discovered the still forlorn condition of matters, and the fact that Andrew had secretly hired Jim to do the work while he loafed in the front of the store, anxious to show off the fact of his rise in the business world.

And that night Andrew Mathers received a day's wages, and a politely regretful dismissal—reason unassigned.

Matt was so careless in his dress, and his hands were so evidently at home with the dust of the earth that, with a short lecture, on cleanliness, he was summarily dismissed.

Joe McCarthy was too rough. The clerks complained of his insolence within half an hour. And Tim McCarthy, his cousin, proved an inveterate liar.

So they came and went, good (in spots), bad and indifferent.

It was almost two weeks after the sign had first gone up that Charley Winchester applied at the office.

In all that time no boy had seemed to suit. Evidently the need was not a pressing one; there were plenty of clerks, seemingly, and a fairly good errand boy. The Adams' store seemed able to exist without that peculiar kind of boy, and yet its owners were still on the warpath, apparently searching for some as yet unheard-of specimen of boyhood.

Charley had not thought of applying at the first. He was attending school still, and was working hard and steadily every moment outside of school hours; for the Winchesters were poor, although they had once known better days. That poverty is the hardest of all to bear, as Charley well knew; and it was his hope and his aim to bring about brighter and better times as soon as he could.

He was anxious to be in school; for he realized that his education would fit him to fill a higher position than he could find without it. But after a talk with his principal, with the minister and the leader of a night school, he found that he could advance as rapidly with the addition of two studies in which the principal could still allow him to continue, as though he were to remain in the High School. And he had learned from the other boys that the sub-clerk was to have two hours a day free for school-work; for Mr. Adams knew very well what was the value of an education.

About ten o'clock on Charley's first morning, Mr. Adams, Sr., came down to the store to the counter, where his sub-clerk was doing up a little bag of nails for Johnny Smith.

Charley smiled pleasantly at the little fellow and he evidently was as courteous to such customers as to their dignified elders.

'Oh, by the way, Winchester,' said old Mr. Adams, 'I wish you'd tackle the old back storeroom, the ell to the large storeroom we use now. The old one has been waiting some time for a good cleaning out. You can begin when you see a chance, some time.' That was leaving Charley quite a margin; and Arthur or Tom, his predecessors, would surely have put it off until a more convenient season—till to-morrow, at any rate.

But Charley soon found out from the clerks that he was not needed in the store, and would not be, probably, for the rest of the morning, and he went at once on his fateful expedition. He discovered the same chaos which had conquered the explorers before him, but he set resolutely to work. He could not help wondering at and rather criticizing the carelessness of his employer, though he tried to excuse him as far as he could.

'I suppose he has so much to attend to,' he said to himself—there was no one else, unless you counted the rats, who now and then scampered out from their hiding-places to see who their invader was, to whom he could talk. 'But if I were proprietor, I'd see that all my clerks or errand boys, or somebody, kept the things in order, if I didn't do it myself.'

Nevertheless, Charley determined that order must be restored, even at this late day; and how he did work! All the rest of the morning he rolled and piled the barrels and boxes, until he had the 'centre of the deck cleared for action,' as he put it. Then, what do you think he tried next? Something that most boys do not especially enjoy. And how Mr. Adams' eyes danced when he looked in about noon, to see young Winchester down on his knees, just scrubbing away with all his might!

Charley straightened himself with as dignified air as was possible under such circumstances (his sleeves were rolled up and he was wearing as an apron a large dusting cloth which happened to be the only clean thing Anderson, one of the clerks, could find for him). He flushed a little, but tried to make his greeting very quietly courteous and indifferent.

'It is rather damp here for you, I fear, Mr. Adams. You will find that place rather soapy. I'm just letting the soap sink in on that spot as the only way to take it out. Toward the left you will find it drier, I think.'

There was a little defiant ring in the boy's voice, but Mr. Adams could easily pardon that. He knew that boys do not especially enjoy being caught in such attire, or doing 'girls' work,' as some rather foolish fellows choose to designate it.

He noticed that the windows were washed and polished. 'And dust and cobwebs have revelled there ever since I thought of this little scheme!' thought the owner.

'I couldn't see plain till they were cleaner,' said Charley, calmly scouring away at a spot where lampblack-must have been reposing for some years, so indelibly did it seem imprinted there.

'I won't get it done to-day, sir; but you said there was no hurry,' Charley went on devoutly, hoping that the proprietor would betake himself elsewhere very speedily; for it is embarrassing to have a man stand by and watch you mop, especially if you can't find any mop handle and are obliged to kneel more or less gracefully to the work.

'Oh, no, no hurry; not in the least,' Mr. Adams hastened to assure him.

'And the air was close and dusty. It will

be fresh and easier to breathe here by to-morrow,' the new sub-clerk continued, decisively. The decision in his tone was due to the energy with which he was scouring that black spot.

'If I do it at all, I'm going to do it up fine,' the young fellow had determined. 'And I don't care if the other fellows do think it's woman's work. I don't know why it should be, I consider it harder than waiting on customers; why, my back's most lame now. I don't see how women can do it. I've often done it for mother, only our floors were not so utterly awful as this old store-room. And it's honest work, and I won't be ashamed of it; so!'

Mr. Adams must have read young Winchester's thoughts, for he was softly chuckling to himself as he went back to the store, 'He'll do! he'll do! he thinks it's girl's work, but he won't be ashamed of it; and he is as thorough as can be!'

The next day it was rainy, and there was not much to do in the store, so Charley had a long, busy day in the storeroom. And by night the task was done. Everything was cleaned, sorted and neatly arranged, and what seemed utterly worthless laid aside in a heap just outside the door, where Mr. Adams could just glance at it, and see if anything in it proved fit to save.

And young Winchester was retained. The sign did not appear again, for that particular, especial, wonderful, superhuman kind of 'boy' that was 'wanted' had certainly been found.

Mr. Adams invited all the applicants into his store one day. The office could not hold them, and he gave them a pleasant but very frank 'talk' indeed; and he explained the store room scheme, the rock on which so many had struck; and he gave them some good advice for future service, too. He was interested in all boyhood, and he was a thorough business man. Many of the listeners carried its help with them through life; but some of the boys were angry.

'I should say it was a scheme,' declared one, angrily, as they talked it over on the grocer's boxes and other loafing places, that night.

'I should have thought we'd have caught on to it,' complained another.

'Well he didn't try it on them all, you see. Found out all he wanted to without it. And then he had such an offhand way we never thought of that old shed's being a test,' concluded a third.

I heard Winchester tell the story recently. He is a rising, popular business man of the Adams & Winchester hardware firm. And he is just as thorough and just as energetic to-day as when, years ago, he scrubbed out the old storeroom, which he owns now. And he wants a sub-clerk himself. I wonder just where he'll find another like himself. Who do you suppose will answer his 'Wanted—a Boy'? It's a long-felt want, and likely to be long felt. There are plenty of boys in general, but where is that particular special kind of 'boy'?—Jean Halifax, in 'Independent.'

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