

STRONG AND STEADY

By HORATIO ALGER, JR.

CHAPTER I.

"This is a nice room you've got, Walter."

"Yes, you know I am to stay here for two years, and I might as well be comfortable."

"It's a good deal better than my room—twice as big, to begin with. Then, my carpet looks as if it had come down through several generations. As for a mirror, I've got a seven-by-nine looking glass that I have to look into twice before I can see my whole face. As for the bedstead, it creaks so when I jump into it that I expect every night it'll fall to pieces and spill me on the floor. Now your room is splendidly furnished."

"Yes, it is now, but father furnished it at his own expense. He said he was willing to spend a little money to make me comfortable."

"That's more than my father said. He told me it wouldn't do me any harm to rough it."

"Perhaps he's right," said Walter. "Of course, I don't object to the new carpet and furniture, but I shouldn't consider it any great hardship if I had to rough it, as you call it."

"Wouldn't you? Then I'll tell you what we'll do. Let's change rooms. You can go round and board at Mrs. Glenn's, and I'll come here."

"I am not sure what my father would think of that arrangement," said Walter, smiling.

"I thought you'd find some way to crawl out," said Lemuel. "For my part, I don't believe you'd enjoy roughing it any better than I."

"I don't know," said Walter. "I've sometimes thought I shouldn't be very sorry to be a poor boy, and have to work my own way."

"That's very well to say when you're the son of a rich man."

"So are you."

"Yes, but I don't get the benefit of it, and you do. What would you do now if you were a poor boy?"

"I can't say, of course, now, but I would go to work at something. I am sure I could earn my own living."

"I suppose I could, too, but I shouldn't want to. Some people are born lazy, don't think so?"

"Perhaps you are right," answered Walter, with a smile. "Now suppose we open our Cæsar."

Lemuel Warner was a pleasant looking boy of fourteen, the son of a prosperous merchant in New York. Walter Conrad was from a small country town, where his father was the wealthiest and most prominent and influential citizen, having a handsome mansion house, surrounded by extensive grounds.

Nobody knew just how rich he was; out he was generally supposed to be worth two hundred thousand dollars. Mrs. Conrad had been dead for five years, so that Walter, who was an only child, had no immediate relation except his father. It was for this reason, perhaps, that he had been sent to the Essex Classical Institute. Being a boy of talent, and well-grounded in Latin, he was easily able to take a high rank in his class. Lemuel Warner had become his intimate friend, being in the same class, but inferior to him in scholarship. They usually studied their Latin lessons together, and it was owing to this circumstance that Lemuel made a better figure in his recitations than before Walter came to the school.

"There, that job's done," said Lemuel, closing his book with an air of satisfaction. "Now we can rest."

"You forget the Latin exercise. You know the doctor expects each boy to write a letter in Latin, addressed to his father, not less than twelve lines in length."

The boys started on their new task, and finished by nine o'clock. Lemuel's letter was written with a brilliant disregard of grammatical rules, but it was considerably revised in accordance with suggestions from Walter.

"I've a great mind to send my letter home, Walter," said Lemuel. "Father expects me to write home every week, and this would save me some trouble. Besides, he'd think I was getting on famously, to write home in Latin."

"Yes, if he didn't find out the mistakes."

"That's the rub. He'd show it to the minister the first time he called, and then my blunders would be detected. I guess I'd better wait till it comes back from the doctor corrected."

"I expect to hear from home to-morrow," said Walter. "It is my birthday."

"Let me be the first to congratulate you. How venerable will you be?"

"As venerable as most boys of fifteen, Lem."

"You're three months older than I am, then. Do you expect a present?"

"Father promised to give me a gold watch chain some time. You know I have a gold watch already."

"Yes, and a regular little beauty."

"So it wouldn't surprise me much to get a chain for a present."

"You're a lucky boy. My watch is silver, and only cost twenty dollars."

"I dare say I should be just as happy with a silver watch, Lem."

"I suppose you wouldn't like to buy, would you? If so, I'll give you the chance. A fair exchange is no robbery."

