

ALGER HORATIO JR.

From Canal Boy to President; Or,
the Boyhood and Manhood of
James A. Garfield

Horatio Alger

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Jr. Horatio Alger

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General Preface

The present series of volumes has been undertaken with the view of supplying the want of a class of books for children, of a vigorous, manly tone, combined with a plain and concise mode of narration. The writings of Charles Dickens have been selected as the basis of the scheme, on account of the well-known excellence of his portrayal of children, and the interests connected with children—qualities which have given his volumes their strongest hold on the hearts of parents. These delineations having thus received the approval of readers of mature age, it seemed a worthy effort to make the young also participants in the enjoyment of these classic fictions, to introduce the children of real life to these beautiful children of the imagination.

With this view, the career of Little Nell and her Grandfather, Oliver, Little Paul, Florence Dombey, Smike, and the Child-Wife, have been detached from the large mass of matter with which they were originally connected, and presented, in the author's own language, to a new class of readers, to whom the little volumes will we doubt not, be as attractive as the larger originals have so long proved to the general public. We have brought down these famous stories from the library to the nursery—the parlor table to the child's hands—having a precedent for the proceeding, if one be needed, in the somewhat similar work, the *Tales from Shakespeare*, by one of the choicest of English authors and most reverential of scholars, Charles Lamb.

Newtonville, Mass.

Preface

If I am asked why I add one to the numerous Lives of our dead President, I answer, in the words of Hon. Chauncey M. Depew, because "our annals afford no such incentive to youth as does his life, and it will become one of the Republic's household stories."

I have conceived, therefore, that a biography, written with a view to interest young people in the facts of his great career, would be a praiseworthy undertaking. The biography of General Garfield, however imperfectly executed, can not but be profitable to the reader. In this story, which I have made as attractive as I am able, I make no claim to originality. I have made free use of such materials as came within my reach, including incidents and reminiscences made public during the last summer, and I trust I have succeeded, in a measure, in conveying a correct idea of a character whose nobility we have only learned to appreciate since death has snatched our leader from us.

I take pleasure in acknowledging my obligations to two Lives of Garfield, one by Edmund Kirke, the other by Major J.M. Bundy. Such of my readers as desire a more extended account of the later life of Gen. Garfield, I refer to these well-written and instructive works.

Horatio Alger, Jr.

New York, *Oct.* 8, 1881.

The Boyhood And Manhood Of James A. Garfield

Chapter I.—The First Pair Of Shoes

From a small and rudely-built log-cabin a sturdy boy of four years issued, and looked earnestly across the clearing to the pathway that led through the surrounding forest. His bare feet pressed the soft grass, which spread like a carpet before the door.

"What are you looking for, Jimmy?" asked his mother from within the humble dwelling.

"I'm looking for Thomas," said Jimmy.

"It's hardly time for him yet. He won't be through work till after sunset."

"Then I wish the sun would set quick," said Jimmy.

"That is something we can not hasten, my son. God makes the sun to rise and to set in its due season."

This idea was probably too advanced for Jimmy's comprehension, for he was but four years of age, and the youngest of a family of four children. His father had died two years before, leaving a young widow, and four children, the eldest but nine, in sore straits. A long and severe winter lay before the little family, and they had but little corn garnered to carry them through till the next harvest. But the young widow was a brave woman and a devoted mother.

"God will provide for us," she said, but sometimes it seemed a mystery how that provision was to come. More than once, when the corn was low in the bin, she went to bed without her own supper, that her four children, who were blessed with hearty appetites, might be satisfied. But when twelve months had gone by, and the new harvest came in, the fields which she and her oldest boy had planted yielded enough to place them beyond the fear of want. God did help them, but it was because they helped themselves.

But beyond the barest necessities the little family neither expected nor obtained much. Clothing cost money, and there was very little money in the log-cabin, or indeed in the whole settlement, if settlement it can be called. There was no house within a mile, and the village a mile and a half away contained only a school-house, a grist-mill, and a little log store and dwelling.

Two weeks before my story opens, a farmer living not far away called at the log-cabin. Thomas, the oldest boy, was at work in a field near the house.

"Do you want to see mother?" he asked.

"No, I want to see you."

"All right, sir! Here I am," said Thomas, smiling pleasantly.

"How old are you?" asked the farmer.

"Eleven years old, sir."

The farmer surveyed approvingly the sturdy frame, broad shoulders, and muscular arms of the boy, and said, after a pause, "You look pretty strong of your age."

