

STRONG AND STEADY

By HORATIO ALGER, JR.

CHAPTER IV.—(Continued.)

Walter raised his eyes and saw Joshua, whose small, mean features, closely resembling his father's, expressed considerable curiosity. Walter secretly doubted whether he should like him; but this doubt he kept to himself. Mr. Drummond opened the outer door, and led the way in.

"This is my wife, Mrs. Drummond," he said, as she approached, and kindly welcomed the young stranger.

"I think I shall like her," thought Walter, suffering his glance to rest for a moment on her mild, placid features; "she is evidently quite superior to her husband."

"Joshua, come here and welcome Mr. Conrad," said his father.

Joshua came forward awkwardly and held out his hand with the stiffness of a pump handle.

"Howdy do?" he said. "Just come?"

"Yes," said Walter, accepting the hand, and shaking it slightly.

"Are you tired with your journey, Mr. Conrad?" asked Mrs. Drummond. "Perhaps you would like to be shown to your room."

Walter went upstairs, preceded by Mr. Drummond, who insisted on carrying his carpetbag, for his trunk would not arrive till the next day, having been forwarded by express. At five o'clock they sat down to supper.

"I hope, Mr. Conrad," said Jacob, "you will be able to relish our humble repast."

"Humble again!" thought Walter. He was about to say that everything looked very nice, when Joshua said:

"If you call this humble, I don't know what you'd say to the suppers we commonly have."

Mr. Drummond, who desired, for this day, at least, to keep up appearances, frowned with vexation.

"Joshua," he said, "I desire that you will act in a more gentlemanly way or else leave the table. Have you ever been in Stapleton before, Mr. Conrad?"

"No, sir; never."

"It is not a large place, but it is growing; the people are plain, but they have kind hearts. I hope you may like the town after a while. If you feel inclined to walk, Joshua will go out with you after supper, and show you the mill dam, the church, and the school house. He will also point out the store—it is only across the way—where, in my humble way, I try to earn a living. I shall be very glad if you will come in and take a look inside. I may be busy, for work has accumulated during my absence, but Joshua will show you around."

"Thank you, sir."

"May I ask, Mr. Conrad—excuse my intruding the question—who is left executor of your father's estate?"

"Mr. Shaw, the lawyer in our village. He is an excellent man, very honest and upright. He was an intimate friend of my father."

"I am glad to hear you say so. So many lawyers, you know, are tricky. We have no lawyer here," pursued Mr. Drummond. "You will perhaps be surprised to hear it, but my humble services are frequently called into requisition, in administering and settling estates."

"Indeed, sir."

"Yes; but I am glad you have got a man you can trust. Mrs. Drummond, I think Mr. Conrad will have another piece of pie."

Supper was over at length, and Walter, by invitation, went out to walk with Joshua.

CHAPTER V.

Walter did not anticipate a very pleasant walk with Joshua. The little he had seen of that young man did not prepossess him in his favor. However, having no other way of spending his time, he had no objection to the walk.

"That's the old man's store just across the street," said Joshua, as they emerged from the house.

"Your father's?"

"Of course. Don't you see the name on the sign?" Walter did see it, but never having been accustomed to speak of his own father as "the old man," he was not quite sure he apprehended Joshua's meaning.

"You were an only child, weren't you?" said Joshua.

"Yes," said Walter, soberly.

"So am I," said Joshua; adding, complacently, "Between you and I, the old man has laid up quite a snug sum. Of course, it'll all come to me some day."

"I am glad to hear it," said Walter, wondering that Joshua should have made such a communication to a comparative stranger.

"To hear the old man talk," pursued Joshua, "you'd think he was awful poor. He's stingy enough about everything in the house. There isn't a family in town that don't live better than we do."

"I thought we had a very good supper," said Walter, who experienced not a little disgust at Joshua's charges against his father.

"That was because you were with us. The old man laid himself out for the occasion. It's the first decent supper I've eaten at home since the Sewing Circle met at our house three years ago."

Though these communications did not raise Joshua in the estimation of Walter, the latter could not help thinking that there was probably some foundation for what was said, and the prejudice against Mr. Drummond, for which he had blamed himself as without cause, began to find some extenuation.

