

The boy read the card aloud: 'No. 27 Hefferman street. Is it easy to find?'

'Yes. Ask the first policeman you meet.'

'I don't like to ask anything of the policeman,' said the boy. 'They might ask me who I was working for.'

'What do you mean by that?' said the man sharply.

'I mean that as long as I haven't any regular work I'm a sort of vagrant, ain't I?' And he looked up at the stranger with an innocent glance.

'I'll give you a dollar if you'll do this errand,' said the man.

'Dollar is a good deal,' murmured the boy. 'That's at the rate of three dollars an hour, and ten hours would make it thirty dollars.'

He said this with the air of one who solves an interesting problem. 'There was a fellow who went from our town when I was a small boy and struck it rich with some steel makers, and they say his income now is something like a dollar a minute all day long and all night too. Time must fly very merrily with him.'

And he chuckled softly.

'Are you going on that errand?' the man asked.

'I don't know as I am,' drawled the boy. 'I'd like to earn the money all right, but I don't believe I can do more than one thing at a time. I came here to see Mr. Barrington, and I guess I'd better wait until he comes out.'

'See here,' said the man hurriedly, 'I'll give you five dollars to take this message.'

'Tain't worth it,' drawled the boy. 'It would be robbing you. You ought to be more careful with your stuff. I wouldn't want an overcharge on my mind like that. No, sir. You keep your money, mister.'

'You're a fool,' growled the man.

'Well, I ain't no robber,' said the boy simply.

The man started and glanced at him sharply, but his face was bland and smiling.

'My old grandfather used to say,' remarked the boy, 'that to take advantage of a man's distress was no better than stealing from him—and it was a blamed sight meaner.'

The stranger was about to make an angry retort when the appearance of a man at the gate stopped him. He was a young man, and he was bare-headed and wore no coat. There were calico sleeves on his arms and a pen behind his ear. He looked like one of the numerous young men behind the big counter.

He nodded slightly, and the man at the bench arose quietly and stepped forward.

The boy arose just as quickly and followed him.

'Here is the package Mr. Barrington left for you,' said the young man at the gate. He spoke hurriedly, and extended a bundle wrapped in a newspaper.

'All right,' said the man, and reached forward and grasped the package.

He turned quickly away, and there was the boy in his pathway. He was pale, but smiling.

'Get out of my way,' hissed the man as he pushed forward.

There was desperation in his face, and there was fear—and there was guilt.

'Wait,' said the boy quickly. He saw the man at the gate still standing there with a look of horror on his face. He saw the other man's hand drop into his side pocket.

'Wait, Jim Barton,' cried the boy.

With an oath the man sprang forward, but the boy nimbly ducked and caught him tightly about the waist. The man's hand came out of his pocket, and he struck viciously at the boy's head. At the same moment the man at the gate ran forward.

'Macy!' cried the boy, and, with a violent effort, he flung the first man to the floor and fell heavily across him.

When he opened his eyes again he was lying on a couch in a handsomely furnished room, and a kindly faced man was looking down at him. His head ached, and there was a thick bandage about it.

'He's all right, Barrington,' said the man beside the couch. 'He has a tough head, and it was only a scalp wound.'

'Good,' said the tall man, who stepped forward.

'Are you Mr. Barrington?' the boy inquired as he sat up.

'Yes.'

'Then I have a letter of introduction for you.'

'You have introduced yourself very acceptably,' laughed the tall man. 'I fancy I know who you are—Mr. Symington wrote to me concerning you last week. And I want you to understand that you have made a very favorable impression on the bank, and the bank will show its gratitude in a practical way. Your shrewdness and courage prevented the loss of a large sum of

currency, and spoiled one of the neatest pieces of thievery ever attempted. Both the principals are gaoled, and I am sorry to say that one of our young men is confined with them.'

'Then Macy was there?' laughed the boy.

'Macy was on hand,' said the tall man. 'Macy thinks you are a wonder, and gives you all the credit.'

'Here's the letter,' said the boy, as he drew an envelope from his pocket. 'You'll find that I'm looking for work.'

'You needn't look any farther,' laughed the tall man.—  
*Cleveland Plain Dealer.*

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