"Oh, yes, sir," answered Thomas, complacently "I am strong."

"And you are used to farm work?"

"Yes, sir. I do about all the outdoor work at home, being the only boy. Of course, there is Jimmy, but he is only four, and that's too young to work on the farm."

"What does he want?" thought Thomas.

He soon learned.

"I need help on my farm, and I guess you will suit me," said Mr. Conrad, though that was not his name. In fact, I don't know his name, but that will do as well as any other.

"I don't know whether mother can spare me, but I can ask her," said Thomas. "What are you willing to pay?"

"I'll give you twelve dollars a month, but you'll have to make long days."

Twelve dollars a month! Tom's eyes sparkled with joy, for to him it seemed an immense sum—and it would go very far in the little family.

"I am quite sure mother will let me go," he said. "I'll go in and ask her."

"Do so, sonny, and I'll wait for you here."

Thomas swung open the plank door, and entered the cabin.

It was about twenty feet one way by thirty the other. It had three small windows, a deal floor, and the spaces between the logs of which it was built were filled in with clay. It was certainly an humble dwelling, and the chances are that not one of my young readers is so poor as not to afford a better. Yet, it was not uncomfortable. It afforded fair protection from the heat of summer, and the cold of winter, and was after all far more desirable as a home than the crowded tenements of our larger cities, for those who occupied it had but to open the door and windows to breathe the pure air of heaven, uncontaminated by foul odors or the taint of miasma.

"Mother," said Thomas, "Mr. Conrad wants to hire me to work on his farm, and he is willing to pay me twelve dollars a month. May I go?"

"Ask Mr. Conrad to come in, Thomas."

The farmer entered, and repeated his request.

Mrs. Garfield, for this was the widow's name, was but little over thirty. She had a strong, thoughtful face, and a firm mouth, that spoke a decided character. She was just the woman to grapple with adversity, and turning her unwearied hands to any work, to rear up her children in the fear of the Lord, and provide for their necessities as well as circumstances would admit.

She didn't like to spare Thomas, for much of his work would be thrown upon her, but there was great lack of ready money and the twelve dollars were a powerful temptation.

"I need Thomas at home," she said slowly, "but I need the money more. He may go, if he likes."

"I will go," said Thomas promptly.

"How often can you let him come home?" was the next question.

"Every fortnight, on Saturday night. He shall bring his wages then."

This was satisfactory, and Thomas, not stopping to change his clothes, for he had but one suit, went off with his employer.

His absence naturally increased his mother's work, and was felt as a sore loss by Jimmy, who was in the habit of following him about, and watching him when he was at work. Sometimes his brother gave the little fellow a trifle to do, and Jimmy was always pleased to help, for he was fond of work, and when he grew older and stronger he was himself a sturdy and indefatigable worker in ways not dreamed of then.

The first fortnight was up, and Thomas was expected home. No one was more anxious to see him than his little brother, and that was why Jimmy had come out from his humble home, and was looking so earnestly across the clearing.

At last he saw him, and ran as fast as short legs could carry him to meet his brother.

"Oh, Tommy, how I've missed you!" he said.

"Have you, Jimmy?" asked Thomas, passing his arm around his little brother's neck. "I have missed you too, and all the family. Are all well?"

"Oh, yes."

"That is good."

As they neared the cabin Mrs. Garfield came out, and welcomed her oldest boy home.

"We are all glad to see you, Thomas," she said. "How have you got along?"

"Very well, mother."

"Was the work hard?"

"The hours were pretty long. I had to work fourteen hours a day."

"That is too long for a boy of your age to work," said his mother anxiously.

"Oh, it hasn't hurt me, mother," said Thomas, laughing. "Besides, you must remember I have been well paid. What do you say to that?"

He drew from his pocket twelve silver half-dollars, and laid them on the table, a glittering heap.

"Is it all yours, Tommy?" asked his little brother wonderingly.

"No, it belongs to mother. I give it to her."

"Thank you, Thomas," said Mrs. Garfield, "but at least you ought to be consulted about how it shall be spent. Is there anything you need for yourself?"

"Oh, never mind me! I want Jimmy to have a pair of shoes."

Jimmy looked with interest at his little bare feet, and thought he would like some shoes. In fact they would be his first, for thus far in life he had been a barefooted boy.

