

Nimrod: A Mighty Hunter Before the Lord

There was a pause. After a while Hunter raised his eyes to the other's face, but immediately let them fall again.

'Well,' said he, 'I might—perhaps—be able to let you have a day or two. You can come here to this job,' and he nodded his head in the direction of the house where the men were working, 'to-morrow at seven. Of course you know the figure?' he added, as Newman was about to thank him. 'Six and a half.'

Hunter spoke as if the reduction were already an accomplished fact. The man was more likely to agree, if he thought that others were already working at the reduced rate.

Newman was taken by surprise, and hesitated. He had never worked under price, indeed he had sometimes gone hungry rather than do so; but now it seemed that others were doing it. And then he was so awfully hard up. If he refused this job he was not likely to get another in a hurry. He thought of his home and his family. Already they owed five weeks' rent, and last Monday the collector had hinted pretty plainly that the landlord would not wait much longer. Not only that, but if he did not get a job how were they to live? This morning he himself had had no breakfast to speak of, only a cup of tea and some dry bread. These thoughts crowded upon each other in his mind, but still he hesitated.

Hunter began to move off.

'Well,' he said, 'if you like to start you can come here at seven in the morning.' Then as Newman still hesitated he added impatiently, 'Are you coming or not?'

'Yes, sir,' said Newman.

'All right,' said Hunter, affably, 'I'll tell Crass to have a kit ready for you.'

He nodded in a friendly way to the man, who went off feeling like a criminal.

As Hunter resumed his march, well satisfied with himself, the fifth man, who had been waiting all this time, came to meet him. As he approached, Hunter recognised him as one who had started work for Rushton and Company early in the summer but who had left suddenly of his own accord, having taken offence at some bullying remark of Hunter's.

Hunter was glad to see this man. He guessed that the fellow must be very hard pressed to come again and ask for work after what had happened.

'Any chance of a job, sir?'

Hunter appeared to reflect.