

that it reminded him of his own and his mother's struggles against poverty. How are we to live?—and how is the debt to be paid? Two questions that had been haunting him for some time past. The winter had been long and severe. There was a heavy doctor's bill, and all the other unavoidable expenses which a tedious illness brings with it, were still unpaid. It was impossible for all the family to live on his salary alone; and even if they could, how was the debt to be paid? He had formed plan after plan for increasing their small income; but one after another had been abandoned, generally for want of time. There was only one thing he could try, which, even if it succeeded, would be very little compared to their wants. Three evenings in the week he had a couple of spare hours. He might get some one to teach.

For Robert Gray, at present, work was the result of necessity, not choice. As a boy he had been educated and looked forward to following his father's profession; but when Dr. Gray's sudden death left his mother with nothing but the cottage they lived in, and Robert himself, the eldest of a large family, he was only too glad to accept Mr. Burke's offer of a situation at a better salary than was generally given to beginners, and a promise of promotion according to his own deserts. On this salary, together with what his mother made by sewing, the family had managed to live, or rather exist. By the time he reached his present standing—only one above him—the Mr. Elliott whose place would soon become vacant,—Edward, the second son, was bringing in his share of the income, a fair share, too. At the entreaty of her sons, Mrs. Gray had given up sewing, and though the strictest economy was still practised in their home, things had looked brighter for the Gray family, and for two or three years there seemed a fair prospect of "getting on." But the loss of Edward's salary, his sickness, with all the attending expenses, had put them further back than they had been for years. They had never been in debt before; now there was a good deal of debt, and no prospect of anything to pay it. Robert wondered,

half angrily, half sadly, if it would come to this, that his mother and sister would have to commence sewing again. Kate could teach, it is true; but with so many younger ones she could not be spared from home; and Edward, in his anxiety to get something to do, was almost making himself sick again. Everything looked dark to Robert Gray that stormy night. He had not his mother's faith, and found it impossible to follow her advice and put out of his mind the situation that would soon be vacant. What that would be to them, in their present circumstances! In bitterness of spirit he thought of its being given to a man who could fill it no better, and deserved it no more than himself, and who had not one quarter of his need of a larger salary. There was little comfort to him in the fact that he did his work well and was a favorite with every one. Any customer would prefer him to Markham; but what good would that do?—Mr. Burke never noticed that. It was true Robert Gray's manner in business was very quiet and unobtrusive; whereas Mr. Markham, what with his eagle eyes, hook nose, loud tones, and general fussiness of demeanor, would be apt to impress one, especially his employer, that the prosperity of the whole establishment rested on his exertions alone, and were it not for his zeal and untiring energy, the entire thing would go to ruin. It seemed hard in Robert's circumstances to stand by and see such a chance pass him,—one that would not be likely to occur again for years. But he felt sure it was not for him. Markham was an older man and had had more experience—a good business man too. What more natural than that he should get the promotion? He tried to turn his mind to teaching in the evenings, if he could get it. That would help them to live, and as for the debts, he must speak to people and get them to wait, a hard thing to one of his proud spirit to do. But there was no other way, and he was anxious to keep his mother from sewing. He felt sure she could not stand that work now, or come through some of the old days again. In a few days Mrs. Gray proposed it herself.

"You can't keep us all, my son, and the