"Jimmy shall have his shoes," said Mrs. Garfield; "when you see the shoemaker ask him to come here as soon as he can make it convenient."

So, a few days later the shoemaker, who may possibly have had no shop of his own, called at the log-cabin, measured Jimmy for a pair of shoes, and made them on the spot, boarding out a part of his pay.

The first pair of shoes made an important epoch in Jimmy Garfield's life, for it was decided that he could now go to school.

Chapter II—Growing In Wisdom And Stature

The school was in the village a mile and a half away. It was a long walk for a little boy of four, but sometimes his sister Mehetabel, now thirteen years old, carried him on her back. When in winter the snow lay deep on the ground Jimmy's books were brought home, and he recited his lessons to his mother.

This may be a good time to say something of the family whose name in after years was to become a household word throughout the republic. They had been long in the country. They were literally one of the first families, for in 1636, only sixteen years after the Pilgrims landed on Plymouth rock, and the same year that Harvard College was founded, Edward Garfield, who had come from the edge of Wales, settled in Watertown, Massachusetts, less than four miles from the infant college, and there for more than a century was the family home, as several moss-grown headstones in the ancient graveyard still testify.

They did their part in the Revolutionary war, and it was not till the war was over that Solomon Garfield, the great grandfather of the future President, removed to the town of Worcester, Otsego County, N.Y. Here lived the Garfields for two generations. Then Abram Garfield, the father of James, moved to Northeastern Ohio, and bought a tract of eighty acres, on which stood the log-cabin, built by himself, in which our story opens. His wife belonged to a distinguished family of New England—the Ballous—and possessed the strong traits of her kindred.

But the little farm of eighty acres was smaller now. Abram Garfield died in debt, and his wife sold off fifty acres to pay his creditors, leaving thirty, which with her own industry and that of her oldest son served to maintain her little family.

The school-house was so far away that Mrs. Garfield, who appreciated the importance of education for her children, offered her neighbors a site for a new school-house on her own land, and one was built. Here winter after winter came teachers, some of limited qualifications, to instruct the children of the neighborhood, and here Jimmy enlarged his stock of book-learning by slow degrees.

The years passed, and still they lived in the humble log-cabin, till at the age of twenty-one Thomas came home from Michigan, where he had been engaged in clearing land for a farmer, bringing seventy-five dollars in gold.

"Now, mother," he said, "you shall have a framed house."

Seventy-five dollars would not pay for a framed house, but he cut timber himself, got out the boards, and added his own labor, and that of Jimmy, now fourteen years old, and so the house was built, and the log-cabin became a thing of the past. But it had been their home for a long time, and doubtless many happy days had been spent beneath its humble roof.

While the house was being built, Jimmy learned one thing—that he was handy with tools, and was well fitted to become a carpenter. When the joiner told him that he was born to be a carpenter, he thought with joy that this unexpected talent would enable him to help his mother, and earn something toward the family expenses. So, for the next two years he worked at this new business when opportunity offered, and if my reader should go to Chagrin Falls, Ohio, he could probably find upon inquiry several barns in the vicinity which Jimmy helped to build.

He still went to school, however, and obtained such knowledge of the mysteries of grammar, arithmetic, and geography as could be obtained in the common schools of that day.

But Jimmy Garfield was not born to be a carpenter, and I believe never got so far along as to assist in building a house.

He was employed to build a wood-shed for a black-salter, ten miles away from his mother's house, and when the job was finished his employer fell into conversation with him, and being a man of limited acquirements himself, was impressed by the boy's surprising stock of knowledge.

"You kin read, you kin write, and you are death on figgers," he said to him one day. "If you'll stay with me, keep my 'counts, and 'tend to the saltery, I'll find you, and give you fourteen dollars a month."

Jimmy was dazzled by this brilliant offer. He felt that to accept it would be to enter upon the high-road to riches, and he resolved to do so if his mother would consent. Ten miles he trudged through the woods to ask his mother's consent, which with some difficulty he obtained, for she did not know to what influences he might be subjected, and so he got started in a new business.

Whether he would have fulfilled his employer's prediction, and some day been at the head of a saltery of his own, we can not tell; but in time he became dissatisfied with his situation, and returning home, waited for Providence to indicate some new path on which to enter.

One thing, however, was certain: he would not be content to remain long without employment. He had an active temperament, and would have been happiest when busy, even if he had not known that his mother needed the fruits of his labor.