"No, I suppose not; but it wouldn't do to exchange a gift."

"Perhaps, if my watch were gold and yours silver, you wouldn't have any objections."

"I don't think that would alter the

case with me. A gift is a gift, no matter about its value."

"It's the hard study, I suppose, that's done it. I must be getting back to Ma'am Glenn's. Good-night."

"Good-night, Lem."

Lemuel Warner gathered up his books, and left the room. Walter poked the fire, putting some ashes on, so that it would keep till the next morning, and commenced undressing. He was interrupted by a heavy step on the stairs, and directly afterward a knock resounded upon his door.

Wondering who his late visitor could be, Walter stepped to the door and opened it. He was still more surprised to recognize in the visitor Dr. Porter, the principal of the institute.

"Good-evening, Conrad," said the doctor. "I am rather a late visitor. I was not sure but you might be in bed. Have you heard from home lately, Conrad?" asked the doctor.

"Yes, sir, I received a letter a few days since."

"Did your father speak of being unwell?"

"No, sir," said Walter, taking instant alarm. "Have—have you heard anything?"

"Yes, my boy; and that is my reason for calling upon you at this unusual hour. I received this telegram twenty minutes since."

Walter took the telegram, with trembling fingers, and read the following message:

"Dr. Porter—Please send Walter Conrad home by the first train. His father is very sick. NANCY FORBES."

"Do you think there is any danger, Dr. Porter?" asked Walter, with a pale face.

"I cannot tell, my boy; this telegram furnishes all the information I possess. Who is Nancy Forbes?"

"She is the housekeeper. I can't realize that father is so sick. He did not say anything about it when he wrote."

"Let us hope it is only a brief sickness. I think you had better go home by the first train to-morrow morning."

The principal shook hands with Walter and withdrew. When his tall form had vanished, Walter sat down and tried to realize the fact of his father's sickness; but this he found difficult. It was a long time before he got to sleep, but at length he did sleep, waking in time only for a hasty preparation for the homeward journey.

He was so occupied with thoughts of his father that it was not till he was well on the way home that it occurred to him that this was his fifteenth birthday, to which he had been looking forward for some time.

The seat in front of Walter was for some time vacant; but at the Woodville station two gentlemen got in and entered upon an animated conversation. Walter did not at first pay any attention to it. He was looking out of the window listlessly, unable to fix his mind upon anything except his father's sickness. But at length his attention was caught by some remarks made by one of the gentlemen in front, and from this point he listened dlanguidly.

"I suspected him to be a swindler when he first came to me," said the gentleman sitting next the window. "He hadn't an honest look, and I was determined not to have anything to do with his scheme. Mining companies are risky things always. I once got taken in to the tune of five thousand dollars, but it taught me a lesson. So I was not particularly impressed with the brilliant prospectus of the Great Metropolitan Mining Company, in spite of its high-sounding name, and its promised dividend of thirty per cent. Depend upon it, James Wall and his confederates will pocket all the dividends that are made."

"Very likely you are right. But it may be that Wall really believed there was a good chance of making money."

"Of course he did, but he was determined to make the money for himself, and not for the stockholders."

"I might have been tempted to invest, but all my money was locked up at the time, and I could not have done so without borrowing the money, and that I was resolved not to do."

"It was fortunate for you that you didn't, for the bubble has already burst. There will be many losers. By the way, I hear that Mr. Conrad of Willoughby was largely interested. He is a rich man, but for all that he may have gone in beyond his means."

"I am sorry for him, but that was reckless."

"Yes, he was completely taken in by Wall. He's a smooth fellow."

When the gentlemen left the cars Walter saw one of them had left a morning paper lying in the seat. He picked it up and examined the columns until his eyes fell upon the following paragraph:

"The failure of the Great Metropolitan Mining Company proves to be a disastrous one. The assets will not be sufficient to pay more than five per cent of the amount of the sums invested by the stockholders, possibly not that. There must have been gross mismanagement somewhere, or such a result could hardly have been reached. We understand that the affairs of the company are in the hands of assignees who are empowered to wind them up. The stockholders in this vicinity will await the result with anxiety."