"When I talk to the old man about his stinting me so," continued Joshua, "he tells me to go to work and earn some money."

"Why don't you do it?"

"He wants me to go into his store, but he wouldn't pay me anything. He offered me a dollar and a half a week; but I wasn't going to work ten or twelve hours a day for so much sum. If I could get a light, easy place in the city say at ten dollars a week, I'd go. There ain't any chance in Stapleton for a young man of enterprise."

"I've thought sometimes," said Walter, "that I should like to get a place in the city; but I suppose I couldn't get enough at first to pay my board."

"You get a place?" exclaimed Joshua, in astonishment. "I thought you was going to college."

"Father intended I should; but his death will probably change my plans. It is expensive passing through college; I cannot afford it."

"Oh, that's all humbug. You're talking like the old man. Why, you're rich. The old man told me that your father left a hundred thousand dollars. You're the only son; you told me so yourself."

"Your father is mistaken."

"What, wasn't your father rich?" asked Joshua, opening his small eyes in amazement.

"My father was unfortunate enough to get involved in a speculation, by which he lost heavily. I can't tell how his affairs stand until they are settled. I may be left penniless."

"Do you mean that?" asked Joshua, stopping abruptly and facing his companion.

"I generally mean what I say," said Walter, rather stiffly.

Joshua's answer was a low whistle of amazement.

"Whew!" he said. "That's the biggest joke I've heard of lately;" and he followed up this remark by a burst of merriment.

Walter looked at him with surprise. He certainly did not know what to make of Joshua's conduct.

"I don't see any joke about it," he said. "I don't complain of being poor, for I think I can earn my own living; but it doesn't strike me as a thing to laugh at."

"I was laughing to think how the old man is taken in. It's rich! He thinks you're worth a hundred thousand dollars," said Joshua.

"Well, he is mistaken, that's all. I don't see how he is taken in."

"He's been doing the polite, and treating you as if you was a prince of the blood. That's the reason he told the old woman to get up such a nice supper. He expected to get you to take him for a guardian, and then he'd have the handling of your money. Won't he be mad when he finds out how he's been taken in? Giving you the best room, too! Are you sure that none of the property will be left?"

"Probably not much. I am sorry to think that your father made such a mistake. I will take care to undeceive him."

"What! You're not going to tell him, are you?"

"Certainly. I meant to do so; but I did not suppose he invited me just because he thought I was rich."

"What for, then?"

"Being my father's cousin and nearest relation, it didn't seem very strange that he should have invited me on that account."

"The old man's pretty shrewd," said Joshua, rather admiringly. "He knows which way his bread is buttered. He don't lay himself out for any poor relations, not if he knows it. Don't you tell him about it till to-morrow."

"Why not?"

"Because, if you do, we'll have a mean breakfast as usual. I just want him to think you're rich a little while longer, so we can have something decent for once."

"I don't feel willing to deceive your father any longer. I have not willingly deceived him at all. I would rather he knew at once."

"To-morrow will be soon enough."

"At any rate, I shall tell him to-morrow then. But I've got tired walking. Suppose we go back."

They went back together. Mr. Drummond was in the store, but Mrs. Drummond was at home.

"You didn't go far," she said. "But I suppose you were tired, Mr. Conrad."

"A little," answered Walter.

"I wonder," thought our hero, "whether she will change as soon as she finds out that I am poor?" Somehow he felt that she would not. She seemed very different from her husband and her son, and Walter was inclined to like her better.

Joshua went out again soon, not having much taste for staying at home; and, as Walter retired early, he did not see either him or his father again till the next morning at breakfast.

"I must go back to the store," said Mr. Drummond the next morning, when breakfast was over. "Joshua will look after you, Mr. Conrad. I hope you will be able to pass the time pleasantly."

"If you can spare me five minutes, Mr. Drummond, I should like to speak to you in private," said Walter.

"Certainly. I can spare five or ten minutes, or more, Mr. Conrad. Won't you walk into the parlor?"