He had one source of enjoyment while employed by the black-salter, which he fully appreciated. Strange to say, his employer had a library, that is, he had a small collection of books, gathered by his daughter, prominent among which were Marryatt's novels, and "Sinbad the Sailor." They opened a new world to his young accountant, and gave him an intense desire to see the world, and especially to cross the great sea, even in the capacity of a sailor. At home there was no library, not from the lack of literary taste, but because there was no money to spend for anything but necessities.

He had not been long at home when a neighbor, entering one day, said, "James, do you want a job?"

"Yes," answered James, eagerly.

"There's a farmer in Newburg wants some wood chopped."

"I can do it," said James, quietly.

"Then you'd better go and see him."

Newburg is within the present limits of Cleveland, and thither James betook himself the next day.

He was a stout boy, with the broad shoulders and sturdy frame of his former ancestors, and he was sure he could give satisfaction.

The farmer, dressed in homespun, looked up as the boy approached.

"Are you Mr. —?" asked James.

"Yes."

"I heard that you wanted some wood chopped."

"Yes, but I am not sure if you can do it," answered the farmer, surveying the boy critically.

"I can do it," said James, confidently.

"Very well, you can try. I'll give you seven dollars for the job."

The price was probably satisfactory, for James engaged to do the work. There proved to be twenty-five cords, and no one, I think, will consider that he was overpaid for his labor.

He was fortunate, at least, in the scene of his labor, for it was on the shore of Lake Erie, and as he lifted his eyes from his work they rested on the broad bosom of the beautiful lake, almost broad enough as it appeared to be the ocean itself, which he had a strange desire to traverse in search of the unknown lands of which he had read or dreamed.

I suppose there are few boys who have not at some time fancied that they should like "a life on the ocean wave, and a home on the rolling deep." I have in mind a friend, now a physician, who at the age of fifteen left a luxurious home, with the reluctant permission of his parents, for a voyage before the mast to Liverpool, beguiled by one of the fascinating narratives of Herman Melville. But the romance very soon wore off, and by the time the boy reached Halifax, where the ship put in, he was so seasick, and so sick of the sea, that he begged to be left on shore to return home as he might. The captain had received secret instructions from the parents to accede to such a wish, and the

boy was landed, and in due time returned home as a passenger. So it is said that George Washington had an early passion for the sea, and would have become a sailor but for the pain he knew it would give his mother.

James kept his longings to himself for the present, and returned home with the seven dollars he had so hardly earned.

There was more work for him to do. A Mr. Treat wanted help during the haying and harvesting season, and offered employment to the boy, who was already strong enough to do almost as much as a man; for James already had a good reputation as a faithful worker. "Whatever his hands found to do, he did it with his might," and he was by no means fastidious as to the kind of work, provided it was honest and honorable.

When the harvest work was over James made known his passion for the sea.

Going to his mother, he said: "Mother, I want above all things to go to sea."

"Go to sea!" replied his mother in dismay. "What has put such an idea into your head?"

"It has been in my head for a long time," answered the boy quietly. "I have thought of nothing else for the last year."

Chapter III—In Quest Of Fortune

James had so persuaded himself that the sea was his vocation, and was so convinced of the pleasures and advantages it would bring, that it had not occurred to him that his mother would object.

"What made you think of the sea, James?" his mother asked with a troubled face.

"It was the books I read last year, at the black salter's. Oh, mother, did you ever read Marryatt's novels, and 'Sinbad the Sailor'?"

"I have read 'Sinbad the Sailor,' but you know that is a fairy story, my son."

"It may be, but Marryatt's stories are not. It must be splendid to travel across the mighty ocean, and see foreign countries."

"A sailor doesn't have the chance to see much. You have no idea of the hardships of his life."

"I am used to hardships, and I am not afraid of hard work. But you seem disappointed, mother. What have you thought of for me?"

"I have hoped, James, that you might become a learned man, perhaps a college professor. Surely that would be better than to be a common sailor."

"But I wouldn't stay a common sailor, mother. I would be a captain some time."

I suppose there is no doubt that, had James followed the sea, he would have risen to the command of a ship, but the idea did not seem to dazzle his mother.

"If you go to sea I shall lose you," said his mother. "A sailor can spend very little time with his family. Think carefully, my son. I believe your present fancy will be short-lived, and you will some day wonder that you ever entertained it."

Such, however, was not the boy's idea at the time. His mother might have reason on her side, but it takes more than reason to dissipate a boy's passion for the sea.

