

of the excitement in the room, came down the street at a most unjudicial pace.

"Stand back, everybody!" exclaimed the doctor. "Air is what he needs."

For two or three minutes there was utter silence; the doctor knelt with his fingers on Lem's pulse, and at last whispered:

"You can't last much longer, Lem."

"I know it," said Lem; "I want to be prayed for."

In an instant good Squire Barkum was upon his knees on the brick pavement. He had got as far as "Almighty God, we thine unworthy—" when the dying man said in a very thin voice, but yet with considerable energy:

"Get up—I don't want *your* prayers—I want some *good* person's."

The Squire's clasped hands fell from the devotional pose, his eye-brows raised, and his lower jaw dropped.

"Get up," repeated Lem. "I don't want anything from anybody that'll listen to you. Oh, God!--I'm killed!"

Again the Squire dropped on his knees, perhaps with some desire to change the subject of his late conversation.

"Who killed you?" asked the old man.

Lem slowly and with great difficulty raised himself on one elbow, fixed his eyes on the Squire, and exclaimed:

"YOU!"

The Squire slowly got upon his feet, fell back, leaned against the front of his sto and gazed into the limbs of a tree on the edge of the sidewalk. The doctor bent his head close to Lem and said:

"You haven't got time to be particular, Lem, but is there anybody you'd particularly like to have pray for you?"

"Yes," whispered Lem, "Bill Hixton."

A murmur ran through the little crowd; somebody elbowed a way through the bystanders and bent over Lem; it was the Sheriff.

"Lem," said he, "you're dying. Bill Hixton's a thief. You know something about him. Don't go into the presence of God with any concealed sin on your conscience. Do you know where Bill Hixton is?"

"Yes."

"Where?"

"Out of your reach," gasped Lem, with a happy smile.

"Who else?" whispered the doctor, after a moment's pause.

"Send for Aunty Bates," whispered Lem.

"She's sick abed," said the doctor.

"Then little Billy Miles," gasped Lem.

"Oh—mother!"—The sick man closed his eyes and went into a court in which there is no danger that the innocent will

suffer for the guilty, and in which turning State's evidence will not save scoundrels.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### TWO COUPLES OF PENITENTS.

The inhabitants of Mount Zion were not, as a body, familiar with the course of all human history, or with the habits of the best society, but they had in them one of those qualities of nature which make the world akin and show that the ancient Greek and the modern negro, the French aristocrat and the New York rowdy, are men of the same blood—they know how to heap upon a corpse the kind attentions which they had withheld from its owner. Lem's funeral was the finest one which Mount Zion had ever known. The coffin was as superb a thing as the rival cabinet-makers at Mount Zion could turn out between them: the nails had real silver heads, extemporized from five-cent coins by an ingenious inhabitant, and the plate upon the lid made up in ornamental flourishes what the paucity of information current about Lem's age, etc., caused to be lacking in the length of the inscription. The inside was trimmed with fine silk, and in considerable taste, the most high-toned ladies in the town contending with each other for a share in the work. The best of the two hearses in the town was newly varnished, the two cabinet makers combined their span of horses, and both gentlemen sat upon the driver's box. The court adjourned, by request of all the members of the bar, and the Judge rode in the first buggy, with the Methodist pastor, who had claimed the mournful pleasure of officiating, on account of Lem's probationary membership in his church. In the next conveyance rode, as chief mourners, little Billy Miles and Aunty Bates, who had got out of bed for the purpose. Behind them was a buggy in which sat the Sheriff and Bill Fussell, each in a new shiny hat and a solemn countenance. After these came everybody in the county, in buggies, farm waggons, on horseback and on foot; some horses carried two riders each, and in an old stage-coach, looking as disreputable and sad as themselves, rode the loafers from Micham's rum-shop. The procession was so long that it extended through the entire length of the main street. After it had turned out toward the little cemetery, however, a rapidly driven buggy containing the Squire and Mrs. Barkum took a place in the rear, and followed; then a couple of horsemen, with very clean-shaven faces, short hair, new and badly-fitting black clothes,