

The children ain't had no show; that's all my fault, too; but it'll take all that two of us can do to catch up with 'em. I want you to be always side o' me, Nan."

"We can't let 'em starve," said the wife, "an' if what you're believin' is goin' to keep you from pickin' up a livin' for 'em when you get a chance, what are we goin' to do?"

"I'm goin' to work," said Sam.

"Sho! You never did three days' work handrunnin' in your life." Then Mrs. Kimper gave a hard laugh.

"I've done it over two years now, and I guess I can keep on, if I get the chance. I can stick to it if you'll back me up, Nan."

"There ain't much to me, nowadays," said Mrs. Kimper, after a moment or two of blank staring as she held her chin in her hands and rested her elbows on her knees. "Once I had an idee I was about as lively as they make 'em, but things has knocked it out of me—a good many kind of things."

"I know it, poor gal," said Sam; "I know it. I feel a good deal the same way myself sometimes, but it helps me along an' stren'thens me up like to know that Him that the visitor in gaol told me about didn't have no home a good deal of the time, an' not overmuch to eat, and yet was cheerful like, an' always on His nerve. It braces a fellow up to think somebody who's been as bad oif as himself has pulled through, an' not stole nothin' nor fit with nobody, nor got drunk, but always was lookin' out for other folks. Say, Nan, 'pears to me it's gettin' dark all of a sudden—oh!"

The exclamation was called by the cause of the sudden darkness, which was no other than Deacon Quickset, who had reached the doorway without being heard. The deacon's proportions were generous; those of the door were not.

"Samuel," said the deacon, "you said this afternoon that you were a changed man, that you were leaning on a strength greater than your own. I want to see you make a new start and a fair one, and as there's a prayer an' experience meeting around at the church to-night I thought I'd come around and tell you that 'twould be a sensible thing to go there and tell what the Lord's done for you. It'll put you on record, and make you some friends, and you need 'em, you know."

Sam was pallid by nature, more so through long confinement, but he looked yet more more pale as he stammered:

"Me—speak—in meetin'?" Before folks that—that's always b'longed to the church?"

"You must acknowledge Him, Samuel, if you expect Him to bless you."

"I hain't no objection to acknowledge Him, deacon; only—I'm not the man to talk out much before them that I know is my betters. I ain't got the gift o' gab—I couldn't never say much to the fellers in the saloon along around about election times, though I b'lieved in the party with all my might."

"It doesn't take any gift to tell the plain truth," said the