

'That don't sound half bad,' he said. 'Good-bye, Miss Spelman.'

And he moved away just as the eminent capitalist came through his office door.

'Was that cub talking to you?' he demanded of the girl.

'Yes, father. He seems like a bright, shrewd boy.' 'He's a street boy. His shrewdness is just another name for barefaced assurance.'

'I like his brightness,' said the girl. 'He told me he was going to work for you.'

'That's some more of his assurance,' said her father. 'I gave him no encouragement whatever.'

'I don't think he's the sort of a boy who needs encouragement. He seems very self-reliant.'

'And he told you he was going to work for me, did he?'

'Yes, father.' 'His impudence is extraordinary. He told me the same thing.'

'Get in, father. I'm going to give you a little ride in the park.'

When the capitalist came down to his plant the next morning he noticed a boy pacing with measured tread in front of the building.

He looked at the boy more closely. Then he recognised his caller of yesterday.

'What are you doing there?' he sharply demanded.

'I'm pacing off the front of the building,' the boy replied. 'Jim Stacy an' me had a dispute over which was the biggest plant, yours or Templeton's. I measured Templeton's, an' now I'm measuring this—an' we've got 'em beat, sir, by fully eight feet.'

The capitalist opened the door.

'Nothing doing in my line,' said the boy quickly.

'Nothing doing,' replied the capitalist.

'All right,' said the boy. 'I won't give you my address. I'll drop around every morning.'

And he turned and walked away, leaving the capitalist staring after him.

The next morning he was on hand again.

At sight of the capitalist he hurried forward.

'Morning, Mr. Spelman. Will you kindly hand Miss Spelman this letter? It's something I told her I'd get for her.'

The capitalist stared at the letter.

'Very well,' he said, and hurried through the open hallway.

'I wonder,' commented the boy, as he turned away, 'if Papa Spelman is pretty friendly with Arnold Bradford? Something looks wrong.'

With which philosophical comment he ended his soliloquy and went his way.

The next morning, as Luella Spelman was bringing her father down town in the trim electric, they passed the boy. He saw them, and whipped off his cap directly.

'There's that confounded boy again,' said the old man, and then he suddenly chuckled. 'I'll have to fine him for being late.'

'Don't forget that you are a half hour earlier than usual,' said the girl. She quickened the speed of the stanhope. 'He's a very bright boy.'

The old man frowned.

'With his bringing up he may be a scallawag with all sorts of failings. You can't trust a boy like that.'

'I think I could trust him,' said the girl.

'Luckily,' said the old man, 'there's no occasion for either of us to put his fidelity to the test.'

The girl laughed.

'There may be an occasion,' she said.

'What do you mean?'

'I mean that he seems to be just the sort of boy who would make an occasion.'

'He's an impudent cub,' said the old man.

After the girl had left her father at the office she turned the stanhope about and hurriedly retraced her route. As she hoped and expected, she met the boy.

'Good morning, John Paul,' she cheerily called, and ran the stanhope close to the curb.

'Good morning, Miss.'

'Will you come with me for a little ride, John Paul?'

He looked at his dingy clothes ruefully.

'If you think—yes, Miss, thank you.'

He took the place beside her.

'You were on your way to the office, I suppose?' said the girl.

'Yes, Miss. Work is slack there at present, and I have been getting down a little later than usual.'

He spoke so gravely that the girl turned and looked at him. Then they both laughed.

'I suppose,' said John Paul, 'that when your father there I can be spared for an hour or two?'

'No doubt,' said the girl. 'And you haven't given up the hope of going into my father's office?'

'Given it up? No, indeed, Miss.'

'My father doesn't seem to be impressed by your determination.'

'You have spoken to him, Miss?'

'He has spoken to me.'

'I am not at all discouraged, Miss.'

The girl looked at him for an instant.

'I think you are a boy who can be trusted, John Paul.'

'Try me, Miss.'

