

STRONG AND STEADY

By HORATIO ALGER, JR.

CHAPTER II.—(Continued.)

At five o'clock on the afternoon of the day after Mr. Conrad's death, Mr. Drummond entered the house, which was on the opposite side of the street from the store. This was the supper hour, and supper was ready upon the table.

A single glance was sufficient to show that Mr. Drummond was not a man to indulge in luxurious living. There was a plate of white bread, cut in thin slices, a small plate of butter, half a pie, and a plate of cake. A small pitcher of milk, a bowl of coarse brown sugar, and a pot of the cheapest kind of tea completed the preparations for the evening meal. Certainly there was nothing extravagant about these preparations; but Mr. Drummond thought otherwise. His attention was at once drawn to the cake, and instantly a frown gathered upon his face.

"Are you going to have company to-night, Mrs. Drummond?" he asked.

"Not that I know of," answered his wife, in some surprise.

"Then why is it that you have put both pie and cake on the table?"

"The cake is a cheap kind."

"No cake is cheap, Mrs. Drummond. I take it you used eggs, butter and sugar in making it. You are probably not aware that all these articles are very dear at present. Until they get lower we need not have cake, except when company is present. Take away the cake, if you please. You can save it for Sunday evening."

"I am afraid it will be dried up by that time."

"If it is dry, you can steam it. I have continually to check you in your extravagant tastes. Cake and pie, indeed! If you had your way, you would double my household expenses."

Mrs. Drummond rose from the table, and meekly removed the offending cake. Just then the third and only other member of the family entered.

This was Joshua Drummond, the only son, now eighteen years of age, though he looked scarcely more than sixteen. He inherited his father's meanness, but not his frugality. He was more self-indulgent, and, though he grudgingly spent money for others, was perfectly ready to spend as much as he could get hold of for himself.

CHAPTER III.

Over Joshua, Mr. Drummond had less control than over his wife. The latter gave way meekly to his unreasonable requisitions; but Joshua did not hesitate to make opposition, being as selfish and self-willed as his father, for whom he entertained neither respect nor affection.

In silence he helped himself to bread and butter, and in due time accepted a piece of pie, which Mrs. Drummond made larger at the expense of her own share. Finally Mr. Drummond remarked:

"I've had a telegram to-day from Willoughby."

"From Willoughby?" repeated his wife.

"Isn't that where your cousin, William Conrad, lives?"

"He doesn't live there any longer. He's dead. The funeral is to be day after to-morrow."

"Shall you go?"

"Yes. It will cost me considerable; as much as five dollars or more; but he was my cousin, and it is my duty to go," said Mr. Drummond, with the air of a man who was making a great sacrifice.

"He was rich, wasn't he?" asked Joshua, becoming interested.

"Probably worth a hundred thousand dollars," said his father, complacently.

"I should think he might have left me something," said Joshua.

"He never saw you, Joshua," said his mother.

"Joshua stands a better chance of getting a legacy from one who doesn't know him than from one who does," said Mr. Drummond, with grim pleasantry.

"He leaves children, doesn't he?"

"One child—a boy. Let me see, he must be fifteen by this time. It's likely I will be appointed his guardian. I'm the nearest relative."

"Will he come here, then?" asked Joshua.

"Very probably."

"Then I hope you'll live better, or he won't stand it."

"When I require any advice from you, Joshua, I will apply for it," said his father.

Joshua inwardly hoped that his father would be appointed guardian, for he hoped that in this event it would make a difference in the family living; and, besides if his cousin were rich, he meant to wheedle himself into his confidence, in the hope of future advantage.

Jacob put off going to Willoughby till the morning train on the day of the funeral. The next day, therefore, he started, taking with him in his valise a lunch of bread and meat tied up in a piece of brown paper. Shortly after his arrival, he called at the house of mourning.

"I am Jacob Drummond of Stapleton, the cousin of the deceased," he explained to Nancy, who opened the door to admit him. "Is my young relative, Mr. Conrad's son, at home?"

"Yes, sir," said Nancy, taking an inventory of his features, and deciding that he was a very disagreeable looking man.

