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**A**S YOUNG Joe Kent entered the office of the Kent Lumber Company at nine o'clock he was conscious of a sudden pause in the morning's work. He felt rather than saw that the eyes of every employee were fixed upon him with an interest he had never before excited. And the quality of this interest, as he felt it, was curiously composite. In it there was a new respect, but mingled with misgivings; a sympathy repressed by the respect; a very dubious weighing of him, a comparison, a sizing up — a sort of mental shake of the head, as if the chances were in favour of his proving decidedly light in the balance; and running through it all was a waiting expectancy, frankly tinged with curiosity.

Kent nodded a somewhat embarrassed, comprehensive good morning, and as he did so a thick-set, grizzled man came forward and shook