

rallying himself for an instant; "they tould me that you was converted in jail, an' that sounds a good deal like it. Now, Sam, I want to tell ye if ye want to argy on the subject of the truth, or any other of the moral sintiments, with any man whatsoever, ye don't want to come to a shoemaker's shop an' find a fellow who's just had three drinks at somebody else's expinse. Now go 'way; come round here to-morrow when I'm sober, an' I'll own up to everything you say, no matter what it is."

"That won't get Mrs. Prency her shoes," said Sam. "Go home an' go to bed, an' let me finish that shoe in your hand, an' if she comes here it'll be ready for her, an' if she don't you won't have anything on your conscience—not so far as she's concerned."

The cobbler took possession of himself with a tremendous effort, and looked sharply from his bleared eyes for an instant as he said—

"An' what do you know about shoemakin'?"

"As much as two years in State prison could learn me, Larry; though I don't think you need to have asked me."

"It's all right, me boy; I take it back; an' if ever I'm sent to State prison meself you may ask it of me ten times over; that's the Bible rule, I belave. Now I'll go home to my wife an' fam'ly, an' if you choose to finish that shoe an' stay here until Mrs. Judge Prency comes in to get it, why, you're quite welcome to do the work an' keep the pay; I tould her fifty cints."

Sam began work upon the bit of repairing which he had taken from the shoemaker's hands, and, although it was not of the routine nature which all of his jail-work had placed in his hands, he knew enough of the requirements of an ordinary shoe to do what was necessary. While he was working, the room suddenly darkened, and as he looked up he saw Mrs. Judge Prency herself.

"Why, it's Mr. Kimper! Are you working here?"

"Only to finish a job that was promised for this afternoon, Mrs. Prency."

"Where's Larry?"

He felt very badly," said Sam, "an' he wanted to go home, an' I promised to finish his work for him. I believe this is your job, ma'am?" said he, holding the shoe in the air for an instant.

"Yes," said the Judge's wife. "I will sit down for a moment, if you will allow me, while you finish it."

"Certainly, ma'am," said Sam, plying the needle and awl vigorously. He looked up only for a second at a time during the next few moments, but what he saw impressed him very favorably. Mrs. Prency was not a young woman, but apparently she had a clear conscience and a good diges-

tion, for she sat with an entirely satisfied and cheerful air; with her shoulders against the back of the chair, as if it were a real pleasure to rest against something, while her cheeks flushed, probably from the exertion of a rapid walk from some other portion of the town. Like any other woman of good health, good character, and good principles, she was a pleasing object to look upon, and the ex-convict looked at her as often as he dared, with undisguised and respectful admiration. But suddenly the uplifting of his eyes was stopped by a remark from the lady, as she said—

"Sam—Mr. Kimper, I've heard some remarks about your speech at the experience-meeting the other night. You know I was there myself; you remember I spoke to you as you came out?"

"Mrs Prency, I know it; an' that isn't all; I'll remember it just as long as I live. I'd rather have been the dyin' thief on the cross than said what I said in that church that night, but I was asked to do it, an' the more I thought about it the more I thought I couldn't say no. But I didn't know what else to say."

"You did quite right, Mr. Kimper: you spoke like a real true, honest man. If it's any comfort to know it, I can tell you that my husband, the judge, thinks as I do. I told him what you said,—I remembered it all, word for word,—and he said to me,—these are exactly his words,—'I believe that is an honest man, and that he is going to remain an honest man.'"

Sam bent over the shoe a little closer, and said, in a faint voice, as if he were talking to himself,—

"What Judge Prency says about human natur' ort to be true. If there's any other man in this county that's had more opportunities of knowin' all about it, I don't know who he can be."

There was silence for a moment or two. Sam quickened his labors upon the shoe, and the lady bent her gaze closely upon the shoemaker. At last she said,—

"Mr. Kimper, don't mistake the meaning of what I am going to ask you. I am a member of the church, myself, and I have as hearty an interest in you and sympathy for you as the best friend you have. But I want to ask you one thing, merely out of curiosity. Has any one questioned you, since, about what you said that evening?"

"Nobody but Deacon Quickset, ma'am."

"Ah? Deacon Quickset? Did he say anything that annoyed you in any way?"

"I can't say that he did, ma'am; though he kind o' filled my mind with doubts an' gave me a sort o' a sleepless evenin'."

"I'm very sorry for that. There's some one else who may trouble you somewhat, and I'm sorry to say that if he does I shall be to blame for it. He is a young lawyer. His name is Reynolds Bartram."