

# STRONG AND STEADY

By HORATIO ALGER, JR.

## CHAPTER XXI.

Though Walter was in a room on the second floor, the distance to the ground was not so great but that he could easily hang from the window sill and jump without injury. Before following him in his flight, we will pause to inquire how the robber, unexpectedly taken captive, fared.

Nothing could have surprised Jack more than this sudden turning of the tables. But a minute since Walter was completely in his power. Now, through the boy's coolness and nerve, his thievish intentions were baffled, and he was placed in the humiliating position of a prisoner in his own house.

"Open the door, or I'll murder you!" he roared, kicking it violently.

There was no reply, for Walter was already half way out of the window, and did not think it best to answer. Walter had proceeded half a mile when he stopped to rest. Two or three times he had tripped over projecting roots which the darkness prevented his seeing in time to avoid.

"I'll rest a few minutes, and then push on," he thought.

It was late, but the excitement of his position prevented him from feeling sleepy. He wished to get out of the woods into some road or open field, where he would be in less danger of encountering Jack, and where perhaps he might find assistance against him.

He was leaning against an immense tree, one of the largest and oldest in the forest. Walter began to examine it. He discovered, by feeling, that it was hollow inside. He ascertained that the interior was eaten out by gradual decay, making a large hollow space inside.

"I shouldn't wonder if I could get in," he said to himself.

He made the attempt, and found that he was correct in his supposition. He could easily stand erect inside.

"That is curious," thought Walter. "The tree must be very old."

He emerged from the trunk, and once more threw himself down beside it. Five minutes later and his attention was drawn by a sound of approaching footsteps. Jack had tripped over a root, and was picking himself up in no very good humor. The enemy, it appeared, was close upon him.

Walter started to his feet in dismay. His first thought was immediate flight, but if he were heard by Jack, the latter would no doubt be able to run him down.

"What shall I do?" thought Walter, in alarm.

Quickly the hollow trunk occurred to him. With as little delay as possible he concealed himself in the interior. He was just in time, for Jack was by this time only a few rods distant. Walter counted upon his passing on; but on reaching the old tree Jack paused, and said aloud, "Where can the young rascal be? I wonder if I have passed him? I'll rest here five minutes. He may straggle along."

With these words he sank upon the ground, in the very same place where Walter had been reclining two minutes before. He was so near that our hero could have put out his hand and touched him.

It was certainly a very uncomfortable situation for Walter. He hardly dared to breathe or to stir lest his enemy should hear him.

"He's led me a pretty tramp," muttered Jack, "but I'm bound to get hold of him to-night. If I do, I'll half kill him."

"Then I hope you won't get hold of him," Walter ejaculated, inwardly.

He began to wish he had run on instead of seeking this concealment. In the first case, the darkness of the night would have favored him, and even if Jack had heard him it was by no means certain that he would have caught him. Now an unlucky movement or a cough would betray his hiding place, and there would be no chance of escape. He began to feel his constrained position irksome, but did not dare to see relief by change of posture.

"I wish he'd go," thought our hero.

But Jack was in no hurry. He appeared to wish to waylay Walter, and was constantly listening to catch the sound of his approach. At length Walter was relieved to hear him say, "Well, I shan't catch him by stopping here, that's sure."

Then he started, and Walter, listening faintly, heard the sound of his receding steps. When sufficient time had elapsed, he ventured out from his concealment, and stopped to consider the situation.

What should he do? It was hardly prudent to go on, for it would only bring him nearer the enemy. If he ventured back, he would be farther away from the edge of the woods, and might encounter Meg, who might also be in pursuit. He did not feel in danger of capture from this quarter, but the woman might find means of communicating with her husband. On the whole, it seemed safest, for the present, at least, to stick to the friendly tree which had proved so good a protector. He stood beside it, watching carefully, intending, whenever peril threatened, to take instant refuge inside. This was not particularly satisfactory, but he hoped Jack would soon tire of the pursuit, and retrace his steps toward the cabin. If he should do that, he would then be safe in continuing his flight.

