

Reconciliation

comes. He is anxious to sell out to that man from the East. He thinks the chance is one not to be lost."

It was the first time that Davison had offered to consult with Justin on any subject, or had spoken to him in this manner. Justin drew his chair closer to the bed.

"If I can help you in any way."

"I've got to have your help, I suppose," said Davison, with a touch of his old petulance. "When a man is wrecked he clutches at—well, we won't talk about that! We'll have to agree to let bygones be bygones. I don't want to hurt your feelings, and I want to do right by you."

He put down the papers, which he had been about to read.

"By the way, Justin, I've been thinking a good deal about you and Lucy. You and she are still in the notion of marrying, I suppose?"

His voice was kindly now, and it softened still more as he beheld the hurt expression on his son's flushed face.

"Forget what I said just now, and I'll try to be more considerate. This has been a terrible thing for me; how terrible I don't think you can ever realize. I had made Ben my idol. It was foolish, of course, but in this world men do foolish things; I have done my full share of them. So if there is anything to be forgiven by any one I am the one to do the forgiving."

His hands shook again on the papers and tears came into the sunken eyes.