

an' it's our duty to see that Lem don't pay more than he'd ought to."

"Mebbe he hain't got enough money to take care of him till—till he finds out whether he lives, an' then they'll come down on you for it," said Mrs. Barkum.

The Squire smiled condescendingly. "That's all you women know about business," said he. "You don't s'pose I engage his board, do you? I'll tell 'em he want's to get a boardin' place, as he's pretty poorly, an' that he's got the money to pay for it. I'll just see if he's got it though."

The Squire learned that Lem still had some money. He explained that Mrs. Barkum had arranged to go to Evansville by the stage of that morning; he was authorized by Lem to engage board for him, he engaged the board accordingly, and moved Lem to his new quarters with such celerity that when, at noon, Dr. Beers called to see his patient, he found the house tightly locked, and was obliged to drive to the Squire's store for further information.

"No," said the Squire, "he isn't a pauper, an' he's got a spirit of his own. He's got money in his pocket, an' he's man enough to want to take care of himself. Grit, doctor—didn't I tell you so months ago."

When the doctor's story of Lem's narrow escape went the rounds, Mount Zion was worked up to a fever heat of feeling. The Squire's pastor alluded to the matter in prayer-meeting, and made it the subject of a powerful discourse upon special interpositions of Providence. Ben Ringell's daughter was summoned to the front door one morning to receive for the sick man an elegant sponge-cake, sent by Mrs. Berrington, who was so aristocratic that she kept two servants. On the same day the town butcher called with steak enough to feed a large family; 'twas for the sick man, he said, and 'twas all tenderloin, too. The teacher of the girl's Bible class in the Sunday-school attached to the Squire's own church—a refined, sensitive woman—sent Lem a bottle of Florida Water, which was then the rarest perfumery known at the Mount Zion drug store. Ijam Fielder, a good-for-nothing mulatto, who spent most of his time hunting, left a splendid assortment of game for Lem, with the word that whenever Lem would like to hear a fiddle played by a man that knew how, he would like to be sent for. Sainly old Aunty Bates who, with a slender purse but a great warm heart, managed to help every one who was in trouble, went straightway to work to knit Lem some warm stockings to wear when he recovered, as she hoped and prayed he might. The Smith girls, who alone among the Mount Zion ladies boasted that they never worked,

compounded a custard with their own fair hands, and delivered it in person, lest its appearance should be marred by a careless bearer. And one evening Dr. Beers was closely questioned by Micham, keeper of the liquor shop, and had pressed upon him, for Lem's especial use and benefit, a flask of brandy, which Micham declared could not be equalled west of the Alleghanies.

CHAPTER XIII.

PRIESTS AND LEVITES.

During the fortnight in which it seemed doubtful whether Lem Pankett would recover, he was the principal subject of conversation at Mount Zion, and every one agreed that the Squire displayed his naturally mean spirit by not taking the sick man in his own house and seeing to it that he was decently buried. Every one told every one else what they would have done had Lem been a faithful employe of their own. There were even many who declared that even if Lem had been a nigger, and the circumstances been still the same, they should have cared for him under their own roofs. This, from people who lived within a few miles of a slave State, and before an abolition party openly existed in the West, was as strong language as the most earnest humanitarian could desire.

When, however, Dr. Beers announced, with pardonable pride, that although Lem had been very dangerously ill, he was now in a fair way to recover, the direction of conversation was somewhat changed. It now became the task—not at all hard—for each man to convince his neighbour that it was the Squire's duty to again find occupation for Lem. A self-appointed committee of one waited on the Squire, and informally expressed the sense of the public, but the Squire vigorously declined to be guided thereby.

"The doctor says he isn't fit to work much," said he, "an' I don't employ men to stand around and hold themselves up. I ain't without charity, but I'm not the man to take the whole charge of the only object of charity in the county. The right place for him is the town where he came from, an' where his people have contributed, by payin' taxes to the public fund that's drawn on for the support of the poor. I've done more for him than anybody else in town; to be sure, the doctor's made him well, but he's doctored him in time that he wouldn't have been doin' anything else in, and I don't s'pose all the medicines he gave him ever cost