

STRONG AND STEADY

By HORATIO ALGER, JR.

CHAPTER XVII.—(Continued.)

He began to replace the book in its brown paper covering.

"I don't know but I might give you twenty-five cents more. Come, now, I'll give you two dollars and a quarter."

"I can't take it," said Walter, shortly. "Three dollars and a half is the price, and I will not take a cent less."

"You won't get it out of me, then," retorted the lady, slamming the door in displeasure.

Walter had already made up his mind to this effect, and had started on his way to the gate.

"I wonder if I shall meet many people like her?" he thought, and he felt somewhat despondent.

Walter began to think that selling books would prove a harder and more disagreeable business than he had anticipated. He had been brought face to face with meanness and selfishness, and they inspired him with disgust and indignation. Not that he expected everybody to buy his books, even if they could afford it. Still, it was not necessary to insult him by offering half price.

He walked slowly up the street, wondering if he should meet any more such customers. On the opposite side of the street he noticed a small shoemaker's shop.

"I suppose it is of no use to go in there," thought Walter. "If they won't buy at a big house, there isn't much chance here."

Still he thought he would go in. He had plenty of time on his hands, and might as well slip no chance, however small. He pushed open the door, and found himself in a shop about twenty-five feet square, littered up with leather snuff-boxes and finished and unfinished shoes. A boy of fourteen was peering, and his father, a man of middle age, was finishing a shoe.

"Good-morning," said Walter.

"Good-morning," said the shoemaker, turning round. "Do you want a pair of shoes this morning?"

"No," said Walter. "I didn't come to buy, but to sell."

"Well, what have you got to sell?"

"A subscription book, finely illustrated."

"Let me look at it."

He wiped his hands on his apron, and, taking the book, began to turn over the leaves.

"It seems like a good book," he said. "Does it sell well?"

"Yes, it sells largely. I have only just commenced, but other agents are doing well on it."

"That's the way to talk. How much do you expect to get for this book?"

"The price is three dollars and a half."

"It's rather high."

"But there are a good many pictures. Those are what cost money."

"Yes, I suppose they do. Well, I've a great mind to take one."

"I don't think you'll regret it. A good book will give you pleasure for a long time."

"That's so. Well, here's the money."

Walter was all the more pleased at effecting this sale, because it was unexpected. He had expected to sell a book at the great house he had just called at, but thought that the price of the book might deter the shoemaker, whose income probably was not large.

During the next hour Walter failed to sell another copy. At length he managed to sell a second. As these were all he had brought with him, and he was feeling somewhat tired, he went back to the tavern, and did not come out again till after dinner.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Walter found a good dinner ready for him at 12 o'clock, which he enjoyed the more because he felt that he had earned it in advance. He waited till about 2 o'clock, and again set out, this time in a different direction. In some places he was received politely; in others he was treated as a humbug. But Walter was by this time getting accustomed to his position, and found that he must meet disagreeable people with as good humor as he could command. One farmer was willing to take the book if he would accept pay in apples, of which he offered him two barrels; but this offer he did not for a moment entertain, judging that he would find it difficult to carry about the apples, and probably difficult to dispose of them. However, he managed to sell two copies, though he had to call at twenty places to do it. Nevertheless, he felt well repaid by the degree of success he met with.

"Five books sold to-day!" thought Walter, complacently, as he started on his walk home. "That gives me six dollars and a quarter profit. I wish I could keep that up."

But our young merchant found that he was not likely to keep up such sales. The next day he sold but two copies, and the day succeeding three. Still, for three days and a half the aggregate sale was eleven copies, making a clear profit of thirteen dollars and seventy-five cents. At the end of the week he had sold twenty copies; but to make up this number he had been obliged to visit one or two neighboring villages.

He now prepared to move on. The next place at which he proposed to stop for a few days we will call Bolton. He had already written to Cleveland for a fresh supply of books to be forwarded to him there. He had but two books left, and his baggage being contained in a small valise, he decided to walk the distance, partly out of economy, but principally because it would enable him to see the country at his leisure. During the first five miles he succeeded in selling both books, which relieved him of the burden of carrying them, leaving him only his valise.