Mr. Drummond was ushered into the parlor, where he had a little chance to look around him before Walter appeared. Mr. Drummond rose at his entrance.

"I suppose you don't know me," he said; "but I was your father's nearest living relation."

"Mr. Drummond, I believe."

"Yes, Jacob Drummond of Stapleton. You have probably heard your father speak of me?"

"Yes, sir," said Walter.

"I came as soon as I could after getting the telegram. I left my business to take care of itself. I wanted to offer you my sympathy on your sad loss."

Mr. Drummond's words were kind, though the reference to his sacrifice in leaving his business might have been as well left out. Still Walter could not feel as grateful as he wanted to do. Somehow he didn't fancy Mr. Drummond.

"You are very kind," he said.

"I mean to be. You know I'm your nearest relation now. I truly feel for you in your desolate condition, and though it may not be the right time to say it, I must tell you I hope, when the funeral is over, you will accompany me home and share our humble hospitality. Mrs. Drummond joins me in the invitation."

"I have not had time to think of future arrangements," said Walter; "but I thank you for your invitation."

"My son Joshua, too," said Mr. Drummond, "is longing to make your acquaintance. He is older than you, but not much larger. Joshua is eighteen, but he will make a very pleasant companion for you. Let me hope that you will accept my invitation."

"Thank you, Mr. Drummond; I will consult my friends about it."

"I wonder how much I could venture to ask for board," thought Mr. Drummond. "If I am his guardian I can fix that to suit myself. A hundred thousand dollars would make me a rich man. That is, I could make money for it without injuring the boy."

Mr. Drummond asked a few more questions about Mr. Conrad's sickness and death. Walter answered them, but did not think it necessary to speak of his losses by the mining company. Mr. Drummond was a stranger, and not a man to inspire confidence. So Walter told as little as he could. At length the visitor, having exhausted inquiries, rose.

"I shall be here to-morrow," he said.

"I shall return to Stapleton after the ceremony. I hope you will make up your mind to go back with me."

"I could not be ready so soon," answered Walter, doubtfully.

"I can wait till next day."

"That will not be necessary, Mr. Drummond. I shall have no difficulty in making the journey alone, if I conclude to accept your kind invitation."

Mr. Drummond shook his head sympathetically, and at length withdrew. As he went down the avenue, he took a backward glance at the handsome mansion in which his cousin had lived.

"That boy owns all that property," he said, half enviously, "and never worked a day for it. I've had to work for all my money. But it was foolish to spend so much money on a house. A third the sum would have built a comfortable house, and the rest might have been put at interest. If it turns out that I am the boy's guardian, I think I shall sell it. That'll be the best course."

CHAPTER IV.

The funeral was over. Mr. Drummond, as indeed his relationship permitted, was one of the principal mourners. Considering that he had not seen Mr. Conrad for five years preceding his death, nor during that time communicated with him in any way, he appeared to be very much overcome by grief. He kept his eyes covered with a large white handkerchief, and his movements indicated suppressed agitation.

He felt that this was a tribute due to a cousin who had left over one hundred thousand dollars. When they had returned from the grave he managed to have a word with Walter.

"Have you decided to accept my offer, and make your home beneath my humble roof?" he asked.

"There has been no time to consult with my friends here, Mr. Drummond. I will let you know next week. I thank you at any rate for your kindness."

"Do come, Walter," said his cousin, twisting his mean features into an affectionate smile. "With you beneath my humble roof, I shall want nothing to complete my happiness."

Jacob Drummond went back to Stapleton ignorant of the state of Mr. Conrad's affairs and regarding Walter as a boy of great wealth.

When the will was opened it was found to bear date two years back, before Mr. Conrad had plunged into the speculation which had proved so disastrous to him. He bequeathed all the property which he did possess to Walter, with the exception of five hundred dollars, which were left as a legacy to his faithful housekeeper, Nancy Forbes. At the time the will was made, its provisions made Walter heir to a large fortune. Now it was quite uncertain how things would turn out. Clement Shaw, the village lawyer, an honest and upright man, was made executor, being an old and tried friend of the deceased.