Jack pushed on, believing that our hero was in advance. It had been a fatiguing

day, and this made his present midnight tramp more disagreeable. His hopes of overtaking Walter became fainter and fainter, and nature began to assert her rights. A drowsiness which he found it hard to combat assailed him, and he knew he must yield to it for a time at least.

"I wish I was at home, and in bed," he muttered. "I'll lie down and take a short nap, and then start again."

He threw himself on the ground, and in five minutes his senses were locked in a deep slumber, which, instead of a short nap, continued for several hours.

While he is sleeping we will go back to Walter. He, too, was sleepy, and would gladly have lain down and slept if he had dared. But he felt the peril of his position too sensibly to give way to his feelings. He watched vigilantly for an hour, but nothing could be seen of Jack. That hour seemed to him to creep with snail-like pace.

"I can't stand this watching till morning," he said to himself. "I will find some out-of-the-way place, and try to sleep a little."

Searching about he found such a place as he desired. He lay down, and was soon fast asleep. So pursued and pursued had yielded to the spell of the same enchantment, and half a mile distant from each other were enjoying welcome repose.

Some hours passed away. The sun rose, and its rays lighted up the dim recesses of the forest. When Walter opened his eyes he could not at first remember where he was. He lifted his head from his corpebag, which he had used as a pillow, and looked around him in surprise; but recollection quickly came to his aid.

"I must have been sleeping several hours," he said to himself, "for it is now morning. I wonder if the man who was after me has gone home?"

He decided that this was probable, and resolved to make an attempt to reach the edge of the forest. He wanted to get into the region of civilization again, if for no other reason, because he felt hungry and was likely to remain so as long as he continued in the forest. He now felt fresh and strong, and prepared to start on his journey. But he had scarcely taken a dozen steps when a female figure stepped out from a covert, and he found himself face to face with Meg.

Not knowing but that her husband might be close behind, he started back in alarm and hesitation. She observed this, and said, "You needn't be afraid, boy. I don't want to harm you."

"Is your husband with you?" asked Walter, on his guard.

"No, he isn't. He started out after you before midnight, and hasn't been back since. That made me uneasy, and I came out to look for him."

"I have seen him," said Walter.

"Where and when?" asked the woman, eagerly.

It was strange that such a coarse brute should have inspired any woman with love, but Meg did certainly love her husband, in spite of his frequent bad treatment.

"Did he see you?"

"No, I was hidden."

"How long did he stay?"

"Only a few minutes, to get rested, I suppose. Then he went on."

"In what direction?"

"That way."

"I'm glad he did not harm you. He was so angry when he started that I was afraid of what would happen if he met you. You must keep out of his way."

"That is what I mean to do if I can," said Walter. "Can you tell me the shortest way out of the woods?"

"Go in that direction," said the woman, pointing, "and half a mile will bring you out."

"It is rather hard to follow a straight path in the woods. If you will act as my guide, I will give you a dollar."

"If my husband should find out that I helped you to escape, he would be very angry."

"Why need he know? You needn't tell him you met me."

The woman hesitated. Finally love of money prevailed.

"I'll do it," she said, abruptly. "Follow me."

She took the lead, and Walter followed closely in her steps. Remembering the night before, he was not wholly assured of her good faith, and resolved to keep his eyes open, and make his escape instantly if he should see any signs of treachery. Possibly Meg might intend to lead him into a trap, and deliver him up to her husband. He was naturally distrustful, but his adventures in the cabin taught him a lesson of distrust.

## CHAPTER XXII.

Walter followed Meg through the woods. He felt sure that he would not have far to go to reach the open fields. He had been delayed heretofore, not by the distance, but by not knowing in what direction to go.

Few words were spoken between him and Meg. Remembering what had happened at the cabin, and that even now he was feeling from her husband, he did not feel inclined to be sociable, and her thoughts were divided between the money she was to be paid as the price for her services, and her husband, for whose prolonged absence she could not account.

After walking for fifteen minutes, they came to the edge of the forest. Skirting

it was a meadow, wet in parts, for the surface was low.