Walter was strong and stout, and enjoyed his walk. There was a freshness and novelty about his present mode of life, which he liked. He did not imagine he should like to be a book agent all his life, but for a time he found it quite agreeable.

He stopped under the shade of a large elm and ate the lunch which he had brought with him from the inn. The sandwiches and apples were good, and, with the addition of some water from a stream near by, made a very acceptable lunch. When he resumed his walk after resting a couple of hours, the weather had changed. In the morning it was bright sunshine. Now the clouds had gathered, and a storm seemed imminent. To make matters worse, Walter had managed to stray from the road. He found himself walking in a narrow lane, lined on either side by thick woods. Soon the rain came pattering down, at first in small drops, but quickly poured down in a drenching shower. Walter took refuge in the woods, congratulating himself that he had sold the books, which otherwise would have run the risk of being spoiled.

"I wish there were some house nearby in which I could rest," thought Walter. The prospect of being benighted in the woods in such weather was far from pleasant.

Looking around anxiously, he espied a small footpath, which he followed, hoping, but hardly expecting, that it might lead to some place of refuge. To his agreeable surprise he emerged after a few minutes into a small clearing, perhaps half an acre in extent, in the middle of which was a rough cabin. It was a strange place for a house, but rude as it was, Walter hailed its appearance with joy. At all events it promised protection from the weather, and the people who occupied it would doubtless be willing to give him, for pay, of course, supper and lodging. Probably the accommodations would not be first class, but our hero was prepared to take what he could get, and be thankful for it. Accordingly he advanced fearlessly and pounded on the door with his fist, as there was neither bell nor knocker.

The door not being opened immediately, he pounded again. This time a not particularly musical voice was heard from within:

"Is that you, Jack?"

"No," answered Walter, "it isn't Jack. His voice was probably recognized as that of a boy, and any apprehension that might have been felt by the person within was dissipated. Walter heard a bolt withdrawn, and the door opening, revealed a tall, gaunt, bony woman, who eyed him in a manner which could not be considered very friendly or cordial.

"Who are you?" she demanded abruptly, keeping the door partly closed.

"I am a book agent," said Walter.

"Do you expect to sell any books here?" asked the woman, with grim humor.

"No," said Walter, "but I have been caught in the storm, and lost my way. Can I stop here over night if the storm should hold on?"

"This isn't a tavern," said the woman, ungraciously.

"No, I suppose not," said Walter; "but it will be a favor to me if you will take me in, and I will pay you whatever you think right. I suppose there is no tavern nearby."

"He half hoped there might be, for he had already made up his mind that this would not be a very agreeable place to stop at.

"There's one five miles off," said the woman.

"That's too far to go in such weather. If you'll let me stay here, I will pay you whatever you ask in advance."

"Humph!" said the woman, doubtfully. "I don't know how Jack will like it."

As Walter could know nothing of the sentiments of the Jack referred to, he remained silent, and waited for the woman to make up her mind, believing that she would decide in his favor. He proved to be right.

"Well," she said, half unwillingly, "I don't know but I'll take you in, though it isn't my custom to accommodate travelers."

"I will try not to give you much trouble," said Walter, relieved to find that he was sure of food and shelter.

"Humph!" responded the woman.

She led he way into the building, which appeared to contain two rooms on the first floor, and probably the same number of chambers above. There was no entry, but the door opened at once into the kitchen.

"Come up to the fire if you're wet," said the woman.

The invitation was hospitable, but the manner was not. However, Walter was glad to accept the invitation, without thinking too much of the manner in which it was expressed, for his clothes were pretty well saturated by the rain. There was no stove, but an old brick fireplace, on which two stout logs were burning. There was one convenience, at least, about living in the woods—fuel was abundant, and required nothing but the labor of cutting it.

"I think I'll take off my shoes," said Walter.

"You can if you want to," said his grim hostess.