"That looks rather discouraging, to be sure," thought Walter. "I suppose father

will lose a good deal. But I'll tell him he needn't worry about me. I shan't mind being poor, even if it comes to that. As long as he is left to me, I won't complain."

The time passed until the cars stopped at Willoughby station. Walter jumped over a fence and took his way across the fields to his father's house. By the road it would have been a mile, but it was scarcely more than half a mile by the foot path.

He went up the pathway to the front door and rang the bell. The door was opened by Nancy Forbes, the housekeeper, whose name was appended to the telegram.

"So it's you, Master Walter," she said. "I am glad you are home, but it's a sad home you're come to."

"Is father very sick, then?" asked Walter, turning pale.

"My dear child, your father died at eight o'clock this morning."

CHAPTER II.

This sudden announcement of his father's death was a great shock to Walter. The news stunned him, and he stood, pale and motionless, looking into the housekeeper's face.

"Come in, Master Walter, come in and have a cup of hot tea. It'll make you feel better."

"Tell me about it, Nancy; I—I can't think it's true. It's so sudden. When was he first taken sick?"

"I didn't notice nothing till last night just after supper. Richard went to the postoffice and got your father's letters. When they came he took 'em into the library, and began to read 'em. There was three, I remember. It was about an hour before I went into the room to tell him the carpenter had called about repairing the carriage house. When I came in, there was your poor father lying on the carpet, senseless. He held a letter tight in his hand. I screamed for help. Mr. Brier, the carpenter, and Richard came in and helped me to lift up your poor father, and we sent right off for the doctor."

"What did the doctor say?"

"He said it was a paralytic stroke—a very bad one—and ordered him to be put to bed directly. But it was of no use. He never recovered, but breathed his last this morning at eight o'clock."

"Nancy, have you got that letter which my father was reading?"

"Yes, Master Walter, I put it in my pocket without reading. I think there must have been bad news in it."

She drew from her pocket a letter, which she placed in Walter's hands. He read it hastily, and it confirmed his suspicions. It was from a lawyer Mr. Conrad had asked to make inquiries respecting the Great Metropolitan Mining Company, and was as follows:

"William Conrad, Esq.:

"Dear Sir—I have, at your request, taken pains to inform myself of the present management and condition of the Great Metropolitan Mining Company. The task has been less difficult than I anticipated, since the failure of the company has just been made public. The management has been in the hands of dishonest and unscrupulous men, and it is doubtful whether the stockholders will be able to recover anything."

"ANDREW HOLMES."

Walter folded up the letter, and put it into his pocket. He felt that this letter had cost his father his life, and in the midst of his grief he had very bitter thoughts about the unscrupulous man who had led his father to ruin. Had it been merely the loss of property, he could have forgiven him, but he had been deprived of the kindest and most indulgent of fathers.

"I should like to see my father," he said.

An hour later he came out of the death chamber, pale but composed. He seemed older and more thoughtful than when he entered. A great and sudden sorrow often has this effect upon the young.

"Nancy," he said, "have any arrangements been made about the funeral?"

"No, Walter, we waited till you came."

"My father had no near relatives. There is a cousin, Jacob Drummond, who lives in Stapleton. It will be necessary to let him know. It will be best to telegraph."

Jacob Drummond kept a dry goods store in the village of Stapleton. He had the reputation of being a very mean man. He carried his meanness not only into his business, but into his household, and there was not a poor mechanic in Stapleton who did not live better than Mr. Drummond, who was the rich man of the place.

(To be continued.)

Ultra-Fashionable.

"Whatever became of that plain family called the Dewberrys who used to live in the little house at the end of the lane?" queried the man who had just returned to the village after a five years' absence.

"Oh, they struck old, stranger," replied the old postmaster. "They own a big mansion on the hill, three automobiles and their daughter is engaged to a real duke."

"Strange! And do they still have 'Dewberry' on the gate as they did when they lived in the little house in the lane?"

