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STRONG AND STEADY

By HORATIO ALGER, JR.

CHAPTER XV.—(Continued.)

The boy, who had made sure of a sale, took back the fruit reluctantly, and passed on, crying out: "Here's your oranges and apples!"

Walter set about thinking what had become of his money. The more he thought, the more certain he felt that he had put his pocketbook in the pocket in which he had first felt for it. Why was it not there now? That was a question which he felt utterly incompetent to answer.

"Have you lost anything?" inquired a gentleman who sat just behind Walter. Looking back, he found that it was a gentleman of fifty who addressed him.

"Yes, sir," he said, "I have lost my pocketbook."

"Was there much money in it?"

"About forty dollars, sir."

"Who was that young man who was sitting with you a few minutes since?"

"I don't know, sir."

"He was a stranger, then?"

"Yes, sir; I never met him till this morning."

"Then I think I can tell you where your money has gone," said the gentleman who sat just behind Walter, beginning to understand him.

"I think your late companion was a pickpocket, and relieved you of it, while he pretended to be reading. I didn't like his appearance much."

"I don't see how he could have done it without my feeling his hand in my pocket."

"They understand their business and can easily relieve one of his purse undetected. I once had my watch stolen without being conscious of it. Your pocketbook was in the pocket toward the man, and you were looking from the window. It was a very simple thing to relieve you of it."

CHAPTER XVI.

Walter went through two cars, looking about him on either side, thinking it possible that the thief might have taken his seat in one of them. There was very little chance of this, however. Next he passed into the smoking car, where, to his joy no less than his surprise, he found the man of whom he was in search playing cards with three other passengers.

He looked up carefully as Walter approached, but did not betray the slightest confusion or sign of guilt. To let the reader into a secret, he had actually taken Walter's pocketbook, but was too cunning to keep it about him. He had taken out the money, and thrown the pocketbook itself from the car platform, taking an opportunity when he thought himself unobserved. As the money consisted of bills, which could not be identified as Walter's, he felt that he was in no danger of detection. He thought that he could afford to be indifferent.

"Did you get tired of waiting?" he asked, addressing our hero.

"May I speak to you a moment?" asked Walter.

"Certainly."

"Then, gentlemen, I must beg to be excused for five minutes," said the pickpocket, addressing his shoulders, as if to express good-natured annoyance. "Now, my young friend, I am at your service."

Walter proceeded to the other end of the car, which chanced to be unoccupied. Now that the moment had come, he hardly knew how to introduce the subject. Suppose that the person he addressed were innocent, it would be rather an awkward matter to charge him with the theft.

"Did you see anything of my pocketbook?" he said, at length.

"Your pocketbook?" returned the pickpocket, arching his brows. "Why, have you lost it?"

"Yes."

"When did you discover its loss?"

"Shortly after you left me," said Walter, significantly.

"I'm very sorry indeed. I did not see it. Have you searched on the floor?"

"Yes; but it isn't there."

"That's awkward. Was your ticket in the pocketbook?"

"No, I had that in my vest pocket."

"That's fortunate. On my honor, I'm sorry for you. I haven't much money with me, but I'll lend you a dollar or two with the greatest of pleasure."

This offer quite bewildered Walter. He felt confident that the other had stolen his money, and now here he was offering to lend him some of it. He did not care to make such a compromise, or to be bought off so cheap; so, though quite penitent, he determined to reject the offer.

"I won't borrow," he said, coldly. "I was hoping you had seen my money."

The pickpocket turned and went back to his game, and Walter slowly left the car. He had intended to ask him point blank whether he had taken the money, but couldn't summon the necessary courage. He went back to his old seat.

"Well," said the old gentleman who sat behind him, "I suppose you did not find your man?"

"Yes, I did."

"You didn't get your money?" he added, in surprise.

"No, he was perfectly cool. Still, I think he took it. He offered to lend me a dollar or two. What would you advise me to do?"

"Speak to the conductor."

Just at that moment the conductor entered the car. As he came up the aisle, Walter stopped him, and explained his loss, and the suspicion he had formed.

"You say the man is in the smoking car?" said the conductor, who had listened attentively. "Could you point him out?"

"Yes."