With his Walter had a long and confidential conversation, imparting to him what he knew of his father's mining speculation and its disastrous result, with its probable effect in accelerating his death.

"I knew something of this before, Walter," said Mr. Shaw. "Your father spoke to me of being largely interested in the Great Metropolitan Mining Company; but of the company itself and the extent to which he was involved I knew nothing."

"I think my father must have been very seriously involved," said Walter. "It may, perhaps, swallow up the whole property."

"Let us hope not. Indeed, I can hardly believe that your father would have ventured in so deep as that."

"He had every confidence in the company; he thought he was going to double his money. If only a part of his property was threatened, I don't think it would have had such an effect upon him."

"I will thoroughly examine into the affair," said Mr. Shaw. "Meanwhile, Walter, hope for the best! It can hardly be that the whole property is lost. Do not be too anxious."

"Do not fear for me on that account," said Walter. "I always looked forward to being rich, it is true, but for all that I can bear poverty. If the worst comes, and I am penniless, I am strong, and can work. I can get along as well as thousands of other boys, who have to support themselves."

Walter did not speak boastfully by any means, but in a calm, confident way, that argued a consciousness of power.

"Yes," said the lawyer, regarding him attentively, "I think you are right there. You are just the boy who can make his own way; but I hope you will not be obliged to do so."

"I am young and strong. Nancy has spent her best years in my father's service, and she is no longer young. It is right that she should have some provision. Besides, my father meant her to have it, and I want to carry out his wishes."

"This is all very generous, Walter; but I am afraid it is inconsiderate. It would not be your father's wish to provide even for Nancy, however faithful she may have been, at the expense of his son."

"It is right," said Walter. "Besides, Mr. Shaw, I find that Nancy had laid up six hundred dollars, which she had deposited in my father's hands. That also must be paid, if there is enough to pay it; if not, I will take it upon myself to pay whenever I am able."

"You're an excellent boy, Walter," said Mr. Shaw. "I always had a good opinion of you, and I find it is more than deserved. I honor you for the resolution you have expressed, though I cannot quite agree with you about the five hundred dollars. As to the debt, that must be paid, if there is money enough to pay it. But we can leave the further discussion of this question for the present. Now let us consider what is to become of you in the meantime. You were at the Essex Classical Institute, I believe?"

"Yes, sir."

"You would like to go back again, I suppose?"

"No, Mr. Shaw. It is an expensive school, and while it is uncertain how my father's affairs will come out, I should not feel justified in going there."

"Perhaps you are right. Of course, you cannot stay here, and keep house by yourself. I would invite you to my own house, but my wife is an invalid, and I have to consider her in the matter."

"Thank you, Mr. Shaw; but I think perhaps I had better accept the offer of Mr. Drummond of Stapleton. He invites me to make my home at his house, and for the present, perhaps, that will be the best arrangement."

Nancy was much troubled at the thought of parting from Walter, whom she had known from his infancy; but a situation was immediately offered her in the village, and Walter promised to take her as his housekeeper whenever he had a home of his own, and this comforted her, although it was likely to be a long time until then, since our hero was at present but fifteen.

He wrote a brief letter to Stapleton as follows:

"Dear Sir—I will accept the invitation you were kind enough to extend to me, for the present, at least, and will come to Stapleton about the middle of next week. You are the only relation of my father that I know of, and I think it would be his wish that I should go to you. If it should be inconvenient for you to receive me at that time, please write me at once. Yours respectfully,

"WALTER CONRAD."

In return, Walter received a letter couched in the most cordial terms, in which Mr. Drummond signed himself, "Your affectionate cousin." He was delighted, he said, to think that he was about to receive, under his humble roof, the son of his revered and lamented cousin. He himself met Walter at the depot.

"I am delighted to welcome you to Stapleton, my young friend," he said, shaking his hand cordially. "In the affliction which has come upon you, let me hope that you will find a haven of rest beneath my humble roof."

Walter made suitable acknowledgments, and proceeded to walk beside Mr. Drummond to the house which he termed humble.

It did not deserve that name, being a substantial two-story house, rather ugly, architecturally, but comfortable enough in appearance.