"You speak of my becoming a scholar, mother," he said, "but there doesn't seem much chance of it. I see nothing but work as a carpenter, or on the farm."

"You don't know what God may have in store for you, my son. As you say, there seems no way open at present for you to become a scholar; but if you entertain the desire the way will be open. Success comes to him who is in earnest."

"What, then, do you want me to do, mother! Do you wish me to stay at home?"

"No, for there seems little for you to do here. Go to Cleveland, if you like, and seek some respectable employment. If, after a time, you find your longing for the sea unconquered, it will be time to look out for a berth on board ship."

James, in spite of his earnest longing to go to sea, was a reasonable boy, and he did not object to his mother's plan. The next morning he tied his slender stock of clothing in a small bundle, bade a tearful good-bye to his mother, whose loving glances followed him far along his road, and with hope and enthusiasm trudged over a hard road to Cleveland, that beautiful city, whither, nearly forty years afterward, he was to be carried in funereal state, amid the tears of countless thousands. In that city where his active life began, it was to finish.

A long walk was before him, for Cleveland was seventeen miles away. He stopped to rest at intervals, and it was not until the sun had set and darkness enveloped the town that he entered it with weary feet.

He betook himself to a cheap boarding-place whither he had been directed, and soon retired to bed. His fatigue brought him a good night's sleep, and he woke refreshed and cheered to look about him and decide upon his future plans.

Cleveland does not compare in size with New York, Philadelphia, or Boston, and thirty-five years ago it was much smaller than now. But compared with James' native place, and the villages near him, it was an impressive place. There were large business blocks, and handsome churches, and paved streets, and a general city-like appearance which interested James greatly. On the whole, even

if he had to give up going to sea, he thought he might enjoy himself in such a lively place as this. But of course he must find employment.

So he went into a store and inquired if they wanted a boy.

"What can you do?" asked the storekeeper, looking at the boy with his countrified air and rustic suit.

"I can read, write, and cipher," answered James.

"Indeed!" said the storekeeper smiling. "All our boys can do that. Is that all you can do?"

James might have answered that he could chop wood, work at carpentering, plant and harvest, but he knew very well that these accomplishments would be but little service to him here. Indeed, he was rather puzzled to know what he could do that would earn him a living in a smart town like Cleveland. However, he didn't much expect to find his first application successful, so he entered another store and preferred his request.

"You won't suit us," was the brusque reply. "You come from the country, don't you?"

"Yes, sir."

"You look like it. Well, I will give you a piece of advice."

"What is that, sir?"

"Go back there. You are better suited to country than the city. I daresay you would make a very good hand on a farm. We need different sort of boys here."

This was discouraging. James didn't know why he would not do for a city store or office. He was strong enough, and he thought he knew enough, for he had not at present much idea of what was taught at seminaries of a higher grade than the district schools he had been accustomed to attend.

"Well," he said to himself, "I've done what mother asked me to do. I've tried to get a place here, and there doesn't seem to be a place for me. After all, I don't know but I'd better go to Ohio."

Cleveland was not of course a sea-port, but it had considerable lake trade, and had a line of piers.

James found his way to the wharves, and his eye lighted up as he saw the sloops and schooners which were engaged in inland trade. He had never seen a real ship, or those schooners and sloops would have had less attraction for him.

In particular his attention was drawn to one schooner, not over-clean or attractive, but with a sea-faring look, as if it had been storm-tossed and buffeted. Half a dozen sailors were on board, but they were grimed and dirty, and looked like habitual drinkers—probably James would not have fancied becoming like one of these, but he gave little thought to their appearance. He only thought how delightful it would be to have such a floating home.

"Is the captain on board?" the boy ventured to ask.

"He's down below," growled the sailor whom he addressed.

"Will he soon come up?"

He was answered in the affirmative.

So James lingered until the man he inquired for came up.

He was a brutal-looking man, as common in appearance as any of the sailors whom he commanded, and the boy was amazed at his bearing. Surely that man was not his ideal of a ship-captain. He thought of him as a sort of prince, but there was nothing princely about the miserable, bloated wretch before him.

Still he preferred his application.

"Do you want a new hand?" asked James.

His answer was a volley of oaths and curses that made James turn pale, for he had never uttered an oath in his life, and had never listened to anything so disgusting as the tirade to which he was forced to listen.

