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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 that he could easily hang from the window sill and jump without injury. Before following him in his flight, he would 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 plinking 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 a 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, and 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 tonight. 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 intently, 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 small-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 couch, 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 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 isn't more'n a 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 up his 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 Meg or 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 pulled 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 now stood 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 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.

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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.

Holland seeks to know the American policy in Venezuela.

Hearst's Independent League is said to be short of money.

Thaw's creditors may oust his receiver and name a trustee.

New York sheriff is accused of winking at race track gambling.

President Falliere's daughter has married the private secretary of the president.

President Roosevelt has started an investigation for the improvement of rural life.

Depositors of a defunct San Francisco bank will sue the directors for \$5,250,000.

Holland is to send a second warship for foreign duty and it is assumed Venezuela is the point.

Turkey has recalled her minister to the United States, whose father is a fugitive in that country.

The Canadian Pacific has placed guards at all its shops and denies that it is importing strike breakers.

New Zealand wants her home government to dissolve the Anglo-Japanese alliance and form a union with the United States.

The Wright airship has made a successful flight in France.

English churches are starting an agitation for church union.

The Baldwin airship has been accepted by the government.

Japanese are declining to go to work for the Canadian Pacific as strike breakers.

The battleship fleet has arrived at Auckland, and a warm reception was tendered it.

The Crystal Palace, one of London's famous institutions, will be closed on account of financial troubles.

A hurricane destroyed a factory in Hungary, burying 100 persons. A number were killed or injured.

A Pittsburg doctor has just effected a cure of lockjaw and claims to have discovered the secret of the malady.

In an address at Warsaw, Ind., a preacher advocated tattooing all married women on the chin as a remedy for the divorce evil.

The business world of France is demanding a revision of their tariff laws. They say the loopholes in the present law are too wide.

The first act of violence in the Canadian Pacific strike has been recorded. A policeman on duty was brutally assaulted, but it is not known if strikers did it.

More Turkish ministers have been dismissed and arrested.

A heavy rainstorm at Boston flooded the streets, doing much damage.

A Philadelphia woman provided in her will for the care of her cats and parrots.

Much timber is being destroyed and mining camps threatened by forest fires in Montana.

New Zealand is making extensive preparations for the reception of the battleship fleet.

Roosevelt has assumed all responsibility for the discharge of the negro troops at Brownsville.

London is cleaning house and has just succeeded in convicting 10 municipal officers of grafting.

A San Francisco man lived 48 hours after breaking his neck and was conscious a part of the time.

Thaw has filed a bankruptcy petition, claiming the doctors' fees and cost of his trials have left him without anything.

A man at Victoria, B. C., who had spent six days of a ten-days sentence in jail because he did not have the money to pay the fine is heir to \$100,000.

Pope Pius has just celebrated his fifth anniversary as pope.

A woman balloonist in Wisconsin fell 900 feet and will live.

OPEN NEW LANDS.

Vast Area Available in Western Canada in September.

Ottawa, Canada, Aug. 11.—Next month will see radical changes in the land policy of the Canadian government. The Oliver land act, which goes into effect September 1, will throw open to the public 28,000,000 acres of rich, arable land, in the odd numbered sections of Western Canada that are liberally intersected by a network of railroads, are adjacent to commercial markets and swarming with live, hustling townships, with well established police protection, municipal government, schools, churches and institutions essential for agricultural prosperity.

While the "reuter" and the man with limited loose cash is being given the opportunity of owning his own farm, unlike the procedure heretofore followed in granting free homesteads, he is not asked to forego the advantages in settled districts and to go into the wilderness to fight the hard fights of the pioneer. Instead of this, the new instrument of the Canadian legislature gives the enterprising man free land situated near flourishing towns, offering all the advantages and conveniences of modern life.

In order to encourage railroad building in the Dominion, the government has given to the railroad companies 22,000,000 acres of land during the last few years, and as a further inducement they have been left absolutely unfettered in the choice of locality and the time of selection, but recently were made to select their lands. The companies have taken full advantage of this generous provision and made a constant practice of leaving their grants in abeyance unless, after closely watching the trend of immigration and settlement, they could make up their minds as to what tracts of land would best serve their interests.

Mass meetings were held tonight and addresses given in their native tongue to Hungarians, Germans and Russians. J. H. McVey was asked this afternoon if the other organizations connected with railroad work were likely to go out soon. He replied:

"If they are going out soon I don't know of it. If they went out without notice they would be breaking their ironclad agreements."

The Canadian Pacific Railway company yesterday promoted all firemen who had been serving in the local roundhouse to be wipers. When crops begin to move there will be larger demand for engineers and firemen than at present.