"I am glad of it. I have received warning by telegraph that one of the New York swell-mob is on the train, probably intent on mischief, but no description came with it, and I had no clue to the person. I have no doubt that the man you speak of is the party. If so, he is familiarly known as 'Slippery Dick.'"

"Do you think you can get back my money?" asked Walter, anxiously.

"I think there is a chance of it. Come with me and point out your man."

Walter gladly accompanied the conductor to the smoking car. His old acquaintance was busily engaged as before in a game, and laughing heartily at some favorable turn.

"There he is," said Walter, indicating him with his finger.

The conductor walked up to him and tapped him on the shoulder.

"What's wanted?" he asked, looking up.

"You've looked at my ticket."

"I wish to speak to you a moment."

He rose without making any opposition, and walked to the other end of the car.

"Well," he said, and there was a slight nervousness in his tone, "what's the matter? Wasn't my ticket all right?"

"No trouble about that. The thing is, will you restore this boy's pocketbook?"

"Sir," said the pickpocket, blustering, "do you mean to insult me? What have I to do with his pocketbook?"

"You sat beside him, and he missed it directly after you left him."

"What is that to me? You may search me if you like. You will find only one pocketbook upon me, and that is my own."

"I am aware of that," said the conductor, coolly. "I saw you take the money out and throw it from the car platform."

"You are mistaken in the person," he said.

"No, I am not. I advise you to restore the money forthwith."

Without a word the thief, finding himself cornered, took from his pocket a roll of bills, which he handed to Walter.

"Is that right?" asked the conductor.

"Yes," said our hero, after counting his money.

"So far, so good. And now, Slippery Dick," he continued, turning to the thief, "I advise you to leave the car at the next station or I will have you arrested. Take your choice."

The detected rogue was not long in making his choice. Already the cars had slackened their speed, and a short distance ahead appeared a small station. The place seemed to be of very little importance. One man, however, appeared to have business there. Walter saw his quondam acquaintance jump on the platform, and congratulated himself that his only loss was a pocketbook whose value did not exceed one dollar.

The conductor on seeing the pocketbook thrown away had thought nothing of it, supposing it to be an old one, but as soon as he heard of the robbery suspected at once the thief and his motive.

CHAPTER XVII.

Walter stopped long enough at Buffalo to visit Niagara Falls, as he had intended. Though he enjoyed the visit, and found the famous cataract fully up to his expectations, no incident occurred during the visit which deserves to be chronicled here. He resumed his journey, and arrived in due time at Cleveland.

He had no difficulty in finding the office of Mr. Greene, the agent of Messrs. Flint & Pusher. He found that this gentleman, besides his agency, had a book and stationery business of his own.

"I don't get out myself," he said to Walter; "but I keep a supply of Flint's books on hand, and forward them to his agents as called for. Have you done much in the business?"

"No, sir; I am only a beginner. I have done nothing yet."

"I thought not. You look too young."

"Mr. Pusher told me I had better be guided by your advice."

"You had better go fifty miles off at least. The immediate neighborhood has been pretty well canvassed. There's Earle, now, a flourishing and wealthy town. Suppose you go there first?"

"I'll go this afternoon."

"You are prompt."

Walter arrived in Earle in time for supper. He went to a small public house, where he found that he could board for a dollar and a half a day, or seven dollars by the week. He suggested a week's board, reflecting that he could probably work to advantage a week in so large a place, or, if not, that five days at the daily rate would amount to more than the weekly terms.

He did not at first propose to do anything that evening, until it occurred to him that he might perhaps dispose of a copy of his book to the landlord in part payment for his board. He went into the public room after supper.

"Are you traveling alone?" asked the landlord, who had his share of curiosity.

"Yes," said Walter. "I am a book agent."

"Meeting with pretty good success?"

"I'm just beginning," said Walter, smiling. "If you'll be my first customer, I'll stop with you a week."

"What kind of a book have you got?"

Walter showed it. It was got up in the usual style of subscription books, with abundance of illustrations.

"It's one of the best books we ever sent out," said Walter, in a professional way. "Just look at the number of pictures. If you've got any children, they'll like it; and, if you haven't, it will be just the book for your center table."

"I see you know how to talk," said the landlord, smiling. "What is the price?"

"Three dollars and a half."

"That's considerable."

"But you know I'm going to take it out in board."

