

deacon looked defiant. Then he pulled himself together with a mighty effort, and remarked: "Sam, some folks say I am down on you, and that I don't sympathize with you. Some folks talk a good deal for you, an' to you. But I just came in this mornin' for the sole purpose of sayin' this: you've had a hard row to hoe, and you've worked at it first rate ever since you got out of gaol. I've been watchin' you, th' agin' perhaps you don't know it, an' I come here to say that I believe so much in your havin' had a change—though I do insist you ain't gone far enough—I come around to say that I was goin' to buy out this place from Larry, an' give it to you at your own terms, so that you could make all the money that came in."

Sam looked up in astonishment at the lawyer. The lawyer looked down smilingly at the deacon, who was seated on a very low bench, and said: "Deacon, we're all a good deal alike in this world in one respect—our best thoughts come too late. I don't hesitate to say that some good thoughts, which I have heard you urge upon other people, but which you never mentioned to me, have come to me a good deal later than they should. But, on the other hand, this matter of making Sam the master of this shop has already been attended to. I've bought it for him myself, and made him a free and clear present of it last night, in token of the immense amount of good he has done me by personal example."

The deacon arose and looked about him in a dazed sort of fashion. Then he looked at the lawyer inquiringly, put his hand in his pocket, drew forth a mass of business papers, shuffled them over once more, looked again at the lawyer, and said: "Mr. Bartram, I've got some particular business with you that I would like to talk about at once. Would you mind comin' to my office or takin' me round to yours?"

"Not at all. Good luck, Sam," said the lawyer. "Good day."

The two men went out together.

No sooner were they outside the shop than the deacon said, rapidly, "Reynolds Bartram, my business affairs are in the worst possible condition. You know more about them than anybody else. You have done as much as anybody else to put them in the muddle that they're in now. You've helped me into 'em, and now you've got to help me out of 'em. Now, what are you goin' to do about it? Everythin' has been goin' wrong. That walnut timber tract over the creek, that I expected to get about five thousand dollars out of, is now worth five thousand cents. Since the last time I was over there some rascal stole every log that's worth anything, an' the place wouldn't bring under the hammer half what I paid for it. I have been tryin' to sell it, but somehow everybody that wanted it before has found out what has been goin' on. This is an awfully mean world on business men that don't look out for themselves all the time."

"I should not think you had ever any right to complain of , then, deacon," said the lawyer.

"Come, come, now," said the deacon, "I'm not in any condition to be tormented to-day, Reynolds; I really ain't. I'm almost