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STRONG AND STEADY

By HORATIO ALGER, JR.

CHAPTER I.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"So are you."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Yes, and a regular little beauty."

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

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

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

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

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

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

"I don't think that would alter the case with me. A gift is a gift, no matter about its value."

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

"Good-night, Lem."

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

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

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

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

"Did your father speak of being unwell?"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"That looks rather discouraging, to be sure," thought Walter. "I suppose father will lose a good deal. But I'll tell him he needn't worry about me. I shan't mind being poor, even if it comes to that. As long as he is left to me, I won't complain."

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

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

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

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

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

CHAPTER II.

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

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

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

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

"What did the doctor say?"

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

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

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

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

"William Conrad, Esq.:

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

"ANDREW HOLMES."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(To be continued.)

Ultra-Fashionable.

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

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

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

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

Changed.

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

"No; she has developed a terrible temper."

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

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

OREGON STATE ITEMS OF INTEREST

OREGON WOOL GOOD.

Secretary Smythe Praises Compulsory Dipping Law.

Portland.—Secretary Dan P. Smythe, of the Oregon Woolgrowers association, passed through Portland recently on his way to Salem, where he represents the third district of Oregon at the annual meeting of the state sheep commission. Mr. Smythe says the wool clip this year is as large as usual, and that the wool is of exceptionally fine quality.

At this session of the sheep commission the eastern Oregon men intend to take some radical action to prevent further encroachments of Washington sheepmen in the Wenaha forest reserve.

Mr. Smythe, who is extensively engaged in sheepraising himself, is emphatic in praise of the compulsory dipping law passed at the last session of the legislature. He says Oregon sheep are now practically free from disease of every kind, and the wool is of a much higher grade than in former years.

The administrtion at Washington has favored the woolgrowers in the Evergreen State, to the detriment of Oregon stockmen. Just what action will be taken Mr. Smythe was not prepared to say, but he thinks the commission will make recommendations that the forestry department at the national capital will not dare to overlook.

LEASE BIG TRACT.

Sheepmen Gobble 100,000 Acres as Overflow to Forest Reserve.

Pendleton.—One hundred thousand acres of fine range land has just been leased in Baker county by Morrow, Gilliam and Umatilla county sheepmen as an overflow range from their forest reserve allotments. The land is logged-off timber land, and lies in a strip 50 miles in length between Austin and Pleasant valley, in Baker county, and belongs to the numerous lumber companies of that district. It was leased for five years by Dan P. Smythe, of this city, and A. K. and A. Smythe, of Arlington, William Smith, of Arlington, and A. C. Whittier, of Baker county. The sum of $8,000 was paid for use of the tract for five years. Over 50,000 head of sheep will be held in the territory during a portion of the summer. It is well watered and contains fine grass.

Halt in Timber Land Buying.

Klamath Falls.—J. W. Alexander, of the Weyerhaeuser Lumber company, is in this city on business for his company. He states that he is not here to buy timber, but that he expects to buy when special inducements are offered. There is but little movement in timber in this section, and none is expected until after the presidential election. While the price of farming lands in this section has increased in the past six months, timber land has decreased from $1.50 a thousand to 75 cents and $1. However, those holding claims are not worrying over conditions, as they feel sure the slump in timber is but temporary.

Whipping Up on Tule Contract.

Klamath Falls.—It is stated here that Chief Engineer Hood has given imperative orders that the dredging on the marsh for the railroad grade must be rushed or the contract will be forfeited. The contract consists of a grade four miles along across swamp land, now rank with tules, and the agreement now is that crews must be worked day and night in order to throw up the grade at the earliest possible date in order to allow it to settle and dry before the track is laid.

Open Reserves June 1.

Pendleton.—Sheepmen of Umatilla county have received notice that sheep may be taken upon the Wenaha forest reserve June 1, instead of June 15, the date originally set. For some time sheepmen have been asking for the use of the reserves on the Blue mountains earlier than usual, because of the dry weather prevailing this spring. Dan P. Smythe, secretary of the sheepmen's association, has received notice from Supervisor Schmitz that admission would be granted June 1.

Will Exhibit at State Fair.

Oregon City.—The board of directors of the Clackamas County Fair association has authorized the executive committee to make a county exhibit at the state fair, which will follow the Clackamas county fair. The board appropriated $50 for premiums for juvenile exhibits, and reappointed Thomas F. Ryan, George Lazelle and T. J. Gary as a committee to direct the affairs of the association.