He extended his wet feet toward the fire, and felt a sense of comfort stealing over him. He could hear the rain falling fiercely against the sides of the cabin and felt glad that he was not compelled to stand the brunt of the storm.

He looked around him guardedly, not wishing to let his hostess see that he was doing so, for she looked like one who might easily be offended. The room seemed remarkably bare of furniture. There was an unpolished table, and there were also three chairs, one of which had lost its back. These were plain wooden chairs, and though they appeared once to have been painted, few vestiges of the original paint now remained. On a shelf were a few articles of tin, but no articles of crockery were visible, except two cracked cups. Walter had before this visited the dwellings of the poor, but he had never seen a home so poorly provided with what are generally regarded as the necessities of life.

"I wonder what Lem would say if he should see me now," thought Walter, his thoughts going back to the Essex Classical Institute, and the friend whose studies

he shared. They seemed far away, "those days of careless happiness, when as yet the burdens of life were unfeared and scarcely even dreamed of. Did Walter sigh for their return? I think not, except on one account. His father was then alive, and he would have given years of his own life to recall that loved parent from the grave. But I do not think he would have cared, for the present at least, to give up his business career, humble though it was, and go back to his studies. He enjoyed the novelty of his position. He enjoyed even his present adventure, in spite of the discomforts that attended it, and there was something exciting in looking about him, and realizing that he was a guest in a rough cabin in the midst of the woods, a thousand miles away from home.

Guarded as he had been in looking around him, it did not escape without observation.

"Well, young man, this is a poor place, isn't it?" asked the woman, suddenly.

"I don't know," said Walter, wishing to be polite.

"That's what you're thinking, I'll warrant," said the woman. "Well, you're not obliged to stay, if you don't want to."

"But I do want to, and I am very much obliged to you for consenting to take me," said Walter, hastily.

"You said you would pay in advance," said the woman.

"So I will," said Walter, taking out his pocketbook, "if you will tell me how much I am to pay."

"You may give me a dollar," said the woman.

Walter drew out a roll of bills, and, finding a one-dollar note, handed it to the woman.

She took it, glancing covetously at the remaining money which he replaced in his pocketbook. Walter noticed the glance, and, though he was not inclined to be suspicious, it gave him a vague feeling of anxiety.

(To be continued.)

KING HARNESSSED A HORSE.

Meanwhile, Its Owner Sat By, Watching the Monarch's Work.

Much-traveled people will testify that the most stupid people in the whole world are found in Mecklenburg, Germany, says the Kansas City Star.

Natives of that district are said to be even more dense than the inhabitants of the county of Wiltshire, England, and that is saying a good deal. The inhabitants of both of these places will admit the impeachment, but they do not call it stupidity; they have another name for it. They have exalted it into a virtue and call it "imperturbability."

In the United States, if a country yokel didn't know the way to a town fifteen miles away, he would be accounted a fool. But in Mecklenburg the peasant one meets on the highways doesn't know, has never been there and never wants to go. That is imperturbability.

It is a mistake, however, to think that the country dillard never "scores," as the king of Wurtemberg has discovered. Recently that royal individual went to shoot with the Grand Duke Adolphus of Mecklenburg. Accompanied by the grand duke's eldest son, he drove in a luxurious motor car to the famous deer park at Neustrelitz. On the way they came upon a country tilt-cart drawn at a snail's pace along the narrow road by a white horse. Perched on the seat were a peasant and his good wife. The chauffeur blew his horn and much to the royal party's surprise the horse began to prance briskly.

As the peasant made no attempt to pull the horse and cart out of the road the chauffeur repeated the "honk, honk." The horse reared and jumped about, but strange to say, the peasant and his wife sat stolidly on the seat without any signs of excitement. Finally the horse flopped over on its side and lay quite still.

