

morning as the lock was out of order and he couldn't get in, and I'm come on to open it for him."

"I told Jennings a week ago," says he, "that he ought to get that lock fixed. Where is he?"

"He's been a-writing letters, and he's gone up to his house to get another letter he wanted for to answer."

"Well, why don't you go right on?" says he.

"I've got almost through," says I, "and I didn't want to finish up and open the vault till there was somebody here."

"That's very creditable to you," says he; "a very proper sentiment, my man. You can't be too particular, about avoiding the very suspicion of evil," he goes on, coming round by the door.

"No, sir," says I, modest like.

"What do you suppose is the matter with the lock?" says he.

"I don't rightly know yet," says I, "but I rather think it's a little worse on account of not being oiled enough. These locks ought to be oiled about once a year."

"Well," says he, "you might as well go right on, now I am here; I will stay till Jennings comes. Can I help you—hold your lantern or something of that sort?"

The thought came to me like a flash, and I turned round and says:

"How do I know you are the president? I have never seen you before, and you may be trying to crack this bank for all I know."

"That's a very proper inquiry, my man," says he, "and shows a remarkable degree of discretion in you. I confess that I should not have thought of the position in which I was placing you. However, I can easily convince you it is all right. Do you know what the president's name is?"

"No, I don't," I said, rather surlily.

"Well, you'll find it on that bill," said he, taking a bill out of his pocket; "and you'll see the same on these letters," and he took some letters from his coat pocket.

I suppose I ought to have gone on then; but I was beginning to feel interested in making him prove who he was, so I said:

"You might have got these letters to put up a job on me."

"You are a very honest man," he said; "one among a thousand. Don't think I'm at all offended at your persistence. No, my good fellow, I like it

—I like it!" and he laid his hand on my shoulder. "Now, here," he said, taking a bundle out of his pocket, "is a package of one thousand pounds in bonds. A burglar wouldn't be apt to carry those round with him, would he? I bought them in the city yesterday, and I stopped here to-night, on my way home, to place them in the vault; and I may add that your simple and manly honesty has so touched me that I would willingly leave them in your hands for safe keeping. You needn't blush at my praise."

I suppose I did turn rather red when I saw those bonds.

"Are you satisfied now?" he said.

I told him I was, thoroughly. And so I was.

So I picked up my drill again, and gave him my lantern to hold, so that I could see the door. I heard Jim, as I call him, outside once or twice, and I nearly burst out laughing, thinking how he must be wondering what was going on inside.

I worked away, and kept explaining to the president what I was trying to do. He was very much interested in mechanics, he said, and he knew that I was a man well up in my business by the way I went to work. He asked me about what wages I got, and how I liked my business, and said he took quite a fancy to me.

I turned round once in a while and looked at him sitting there as solemn as an owl, with my dark lantern in his blessed hand; and I'm blamed if I didn't think I should have to halloo right out.

I got through the lock pretty soon, and put in my wire and opened it. Then he took hold of the door and opened the vault.

"I'll put my bonds in," said he, "and go home. You can lock up and wait till Mr. Jennings comes. I don't suppose you will try to fix the lock to-night."

I told him I shouldn't do anything more with it now, as we could get in before morning.

"Well, I'll bid you good-night, my man," says he as he swung the door to again.

Just then I heard Jim whistle, and I guessed the watchman was coming up the street.

"And," said I to the president, "you might speak to the watchman, if you see him, and tell him to keep an extra look-out to-night."