Bumper Crop Promised.

Arlington.—Heavy rains throughout this section of Oregon a few days ago have added many thousands of dollars to the wealth of Gilliam and adjoining counties. The weather is warm and the farmers happy. Every one predicts a prosperous year for this part of the state.

Hatchery Superintendent.

Oregon City.—W. H. Smith, of Parkplace, has been appointed superintendent of the state fish hatcheries at Wallowa and Ontario.

CHEAP FUEL IN SIGHT.

If Choppers Can't Sell to Trust They Will to Consumers.

Pendleton.—After futile efforts to sell their wood to Pendleton and Walla Walla woodyards, ten woodchoppers of Kamela have pooled their output and have placed an agent in this city and will sell direct to the consumer. They have 5,000 cords in the pool and will fill this territory with cheap wood, they declare. The woodyards have large supplies on hand owing to the fact that the mild weather of the past winter restricted the sale, and have refused to buy the Camela pool, which is now being marketed here. Already several cars have been ordered from the pool and it promises to demoralize the wood market in the inland empire.

Keep Salmon Out of Alfalfa.

Pendleton.—Thousands of salmon fry from six to eight inches in length are now running out into the canal of the Irrigon irrigation project and many of them are being stranded on the bars, where they are perishing. Deputy Game and Fish Warden O. F. Turner will take immediate steps to have proper fish screens placed at the dam to prevent this destruction of the young fish. The dam of the Irrigon project is in the Umatilla River two miles east of the town of Umatilla. Thousands of fine salmon fry are now to be found in the river and every effort will be made to prevent them from running into the irrigation canals. Other canals on the river are properly protected with screens and ladders.

Wells-Fargo to Build.

Eugene.—The Wells-Fargo Express Company has begun the erection of a fine brick building on the Southern Pacific depot grounds in which to handle its business in this city. The architecture of the new building will be in keeping with that of the new passenger depot, now in course of construction and to be completed before July 1. The Wells-Fargo building will be of brick and stone and will cost $4,000 to $5,000. It is probable the downtown office of the company will be done away with when the new building is finished, as the location is convenient to the business section of the city.

Pays Large Inheritance Tax.

Salem.—The second largest inheritance tax ever paid into the state treasury was received recently. It was the tax on the estate of Amanda Reed, of Multnomah county, appraised at a valuation of $1,385,919.89. The tax was $7,141.40. The largest tax paid was on the estate of Henry Weinhard, which amounted to $15,248.54. The appraised value of the Weinhard estate was but $1,381,967.22, but was left in a lump sum, while the Reed estate was divided among a large number of beneficiaries.

Auto to Carry Tourists.

Klamath Falls.—Captain J. M. McIntyre, of the McIntyre Transportation company, has purchased an 11-passenger automobile, and will put it on the line between Dorris and this city. A crew of men is now working on the road between Dorris and Keno, getting it in shape for automobile service, and it is expected that the run can be made in two hours from end of rail to this city.

PORTLAND MARKETS.

Apples—Select, $2.50 per box; fancy, $2; choice, $1.50; ordinary, $1.25.

Potatoes—Select, 70c per hundred; Willamette Valley, 45c per hundred; East Multnomah, 55c; Clackamas, 55c per hundred; sweet, 5½c per pound.

Fruits — Strawberries, California, $1.50@1.85 per crate; Oregon, 10@12½c per pound.

Vegetables—Turnips, $1 per sack; carrots, $1.50@1.75; beets, $1.25; parsnips, $1.25; beans, wax, 12½@13½c per pound; head lettuce, 35c per dozen; artichokes, 50c per dozen; asparagus, 7@8c per pound; egg plant, 25@30c per pound; parsley, 25c per dozen; peas, 6@7c per pound; peppers, 20c per pound; radishes, 15c per dozen; rhubarb, 2@3c per pound; spinach, 85c per crate.

Wheat—Club, 89c per bushel; red Russian, 86½c; bluestem, 91c; valley, 89c.

Barley—Feed, $25 per ton; rolled, $27@28; brewing, $26.

Oats—No. 1 white, $27.50 per ton; gray, $27.

Hay—Timothy, Willamette Valley, $17 per ton; Willamette Valley, ordinary, $15; Eastern Oregon, $18.50; mixed, $16; clover, $14; alfalfa, $12; alfalfa meal, $20.

Dressed Meats—Hogs, fancy, 8½c per pound; ordinary, 7@7¼c; large, 6c; veal, extra, 7½c; ordinary, 7c; heavy, 6c; mutton, fancy, 10c.