"That is my humble dwelling," said Mr. Drummond, pointing it out. "It is not equal to the splendid mansion in which you have been accustomed to live, but my worldly circumstances differ widely from those of your late lamented parent. That is my son, Joshua, who is looking out of the front window. I hope you may become good friends, considering how nearly you are related."

(To be continued.)

Cruel.

Gunner—So the celebrated poet married Mrs. Penner, the short-story writer?

Guyer—Yes, and some of their wedding presents were cruel insinuations.

Gunner—What did they receive?

Guyer—Sixteen waste baskets embellished with ribbons.



THE HOUSEHOLD

Yorkshire Pudding.

The recipes usually seen produce a soggy mass, very different from the "broad-acred" shire's product. Try this from a genuine Yorkshire woman: Beat thoroughly, two eggs, yolks and whites together, six tablespoonfuls flour, salt to season and milk, until the whole is the consistency of thick cream. Pour into a roasting pan and bake in the drippings from the roast, or heat to the boiling point one tablespoonful of lard or drippings, and bake in this twenty minutes. It is truly delicious with the accompaniment of roast beef and brown gravy.

Rice and Tomato Soup.

Put one tablespoonful of butter into a saucepan, add two small onions, chopped fine, and cook without browning. Add one can of tomatoes (or three pints of ripe ones), 2 cupfuls of water, 1 teaspoonful of salt, 6 peppercorns and 2 sprigs of parsley. Cook until tomatoes are soft, then rub through a sieve. Return to the saucepan with two tablespoonfuls of well-washed rice and simmer slowly for one hour. Press again through a sieve and add more seasoning if desired.

Egg Puffs.

Soften a tablespoonful of butter to a creamy consistency by working it with a fork; beat three eggs to a froth and add them to the butter; add a level teaspoonful of salt and six tablespoonfuls of flour. Beat all these ingredients together until they foam, then put them into buttered earthen cups or small tin pans, and bake in a hot oven for half an hour, or until they are cooked through and nicely browned.

Bacon Fritters.

Cut fresh pork into pieces about half an inch square and fry until done, but not brown. Take one cup flour, one cup Southern corn meal, one teaspoonful of saleratus, a pinch of salt and enough sour milk to make a stiff batter. Beat one egg up stiff and light, mix up batter well and add the cooked pork, stirring just enough to mix well. Fry in a skillet and eat with good Southern molasses.

Filling a Lamp.

Reservoirs of oil lamps should never be filled to the brim, as oil expands when heated, and the overflow is apt to exude, causing a smell of paraffin, while to prevent the oil from flowing over the edge of the burner after the lamp has been filled the wick, after cleaning, should be turned down below the level of the burner until it is required to light it.

Home-Made Sausage.

Six pounds of lean fresh pork and three of fat ground together in a meat chopper. To this add twelve teaspoons of powdered sage, six each of black pepper and salt, two teaspoons each of ground cloves and mace and a grated nutmeg. Mix well, pack all in stone jars and pour melted fat on top to exclude air.

German Cake.

Fourteen ounces flour, 9 ounces butter, 9 ounces sugar, 2 eggs, one-half lemon peel. Stir butter, sugar, eggs and lemon peel until light, add flour, knead until smooth, put dough on ice for a few hours, roll out, cut strips, and roll into figures, 8 or kringle; bake in moderate oven until brown.

Popcorn Candy.

Make an old-fashioned molasses candy and just before taking it from the fire (when a little dropped into cold water is brittle) stir in enough popcorn to thicken it. Put the mixture into buttered pans and press flat with the back of a spoon, and as it stiffens cut into squares.

Good Breakfast Dish.

Put into the double boiler one large cup yellow cornmeal and four thin slices of bacon cut into dice. Add a little salt and fill the cooker with cold water. Let it cook about an hour and a half, turn out into a pan to cool, slice cold and fry. A good breakfast dish.

A Fine Almond Torte.

Nine eggs, whites beaten separately; one and one-half cups sugar; two cups bread crumbs, one-half pound almonds chopped fine; one lemon rind, two teaspoons baking powder. Before sending to table cover top with whipped cream.

Baked Fish in Ramikins.

