

a dollar. I took him when he hadn't a friend; I kept him a week for nothin'; I held on to him when I'd have been justified in sendin' him away; I put myself out to find him a way of gettin' back to his mother when he wanted to go; I gave him a shawl to keep himself warm with—I've done *lots* of things for him. He's of age,—he's come back here of his own free will; he don't want to live on anybody else;—why don't somebody give him work if they think so much of him? I'd do it quick enough if he was strong enough to do what's got to be done, but the pork-packin' and corn-shellin' season's nearly on us, an' I've got to have a strong man that ain't likely to get sick and upset all my business calculations."

The Squire said as much to Lem, though in a kinder manner, and with sundry quotations of Scripture, on the first day when the convalescent lounged into the store. Lem admitted the wisdom of the Squire's remarks; and was as grateful when the Squire promised to "keep him in mind if he heard of anything turnin' up"—as if the Squire meant more by that expression than other people do under similar circumstances.

Then began for Lem a course of experience through which thousands of men have passed, and thousands are all the while passing, but which, in spite of its commonness, is full of tortures keener than any that Christian zealot or heathen executioner were ever able to devise—a source of experience whose influence upon character, and, through character, upon the world—the usual nature of religious teaching has never succeeded in overcoming. No one spoke unkindly to Lem, but no one greeted him with any cordiality. Business men did not frown when he approached, but, no matter how great their leisure might be, they never gave him any encouragement to enlarge upon his necessity for employment. Occasionally some one would quiet his own conscience and get rid of Lem by giving him a dollar, or some smaller coin, and then intimate by his tone and action that his entire duty was done. Others, equally practical but not willing to pay so large a price for a peaceful mind, would give Lem employment for an hour or two, and pay him at the current rate of daily labour; still others would feel that they had discharged all their moral obligations by giving Lem a full meal.

And yet the people of Mount Zion were as good, collectively, as those of any other town, and better than those of many, for Mount Zion was originally a religious colony and the descendants of the founders were people of considerable character. Every one was sorry for Lem—every one but Lem himself heard everywhere what an unfortunate

but deserving fellow he was. As Lem strolled aimlessly past Mrs. Berrington's house one afternoon, while that lady was entertaining quite a large company, which had gathered to make the acquaintance of the new judge of the circuit, the whole assemblage began at once to speak commiseratingly of the poor fellow, his lonely, friendless life, his lack of prospects, the weighty nature of his responsibilities.

"Why don't some one give him work?" asked the judge, who was a resident of a different county.

"Well—he—he isn't very strong—he can't do much"—he came very near dying a short time ago," some one answered, and the judge replied "Oh!" in a tone which indicated that he completely understood the matter and regarded it in the same light in which the citizens did. Lem passed the Squire's pastor one day in the street, and had in his face an expression which caused the good pastor to go instantly home and pray earnestly that the steps of this poor man might be ordered of the Lord. Lem happened in at the Methodist prayer-meeting one night, and noiselessly contracted himself into one of the rearmost corners; the next brother who prayed made a special appeal to Heaven for Lem, mentioning the would be beneficiary by name.

Lem grew steadily poorer, weaker and more anxious looking. When his money gave out he left his boarding-house and slept in a corn-rick; no one made remarks about it, for no one knew of it. Then he caught fish until the weather grew too cold for fishing, and the money for which he sold his fish paid for his lodging and board with a shiftless family living near the river. Whenever there was a freshet he sat in a skiff and watched the river for saw-logs; such of these as he secured gained him money enough to retain his miserable home. He cut wood on ground which a farmer wanted cleared, but he could do only about half the work of an able-bodied man, and there were many rainy days in which he could not work at all, so he never was able to spare money for his mother. Beggars, who occasionally visited Mount Zion and told pitiful stories, fared better than he, for Lem did not know how to beg.

He was not, with his many troubles, as badly off as he might have been, however, for he had three friends. The first was the old woman who had knitted him a pair of socks when he was sick; the second was a little boy named Billy Miles; and the third, from whom he had once been estranged, but in whom he now found his only way into occasional oblivion, was whiskey. The old woman, who lived by herself with barely