Mr. Drummond was far from anticipating the nature of Walter's communication. Indeed, he cherished a hope that our hero was about to ask his assistance in settling up the estate—a request with

which, it is needless to say, he would gladly have complied.

"I don't suppose you know how I am situated—I mean in relation to my father's estate. It is not certain that my father left anything," said Walter, thinking it best to reveal everything at once.

"What!" exclaimed Mr. Drummond, his lower jaw falling, and looking very blank.

"My father made some investments recently that turned out badly."

"But he was worth a very large property—it can't all be lost."

"I am afraid there will be very little left, if anything. He lost heavily by some mining stock, which he bought at a high figure, and which ran down to almost nothing."

"There's the house left, at any rate."

"My father borrowed its value, I understand; I am afraid that must go, too."

Now, at length, it flashed upon Mr. Drummond how he had been taken in. He thought of the attentions he had lavished upon Walter, of the extra expense he had incurred, and all, as it appeared, for a boy likely to prove penniless. He might even expect to live upon him. These thoughts, which rapidly succeeded each other, mortified and made him angry.

"Why didn't you tell me this before, young man?" he demanded with asperity. His change of tone and manner showed Walter that Joshua was entirely right in his estimate of his father's motives, and he in turn became indignant.

"When did you expect me to tell you, Mr. Drummond?" he said, quickly. "I only arrived yesterday afternoon, and I tell you this morning. I would have told you last night, if you had been in the house."

"Why didn't you tell me when I was at Willoughby?"

"I had other things to think of," said Walter, shortly. "The thought of my father's death and of my loss shut out everything else."

"Well, what are you going to do?" asked Mr. Drummond in a hard tone.

"I shall have to earn my own living," said Walter. "I am well and strong, and am not afraid."

"That is a good plan," said Mr. Drummond, who knew Walter so little as to fear that he wanted to become dependent upon him. "When I was of your age I had my own living to earn. What do you propose to do?"

"Have you a vacancy for me in your store? Joshua told me you wished him to go in."

"You couldn't earn much, for you don't know anything of the business."

"I should not expect to. I am perfectly willing to work for my board until I find out how my father's affairs are going to turn out."

This proposal struck Mr. Drummond favorably. He judged that Walter would prove a valuable assistant when he was broken in, for it was easy to see that he had energy. Besides, it was desirable to keep him near until it was decided whether Mr. Conrad's affairs were really in as bad a state as his son represented. Even if a few thousand dollars were left, Mr. Drummond would like the handling of that sum. Then, again, no one knew better than Mr. Drummond that Walter's board would cost him very little; for, of course, he would at once return to his usual frugal fare.

"Very well," he said; "you can go into the store on those terms. As you say, you've got your own living to earn, and the sooner you begin the better."

Walter had not said this, but he agreed with Mr. Drummond. It may be thought strange that our hero should have been willing to enter the employment of such a mean man; but he thought it wisest to remain in the neighborhood until he could learn something definite about his father's affairs. He prepared to go to work at once, partly because he didn't wish to be dependent, partly because he foresaw that he should be happier if employed.

When Mr. Drummond and Walter came out of the parlor, Joshua was sitting in the next room, and looked up eagerly to see how his father bore the communication. He was disappointed when he saw that Mr. Drummond looked much as usual.

"Conrad has been telling me," said Mr. Drummond, "that his father lost a good deal of money by speculation, and it is doubtful whether he has left any property."

"I am very sorry," said Mrs. Drummond; and Walter saw and appreciated her look of sympathy.

"As he will probably have to work for a living, he has asked for a place in my store," pursued Mr. Drummond, "and I have agreed to take him on trial. Conrad, you may get your hat and come over at once."

Joshua whistled in sheer amazement. The affair had by no means terminated as he anticipated.

(To be continued.)

The Lady in the Moon.

An amateur astronomer writes of the "lady in the moon": "It is a very beautiful face seen in profile and uplifted, as though in proud disdain of things terrestrial. The curve of the throat is exquisite, and indeed the entire outline is marvelously lifelike. The moon lady may best be observed through a small opera glass when our satellite is at half. At that time the tip of the chin about touches the terminator—that is, the dividing line between the light and dark portions of the lunar surface. Most people can recognize the man in the moon. Well, the hair of the lady, in which I can always fancy I see a spray of orange blossom, forms the man's left eye, the nose and mouth, his nose, and the chin and throat the man's mouth."

