STRONG AND STEADY

By HORATIO ALGER, JR.

CHAPTER XVII.—(Continued.)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Good-morning," said Walter.

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

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

"Well, what have you got to sell?"

"A subscription book, finely illustrated."

"Let me look at it."

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

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

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

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

"The price is three dollars and a half."

"It's rather high."

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

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

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

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

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

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

CHAPTER XVIII.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Is that you, Jack?"

"No," answered Walter, "it isn't Jack."

His voice was probably recognized as that of a boy, and any apprehension that might have been felt by the person within was dissipated. Walter heard a bolt withdrawn, and the door opening, revealed a tall, gaunt, bony woman, who eyed him in a manner which could not be considered very friendly or cordial.

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

"I am a book agent," said Walter.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Humph!" responded the woman.

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

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

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

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

"You can if you want to," said the hostess.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(To be continued.)

A Fabulously Rich Nation.

The United States is a fabulously rich nation. The money in circulation amounts to $3,250,000,000 and that in the Federal treasury to $345,246,508. The value of domestic merchandise exported is $1,853,718,000, and that of all manufactures $14,802,147,000. The farm wealth of the country produced in 1907 is in round figures $7,412,000,000; the added mineral wealth for the year is $3,000,000,000. It has been pointed out with truth during the October "panic" that the national prosperity is not based on Wall street and its workings, but more deeply, on the country's vast agricultural production. If this is the case—and it surely is—an inventory of the various crops reveals figures to comfort and cheer. That he who reads may learn, the values of the various farming industries are presented herewith: Wheat, $500,000,000; cotton, $675,000,000; corn, $1,370,000,000; hay, $670,000,000; poultry and eggs $900,000,000; dairy products, $173,765,000; live stock, $4,875,000,000. The sum representing our commerce with foreign nations in 1907 has more than trebled in the past three decades, and that year was the third running in which both exports and imports have totaled more than a billion of dollars. This statement of our national assets, this inventory of the fundamental prosperity of our country and its constituent States relieves all carping care, all need for financial worriment. It is something more than encouraging—it is inspiring.

The Retort Courteous.

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

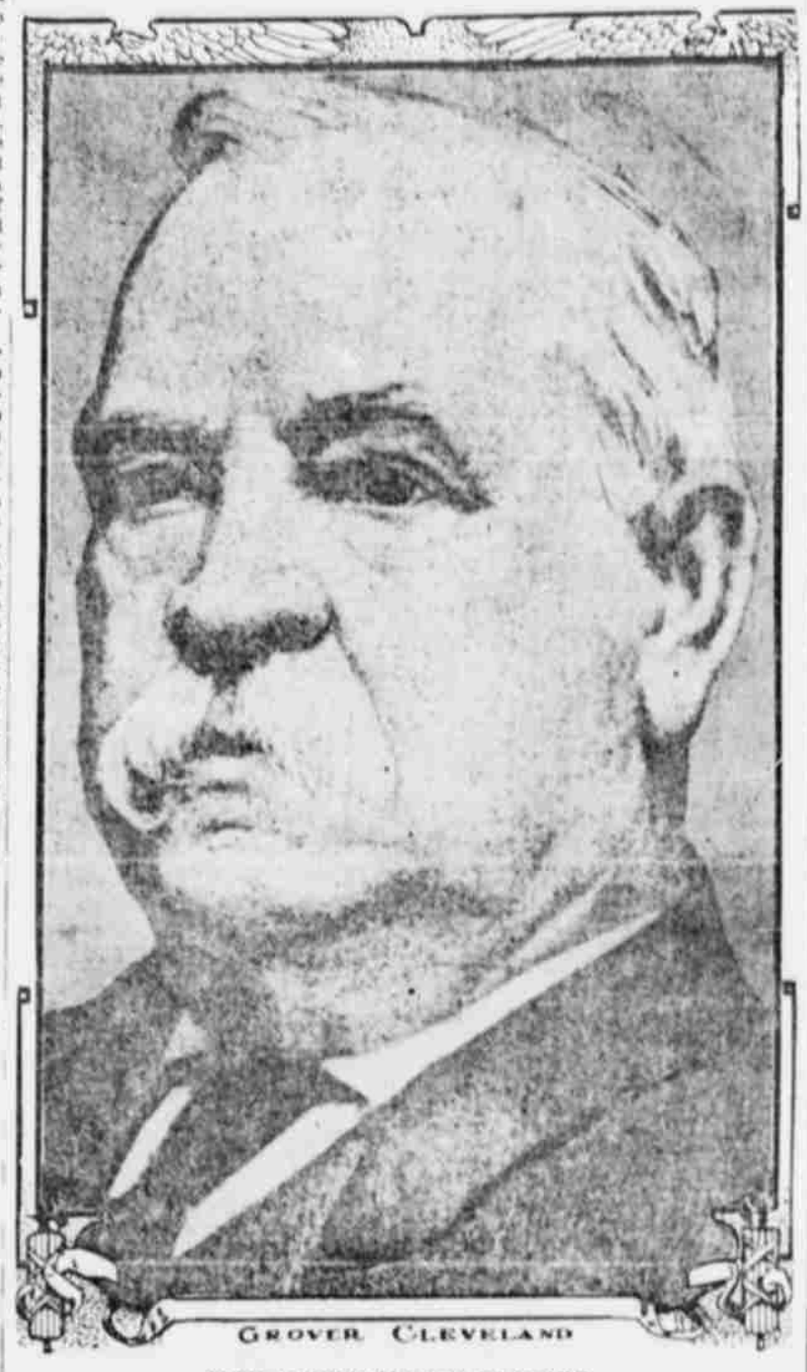
A patronizing young woman of Cincinnati was being shown through the institution, when she came upon a fine looking Indian girl of perhaps 16 years of age. The Indian girl was hemming napkins, which the girl from Cincinnati watched for some moments in silence. Then she said to the Indian "Are you civilized?"