Immediately out jumped the king, the grand duke and the son of the grand duke and came running up to the fallen horse. The grand duke made a dive at the horse's head, his son grabbed the bridle and the king narrowly escaped serious injury in unfastening the traces while the horse's hind legs were working like flails. All this while the peasant and his good wife sat calmly on their seat and watched the royal trio perspire at their self-imposed task. Finally after a great deal of pulling and coaxing the white horse scrambled to its feet and patiently submitted to being harnesssed by the three pairs of hands which probably never before had done such humble work. When everything was in order again, the grand duke handed the peasant a piece of money.

"There, there, my good man," he said. "It's all right this time, anyhow. Now you can tell your cronies that the grand duke and his son picked up your horse, and the king of Wurtemberg helped them."

The Retort Courteous.

An official of the Department of the Interior tells of an incident at one of the government schools for the Indians.

A patrolling young woman of Cincinnati was being shown through the institution, when she came upon a fine looking Indian girl of perhaps 16 years of age. The Indian girl was hemming napkins, which the girl from Cincinnati watched for some moments in silence. Then she said to the Indian "Are you civilized?"

The Sioux raised her head slowly from her work and glanced coldly at her interrogator. "No," she replied, as her eyes again sank to her napkins; "are you?"

The man who tells tiresome stories usually has a big strong voice, lots of energy, and gets to the end in spite of interruptions.



Feet of the Horse.

The usefulness of a horse depends largely upon the quality of his feet. If they are sound and well taken care of he is able to travel and work well, but if they are defective and neglected his usefulness is impaired and he can not be depended on in any emergency, as he is liable, when his services are most needed, to become partially if not wholly disabled, resulting in serious loss to his owner. But few horses are born with perfect feet, yet the defects by careful treatment are often entirely cured; also many horses with sound hoofs are practically ruined by the ignorance or carelessness of blacksmiths.

The proper shoeing of horses and the general care of their feet is a matter that should receive the strict attention of every farmer, and yet, as a rule, it is woefully neglected. The farmer should have knowledge of the natural formation of a horse's foot, so as to be able to determine whether the animal is being properly shod or not, and while that is being done he should never go away and leave the smith to slight the work to get through with it or butcher its feet if he does not understand his business.

While no definite rules for shoeing horses can be given, some general principles are acknowledged by all competent horsehoofers, namely, the heel should never be cut except to remove a ragged point. The same is true of the frog, which is an elastic cushion, intended to reduce the impact of a sudden shock to the foot. The butters is an instrument that may do an immense amount of damage in the hands of an incapable operator. Much mischief is done by it every day.

When the toe is too long and projects beyond the hoof, it causes stumbling and it should be shortened. A hot iron should never be applied to the foot to ascertain its evenness, as many blacksmiths do merely to save time, when they know it is not right. A seared surface between the hoof and the shoe makes the contact less perfect and the shoe necessarily less rigid than it ought to be.

The outside of the hoof should not be rasped more than is necessary to clinch the nails, as this thins the crust and reduces the strength of the bearing surface of the foot. Weakening and decay are sometimes the result of this practice. Oil applied to the hoofs occasionally during dry weather is beneficial.

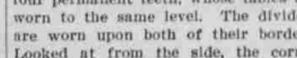
To Tell a Horse's Age.



At four years old each jaw shows four permanent teeth, whose tables are worn to the same level. The dividers are worn upon both of their borders. Looked at from the side, the corner teeth are quite small.



At four and a half years the nippers show wear on both edges. The corner teeth and the hook or canine teeth are in evidence.



From the study of clouds an official of the United States Weather Bureau concludes that the ordinary cyclones which traverse our country from west to east are not more than two or three miles in depth, although their diameter is many hundreds of miles. In other words, their motion does not affect the upper regions of the atmosphere.

In the case of hurricanes, this authority finds that the depth is greater, amounting to as much as five or six miles. But higher currents blow directly across the cyclonic and anticyclonic areas which produce storms and fair weather at the surface of the earth.

This new theory tends to offset former ideas concerning the circulation of the atmosphere.

An Agricultural Pest.