"Well, that's a consideration, to be sure. A man doesn't feel it so much as if he took the money out of his pocket and paid cash down. What do you say, Mrs. Burton?" addressing his wife, who just then entered the room. "This young man wants to stay here a week, and pay partly in a book he is agent for. Shall I agree?"

"Let me see the book," said Mrs. Burton, who was a comely, pleasant-looking woman of middle age. "What's the name of it?"

"Scenes in Bible Lands," said Walter.

He opened it, taking care to display and point out the pictures. So Walter made the first sale, on which he realized a profit of one dollar and a quarter.

"It's a pretty easy way to earn money," he reflected, with satisfaction. "If I can only sell copies enough. One copy sold will pay for a day's board."

He went to bed early, and enjoyed a sound and refreshing sleep. He was cheered with hopes of success on the morrow. If he could sell four copies a day, that would give him a profit of five dollars, and five dollars would leave him a handsome profit after paying expenses.

The next morning after breakfast he started out, carrying with him three books. Knowing nothing of the residents of the village, he could only judge by the outward appearance of their houses. Seeing a large and handsome house standing back from the street, he decided to call.

"The people living here must be rich," he thought. "They won't mind paying three dollars and a half for a nice book."

Accordingly he walked up the gravelled path and rang the front door bell. The door was opened by a housemaid.

"Is the lady of the house at home?" asked Walter.

"Do you want to see her?"

"Yes."

"Then wait here, and I'll tell her."

A tall woman, with a thin face and a pinched expression, presented herself after five minutes.

"Well, young man," she asked, after a sharp glance, "what is your business?"

Her expression was not very encouraging, but Walter was bound not to lose an opportunity.

"I should like to show you a new book, madam," he commenced, "a book of great value, beautifully illustrated, which is selling like wildfire."

"How many copies have you sold?" inquired the lady, sharply.

"One," answered Walter, rather confused.

"Do you call that selling like wildfire?" she demanded, with sarcasm.

"I only commenced last evening," said Walter, "I referred to the sales of other agents."

NEWS OF THE WEEK

In a Condensed Form for Our Busy Readers.

HAPPENINGS OF TWO CONTINENTS

A Resume of the Less Important but Not Less Interesting Events of the Past Week.

The battleship fleet has left Honolulu.

President Fallieres, of France, is visiting in Denmark.

The British house of lords has passed an old age pension.

At a meeting of Atlanta Baptist Ministers' association, one member praised John D. Rockefeller.

The Chicago board of health has started an active campaign to reduce the high death rate among babies.

The Clyde liner Chippewa, which went on the rocks between Boston and Charleston three weeks ago, is a total wreck.

An automobile stage running from Bellingham, Wash., to Lynden went over an embankment and 15 passengers were injured.

Admiral Rojestvensky, the Russian officer defeated by Admiral Togo in the Russo-Japan war, is dead, as a direct result of his wounds.

A steam pipe on the battleship Kearsarge burst and scalded five men. Cigarettes have been barred from one of the largest Nevada mines.

In a dispute between Canadian Pacific shop employees and the company a board of conciliation granted the men almost every point contended for.

Gompers and Morrison, leaders of the American Federation of Labor, have been cited to appear in court for disobeying the injunction regarding a boycott against the Buck Stove company.

Persian troops are said to have put down the revolution and retaken Tabriz.

A Buffalo woman poisoned her three children and attempted to poison herself.

Count Tolsti has written a lengthy article denouncing the Russian reign of terror.

The naval tug Iroquois has gone ashore near the entrance to Pearl harbor, Hawaiian islands.

An automobile met a train near Columbia City, Ind., and all six occupants of the auto are dead.

The recent inundations in the vicinity of Tokat, Asia Minor, cost 2,000 lives. Untold damage was done to property.

A Chicago girl has just been saved from drowning by a man who years ago was rescued from the water by this same girl.

The matron of a West Oakland children's home is in trouble because she whipped two little girls with a buggy whip.

The Pennsylvania railroad will expose all employees who are delinquent in their duties in the hope that it will cause greater care among the men and save accidents.

Whitney L. Boise, a prominent man of Portland, has been arrested for embezzlement. It is charged that he has made away with at least \$150,000 belonging to the Hawthorne estate.

