

revisited the locality the next year, we after some search found the log shanty. It was empty. By certain signs I concluded it had been vacated the day of my last visit. No doubt the inmates, after Mark's treachery, feared he would lead the authorities upon them and so they vanished. Thus individually did I accomplish for the Government what a large staff had sought in vain to do.

CHAPTER II.

Fortune has always favored me. Inheriting considerable means I have added steadily to the store and was reported rich long before I felt entitled to be so considered. Friends often warned me against burglars, my house was so far removed from the frequented streets, and so much gossip was afloat about my income and possessions, but I never had bothered a bit about it until this particular night, when I was sure I heard a footstep down stairs in the library. A footstep had no business there at midnight. Besides myself there was only the housekeeper in the place and she was asleep long ago.

But somebody else was in the house now, sure enough, so I quietly dressed and stole down. There was a flickering light in the rooms, and my indignation swelled on observing that the fellow had lit one of my fine wax candles. Seeing that I was providing him with things to steal, why in thunder could he not bring his own light, or why could he not have looked about until he found a tallow candle?

On the table he had spread out a number of valuables collected from different rooms. There were two pieces of silver, heirlooms in the family which no money could buy from me, besides two other pieces of greater intrinsic value. As I got in view he tossed on the table a wallet containing several hundred dollars, which he had secured by forcing a lock in a cabinet, and

then he commenced coolly rummaging among the papers. In my hand was a stout oaken stick which I had found in the hall and grasping it firmly I stole in upon the fellow.

When within six feet of him he looked over his shoulder, not as though he had heard me, but as though warned by instinct. He tried to turn but I was upon him and brought him a terrific blow with my stick and then we clinched. He was a powerful brute, but my strength has always been great and I had the advantage in the attack. We fought stubbornly, and finally I got him down with my hand on his throat. Somehow he seemed passive as though reserving his strength, and I was suspicious. As my breath began to return I thought I saw the man actually trying to smile. And then I looked at him.

"Mark!"

"Ah there?" retorted the rascal in a gasp as my fingers relaxed.

"Is this what you are at now. Get up!"

"Yes, and why not?" he asked unblushingly as he arose. "Business is business and I am no more ashamed of mine than I would be of yours."

"Well you're a thoroughbred scoundrel."

"Go slow, there. No names. Don't presume too much upon our acquaintanceship, but attend to your business and I'll attend to mine. Now you go back to bed and I'll go on with this job. I'm nearly through."

"Just as near through as you'll ever get. Do you call this attending to your own business—don't you know this is my house?" I was in a rage, though now the memory of his impudence is amusing.

"Of course it's your house. I didn't know it until we grappled and then I knew it was all right. You are under obligations to me. I saved your life you know."

"Suppose you did. Call around at my office to-morrow and I'll pay you the \$500 I promised you, but I won't