Obvious.

"Do you tip the waiter when you dine?"

"Say, do I look starved?"



"I understand the new magazine has a high standard." "Indeed it has. It went up yesterday."—Atlanta Constitution.

Redd—What kind of a machine have you got now? Greene—A runabout; it will run about a block, and then stop.—Yonkers Statesman.

Authoress—I'm very happy in my married life. I find my husband such a help. Friend—Indeed! Does he cook, or write?—Fliegende Blaetter.

"Maude was afraid the girls wouldn't notice her engagement ring." "Did they?" "Did they! Six of them recognized it at once."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

"I hear your friend Tamson's marriest again." "Aye, so he is. He's been a dear friend to me. He's cost me three weddin' presents an' twa wreaths."—London Tit-Bits.

"Is your husband voracious in his appetite, madam?" "I can't say as he is, doctor. He'll eat anything and everything as long as there's anything to eat."—Baltimore American.

He—If you refuse me I shall go out and hang myself to the lamp-post in front of your house. She—Now, George, you know father said he wouldn't have you hanging around here.—Life.

"Ever seen Congress in session?" "No," replied Farmer Coboss, "but I know how it looks. I hev a hired man who kin git as busy doing nothin' as anything on earth."—Washington Herald.

Mr. Newlywed—But, my love, why are you weeping? Mrs. Newlywed—Oh, John! John! I just peeped into the kitchen and saw that cook has on her traveling gown.—Harper's Weekly.

"I want a man to do odd jobs about the house, run on errands, one that never answers back and is always ready to do my bidding." "You're looking for a husband, ma'am, not a man."—The Jewish Ledger.

Hi Tragerdy—Yes, we opened in Oshkosh. Lowe Comerdy—And what did your audience think of your "Hamlet"? Hi Tragerdy—Wey—er—he went out before I had a chance to ask him.—Philadelphia Press.

"Cheer up, old man," said the consoling friend. "You know love laughs at locksmiths." "Yes, I know," replied the dejected lover. "But her father ain't a locksmith; he's a boiler-maker."—Detroit Free Press.

He—So your father thought I wanted to marry you for your money. What did you say? She—I persuaded him that you didn't, and then he said if that was the case you didn't have any sense.—The Jewish Ledger.

"Willie, did you put your nickel in the contribution box in Sunday school to-day?" "No, mamma! I ast Eddy Lake, the preacher's son, if I couldn't keep it an' spend it for candy, an' he gave me permission."—Denver News.

"Young man," said the pompous individual, "I did not always have this carriage. When I first started in life I had to walk." "You were lucky," chuckled the youth. "When I first started in life I couldn't walk."—The Catholic News.

Nell—He doesn't know anything about the little niceties of paying attention to a girl. Belle—Why, I saw him typing your shoestring. Nell—Yes; but he tied it in a double knot, so it couldn't come untied again.—Philadelphia Record.

"What you want is a stenographer who is rapid and absolutely accurate." "Well," answered Mr. Bliggins, "rapidity is all right, but as to accuracy—well, I don't want to be held down strictly to my own ideas of grammar."—Washington Star.

Miss Cutting—I see by the paper that all the swell set was at the Assembly ball last night. Miss McCluff—Yes; I expected to be there, but was prevented.—Miss Cutting—The idea! I hope the doorkeeper wasn't rough with you, dear.—Catholic Standard and Times.

Tommy—Do you believe it is fortunate to be the seventh son? Mickey—Naw! I'm the seventh son. Tommy—But the fortune tellers say the seventh son has all kinds of luck handed down to him. Mickey—Huh! All I have handed down to me is me six brothers' old clothes.—Chicago News.

First Gentleman (entering the apartment of second gentleman)—About a year ago you challenged me to fight a duel. Second Gentleman (sternly)—I did, sir. First Gentleman—And I told you that I had just got married, and I did not care to risk my life at any hazard. Second Gentleman (haughtily)—I remember, sir. First Gentleman (bitterly)—Well, my feelings have changed; any time you want to fight, let me know.—Human Life.