The company's locomotives and rolling stock are at present in excellent condition, the dry summer having caused little wear. Besides 300 Japanese mechanics trained in the railroad shops of the Pacific Coast states and in technical schools are arriving and are being distributed where necessary. Sleeping and dining cars have been drawn up close to the shops to provide accommodations for the non-union workmen, guarded by special constables.

SANTA FE FINED \$7,000.

Found Guilty of Giving Big Rebates Masked as Bonus

Chicago, Aug. 8.—The Atchison, Topoka & Santa Fe railroad, by its counsel, pleaded guilty to rebating today and was assessed a fine of \$7,000 by Judge Betha in the United States District court. The government, represented by District Attorney Edwin W. Sims, proved that a bonus paid by the railroad to the Garden City Sugar & Land company, of Garden City, Kan., was in effect a rebate. The railroad company, through its industrial department, offered the Garden City concern a bonus of \$50,000 for locating on its lines. The bonus was paid as freight was shipped, and a year ago the land company had paid \$22,000 in freight charges and had received \$11,000 of it back in bonus.

HENEY ON THE RACK.

Questioned About \$30,000 Fee From Water Company.

San Francisco, Aug. 8.—Assistant District Attorney Francis J. Heney was today placed on the witness stand in the preliminary examination of Abraham Ruef in the police court as an expert on attorneys' fees and interrogated by Ruef's counsel regarding the alleged receipt by Heney of a fee of \$30,000 from the Contra Costa Water company. This was done ostensibly to offset the theory advanced by the prosecution that the receipt of \$30,000 by Ruef from G. H. Unsen in the Parkside trolley franchise matter was too large a fee for legal services.

Mrs. Sage Plans Gift.

New York, Aug. 8.—It is learned from friends of Mrs. Russell Sage that she is thinking seriously of purchasing Constitutional island, in the upper Hudson, opposite West Point, and presenting it to the United States government as a site on which to erect the world's greatest military preparatory school, a school that will be to West Point what Eton is to Oxford and Lawrenceville is to Princeton. She is very much in earnest about this project and is investigating the matter very closely.

Death Roll in Tabriz 800.

Tabriz, Aug. 8.—There has now been 35 days' fighting in the streets of Tabriz, and the casualties, due chiefly to bombs thrown from mortars and shrapnel, are estimated at 800. Many of the finer residences of the city and hundreds of shops in the basements have been looted. The loss in this direction is placed at more than \$1,000,000.

Meet Death in Flames.

New York, Aug. 11.—Six persons were burned to death in a tenement house at 222 East One Hundred and Twelfth street, four children between the ages of 8 and 12, an infant of 2 months and an aged man. Other occupants of the tenement were injured by jumping from windows.

TRIBESMEN HOLD UP SHAH.

Persian Ruler Held Prisoner in His Own Palace.

St. Petersburg, Aug. 11.—Special dispatches received here from Teheran give a tragic-comic description of the position of the shah of Persia, who is virtually a prisoner in the hands of wild tribesmen summoned to Teheran to protect the throne against the revolutionists, but have become a greater menace to the monarch than his other foes.

The tribesmen are extravagant in their demands for money, which the shah is unable to grant, and they threaten to destroy the palace and pillage Teheran. The \$250,000 secured from the Russian bank recently as a loan on the crown jewels of Persia already is exhausted. General Liakhoff's Cossacks are unable to make any headway against the tribesmen, who have refused to permit the shah to leave the camp at Bala Shakh for Saltana Bad, where the harem is now staying.

Famine is reported to be imminent in Southern Persia, and this promises to bring about a crisis in political affairs in the autumn.

DISCORD IN TURKS' PALACE.

Former Ministers Blame Each Other for Ill Luck.

Constantinople, Aug. 11.—Discord reigns among the former ministers and palace officials detained at the ministry of war. Men Dugh Pasha, ex-minister of the interior, is at loggerheads with Lahain Pasha, the sultan's former secretary, who reproached him with not having adopted his advice three months ago to solicit the sultan to grant amnesty to political prisoners.

The secretary, who is suffering from acute melancholia, replied that it was better to have died than to witness the present state of affairs.

Zeekhi Pasha, who was recently dismissed as inspector of military schools, is also reported to be a prisoner at the ministry of war, half demented and constantly requesting a revolver with which to end his life.

To this request the response was made that he must live and render to the nation an account of his doings. He has contributed \$25,000 toward a fund to purchase two cruisers to be named after the heroes of the revolution.

Full Force Restored.

San Francisco, Aug. 11.—When the employees in the Southern Pacific shops at West Oakland went to work yesterday they found that they were expected to work nine hours instead of eight per day. Their pay, however, will be on the nine-hour basis. During the last 60 days the railroad company has increased its working force in the Oakland shops until now it is as great as it was before the slump of several months ago. The increase of working hours is necessitated by the large amount of work on hand.

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