So great have been the ravages caused by the dodder—a leafless, twining, parasitic plant—that a decree has been issued by the French President prohibiting its importation into the country. It is a veritable agricultural scourge, attacking and destroying hops, vines, clover, peas, tomatoes and many other kinds of agricultural produce. Once having found its way into a district, it is most difficult to get rid of, and constitutes a permanent source of anxiety to the farmer. Cutting down, burning and poison have all been tried with unsatisfactory results.

Unprofitable Experimenting.

In the entire realm of scientific investigation there is nothing more interesting and marvelous than the growth and development of plants from the beginning or the germination of the seed to the reproduction of the germ. Each species of plant has its distinctive character and life habits and only flourishes where natural conditions are favorable to its growth. To attain any degree of perfection, the soil and climate combined must be such as the plants require, although a moderate degree of success may be attained when either of these factors are not exactly suited to its growth, but where both are deficient in any considerable degree the plant can not be successfully grown, except by artificial means whereby the necessary natural conditions are created. If the chemical composition of the soil is favorable, and climatic conditions unfavorable, the latter can be created artificially—such as protection from cold and excessive heat and lack of moisture—and, likewise, if the soil is deficient in the chemical elements which the plant requires, they can be added to, but in either case the process is laborious and expensive and the results unsatisfactory. All plants are indigenous to certain kinds of soil, and all soils are especially adapted to the growth of certain kinds of plants, and nature can not be improved upon in any way, nor can her deficiencies be successfully remedied by artificial means. In order, therefore, to be successful in his business, the farmer must "keep close to nature and mark well her ways." He must raise only such crops as are best adapted to the soil of his farm, in accordance with his experience, and wholly refrain from extensive experiments with such as are of doubtful utility.

Keeps Chickens at Home.

An Iowa man has designed an anti-flying chicken-wing attachment having in view to prevent the annoyance and damages incident to chickens scratching in your neighbor's garden. The device is attached to the chicken's wing. It is made of parallel pieces of wire bent into the form of an elbow, with a hook at the bend.

To apply the attachment to a chicken's wing it is slipped over the wing, and by placing the parallel sides toward each other the hook can be snapped in position and retained by the resiliency of the wire. The hook will be on the inner corner of the wing and will prevent the device from slipping off. The chicken will thus be prevented from spreading the wing as required to fly and thereby unable to get over a fence into the neighbor's garden.



STOPS FLYING.

In some parts of Europe corn cobs are used for building purposes. The cobs are collected and taken to a factory, where heavy compresses crush and mold them into blocks of various sizes, just as bricks are variously molded. These blocks are then bound with wire so as to make them hold together. They are then soaked in tar to make them water-tight, and are ready for use after this treatment. Of course, they are much lighter than bricks, are always dry, and make good houses. This is but one of the very many ways in which Europe shows a greater economy than America does. There is little over there which goes to waste. Even the refuse and garbage of Paris is made to serve a purpose by being burned and converted into power.

Houses of Corn Cobs.

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Cost of Feeding Hens.

Bulletin No. 115 from the West Virginia Experiment Station gives the first year's record with 600 hens. It gives pictures and descriptions of houses, method of handling, amounts, kinds and cost of feed and egg production. The cost of feed for the year was 89 cents per head; total cost \$1.42 per head. The fowls averaged 113 eggs each, valued at \$2.43, so that each hen returned a net profit of \$1.01.

How to Feed Out Silage.

Owing to the constant contact of the air with the top layer of silage it is necessary to remove a horizontal layer of silage to a depth of not less than one and one-half inches daily to prevent any from spoiling. If this fact is kept in mind when building a silo its diameter can be made such as to make possible the feeding of a layer of this depth daily with the amount of live stock on hand.—John Michels.

Distribution of Mammals.

The distribution of mammals over the earth shows many curious features. North America, Northern Europe and Asia have many families in common. Such animals as wolves, foxes, bears, deer and moose, beavers, squirrels and rabbits live all around the Northern Hemisphere. The mammals found on isolated islands are of surpassing interest to the naturalists.