He sensibly concluded that nothing was to be gained by continuing the conversation with such a man. He left the schooner's deck with a feeling of discomfiture. He had never suspected that sailors talked or acted like the men he saw.

Still he clung to the idea that all sailors were not like this captain. Perhaps again the rebuff he received was in consequence of his rustic appearance. The captain might be prejudiced against him, just as the shop-keepers had been, though the latter certainly had not expressed themselves in such rude and profane language. He might not be fit for a sailor yet, but he could prepare himself.

He bethought himself of a cousin of his, by name Amos Letcher, who had not indeed arrived at the exalted position of captain of a schooner, but was content with the humbler position of captain of a canal-boat on the Ohio and Pennsylvania Canal.

This seemed to James a lucky thought.

"I will go to Amos Letcher," he said to himself. "Perhaps he can find me a situation on a canal-boat, and that will be the next thing to being on board a ship."

This thought put fresh courage into the boy, and he straightway inquired for the *Evening Star*, which was the name of the boat commanded by his cousin.

Chapter IV—On The Tow-Path

Captain Letcher regarded his young cousin in surprise.

"Well, Jimmy, what brings you to Cleveland?" he asked.

"I came here to ship on the lake," the boy answered. "I tried first to get a place in a store, as I promised mother, but I found no opening. I would rather be a sailor."

"I am afraid your choice is not a good one; a good place on land is much better than going to sea. Have you tried to get a berth?"

"Yes, I applied to the captain of a schooner, but he swore at me and called me a land-lubber."

"So you are," returned his cousin smiling "Well, what are your plans now?"

"Can't you give me a place?"

"What, on the canal?"

"Yes cousin."

"I suppose you think that would be the next thing to going to sea?"

"It might prepare me for it."

"Well," said Captain Letcher, good-naturedly, "I will see what I can do for you. Can you drive a pair of horses?"

"Oh, yes."

"Then I will engage you. The pay is not very large, but you will live on the boat."

"How much do you pay?" asked James, who was naturally interested in the answer to this question.

"We pay from eight to ten dollars a month, according to length of service and fidelity. Of course, as a new hand, you can not expect ten dollars."

"I shall be satisfied with eight, cousin."

"Now, as to your duties. You will work six hours on and six hours off. That's what we call a trick—the six hours on, I mean. So you will have every other six hours to rest, or do anything you like; that is, after you have attended to the horses."

"Horses!" repeated James, puzzled; for the animals attached to the boat at that moment were mules.

"Some of our horses are mules," said Captain Letcher, smiling. "However, it makes no difference. You will have to feed and rub them down, and then you can lie down in your bunk, or do anything else you like."

"That won't be very hard work," said James, cheerfully.

"Oh, I forgot to say that you can ride or walk, as you choose. You can rest yourself by changing from one to the other."

James thought he should like to ride on horseback, as most boys do. It was not, however, so good fun as he anticipated. A canal-boat horse is by no means a fiery or spirited creature. His usual gait is from two to two and a half miles an hour, and to a boy of quick, active temperament the slowness must be rather exasperating. Yet, in the course of a day a boat went a considerable distance. It usually made fifty, and sometimes sixty miles a day. The rate depended on the number of locks it had to pass through.

Probably most of my young readers understand the nature of a lock. As all water seeks a level, there would be danger in an uneven country that some parts of the canal would be left entirely dry, and in others the water would overflow. For this reason at intervals locks are constructed, composed of brief sections of the canal barricaded at each end by gates. When a boat is going down, the near gates are thrown open and the boat enters the lock, the water rushing in till a level is secured; then the upper gates are closed, fastening the boat in the lock. Next the lower gates are opened, the water in the lock seeks the lower level of the other section of the canal, and the boat moves out of the lock, the

water subsiding gradually beneath it. Next, the lower gates are closed, and the boat proceeds on its way. It will easily be understood, when the case is reversed, and the boat is going up, how after being admitted into the lock it will be lifted up to the higher level when the upper gates are thrown open.

If any of my young readers find it difficult to understand my explanation, I advise them to read Jacob Abbot's excellent book, "Rollo on the Erie Canal," where the whole matter is lucidly explained.

Railroads were not at that time as common as now, and the canal was of much more importance and value as a means of conveying freight. Sometimes passengers traveled that way, when they were in not much of a hurry, but there were no express canal-boats, and a man who chose to travel in that way must have abundant leisure on his hands. There is some difference between traveling from two to two and a half miles an hour, and between thirty and forty, as most of our railroad express trains do.