SOMETHING FOR EVERYBODY

Deposits in the postal savings banks of Japan now exceed \$45,000,000.

Manchuria already receives 1,000 cable messages a day from Japan. The doubling of the cables is probable.

John Burns is said to have the best working library of any member of the English House of Parliament.

Belgium is now importing yearly about \$1,500,000 worth of automobiles, motor-cycles and bicycles. The imports have quadrupled in four years.

In the last eight years the three great iron countries have produced 310,300,000 tons of pig iron, of which over half has come out of the United States.

In the Slavonic section of the New York public library there are 8,527 volumes and a very large proportion of the Russian readers select books of social and governmental subjects.

There are now not far from 60,000 miles of railroad under block signal operation, nearly 10,000 miles of which have been added within a year and a half. All of this mileage is distributed among eighty-four different systems.

Emigration to Canada from the United States in January and February increased 61 per cent, while foreign emigrants arriving at Canadian ports decreased 36 per cent. Over 1,000 American settlers reached Saskatchewan on March 19.

Mrs. Kate Douglas Wiggin has been nominated as an honorary steward of the anniversary dinner of the Royal Literary Fund in London. Lord Tennyson is the president of the society. Rudyard Kipling, who will preside at the dinner, has asked Mrs. Wiggin to respond to a toast.

An Eskimo will devour greedily twenty pounds of meat a day. A Russian Tartar will eat in twenty-four hours forty pounds. Captain Cochran mentions a Tartar who consumed in that time the hind quarters of a large ox, twenty pounds of fat and a proportionate quantity of melted butter for drink. Three of his tribe—the Yakuti—think nothing of polishing off a reindeer at a meal.—New York Press.

President Fouse, of the Fidelity Mutual Life Insurance Company, calls attention in his annual address to the vast extent of the life insurance business in this country, by comparing it with the banking business. The 6,544 national and 11,852 State, private and savings banks and trust companies have an aggregate capital and surplus of \$3,000,000,000, and deposits of \$13,000,000,000. Ninety-three insurance companies have admitted assets of over \$3,000,000,000 and insurance in force amounting to \$14,000,000,000.

There is a possibility that the Episcopal church will soon have three brothers as members of the bishopric. The Right Reverend Dr. William Parret, bishop of Maryland, because of advancing years and failing strength, has asked his diocese to elect a coadjutor and has called a special convention to choose the priest to be elevated to the episcopate. Several clergymen have been mentioned for the honor, among them being the Rev. Dr. Arthur B. Kinsolving, rector of St. Paul's church, Baltimore, who is said to stand a good chance of election. One of Dr. Kinsolving's brothers is bishop of Texas and another is the head of the diocese of Southern Brazil.

In a recent trial a San Francisco judge made arithmetic a test of mental soundness. But if this test had been applied to certain great men they would be declared imbeciles. Dean Stanley, for one, would have been set down as hopeless had he been judged by his incapacity to do a sum in simple addition or multiplication. Had Keble, writer of famous hymns, depended upon his arithmetic Oxford would not long have known him. When bursar accounts came out nearly \$10,000 to the bad. In vain did the learned and pious men of the college go over the figures with him. Not until an expert was summoned was it discovered that Keble, in casting up a column, had added the date of the year to the college's debts.

"I know where \$3,000,000 in cash lies concealed," said a New York lawyer.

"This vast sum lies concealed in the inside vest pocket of the 30,000 automobiles of New York State. Each man carries \$100 of it in one crisp note, ready to be paid out in a fine, if he should be arrested for speeding. Fines, though, don't appear to stop speeding," he continued. "Perhaps the rich automobilist regards them much as the Suezian wood thief did. The thief was arrested. The magistrate said to him: 'You are brought up on the charge of stealing wood. This charge has been proved against you. But you are old and poor and you shall be let off this time. Only don't do it again.' 'Nonsense!' retorted the thief. 'Let us not have any false sentimentality here. I steal my wood, I pay my fine, and there's an end of it.'"