Peary has started on another attempt to reach the north pole.

The Russian budget shows a deficit of \$37,500,000 in extraordinary revenues.

A spectator at a Chicago ball game fell and broke his neck when a home run was made.

Frank Zotti, head of a wrecked New York bank, has been arrested on a charge of grand larceny.

Eastern railroads have been allowed to exchange passes for advertising pending an appeal to the federal court.

Eastern railroads have decided against a general advance in rates. Advances will be made in the South-east and Southwest.

Humbert Rivas, son of the general commanding the Salvadoran army against the revolutionists, has been denied admission to the United States.

During the three months ending March 31 there were 728 persons killed on the railroads of the United States. This is a great reduction over the previous three months.

The men of the battleship fleet are having a royal time in Honolulu.

At the conventions in Denver an agreement was reached between the Western Federation of Miners and the United Mine Workers of America whereby the two organizations will work in harmony in the future.

Count Boni has begun suit for the custody of his children.

Wholesale exposures of grafting in Portugal have been made.

The battleship fleet has arrived at Honolulu, and were given an enthusiastic welcome.

FRUIT FOR FLEET.

Honolulu Donates Liberally to Officers and Men of Battleships.

Honolulu, July 21.—A feature of the entertainment of the fleet Sunday was the presentation of hundreds of tons of fruit and delicacies of all kinds to the various battleships. The great store of good things was loaded on a lighter which was towed to each of the twelve ships in turn, the Hawaiian band being aboard also, and playing native and American airs as the distribution proceeded.

A generous supply of ice fruit and plenty of reading matter was sent to the island, where 850 men of the Nebraska are in quarantine, the entertainment committee being determined not to forget any one.

Sunday has been a quiet day with the men of the Atlantic battleship fleet. Outside of the star games, which took place at the league ground, and which hundreds of sailors attended, there was little in the way of formal entertainment except excursions to Pearl harbor, many of the men taking advantage of the opportunity to inspect the site of the navy station that is being planned.

The officers were privately entertained at many residences, and there was hardy one of the cool porches along the streets of the residence district that did not offer retreat to the white-clad visitors. The men, too, sought amusement in many parts of the city and the street of the downtown section, as well as the tree-shaded roads and lanes further out where poplars throughout the day with groups of strolling seamen. On every hand they were welcomed by the citizen and found hospitable entertainments wherever they sought it.

Out on the ships, hundreds of visitors were made welcome, and every yacht and private launch in the bay was pressed into service to carry parties of pleasure-seekers in and out among the anchored warships.

MEXICO FOR MEXICANS.

Sentiment Against Foreigners Is Rapidly Gaining Ground.

Mexico City, July 21.—The anti-foreign feeling in Mexico is assuming large proportions, and a bitter controversy over the question is being waged between the foreign and native press. La Patria printed an article in which it proclaimed the time ripe for a policy whose slogan shall be, "Mexico for the Mexicans. Most of the tirade is directed against the 'Yankees,' a term of contempt used by Mexican editors in designating Americans.

Among other things La Patria declares that if Americans think the governments of Argentina, Chile or Brazil more enlightened than that of Mexico, they should journey to those parts, the sooner the better.

After referring to the efforts on the part of the foreigners to kill the proposed new mining law restricting corporations in Mexico, the paper says: "We repeat our attitude toward foreigners. We are not boxers, but patriots, and when we take a given decision we take it, not as against foreigners, but for the benefit of Mexico."

LOSE UNDER 3-CENT FARE.

Cleveland Traction Company's Reports Show Big Monthly Deficits.

Cleveland, O., July 21.—Cleveland had nearly three months of 3-cent car fares, and two of the monthly reports have shown a deficit. A similar report is predicted for July. The operating expenses and fixed charges have been from \$40,000 to \$50,000 a month in excess of the earnings. The Municipality Traction company, which is operating the local lines under a lease, also is under promise to give free transfers after July 28. The revenue from transfers has been about \$2,000 a month, a cent each having been charged.

The officials of the company still express their belief that 3-cent fares will pay in time. An important meeting of the directors will be held next Tuesday to consider the inauguration of free transfers and other vital points.

Tied to the Rails.

