

stand by and be robbed by you or anybody else."

"Well you are a nice one," said Mark with an oath. "You would have been dead and buried in a hollow tree four years ago only for me, and here instead of thanking me you bob up when I have got a nice haul spread out on the table and expect me to let you spoil my game. What would I do that for? I am here on business and am going through with it. If I killed you it wouldn't be murder. Bill and Andy were going to do you four years ago, and so if I put a hole through you now it would be their bullet which I have considerably held back all this time. But you have no gratitude. If you have neither gratitude nor sense enough to go to bed I'll finish you and feel no deeper personal concern than if I only met a funeral on the street. I have a right to kill you if I want to, and I'll get away too, for my partners are down at the wharf with a boat and we will be across the lake before morning."

His reasoning was forcible but not convincing. The man meant it, I could see, strange as it was. I made a motion for my stick and we clinched again, he soon proving too many for me. Before, he had been mild, thinking it was "all right seeing it was me." Now he fought to win. He banged and pounded me and I was growing faint when by a quick wrestler's trick I escaped him and got my club, and rushed at him again. There was a report, a pain in my left leg, and as I dropped to one knee he pocketed his smoking pistol and started to gather up the booty. I hobbled to the table and started to smash at him with my stick, and just then a terrific noise, of screams and falling furniture came to us down the stairs. My housekeeper was aroused. Between this and my attack Mark became alarmed, dropped the silverware and rushed for the open window of the adjoining room. As he vanished his parting exclamation reached me and it was:

"Curse you for a thankless brute!"

His ridiculous idea of the nature of gratitude due him from me struck me then and I rather smiled, but that leg deserved attention. The housekeeper did her best, but she would not go outside for help, and as I could not walk, we contented ourselves with bandaging and bathing it until near morning, when the good woman with many a prayer for her safety brought a doctor. Before he arrived I had determined to give no description nor confess any knowledge of my burglar. I thought of the hollow tree in which my spinal column and yawning ribs might at the moment have been hidden but for Mark, and so concluded to let him off if he could escape. But I was out of all humor with him and considered him either a thorough-paced scoundrel or else a lunatic to argue with me as he did. Surely I was in the right of it for who would go to bed at a burglar's bidding and allow him to bag such treasures as mine were?

CHAPTER III.

Three more years had elapsed and I was buried in a bigger law practice than ever. My friend, or enemy, Mark, had never bothered me during that time, having, no doubt, scurried across the lake as he said he would. Often in the papers appeared notices of men named Mark this or that, who were drowned or sent to penitentiary or killed in accidents, and often did I wonder if this could be my Mark, for he had never mentioned his full name. Moreover the question as to what claims he really had upon me by reason of having saved my life was one I could never settle. Different lawyer friends argued with me that he had no claim, that it is the duty of all men to prevent murder, and that Mark would have committed a moral and legal crime in being privy to my death, therefore he simply avoided