

toilet. A small looking-glass in the bathroom gave him an unexpected pleasure. 'I shan't have to buy one,' he said, delightedly.

He carried his shoes in his hand as he stole softly down the stairs. Early as it was, he found Mrs. Gray in the kitchen.

'No,' she said, 'there are no chores for you to-day. You'd better hunt round and get you a bed. I might have told you that you could sleep down here on that old lounge, but I didn't think of it.'

'I slept first-rate. The floor was clean. I'm just as much obliged, though, as if you had told me.'

'Well, you can use it, and welcome, till you do get a bed.'

'I hope to get one to-day. I'm going to see what I can do after breakfast; but, first I want to sweep our front steps and the pavement.'

Mrs. Gray objected: 'I'm up earlier than common. I'll do it myself.'

Joe laughed. 'It was in our compact,' he reminded her, 'and I want to do it.'

Joe bought a paper from a newsboy, while he was engaged in his self-imposed task. He carried it up to his room, after being again assured that there was nothing for him to do, and read portions of it carefully. Then he took paper and a pencil and wrote for an hour or two. He then went out.

Inquiring his way, he reached, at last, that part of the city where were the large furniture stores. One, two, three, four, five, he entered. Dismissed from each of them with a curt, 'No, I don't want it,' Joe kept on, undismayed.

'I'll try every single one in the city before I give up!' he said.

Store after store was visited. In many of them Joe was unable to see any member of the firm. Shortly before noon his request was granted, and he was ushered into a private room. An elderly man, seated at a desk, paused in his writing, and looked inquiringly at him.

Joe bowed respectfully, and advanced toward him.

'Well, sir, your business?'

'I want a bedstead, a mattress, a pillow and a chair, sir, and I want to pay for them in advertisements. I can write them so they will attract people's attention, I think.'

'And you want me to run the risk of their meeting with no attention?'

'I want the furniture. I cannot pay for it in money, and I have heard that advertisement-writing was a good thing.'

'Why can't you pay in money?'

Joe explained his position. 'My father is a farmer, and I've come here for a year's schooling. I want to earn my way, and I've taken the cheapest room I can find. It's a garret-room, unfurnished, and I don't want to ask my father for money to buy a bed and a chair.'

'H-m. Well, go to that desk and write me an advertisement.'

'I have some with me, sir. The blank spaces are for the firm's name.'

'Let me see one or two.'

'Well,' a few minutes later, 'these are fair. You could improve on them by practicing, probably. Still, they are fair, and I'll take them.'

He touched a knob as he spoke, and a clerk appeared in answer to his summons.

'We have same broken lots of pine, Clark?'

'Yes, sir.'

'Take this young man with you, and let him select a bedstead, a slat-spring, one excelsior mattress, two pillows, a couple of chairs and—a table.'

'No, sir. And if you please, sir, I did not ask for a spring, and one pillow will do, sir, and one chair.'

'That's all right. Now, just write your

address on this card, and I'll send you a line when I need anything more.'

'Thank you, sir,' said Joe. Then somewhat slyly he extended his hand. 'I shall ask God to bless you,' he said.

'Thank you. I'm glad you are trying to please him by not being a burden on your father. Well, good-day.'

'Good-day, sir,' said Joe, gratefully.

Joe's room looked quite like a room, he thought, when he surveyed his new possessions that night. He had spent the afternoon in a fruitless search for work. 'Writing, copying, addressing envelopes—anything I can do at odd times,' he had said wherever he had applied. His efforts, however, had been all in vain.

After a night's rest he consulted his landlady.

'Well,' she said, 'I don't know, but, perhaps, you could get your three meals at some of the restaurants, by waiting on table or washing dishes.'

'All my meals! Why, that would save me four dollars a week! Thank you, oh, thank you, ever so much!'

'There's Ginger's, two blocks from here. You might try him. He's a hard man with help, they say, but you wouldn't be there much.'

Joe lost no time in seeking Mr. Ginger, and applying for a position.

'Seven to eight, mornings, five to six-thirty, or seven, nights, and your pay in meals, three per day—that's your proposition?' said Mr. Ginger.

'Yes, sir.'

'References with you?'

Joe's face fell. 'I'm from the country, sir; I have no references, for I have never worked for anyone but my father.'

'Sorry; settles it. Good-day.'

Joe turned away sadly. On the threshold of the door his face brightened. He hurried back to the desk. Mr. Ginger looked up with a frown. 'Can't break rules. No use. Settles it.'