James did not have to wait long after his engagement before he was put on duty. With boyish pride he mounted one of the mules and led the other. A line connected the mules with the boat, which was drawn slowly and steadily through the water. James felt the responsibility of his situation. It was like going to sea on a small scale, though the sea was but a canal. At all events, he felt that he had more important work to do than if he were employed as a boy on one of the lake schooners.

James was at this time fifteen; a strong, sturdy boy, with a mass of auburn hair, partly covered by a loose-fitting hat. He had a bright, intelligent face, and an earnest look that attracted general attention. Yet, to one who saw the boy guiding the patient mule along the tow-path, it would have seemed a most improbable prediction, that one day the same hand would guide the ship of State, a vessel of much more consequence than the humble canal-boat.

There was one comfort, at any rate. Though in his rustic garb he was not well enough dressed to act as clerk in a Cleveland store, no one complained that he was not well enough attired for a canal-boy.

It will occur to my young reader that, though the work was rather monotonous, there was not much difficulty or danger connected with it. But even the guidance of a canal-boat has its perplexities, and James was not long in his new position before he realized it.

It often happened that a canal-boat going up encountered another going down, and *vice versa*. Then care has to be exercised by the respective drivers lest their lines get entangled.

All had been going on smoothly till James saw another boat coming. It might have been his inexperience, or it might have been the carelessness of the other driver, but at any rate the lines got entangled. Meanwhile the boat, under the impetus that had been given it, kept on its way until it was even with the horses, and seemed likely to tow them along.

"Whip up your team, Jim, or your line will ketch on the bridge!" called out the steersman.

The bridge was built over a waste-way which occurred just ahead, and it was necessary for James to drive over it.

The caution was heeded, but too late. James whipped up his mules, but when he had reached the middle of the bridge the rope tightened, and before the young driver fairly understood what awaited him, he and his team were jerked into the canal. Of course he was thrown off the animal he was riding, and found himself struggling in the water side by side with the astonished mules. The situation was a ludicrous one, but it was also attended with some danger. Even if he did not drown, and the canal was probably deep enough for that, he stood in some danger of being kicked by the terrified mules.

The boy, however, preserved his presence of mind, and managed, with help, to get out himself and to get his team out.

Then Captain Letcher asked him, jocosely, "What were you doing in the canal, Jim?"

"I was just taking my morning bath," answered the boy, in the same vein.

"You'll do," said the captain, struck by the boy's coolness.

Six hours passed, and James' "trick" was over. He and his mules were both relieved from duty. Both were allowed to come on board the boat and rest for a like period, while the other driver took his place on the tow-path.

"Well, Jim, how do you like it as far as you've got?" asked the captain.

"I like it," answered the boy.

"Shall you be ready to take another bath to-morrow morning?" asked his cousin, slyly.

"I think one bath a week will be sufficient," was the answer.

Feeling a natural interest in his young cousin, Amos Letcher thought he would examine him a little, to see how far his education had advanced. Respecting his own ability as an examiner he had little doubt, for he had filled the proud position of teacher in Steuben County, Indiana, for three successive winters.

"I suppose you have been to school more or less, Jim?" he said.

"Oh, yes," answered the boy.

"What have you studied?"

James enumerated the ordinary school branches. They were not many, for his acquirements were not extensive; but he had worked well, and was pretty well grounded as far as he had gone.

Chapter V—An Important Conversation

"I've taught school myself," said Captain Letcher, complacently. "I taught for three winters in Indiana."

James, who, even then, had a high opinion of learning, regarded the canal-boat captain with increased respect.

"I didn't know that," he answered, duly impressed.

"Yes, I've had experience as a teacher. Now, if you don't mind, I'll ask you a few questions, and find out how much you know. We've got plenty of time, for it's a long way to Pancake Lock."

"Don't ask me too hard questions," said the boy. "I'll answer the best I know."

Upon this Captain Letcher, taking a little time to think, began to question his young cousin in the different branches he had enumerated. The questions were not very hard, for the good captain, though he had taught school in Indiana, was not a profound scholar.

James answered every question promptly and accurately, to the increasing surprise of his employer.

The latter paused.

"Haven't you any more questions?" asked James.

"No, I don't think of any."

"Then may I ask you some?"

"Yes, if you want to," answered the captain, rather surprised.