"Oh, no. They call themselves DuBarry now. Dewberry sounds too plain."

Changed.

"They're not as loving as they were when they were married last spring."

"No; she has developed a terrible temper."

"But he used to consider her an angel then."

"Yes; and now he wishes she was one for sure."

HOUSEHOLD

SOMETHING FOR EVERYBODY

East Indian Preserves.

Eight hard, green pears, chopped; six pounds of sugar, one-quarter pound of green ginger root, one pint of water, three lemons. Pour the boiling water on the ginger root, let it stand for a few minutes, then scrape and cut thin. Chop fine the yellow rind of the lemons and cook in hot water for fifteen minutes. Put all the ingredients together and cook for three hours or longer.

Cheese Cakes.

Cream one-half pound butter with one pound sugar, beat in the yolks of six eggs, the juice of one lemon and the grated rind of two, a grated nutmeg and two tablespoonfuls of brandy. At the last stir in the whipped whites of the six eggs. Bake in small open shells of pie crust, and if you wish you can lay narrow strips of the pastry across the top.

Muscadine Comfits.

Take four ounces of double refined sugar finely beaten and searched, put thereto two grains of muske, a pennyweight of orris root in powder, beat it to perfect fine paste, then roll it as thin as paper, and cut it like to diamonds with your knife, as with a fine jagged rowel (roll) cutter; so dry them in your stove and keep them.

Sponge Padding.

One tablespoonful milk, one cup flour, one cup sugar, one teaspoonful baking powder, three eggs. Beat yolks of eggs and sugar together light, add flour and white of egg beaten very light; add milk. Put the baking powder in the flour. Steam in cups twenty minutes. This makes seven cups. To be eaten with rich sauce.

Lemon Sauce.

Three-fourths cup sugar, one-third cup water, 1 level tablespoonful butter, 2 tablespoonfuls lemon juice. Boil the sugar and water for ten minutes. Remove to back of range and add butter and lemon juice. As soon as butter is melted serve on the bananas, with lamb as an entree, or with cake as a dessert.

Shears for Carving Fowl.

A pair of carving shears has been devised especially for those who find the talent of carving hard to acquire, says Popular Mechanics. The upper blade is a carving knife and the dented lower blade forms a clip. The shears are easy to handle and permit one to successfully attack any part of the fowl.

Jelly Rice.

Boil one cupful of rice in sweet milk until soft, adding a little sugar and salt to taste. Pour into cups, and when cool turn into a dish, scoop out a tablespoonful of rice from the top of each, and fill the place with jelly. Serve in a glass dish with whipped and sweetened cream piled over them lightly.

Fig Filling for Cake.

Chop figs fine, adding a few seeded raisins. Make an ordinary boiled frosting and put aside part of it in a separate dish (for the top). Mix the figs with the rest of the frosting, stirring until it is an even paste. You will find it cuts more easily than if the figs were boiled.

Cream and Banana Pie.

Heat together in a basin a little granulated sugar and a lump of butter, the yolks of three eggs, a little milk, and sherry and some banana thoroughly mashed. Pour the mixture into a deep dish and stir in the whites of two eggs, well beaten. Bake in an oven not too hot, remove and serve.

Sponge Cake.

Beat together six eggs and a half pound of powdered sugar for fifteen minutes, using a wire whisk for the purpose. Flavor with a half teaspoonful of lemon juice or vanilla. Sift well a half pound of flour and fold this in lightly with a spoon. Bake in a good oven for a half hour.

Mexican Rice.

Put a cupful of dried rice into a hot frying pan containing a tablespoonful of olive oil. Roast the rice until well brown, but not scorched. Add to this 4 or 5 finely chopped tomatoes, a little salt and 2 teaspoonfuls of Mexican or chili pepper pulp. Pour in a cupful of boiling water and let simmer until the rice is soft.

Poor Man's Cookies.

One egg, one-half cup lard, one-half cup molasses, one teaspoon salt, one cup brown sugar, one-half cup water, two teaspoons soda; spice to taste; three cups flour; stir in flour until so thick you cannot work any more, then drop in pan and spread with fork dipped in hot water.