'But I have a letter from our minister at home, sir. It will tell you something about me, sir. My father got it. He thought my teachers might require it.'

'Got it with you?'

Joe took the letter from his pocket. Mr. Ginger read it slowly, while Joe awaited his decision with great anxiety.

'Lodge near by?' said Mr. Ginger, at last.

Joe told him the street and number.

'Go to work to-night.'

'Now, if you like, sir. I'm hungry, and I see you're short of a waiter in that corner.'

'H-m! Been looking about you. Well, I'll try you.'

Mr. Ginger beckoned to his head waiter.

'Here, Watkins, give this young fellow a chance. Show him what to do and how to do it. He'll work night and mornings. Meals here.'

Joe thanked him, and followed the waiter, instructed by him; he applied himself to his new work with the determination to do it well.

It was with a bright face that he returned to Mrs. Gray's. 'He took me!' he said. 'I'm to have all my meals! I'll tell you all about it this noon. I'm off for school now, but I'll have time to do things for you every noon. I'm so glad you thought of it!'

'That was a capital idea of Mrs. Gray's,' he thought, on his way to school. Now, the next thing will be to earn a dollar for my rent and something for my schoolbooks, if I have to buy any. I must not call on father for money while I can work.'

As the days went on, Joe kept his eyes open as he walked through the streets. He noticed, the following Saturday, that there was great activity in the markets and grocery stores.

'Two days' supplies,' he thought. 'I wonder if they don't want an extra hand anywhere.'

To think was to act. In the early afternoon Joe applied at several stores. He met with no success. 'I'll not give up,' he thought. 'I'll try till I do get something.'

On the next Saturday he took the streets in a cheaper part of the city. Entering the first store, he made his errand known to the only man in it.

The man shook his head. 'Business don't yield much profit nowadays, and we can't keep two boys.'

'Saturday is a holiday. I'll work from two o'clock to four in the afternoon, and eight to ten, or later, at night, if you'll give me groceries or meat to the value of a dollar and one-half.'

'Well, that's fair, I suppose, and I'll see what my partner says. We do need an extra hand Saturday nights to take out orders in the neighborhood while our clerk is off with the team. Got any references?'

Joe explained his position. 'I've got a letter, sir,' he concluded. 'Mr. Ginger took me on the strength of it. I'm working for him for my board. This money I want for my rent and other things.'

'Well, if you can wait a spell, I'll talk it over with my partner. He's out. There he is now. Give me your letter.'

The few minutes that elapsed seemed hours to Joe, as he waited the decision of the partners.

'Mr. Brown—my name is Thomson—thinks we can try you,' announced Mr. Thomson on his return.

'Oh, thank you, sir! I'll try hard.'

'You'll have to hustle. Saturday's a live-day all round.'

'Yes, sir. Shall I go to work now?'

'Perhaps you may as well. This basket'll be to go out directly.'

'Yes, sir. I'm afraid I shall be slow at first, till I learn the streets round here.'

'Won't take you long. They're all numbered.'

Joe flew home for a moment that afternoon before he was due at the restaurant, and told Mrs. Gray of his new prospects. 'And I thought—I thought—'

'That I would take the groceries for your room rent, and pay you the other half dollar? Well, I'd as well buy things there as anywhere's else, and you can fetch them home. It'll be real handy.'

'I wish you would let me do more,' said Joe. 'You are very good to me, but you don't let me do enough.'

'I ain't used to you yet. I guess you earn your room already, and you'll have plenty to do when I start the furnace. And I guess you'll think you've got a pretty big contract on your shoulders when the snow comes.'

'It seems as if I ought to do more now,' answered Joe, as he went out.

He felt himself relieved of a heavy burden now. 'It is God's help,' he said reverently.

A task which he had been dreading all the week still lay before him. He had learned to wait on table with accuracy and dispatch. He thought, gratefully, that it was his mother's careful training that made it easy for him. But, as he went back and forth between the table and the kitchen he found it hard to keep the orders in his mind, so difficult did the coming ordeal seem.

He went up to Mr. Ginger's desk the moment his work was done. Asking God for help he stood before him.

'Well!' said Mr. Ginger gruffly, 'what now?'

'I will come to-morrow, sir, but I cannot come another Sunday. I did not know you kept open on Sundays, or I would have told you at first, that I could not work on the Lord's Day.'