"Where is the road?"

"You'll have to cross this meadow, and you'll come out it. It isn't more'n quarter of a mile. You'll find your way well enough without me."

Walter felt relieved at the prospect of a speedy return to the region of civilization. It seemed to him as if he had passed the previous night for away in some wild frontier cabin, instead of in the center of a populous and thriving neighborhood, within a few miles of several flourishing villages. He drew out a dollar bill and offered it to Meg.

"This is the money I agreed to pay you," he said. "Thank you, besides."

"I hear my husband's steps," she said, hurriedly. "Fly or it will be the worse for you."

"Thank you for the caution," said Walter, rousing to the necessity for immediate action.

"Don't stop to thank me, Go!" she said, stamping her foot impatiently.

He obeyed at once, and started on a run across the meadow. A minute later, Jack came in sight.

"Why, Meg, are you here?" he said, in surprise. "Have you seen the boy?"

He did not wait for an answer, for, looking across the meadow, he saw the flying figure of our hero.

"There he is, now," he exclaimed, in a tone of fierce satisfaction.

"Let him go, Jack," pleaded Meg, who, in spite of herself, felt a sympathy for the boy who, like herself, had been unfortunate.

He threw off the hand which she had placed upon his arm, and dashed off in pursuit of Walter.

Walter had the start, and had already succeeded in placing two hundred yards between himself and his pursuer. But Jack was strong and athletic, and could run faster than a boy of fifteen, and the distance between the two constantly diminished. Walter looked back over his shoulder, as he ran, and, brave as he was, there came a sickening sensation of fear as he met the fierce, triumphant glance of his enemy.

"Stop!" called out Jack, hoarsely.

Walter did not answer, neither did he obey. Only a few rods in advance was a deep ditch, at least twelve feet wide, over which a single plank was thrown as a bridge for foot passengers. Walter sped like a deer forward and over the bridge, when, stooping down, he hastily pulled it over after him, thus cutting off his enemy's advance.

"Put back that plank," roared Jack.

"I would rather not," said Walter.

"You'll be sorry for it, then," said Jack, fiercely.

He had walked back about fifty feet, and then faced round. His intention was clear enough. He meant to jump over the ditch. Our hero took the plank and put it over his shoulder, moving with it farther down the edge. An idea had occurred to him, which had not yet suggested itself to Jack, or the latter might have been less confident of success.

Jack stood still for a moment, and then, gathering up his strength, dashed forward. Arrived at the brink, he made a spring, but the soft bank yielded him no support. He fell short of the opposite bank by at least two feet, and, to his anger and disgust, landed in the water and slime at the bottom of the ditch. He scrambled out, landing at last, but with the loss of one boot, which had been drawn off by the clinging mud in which it had become firmly planted. Still he was on the same side with Walter, and the latter was now in his power. This was what he thought; but an instant later he saw his mistake. Walter had stretched the plank over the ditch a few rods further up, and was passing over it in safety.

(To be continued.)

Why He Kicked.

"Some people are chronic kickers," growled the hotel clerk, "and it's no use trying to satisfy them."

"What's the trouble now?" queried the reporter.

"You saw that solemn looking chap making a get-away as you came in?" rejoined the man behind the ten-carat sparkler. "Well, he registered about half an hour ago and was shown to his room. Now what do you suppose happened?"

"I pass," said the pencil pusher.

"A few minutes later," continued the key juggler, "he rushed back to the office, mad as a March hare, and jumped all over me, figuratively speaking. It seems that he had come here for the purpose of doing the suicide act by turning on the gas and I assigned him to a room lighted by electricity."

Part of the Treatment.

"So you believe in charging heavy fees?"

"Yes," answered the physician, "but only for the patient's own good. If you can make him feel that he has an investment with you he is more likely to follow instructions carefully in order to get his money's worth."—Washington Star.

In a Quandary.

Brother—Yes, I like Jack well enough, but how did you ever happen to marry a man a head shorter than you are?

Sister—I had to choose between a little man with a big salary and a big man with a little salary.

Useless Sacrifice.