Butter—Extras, 24c per pound; fancy, 23c; choice, 20c; store, 16c.

Poultry—Mixed chickens, 13@14c per pound; fancy hens, 14½@15c; roosters, old, 9c; fryers, dozen, $4; broilers, dozen, $4.50@5; dressed poultry, per pound, 1c higher; ducks 16@17c; geese, 8@9c; turkeys, alive, 17@18c; dressed, 19@20c.

Hops—1907, prime and choice, 5@6½c per pound; old, 1½@2c per pound.

Wool—Eastern Oregon, average best, 11@15c per pound, according to shrinkage; valley, 10@12½c.

Mohair—Choice, 18@18½c per pound.

MARK PACKAGES IN FULL.

Railroads Put Additional Burdens on Small Shippers.

Chicago, May 26.—Besides determining to increase freight rates 10 per cent, the railroads in the "official classification" territory have agreed to add considerably to the burdens of the shippers of package freight. At the same meeting at which the rate increases were decided upon, the representatives of more than 400 railroads agreed that after July 1 they will not receive for shipment any packages in less than carload lots which are not marked plainly with the name of the consignee, the station and state of consignee, the station, city and state of destination.

It is estimated that this action will save the railroads in the territory east of the Mississippi River and north of the Ohio River to the seaboard, at least $2,000,000 annually in loss and damage claims. On the other hand, it will cost the shippers of package freight probably as much, or even more, to perform the actual work required in marking the shipments as prescribed by the railroads. It is also stated by the shippers that it will make impossible any secrecy regarding the identity of the customers of any business house.

On the contrary, any business house may, after the new rules go into effect, station men at railroad warehouses and learn in detail all about the shipments of competitors, to whom shipped and in what amounts. That this will have a tremendous effect upon this class of business is confidently asserted.

It has been the custom of the shippers to mark their packages with an initial or some hieroglyphic, the key to which is to be found on the bill of lading. It was the theory that this would save the time and labor of the shipper and throw a certain amount of secrecy around the conduct of his business.

WHOLE STATE STORM SWEPT

Texas Suffers Untold Damage From Wind and Rain.

Austin, Texas, May 26.—A terrific wind and rain storm swept Texas from the Panhandle to the Gulf early Sunday. The destruction to crops and vegetables, trees and shrubbery was the greatest reported in years.

In numerous places houses were unroofed and small villages and hamlets in many instances were inundated by the terrific rainfall which, in the space of four hours, reached seven inches in many sections. Austin was in the path of the worst of the storm, and for hours the streets were impassable for either man or beast, electric light and telephone connections were disabled beyond immediate repair and many houses were unroofed.

The agricultural sections of Central and Southern Texas have been immeasurably damaged, according to general reports received here, badly demoralized wire service occasioning slow and unsatisfactory reports from many sections that are known to have suffered from the storm.

OKLAHOMA TIED COMPLETELY

Muskogee Is in Sorry Plight Without Heat or Light.

Muskogee, Okla., May 26.—Not a railroad in Oklahoma is in operation, as a result of the heavy rains and cloudbursts that have occurred in various parts of the state during the past three days. The last road to suspend operations was the Missouri-Kansas & Texas, which was forced to quit at noon Sunday, when the bridge on the main line at Eufala went down.

To add to the disaster, the main supplying natural gas to the Indian Territory part of the state was carried away with the Clarksville bridge late Sunday, and the supply of gas for Muskogee and several other cities in the southeast part of the state has been entirely cut off. Officials of the gas company say it will be a week before repairs can be made so that the gas supply can again be carried. As natural gas is used for light and heat, business will be suspended. Elevators have been forced to stop running, and hotels and restaurants have practically been put out of business.

Vehicle Falls Down Mountain.

San Jose, Cal., May 26.—Twenty-one students, half the graduating class of the Santa Clara High School, were carried 200 feet down a mountain side when a carry-all toppled from the Mount Hamilton road at midnight Saturday night. The vehicle broke up when it started in its descent and most of the young people slid in safety down the mountain side in the cover of the vehicle. News of the accident reached this city early Sunday and a physician and nurses were dispatched to the scene in an automobile.

Sentence Four to Death.

St. Petersburg, May 26.—The court-martial of eleven revolutionists, including four women, which began a few days ago, has resulted in the sentencing of four of the accused to death and six to periods of servitude. One was acquitted.

PRIETOR.