The Care of Sheep.

Overfeeding or sudden changes from poor to very rich food, combined with want of exercise, if not actual causes, will contribute to the development of the loss of wool among ewes.

An English shepherd being asked what he attributed his unequalled success in the show ring to, replied: "To two things—always having my ewes trained to walk in the halter, and to always being polite to the judge, no matter what position he placed the exhibit in."

THE WEEKLY HISTORIAN



1215—Magna Charta signed by King John.

1000—Champlain left Quebec to explore the lake which bears his name.

1610—Champlain defeated the Iroquois near the mouth of the Richelieu river.

1700—Madrid entered by the English and Portuguese.

1741—Alliance between George II. of England and Marie Theresa of Austria.

1745—Louisbourg, N. S., taken by the British from the French.

1775—Battle of Bunker Hill.

1778—British evacuated Philadelphia near the mouth of the Schuylkill river.

1793—City of Archangel, in northern Russia, nearly destroyed by fire.

1705—Union College founded at Schenectady, N. Y.

1812—United States Congress declared war against Great Britain.

1815—Battle of Waterloo.

1810—The Savannah, first steamer to cross the Atlantic, arrived at Liverpool. The State of Maine separated from Massachusetts.

1820—The Earl of Dalhousie assumed office as governor of Canada.

1831—Reform bill reintroduced in the British Parliament.

1837—Accession of late Queen Victoria on the death of William IV.

1830—Total defeat of the Turkish army by Ibrahim Pasha on the Euphrates.

1840—Montreal and Quebec incorporated as cities.

1850—Steamer Griffith burned on Lake Erie with loss of 300 lives.

1853—Termination of the Burmese war.

1850—President of the United States recognized the filibuster Gen. Walker as President of Nicaragua.

1850—Repulse of the French and English squadrons on the Peiho. Commodore Tatnall of United States navy, in Chinese waters, made his famous utterance: "Blood is thicker than water."

1863—Japanese ports closed to European and American traders.

1864—Alabama sunk by the Kearsarge.

1867—Execution of Maximilian, Emperor of Mexico. North German constitution promulgated.

1868—Mamaita evacuated by the Paraguayans.

1869—Kansas negroes petitioned Congress for suffrage.

1870—Treaty of peace between Brazil and Paraguay.

1871—Corner stone for the New York State capitol laid at Albany.

1872—Earl of Dufferin assumed office as governor general of Canada.

1880—Armenians massacred by Persians near Erzerum.

1883—Monument unveiled in Walden cemetery, Chicago, in memory of the "Haymarket anarchists."

1885—Baltic canal opened by Emperor William.

1900—Spain ceded the Caroline Islands to Germany.

1903—Regina, Saskatchewan, incorporated as a city.

1907—The French chamber voted to suppress the agitation in the wine raising districts by force. The Mayor of New York turned the first sod in the construction of the Catskill water supply. President Roosevelt signed a treaty with Santo Domingo.

SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

The Chicago Board of Education has decided to bar all candidates for positions as teachers in the public schools who are over 50 years old.

The Minnesota school for the deaf this year graduated seven students, each of whom has learned a trade, in addition to his academic training.

Contractors are now at work on building to be erected at the Minnesota school for the deaf, which will cost \$50,000 and is to be completed this year.

President Northrop of the University of Minnesota notified the students of any one having unpaid bills outstanding at the close of the school year would be graduated.

At the annual meeting of the state of the Minnesota school for the blind held at Faribault, Dr. Dorr, superintendent of the school, was presented a gold-headed cane.

At Reno, Nev., the entire State is to have a holiday the other day to celebrate the dedication of the Mackay School of Mines and the reception of the statue of Mackay, both being presented to the State and University of Nevada by Clarence Mackay and his mother.

In revenge for the passage of a prohibition law in Alabama, which deprived schools of Mobile city and county of \$100,000 annual revenue, the anti-prohibitionists at a special election, defeated a tax to levy a special one mill tax on tax, leaving the schools without funds to support.