Crullers.

One and one-half cups sugar, one-half cup lard, two eggs, two cups buttermilk, two teaspoons soda, two teaspoons cream of tartar, two teaspoons cinnamon. Flour enough to roll out. This recipe requires about 2 and one-half pounds lard for frying.

Good opportunities for electrical undertakings in Spain are reported.

The Federated Malay States produce 60 per cent of the world's production of tin.

There is a hacienda, or ranch, in the Mexican State of Durango, comprising 10,000,000 acres.

Kite day is a Chinese national holiday. An expert Chinese kite flyer will easily keep six or even eight kites going on one string.

In 1904 Japan exported a little over \$1,000 worth of human hair; the total export was valued at \$60,000 in 1906. Large quantities are made into wigs in Paris.

A very creditable exhibition of oriental paintings, both modern and ancient examples, was held at the India government school of art in Calcutta recently.

Five generations of the family of Mr. Pettit, boot dealer of Mexborough, England, are living, his own child being the youngest member. The great-grandmother is ninety and the child is eleven months old.

Consul Gray at Tsingtau warns young men against going to China in the hope of finding profitable jobs. Any young man who is willing to work will, he says, find better opportunities every day in the large American cities.

A new process has been discovered in China by which ramie fiber becomes a soft flasse in a few minutes. A company has been formed to prepare the flasse for general use, and the first shipment will soon be made to Europe.

The Municipal Chamber of Para, Brazil, has recently authorized a reduction in the tax levied on traveling salesmen. The reduction will be effective until Jan. 1, 1909. The new tax amounts to about \$100, with additional fees of about \$18. The penalty for evasion is confiscation of samps and a heavy fine.

The Orleans Railway Company of France recently inaugurated a new train de luxe, consisting of six new cars each seventy feet long, or six feet longer than any cars now in use on the French lines, and mounted on trucks with triple axletrees, giving great smoothness in running. There are two smoking cars furnished with writing tables and newspapers and periodicals.

The highest authorities place the total number of years elapsed since, in the light of the best geological evidence, men first appeared upon earth at 288,000. Of this, 78,000 belong to the preglacial epoch, 100,000 years to the glacial epoch and the protohistoric and neolithic, 10,000 years to the last named epochs, and 6,000 years to the time elapsed since the beginning of the historic period in Egypt.

A recently published statistical report gives the number of "diploma physicians" in the world as 228,234. Of these Europe has 162,334. The table credits Germany with 25,518, "which," says the Frankfurter Zeitung, "shows the table to be incorrect, for the Medecinscher Jahrbuch gives Germany 31,415 physicians, of whom one-fifth are specialists. In all the large cities of Germany there are two to three physicians to every thousand inhabitants, while in Berlin there are about five for every four thousand."

An extraordinary addition has been made to the exhibition of inventions in Berlin. A shoemaker named Wegner, living in Strasburg, has sent in a clock of the grandfather shape, nearly six feet high, made entirely of straw. The wheels, pointers, case and every detail are exclusively of straw. Wegner has taken fifteen years to construct this strange piece of mechanism. It keeps perfect time, but under the most favorable circumstances cannot last longer than two years.—London Globe.

The most curious railway in the world is built on ice. It is laid between Cronstadt and Oranienbaum, and is in use only during the winter. Its success has suggested the construction of a similar winter railway between the two important commercial centers, Kremenichug and Ekatarinowlav, which are united in summer by the steamboat traffic along the Dneiper river. This means of communication is closed in winter by the ice. A costly, roundabout journey has to be made between the two towns, though they do not lie far apart.

Under the new Korean forest laws the forests will be classified in four kinds, according to the status of their owners. These four classes are imperial, state, public and private forests. The minister of agriculture, commerce and industry may work out and order the preservation of such forests as may be necessary for the prevention of landslides, floods and droughts. The minister can also prohibit the cutting of forests, the destruction of which would impair the scenic features of places of public resort or localities noted for scenic attractiveness.