Edyth—It's too bad that Clara was in love with Jack when he proposed to me. I feel sorry for the poor girl.

Mayne—Why, she is in love with Tom. She never cared for Jack.

Edyth—Oh, dear! I never would have accepted him had I known that.

A Bad Break.

Wife—Why did you give that phonograph away just before we were married? Didn't you think I could use it?

Husband—My dear, I gave it away to keep peace. Don't you know that no house is big enough for two talking machines?

And at the last report he was still trying to square himself.—Detroit Free Press.

## Recognition.

"The men who devote their time to the country's service should be recognized," said the official.

"Well," answered Farmer Cornstassel, "some of 'em should and others 'ud be more respected if they could approach the payroll in disguise."—Washington Star.

## Less Lavishness.

"Do you think your insurance company is being conducted more economically?"

"I'm sure of it," answered the hopeful citizen. "It doesn't send me nearly as many blotters and calendars as it used to."—Washington Star.

## No Stranger to That.

Mrs. Highmas—I suppose at some time in your life you struggled with the Nibelungenlied?

Mrs. Gaswell—O, yes: I had an awful siege of that in '93. I had to take all kinds of nasty medicines before I got it out of my system.

## Not Quite the Same.

Miss Dute—He told me once that I was quite pretty.

Miss Chellus—Yes, he also told me that you were quite pretty—once.—Philadelphia Press.

A great extension of the Siberian railroad is proposed along the River Amur, and as it has met with hearty approval on the part of the present ministry, it is likely to be constructed. It will open up 40,000,000 acres of corn land.

State of Ohio, City of Toledo, Lucas County, ss.

Frank J. Cheney makes oath that he is senior partner of the firm of F. J. Cheney & Co., doing business in the City of Toledo, County and State aforesaid, and that said firm will pay the sum of ONE HUNDRED DOLLARS for each and every case of Catarrh that cannot be cured by the use of Hall's Catarrh Cure.

FRANK J. CHENEY.

Sworn to before me and subscribed in my presence, this 6th day of December, A. D. 1886.

A. W. GLEASON,

Notary Public.

Hall's Catarrh Cure is taken internally, and acts directly upon the blood and mucous surfaces of the system. Send for testimonials free.

F. J. CHENEY & CO., Toledo, O.

Sold by all druggists, 75c.

Take Hall's Family Pills for constipation.

## Reaction.

Salesman—Hat, sir? Yes; what kind do you wish to look at?

Customer—Well, my wife wears a Merry Widow affair. If you have something that is the exact opposite of it, young man, that's what I want.

Salesman—Then you want a plug hat, of course, with a black band around it. That is the nearest we can come to a Disconsolate Widower hat.—Chicago Tribune.

## Gave It Up.

"Uncle Henry, how big a tarpon did you ever catch?"

"Why, Sammy, once I—but how big a tarpon did you ever hear of?"

"Seven feet, ten inches is the record."

"I'm not going to try to beat that, Sammy. I have only a few years to live, and I want to go to heaven some day."

## A Financier.

Judge—How many times have you been arrested before?

Prisoner—Five, sir.

Judge—Then I shall feel it my duty to impose the maximum fine.

Prisoner—But, your honor, isn't it only fair to give a reduced rate to regular customers?—Judge.

## Premature.

Husband (on overland train)—You mustn't mind it, Maria, if I take several doses of spirits during the day, from now on. It's the only thing that will cut this alkali dust that gets into one's throat.

Wife—You won't have to do it to-day, John. I've been making some inquiries, and I find we don't strike the alkali region for 500 miles yet.

## The Wise Men.

"After all, it's the wise man who can change his opinion."

"But the wisest men simply can't do it."

"Why not?"

"Because they've been dead for years."—Catholic Standard and Times.

## The General Demand

of the Well-Informed of the World has always been for a simple, pleasant and efficient liquid laxative remedy of known value; a laxative which physicians could sanction for family use because its component parts are known to them to be wholesome and truly beneficial in effect, acceptable to the system and gentle, yet prompt, in action.