'My father is afraid that your life unfits you for any position of trust.'

'I know he does, Miss.'

The girl was looking at the road very intently.

'I thank you for sending me that address, John Paul.'

'You are quite welcome, Miss. I was very glad to get it. I wanted to write to Mr. Bradford. I wrote to him yesterday.'

'Will you tell me what he says in his answer, John Paul?'

He nodded.

'Yes, Miss.'

'Mr. Bradford and I were friends for a long time, John Paul. And then we had a—misunderstanding. But I wish Mr. Bradford well, and—I am interested in his success. You understand, John Paul?'

He nodded again.

'I understand, Miss.'

'Thank you, John Paul.'

They rode a little way in silence.

'I found out something about Mr. Bradford, Miss. He has been doing well out there in Arizona, and would have done better, but he was taken ill. Oh, he's better now, Miss. He was caught on the desert in a storm, and a fever put him out of business. But he's getting well, Miss. There's no danger now. That's what the man who knows him told me.'

The girl looked around presently.

'I hope you will convince my father that he needs you, John Paul.'

The boy laughed.

'That will be all right, Miss.'

The girl hesitated.

'Are—are you in need of—of any money?' she asked.

He shook his head.

'No, Miss. I've never yet seen the day when I was quite without it.' He laughed. 'An' I've never seen much of it, either.'

Before the girl could reply an ominous report—a sharp bang!—told of a wrecked tire.

'We will have to walk across the park to the car,' said the girl. 'I can telephone to the garage at the park entrance.'

John drew the stanhope close to the curb. Then he beckoned to a park-policeman.

'Hennessy,' he called, 'just keep an eye on the "machine" till the wreckers get here.'

Each morning John Paul reported at the big plant. At least he managed to appear near the office when the capitalist entered. But the old man did not relent. Possibly his eyes twinkled at the lad's cheerful persistence, but his forehead wore its usual frown.

And then one morning he appeared, but not alone. A man in fashionable garb—a somewhat striking looking man with a dark moustache—accompanied him. John Paul was carrying the stranger's heavy travelling bag.

The old capitalist and his daughter had just reached the office. As the old man crossed the sidewalk, the stranger met him, and they shook hands, and the stranger took the bag from John Paul and they went in together.

'Wait here,' the stranger called back to John Paul.

So John Paul quickly turned and crossed to the stanhope at the curb, and took off his cap to the girl.

'I'm filling in a little time toting bags,' he said.

'I've got to keep the kettle boiling while I'm waiting for the new job, you know.' He paused and thrust his hand into his pocket. 'I've got a letter,' he said. He noted her quick start. 'It's from Mr. Bradford. He's coming home.'

The color surged across her face. 'He started as soon as he got my letter. He didn't write much. I guess he was in too much of a hurry. As I figure it out, he ought to be here to-night or to-morrow.'

He put the letter back in his pocket.

'I'm going to meet him at the train,' he said. Then he softly chuckled. 'He may want me to tote his dress suit case.' He looked up suddenly. The girl was smiling.

'I've got to write a note to your father, Miss.'

'About the place?'

'Well, it may help.'

She gave him a blank card and an envelope from the handy box under the seat cushion, and he produced a stubby pencil and laboriously prepared the message.

'How's that?' he asked as he handed her the card.

She took it and read it aloud.

'Mr. Spelman—look out for the party that's with you. He was followin' the horses when I saw him first. In Chicago he was workin' a swindlin' skeem through the mails. I know a man who knows all about him. He's as smooth an' slick as they make 'em. Yours warningly, John Paul Stokes.'

The girl nodded.

'Better take it to him at once, John Paul. It seems important.'

John took the envelope and entered the hallway. He rapped on the inner door.

'Come in,' said the old man's voice.

The boy entered the room. The stranger was sitting at the old man's desk. There were numerous samples of what seemed to be ore lying on the desk, and there was a map and a bundle of papers.

'Well!' said the old man sharply.