

A few weeks later, when Featherstone and his family were at the Crossing, Hulton sent for Foster.

"I suppose you won't want to sell the mill?" he asked.

"No," said Foster. "Business looks like booming and our chances are pretty good."

Hulton made a sign of agreement. "That's so. I reckon you could do a bigger trade than you have the money to handle. However, I guess you and Featherstone mean to continue the partnership?"

"Yes," said Foster, quietly, "we stick together."

"Although he is going to marry a lady who will invest some money in the business? If your friendship stands that test, it must be pretty sound. But I'd better state why I sent for you. Our trade is growing fast, and there's a risk of our running short of half-worked material. Well, if you won't sell your mill, you must enlarge it on a scale that will enable you to keep us going, besides coping with your other orders. I'm open to supply the capital, and have thought out a rough proposition. Give him the paper, Percival."

The treasurer did so, and Foster studied the terms with keen satisfaction.

"If there's anything you don't agree to, you can indicate it," Hulton remarked.

Foster hesitated. "It's a very fair and liberal offer. But I wouldn't like to take it, so to speak, as a reward. You see, I didn't——"

"Expect anything from me," Hulton suggested with dry amusement. "You were acting for Featherstone, but were willing to do me a favor! Anyhow, you can regard the thing as a plain business proposition. I get a number of advantages, besides good interest."