

## CHAPTER XXV.

## FINALE.

In the afternoon, upon awakening, I felt much calmer and better. Edward came in to see me, but we talked little, he sitting by my bedside clasping my hand. The doctor had told him, in my presence, that I had been pretty well shook up, but he thought with good nursing I would come out all right. I had had one arm and two ribs broken, and had been badly cut about the head. I had passed through a serious crisis, but was now on the high road to convalescence.

Edward, though trying to be quiet, was nervous and uneasy; he evidently had something on his mind, which he wished to tell me, and yet seemed undecided just how to do it.

"And how did you leave Matilda and little Arthur?" asked I, after a pause.

"Well, quite well."

"She must be worried by my not writing. Of course, she knows nothing of the accident."

"Not a word."

"That is best. When you write, don't frighten her, Edward; tell her I have been some hurt, but am getting much better, and will soon be all right again. My hand is so hurt, or I would write her myself."

"Perhaps it won't be necessary to write. For—"

"For what, Edward? You seem to have something to say, and yet can't quite say it."

"Yes, I was going to tell you—that is—anyhow, I've got to go now, but will be back after awhile, and let you know all about it." And he arose, and left the room.

I wondered what he could have to tell that he seemed to hesitate so much about, but contented myself with lying quiet, and listlessly gazing out of the window at the waving branches of a tree. A feeling of indifference had come over me, and a desire to let myself float down with the tide of events, so to speak. I had felt rather a sensation of chagrin and disappointment when I had found myself still alive, but knowing I was likely to live for some time to come, I had no plans for the future, or any desire to form any.

A noise and altercation outside my room attracted my attention.

"It is no use, sir," said a female voice, which I recognized as having heard often by my bedside, when in my dreamy state; you can't go in. The doctor says he must be kept quiet, and I ought to know too what's best for him. Haven't I nursed him ever since he was hurt?"

"Pshaw! Sarah, I'm not going to eat him

up, or run away with him," replied the strange voice of a man, coaxingly.

"Can't help it, sir, you musn't disturb him."

"I'm not to be bamboozled, young lady, by any games; I must, and shall see him."

"Games! you rude, wicked man, what do you mean?"

"Mean, girl! I mean that I am an officer of the law and have an order for his arrest. Step aside, and let me enter."

A heavy tread, and the door swung open. I raised my eyes, and met those of the detective.

"Ah!" said he, quickly, upon seeing my condition; "the story of the smash-up, then, was true. Any-how, I have him safe."

I gazed at him inquiringly, trying to make it all out.

"Don't disturb yourself, sir," said he, in a softened tone; "it's all right. The folks will be here in a few minutes."

I said nothing, but still followed him with my eyes, as he took a seat by the window. More sounds of footsteps outside, and Edward soon eagerly entered.

"Good news, Tom," cried he, "we'll make a man of you again, before long."

"Why, what now?" inquired I, languidly.

"You're five thousand dollars richer than you were before the accident."

"Why I haven't been killed, have I?"

"No, but you have been smashed up. The railroad company, I have just heard officially to-day, intend to make you an offer in settlement of five thousand dollars cash. Somebody must have been threatening a big suit on your account."

"Indeed! why, Edward, I can pay all my debts."

"Yes and have a good round sum over."

I paused a second, ruminating on this unexpected good luck.

"This man here, Edward, seems to have some business with me, will you see what it is?"

"Eh! well sir, what can we do for you?"

The detective drew him one side and whispered in his ear. Edward's countenance fell, and he knew not what to say.

"Brown, Brown," said he, after a moment's pause, "let me see there was a boy with a telegram for you at the depot. The message just missed you at Cincinnati, and they were fortunate enough at the hotel to get it aboard this train."

"Telegram for me."

"Yes. Here he comes now across the fields, the same as I did myself. The stage is slow and the roads bad, and I wouldn't wait."