Cream the bits of left-over fish and beat them up with an equal quantity of hot mashed potato. Put the two in the ramikins and bake brown. Garnish on top with a small bit of parsley.

Bean Muffins.

One pint bran, one-half pint flour, one pint sweet milk, six tablespoons molasses, one-half teaspoon salt, one teaspoon saleratus; bake a good half hour.

SOMETHING FOR EVERYBODY

Andrew Carnegie's library gifts amount almost to \$50,000,000.

The total number of persons in receipt of State relief in India exceeds 1,250,000.

Louisiana has seven million acres of swamp land, which are at present totally useless.

The irrigated districts of Egypt comprise 5,340,000 acres and support 10,000,000 persons.

It is computed that the dew falling in England is equal to five inches of rain each year.

Government experts are investigating seaweed with the object of determining its economic value.

The Chinese have undertaken to nurse their forests, and the officials of the Celestial government have engaged a Japanese expert from Tokio to act as head master for the proposed school of forests at Mukden for a term of four years, with two Chinese as his assistants.

Prof. D. C. Jackson of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, has been retained by the Massachusetts highway commission to make a report regarding the telephone situation with special reference to the practicability of a reduction in rates and a higher efficiency of service.

"Neatness is essential on the links," said H. J. Whigham, the golfer, at a dinner in Chicago. "At Shinnecock Hills one day I played behind two young and pretty girls. Overtaking them, I heard the younger say: 'How many holes on this course, Alleen?' 'Nineteen, dear,' said Alleen, 'including the one in your stocking!'"

Simultaneously with the organization of a pigeon postal service in the French Kougo, where the climate makes both ordinary and wireless telegraphy impossible, it is announced that the British government has replaced the pigeon post by wireless telegraphy in both the naval and the colonial service, and that this year's budget contains no appropriation for pigeons.

O'Connell had got a man off at one time for highway robbery and at another for burglary; but on the third occasion, for stealing a coasting brig, the task of hoodwinking the jury seemed too great for even his powers of cajolery. However, he made out that the crime was committed on the high seas and obtained an acquittal. The prisoner lifted up his hand and eyes to heaven and exclaimed: "May the Lord long spare you, Mr. O'Connell—to me!"

The reason why the stomach and intestines do not digest themselves was once thought by Weiland, a German experimenter, to be that they defend themselves by anti-enzymes, or anti-ferments. Dr. Nandor Klug of Budapest now reports these anti-ferments not to be found, but that the mucin present in the inner half of the gastric mucous membrane resists the digestive action of the trypsin and the gastric juice. The digestive organs, therefore, protect themselves by the mucin they secrete.

The population of Japan to-day is just about 50,000,000. The exact figures for 1907 are not yet available, but the estimates just published are based on the average growth of the last thirty years and may be taken as fairly accurate. In each of the five-year periods for which figures are shown, over the past twenty-five years, the population has increased, roughly speaking, by 2,000,000. To-day the estimate is that there are 49,237,744 native-born Japanese in the territory ruled over by the Mikado.—Pall Mall Gazette.

When the members of the British Institution of Electrical Engineers paid a visit of inspection to northern Italy lately, they were interested in a device used to protect the overhead transmission lines of an electric traction system from lightning discharges. The device consists of jets of water, which form a permanent "earth" at the Monbegno generating station on the Valtellina line. The electric resistance of the jets was said to be sufficient to prevent a serious loss of current, while not too great to enable them to serve for protection against lightning.

It is said that "moon blindness" in a horse is caused by "wolf teeth"—two small surplus teeth just in front of the first upper pre-molars, one on each side of the upper jaw. An authority says: "The 'wolf teeth' do not cause eye disease or any other harm, and usually are not discovered until the eye disease appears. The eye trouble is 'periodic ophthalmia' (moon blindness), which is hereditary and incurable. Thousands upon thousands of horses suffer from this eye disease, yet have not a 'wolf tooth' in their heads. The important matter to remember in connection with periodic ophthalmia is not the significance of the 'wolf tooth,' but the necessity and importance of rejecting from breeding operations all afflicted with periodic ophthalmia, or cataract, which results from repeated attacks."