

tion," remarked the witness, looking around him for sympathy.

"The witness will be quiet," said the Judge, "and the prosecuting attorney must be bound by the agreement which was made by the State with the witness."

"Cross-examine," said the prosecutor, dropping sulkily into his chair. Bill Fussell arose and addressed the witness:

"Do you believe the prisoner knew the money you gave him was counterfeit?"

"No."

"Why?"

"Because I wouldn't have a man shove queer money for me after he knew what it was—it takes all business ways right out of him."

"What was he doing at New Philadelphia for you?"

"Nothing."

"What were you doing there?"

"Waiting for a boat to take me out of the country."

"What for?"

"I thought some of the counterfeits would be found out pretty soon, I'd got off such a lot of them through him."

"Was he going with you?"

"No."

"Why?"

"Because I hadn't asked him to, he didn't know I was going, and I wouldn't have had him with me if he'd wanted to go."

"Why not?"

"Because he'd found out what my business was."

"How did he find out?"

"Bill——"

A pistol-shot startled the court, and the witness fell out of his chair, bleeding profusely from the chest. Every one, the Judge included, sprang up, and the Judge shouted, "Mr. Sheriff! preserve order!" but the Sheriff hurried to the side of the wounded man, and whispered:

36

"Bill Hixton?"

"The Bible—quick!" gasped the witness. "As I hope to be saved from hell, the boy never had a notion of what we were up to, and was trying to run away from us when he was caught. I acknowledge the Lord Jesus Christ to be——"

The witness's voice failed him. His face twitched into agonized lines, every one of which was eloquent, but nobody could read them. By a violent effort he recovered his voice, and gasped:

"A man that—the boy—loved and helped—told him; he—was the only—only friend the boy—ever had, if—if he was a—horse-thief. I'm dying—trusting only in the—merits of—Jesus Christ——"

"Shocking!" exclaimed Squire Barkum. "It's what *you'll* say when you die, isn't it, you old scoundrel?" said Bill Fussell, confronting the Squire.

"Mr. Sheriff, you *must* keep order," said the Judge. "Who else will the prosecution call?"

"Nobody," said the prosecuting attorney, as the Sheriff shouted "Order!" with great vigour, and sent deputies in search of the murderer.

"Will the defence call any one?"

"No, your honour—we rest," said Bill Fussell, "and trust to the good sense of the jury."

The jurymen looked at each other, and exchanged some rapid words; the foreman stood up and exclaimed:

"Not Guilty!"

"Order! gentlemen," shouted the clerk.

"Gentlemen of the jury, arise and look upon the prisoner; prisoner, arise——!"

But a tempest of cheers drowned the voice of the clerk—everybody crowded round Lem to shake hands, some of the jurymen jumping from their benches to participate. The court-room was nearly emptied as Lem, leaning upon Bill Fussell, walked out, apparently with some difficulty. The Sheriff sent for the coroner and his own horse, the former to sit upon Binkle, and the latter for himself to sit upon as he took part in the chase after the murderer. But a hero, who had emerged from the clutch of the law, was greater in the eyes of the public than either a dead counterfeiter or a live ruffian—so most of the village followed Lem, or broke into groups and talked about him.

CHAPTER XXIII.

IN WHICH THE HERO ESCAPES FROM THE ROAD.

Lem and his counsel walked slowly down the main street of the village. Storekeepers and their customers hurried out of stores to shake hands with Lem and congratulate him. To every one Lem said "Thank you," but he did not seem to be as greatly elated as a man who had barely escaped State prison should be. As the couple passed along a stretch of board fence from behind which no smiling friends approached, the young lawyer said:

"Cheer up, cheer up, little chap—you act as if I was the Sheriff. What's the matter?"

Lem groaned. "Oh, lots of things," he said. "I haven't got any money to give you for one thing."

"Wipe that out, then," said the lawyer. "I'd have given you a fifty, as poor as I am,