

terrible that he absent-mindedly played his knave upon his companion's queen, though he had two smaller trumps in his hand.

Suddenly, as both men had their heads together, trying to light fresh pipes with the same match, there was a shadow cast from the doorway toward which the deputy had his back; before the officer could look around to ascertain the cause, he received a tremendous blow on the head, which knocked him senseless, while Lem, looking up, beheld Bill Hixton.

"Get out that door and onto my horse—he's where your bosses used to tie theirs—and gallop down to New Philadelphia; there's a boat just leaving Mount Zion, and you'll catch it if you gallop lively. Here's money—plenty of it—don't stop till you reach Vicksburgh—I'll meet you there in a week or two."

"I won't do it," said Lem.

Mr. Hixton straightened himself from the stooping posture in which he had been blind-folding and tying the unconscious deputy, and stared fixedly at Lem. Recovering his tongue, he asked:

"Why not?"

"Because my bosses 'll clear me when they get back, an' I'm not goin' away with a bad name."

The ex-thief picked Lem up as if he had been a baby, carried him through the underbrush to where the horse was tied, saying as he walked:

"Your bosses, Binkle and Lodge, are the smartest shovers of counterfeit money in the whole West—they've been playing it on you this week or so. I met 'em not three hours ago, and heard all about it. They'd heard about the warrant out for you, and I believe they were both real sorry for you, but they're a couple of infernal cowards, and wouldn't try to rescue you. They talked about lettin' you go to jail, and then hiring somebody to break you out. I told 'em I'd tend to that job. Now gallop your liveliest, and do as I tell you to."

"I gave the Sheriff my word that I wouldn't run away," said Lem.

Hixton set Lem upon the horse, and drew a pistol.

"Mind me!" said he.

Lem looked at the pistol, and shuddered; then he asked:

"Where did you get this horse?"

"Bought him—I'm a man of my word, youngster."

"Where did you get the money?"

"Of Binkle."

"Counterfeit?"

"No—he owed me two hundred and fifty, good money, that I payed him to do what he didn't do; he was to have sent somebody to

break me out of jail. He made believe he sent you, and told me how he put the notion in your head, but when I told him of the way that you and me had met twice before, he owned up beat, and shelled out the money. Now look here, my boy, you've saved my neck, but I once saved yours, and I demand a favour of you. Do as I tell you, and get out of this country. You can't do any good by stayin'—if you go, you can count on me for life, and see your folks well taken care of. If you don't go I'll get on this horse, and ride into town, give myself up to the Sheriff, and swear that I run that money on you!"

Lem gathered up the reins, Hixton pulled a twig from a tree and gave the horse a sharp cut, and away dashed the animal at a pace which compelled Lem to hold tightly to mane and saddle to keep from falling.

"Tie him in front of the warehouse at New Philadelphia," shouted Hixton; then he exclaimed in a deep undertone: "Thunder! that infernal deputy sheriff must have heard that—I'll have to put him where his boss can't find him."

CHAPTER XXI.

PUBLIC OPINION.

Bad news and damaging reports travelled as rapidly at Mount Zion as they ever did in the best society, so it came to pass that everybody soon knew the worst about Lem, and, apparently, a great deal in addition to the truth. The news was undoubtedly received with sincere regret by many good people, but these were of a kind who did not enjoy gossip. Many others seemed to find a kind of satisfaction in the import of the stories. A knot of men, who were waiting at the post-office for the arrival of the mail, listened to such reports as each other had heard, and when one of them expressed the opinion that Lem was a bad egg, he did not hear a dissenting voice.

"Like enough it was all a trick, his getting to Mount Zion the way he did," suggested Major Moydle, who was the most brilliant theorist and irresponsible purchaser in the county.

"What, and smash up a steamboat to do it?" asked the postmaster.

"Like enough," replied the Major, cocking his hat over his eye in a most defiant manner, and assuming an attitude of self-defence. "There's nothing that such fellows won't do to carry their point. The pilot of that boat said that the least turn of the wheel, one way or the other, would settle

everyt
swears
but ho
Lem to
the st
have g
right t

"Th
whose
had ha
on th
"I've
I know
enough

Ever
mome
ideas;
"I

he.
right
always

lookin
thing
enough
a good

"A
count
pipe.

"O
the m
he did
feits

store
"G

knew
Squir
mort,

Potts
took
rival

"I
versi
Pres

town
been

"

as co
dist

"Th
weig

drun
My

sun
self
agin

the
got

tim
pio
fait

A
bec