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

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

EX-PRESIDENT CLEVELAND

Born: Caldwell, New Jersey, March 18, 1837.
Died: Princeton, New Jersey, June 24, 1908.



GROVER CLEVELAND

CLEVELAND'S CAREER IN SHORT.

Born at Caldwell, Essex County, N. J., March 18, 1837. Christened Stephen Grover Cleveland.

In 1841 family moved to Fayetteville, N. Y.

Served as clerk in a country store.

In 1853 was appointed assistant teacher of the New York institution for the blind.

For four years, from 1855, assisted his uncle in preparation of "American Herd Book," and had a clerkship in a law firm in Buffalo.

Admitted to the bar in 1859.

Appointed Assistant District Attorney of Erie County Jan. 1, 1863.

Defeated for the District Attorneyship of Erie County in 1865.

Practiced law.

Elected Sheriff of Erie County in 1870.

Elected Mayor of Buffalo in 1881.

Elected Governor of New York in 1882 by a plurality of 200,000.

Elected President of the United States in 1884. Majority in the electoral college, 37.

Broke all records by vetoing 115 out of 987 bills.

Married Frances Folsom in the White House June 2, 1886.

Defeated in campaign for re-election in 1888.

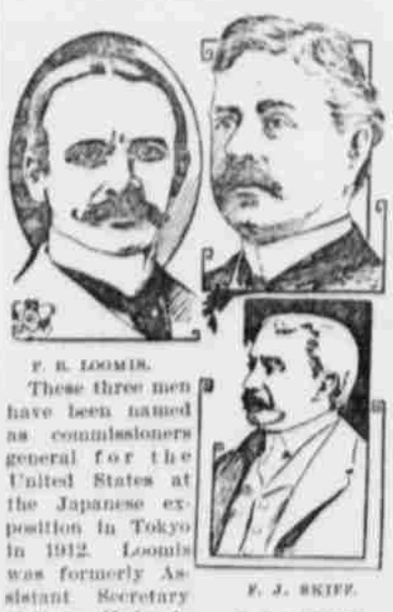
Engaged in the practice of law in New York.

Elected President of the United States in 1892.

Settled Venezuela boundary dispute in 1895.

After leaving White House in 1897 established home for his family in Princeton, N. J.

NICE JOBS FOR THESE.