New York, July 21.—A strange murder case developed yesterday when officials of Hackensack, N. J., examining the body of Mrs. Orelia Eberhard, which was found lying on the railroad track near Colburg, N. J., bound to the rails. A passing train had cut the body in two. Orelia Eberhard, a daughter of the dead woman, it was discovered, was wounded three times by bullets and dragged herself a mile to an isolated farmhouse. The police are hunting for August Eberhard, a nephew of the murdered woman, believing he may know something of the crime.

Floods Destroy Village.

Vienna, July 21.—Floods have washed away the village of Zvezdova, on the Galician estate of Archduke Stephen. Twenty-two people have been drowned.

REBELS ARE GAINING

Shah Has Lost Control of Northern Half of Territory.

RACHIN KHAN NOW A FUGITIVE

Artillery Captured and Reactionary Leaders Seek Asylum With Russian Cossack Guards.

St. Petersburg, July 21.—A dispatch from Tabriz, by courier post to Tulu, affirms that the shah's cause in northern Persia is lost.

The artillery and ammunition which were abandoned by Rachin Khan, who was commander-in-chief of the troops during his flight from Tabriz, passed into the hands of the revolutionists, who are now in full possession of the city. The shah's palace has been turned into the revolutionary headquarters.

The reactionaries, who had taken refuge in the Russian bank and the Russian consul, M. Pochtinnoff, have again retired to the consul's country villa outside the city, which is being guarded by a large detachment of Cossacks. The casualties resulting from the recent bombardment and fighting between the troops and revolutionists were slight.

TEHERAN FEARS AN UPRISING

Success of Insurgents at Tabriz Encourages Revolutionists.

Teheran, July 21.—The successes of the revolutionaries at Tabriz, concerning which news is beginning to reach here, have encouraged the local revolutionary leaders and caused apprehensions of renewed disturbances. Rapid preparations are being made to concentrate the shah's forces, and 500 horsemen of the nomadic tribes of Bakhtiari have arrived on the outskirts of the city. Quarters are being prepared for them in the vicinity of the shah's palace, which is becoming rapidly transformed into a fortress. Guns have been mounted on the walls commanding the city in all directions. A strong party led by Amir Boghroo, which now has the upper hand, has informed the shah that the re-establishment of order awaits his instructions. The reactionaries are actively at work among the populace collecting signatures to petitions asking the shah to abdicate the constitution, and a memoir to the same effect is being prepared for presentation to Great Britain and Russia.

Sultan in Furious Rage.

London, July 21.—A special dispatch from Constantinople to the Daily Telegraph says there is not the slightest doubt that Turkey is suffering the greatest crisis in her internal affairs that it is possible to imagine.

The sultan, continues the correspondent, is furious with his ministers, whom he holds responsible for the situation in Macedonia, and whom he accuses of misleading him as to the true facts of the situation. They have advised him to pardon the officers now awaiting court-martial on the charge of assisting the "Young Turk" agitation, but he obstinately refuses to do this, and declares that he ministers are traitors.

The sultan threatens to remove the officers of the third army corps and crush the Albanians by force.

Appreciates Act of Generosity.

Pekin, July 21.—It was announced here yesterday that the Chinese government has decided to appoint Tang hao Yu, governor of Monken province, as high commissioner to the United States to thank the American government for remitting a part of the boxer indemnity. The government intends to send 100 students to the United States every year for four years, and then 50 a year until the entire amount of the indemnity remitted by the United States has been expended. This is only part of a plan to bring China into closer relations with America.

Find Graft at Molokai.

Honolulu, July 21.—The federal grand jury, which has just completed an investigation of the government work on the leper island of Molokai, which consists in the construction of a big leprosarium or hospital for the patients, has discovered that all the employees engaged in this work are aliens and that they pay 20 per cent of their wages to persons who procure them their situations. The report of the jury urges that American citizens be employed on all federal and public works.

Potter Suffers Relapse.

Cooperstown, N. Y., July 21.—Bishop Henry C. Potter, who has been ill since June 27, at Poughkeepsie, Mrs. Potter's home here, suffered a relapse yesterday, and last night his condition was again grave. Dr. J. E. Janvrin said: "The bishop Sunday passed the most comfortable day during his sickness. Yesterday morning he suffered a relapse, and during the day he has been uneasy and in some ways last night he was resting comfortably, however."