In supplying that demand with its excellent combination of Syrup of Figs and Elixir of Senna, the California Fig Syrup Co. proceeds along ethical lines and relies on the merits of the laxative for its remarkable success.

That is one of many reasons why Syrup of Figs and Elixir of Senna is given the preference by the Well-Informed. To get its beneficial effects always buy the genuine—manufactured by the California Fig Syrup Co., only, and for sale by all leading druggists. Price fifty cents per bottle.

## His Busy Day.

"Ethel," he whispered, "will you marry me?"

"I don't know, Charles," she replied, coyly.

"Well, when you find out," he said, rising, "send me word, will you? I shall be at Mabel Hicks' until 10 o'clock. If I don't hear from you by 10 I'm going to ask her."—Tid-Bits.

FITS St. Vitus' Dance and Nervous Debility permanently cured by Dr. J. C. Kane's Great Nerve Restorer. Send for FREE \$2.00 trial bottle and treatise. Dr. R. H. Kane, L. A., 301 Arch St., Philadelphia, Pa.

## A Delicious Custard.

The recipe for this delicate dessert has been handed down in my family for many generations: Into each individual custard cup put the yolk of one egg, add one heaping teaspoonful of sugar, two gratings of nutmeg and five tablespoonfuls of sweet milk. Incorporate thoroughly and set the cups in a pan of hot water. Bake in a moderate oven until firm. When cool, cover with a meringue, using the whites of the eggs for this purpose, and allow one tablespoonful of powdered sugar to the white of each egg. Through the very tiptop of each snowy mound drop a teaspoonful of orange marmalade.—Delineator.

Mothers will find Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup the best remedy to use for their children during the teething period.

But Never Call Him Early.

He—Funny thing about your sex. Call a woman "a bird" and she's pleased. But call her a hen or an old crow and she gets angry.

She—Nothing exclusively feminine about that. Call a man "a sad dog" and he feels good. But call him "a miserable cur"—the same thing—and he'll knock your head off.—Boston Transcript.

## Knew One of the Firm.

Attendant (showing him through the structure)—This house is built on what is known as the "slow combustion" plan. Mr. Pneuritch—Ah, yes; I think I know Slocum. I have seen him at the club; but I have never had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Bastion.—Chicago Tribune.

Brazilian railroads in operation at the beginning of last year had a total length of 10,776 miles. In addition there were 1,902 miles under construction and 4,177 miles being surveyed or already approved, making the total mileage about 16,855 miles.

## No Cause for Alarm.

"Look, officer!" shouted the excited citizen. "That big department store is afire!"

"What makes you think so?" asked the officer, calmly.

"Why, don't you see all those woman shoppers coming down the fire escapes?"

"Oh, yes; but that is not the sign of fire. You see, they can't get through the revolving doors with those big hats."

## In the Concrete Age.

First Government Officer (a few years hence)—Anything particular on hand to-day?

Second Government Officer—Yes; I've got to go this afternoon to take part in the molding of the corner stone for a new battleship.

# S.S.S. CONTAINS NO MERCURY

Medicines containing Mercury are often given to persons suffering with Contagious Blood Poison, and so powerful is the action of this drug that it frequently removes the symptoms in a short while, and shuts the disease up in the system to do greater damage to the delicate internal members. When, however, the treatment is left off, the disease always returns, and the patient finds that his health has been injured by this powerful mineral, and he is often left with weak stomach, disturbed digestion, mercurial rheumatism, etc. The action of S. S. S. is entirely different. It contains no Mercury, nor any other harmful drug, but is made entirely of healing, cleansing roots and herbs. It cures Contagious Blood Poison by removing the virus from the blood. It searches out every particle of the poison and does not leave the least trace for future outbreaks. S. S. S., in addition to curing the disease, builds up and strengthens every part of the body. Its fine tonic effects tone up the stomach and digestion, improve the appetite and regulate the entire system. Home treatment book containing valuable information about the different stages of the disease and any medical advice desired sent free to all who write.

THE SWIFT SPECIFIC CO., ATLANTA, GA.