F. B. LOOMIS. F. J. SKIFF. F. D. MILLET.

These three men have been named as commissioners general for the United States at the Japanese exposition in Tokyo in 1912. Loomis was formerly Assistant Secretary of State. He heads the commission and will receive $8,000 a year for five years, beginning with 1909. He is very highly esteemed by President Roosevelt. Skiff was prominently connected with the World's Fair in 1904 and is now director of the Field museum in Chicago. Millet is the well-known American artist. Skiff and Millet will receive $2,000 a year each for 1909 and $5,000 a year for the next four years. The duty of the commissioners is to recommend to President Roosevelt and Congress the cost and character of the United States building and exhibits at the exposition, and later to take charge of the selection and placing of exhibits.

Natural Toothbrushes.

Natives of Somaliland have the whitest and best teeth of any people in the world, and the reason is not far to seek. Whenever they are idle they may be found rubbing their teeth with small pieces of wood—little twigs which are covered with a soft bark and which ravels out into bristles. This practice prevents the teeth decaying and of course keeps them in excellent condition. Just as one might pick a wild flower in the country, so the Somali native picks his toothbrush. They are never without their small twigs. Toothbrushes as we know them are unknown in Somaliland. Their own methods are undoubtedly the healthiest and certainly the cheapest, and it is a matter for wonder that we do not take a leaf out of their book in this respect.—Dundee Advertiser.

Not Guilty.

It is not always a guilty conscience that is taken by surprise, for sometimes the most innocent of men will start at a suspicious word. The following incident, which occurred in a hardware shop, is illuminating:

An elderly lady, dressed severely in gray, and carrying what looked very much like a bundle of tracts, approached the counter.

A clerk hastened to serve her.

"What can I do for you, madam?"

She leaned toward him.

"Have you—er—any little vises?" she inquired.

When the children of a family are named "Arabella," "Gwendolin," "Rupert," etc., it is a good sign the mother's favorite reading is not the Bible.

EUGENE V. DEBS.

The Nominee of the National Socialist Party for President.

For the second time Eugene V. Debs is the nominee of the National Socialist party for the Presidency. In 1904 he headed that party's ticket and made an agressive campaign. He received a total of 402,536 votes, the largest vote in any State being 69,225 in Illinois. Had the Socialists been united, the result would have been even more flattering, for there was still another Socialist candidate in the field, Charles Hunter Corregan, the nominee of the Socialist Labor party.

Eugene V. Debs was born in Terre Haute, Ind., and began work as a lo-

EUGENE V. DEBS.

comotive fireman. He next entered commercial pursuits, branching out into politics and being elected city clerk of Terre Haute and then member of the State Legislature. He came into national prominence during the great railroad strike, which had Chicago as a center and in which he bore a leading part. He was secretary of the Board of Locomotive Firemen and president of the American Railway Union and served six months in jail for violating a Federal injunction during the conduct of the strike. Since then he has been conspicuous in the Socialist movement and enjoys a wide reputation as an orator. He is also an editor and thus from platform and sanctum teaches Socialist doctrine.

FRENCH MILITARY ATHLETE.

FRENCH ARMY'S STRONG MAN.

The French army has many strong men. Muscle is cultivated sometimes at the expense of other things, but the fact remains that frequently this Parthenon-like attainment comes in pretty handy. The French army in Morocco was kept busy between times at sports and games. One of the diversions of the soldiers was lifting heavy weights and some of them became able to do astonishing feats, one of which, taken from a photograph, is here shown. The cannon and equipment weigh many hundred pounds, but the soldier picked it up and carried it easily.

According to Hoyle.

Rev. Joseph Gravely (giving his views of the evils of card playing during a pastoral call)—As I was saying, I am in doubt—

Parrot (interrupting eagerly)—When you are in doubt play trumps.

And no member of that family has been able to account for the parrot's utterance to the satisfaction of the pastor.—London Punch.

A Hard One.

Tommy—Say, mamma?

Mamma—Well, what is it, Tommy?

Tommy—How does a deaf and dumb boy say his prayers when he happens to have a sore finger?—Kansas City Independent.

The Main Thing.

"She has the face of a seraph!" declared the enthusiastic friend.

"That's all right," said the practical manager, "but has she the backing of an angel?"—Baltimore American.

Stand up for your rights. People may not like it at first, but they will soon learn to keep out of your way.

Lucky is the man who isn't sold when women go to market.