

which his mind seemed busily occupied—"I shouldn't wonder if that was the best way out, after all. I do believe I'll do it. Yes, I will do it! I'll go an' buy out that shoe shop of Larry Highgetty's, an' I'll let Sam Kimper have it at just what it costs, an' trust him for all the purchase-money. I don't believe the good-will of the place, an' all the stock that is in it, will cost over a couple of hundred dollars; and Larry would take my note at six months almost as quick as he'd take anybody else's money. If things go right I can pay the note, an' if they don't he can get the property back. But in the meantime folks won't be able to say anything against me. They can't say then that I'm down on Sam, like some of 'em is sayin' now. An' if anybody talks about Bartram an' the upper-crust folks that have been helpin' the meetin's along, I can just remind 'em that talk is cheap, and that it's money that tells. I'll do it, as sure as my name's Quickset, an' the quicker I do it the better it will be for me, if I ain't mistaken."

The deacon hurried off for the shoe store; as usual, the only occupant of the shop was Sam.

"Where's Larry, Sam?" asked the deacon, briskly.

"I don't know, sir," said Sam; "but I'm afraid he's at Weitz's beer shop."

"Well, Sam," said the deacon, trying to be pleasant, though his mouth was very severely set, "while you're in the convertin' line—which I hear you're doin' wonders at, an' I'm very glad to hear it—why don't you begin at home an' bring about a change in Larry?"

"Do you know, deacon," said Sam, "I was thinkin' about the same thing, an' I'm goin' to see that priest of his about——"

"Oh, Sam!" groaned the deacon, "the idea of goin' to see a Catholic priest about a fellow-man's salvation, when there's a special meetin' runnin' in our church, an' you've took such an interest in it!"

"Every man for his own, deacon," said Sam. "I don't believe Larry cares anythin' about the Church that you belong to, an' that I've been goin' to for some little time, an' I know he thinks a good deal of Father Black. I've found out for myself, after a good deal of trouble in this world, that it makes a good deal of difference who talks to you about such things. Now, he thinks Father Black is the best man there is in the world. I don't know anything about that, though I don't know of anybody in this town I ever talked to that left me feelin' more comfortable and looked more like a good man himself than that old priest did one day when he came in here and talked to me very kindly. Why, deacon, he didn't put on any airs at all. He talked just as if he was a good brother of mine, and he left me feelin' that if I wasn't good, I was a brother of his anyhow. That's more than I can say most other folks in this town ever did, deacon."

The deacon was so horrified at this unexpected turn of the conversation that for a little while he entirely forgot the purpose for which he came. But he was recalled to his senses by the entrance of Reynolds Bartram. His eyes met the lawyer's, and at once the