"Very well," said James. "A man went to a shoemaker and bought a pair of boots, for which he was to pay five dollars. He offered a fifty-dollar bill, which the shoemaker sent out and had changed. He paid his customer forty-five dollars in change, and the latter walked off with the boots. An hour later he ascertained that the bill was a counterfeit, and he was obliged to pay back fifty dollars in good money to the man who had changed the bill for him. Now, how much did he lose?"

"That's easy enough. He lost fifty dollars and the boots."

"I don't think that's quite right," said James, smiling.

"Of course it is. Didn't he have to pay back fifty dollars in good money, and didn't the man walk off with the boots?"

"That's true; but he neither lost nor made by changing the bill. He received fifty dollars in good money and paid back the same, didn't he?"

"Yes."

"Whatever he lost his customer made, didn't he?"

"Yes."

"Well, the man walked off with forty-five dollars and a pair of boots. The other five dollars the shoemaker kept himself."

"That's so, Jim. I see it now, but it's rather puzzling at first. Did you make that out yourself?"

"Yes."

"Then you've got a good head—better than I expected. Have you got any more questions?"

"Just a few."

So the boy continued to ask questions, and the captain was more than once obliged to confess that he could not answer. He began to form a new opinion of his young cousin, who, though he filled the humble position of a canal-boy, appeared to be well equipped with knowledge.

"I guess that'll do, Jim," he said after a while. "You've got ahead of me, though I didn't expect it. A boy with such a head as you've got ought not to be on the tow-path."

"What ought I to be doing, cousin?"

"You ought to keep school. You're better qualified than I am to-day, and yet I taught for three winters in Indiana."

James was pleased with this tribute to his acquirements, especially from a former schoolmaster.

"I never thought of that," he said. "I'm too young to keep school. I'm only fifteen."

"That is rather young. You know enough; but I aint sure that you could tackle some of the big boys that would be coming to school. You know enough, but you need more muscle. I'll tell you what I advise. Stay with me this summer—it won't do you any hurt, and you'll be earning something—then go to school a term or two, and by that time you'll be qualified to teach a district school."

"I'll think of what you say, cousin," said James, thoughtfully. "I don't know but your advice is good."

It is not always easy to say what circumstances have most influence in shaping the destiny of a boy, but it seems probable that the conversation which has just been detailed, and the discovery that he was quite equal in knowledge to a man who had been a schoolmaster, may have put new ideas into the boy's head, destined to bear fruit later.

For the present, however, his duties as a canal-boy must be attended to, and they were soon to be resumed.

About ten o'clock that night, when James was on duty, the boat approached the town of Akron, where there were twenty-one locks to be successively passed through.

The night was dark, and, though the bowman of the *Evening Star* did not see it, another boat had reached the same lock from the opposite direction. Now in such cases the old rule, "first come, first served," properly prevailed.

The bowman had directed the gates to be thrown open, in order that the boat might enter the lock, when a voice was heard through the darkness, "Hold on, there! Our boat is just round the bend, ready to enter."

"We have as much right as you," said the bowman.

As he spoke he commenced turning the gate.

My young reader will understand from the description already given that it will not do to have both lower and upper gates open at the same time. Of course, one or the other boat must wait.

Both bowmen were determined to be first, and neither was willing to yield. Both boats were near the lock, their head-lights shining as bright as day, and the spirit of antagonism reached and affected the crews of both.

Captain Letcher felt called upon to interfere lest there should be serious trouble.

He beckoned to his bowman.

"Were you here first?" he asked.

"It is hard to tell," answered the bowman, "but I'm bound to have the lock, anyhow."

The captain was not wholly unaffected by the spirit of antagonism which his bowman displayed.

"All right; just as you say," he answered, and it seemed likely that conflict was inevitable.

James Garfield had been an attentive observer, and an attentive listener to what had been said. He had formed his own ideas of what was right to be done.

"Look here, captain," he said, tapping Captain Letcher on the arm, "does this lock belong to us?"

"I really suppose, according to law, it does not; but we will have it, anyhow."

"No, we will not," replied the boy.

"And why not?" asked the captain, naturally surprised at such a speech from his young driver.

"Because it does not belong to us."

The captain was privately of opinion that the boy was right, yet but for his remonstrance he would have stood out against the claims of the rival boat. He took but brief time for considerations, and announced his decision.

"Boys," he said to his men, "Jim is right. Let them have the lock."

Of course there was no more trouble, but the bowman, and the others connected with the *Evening Star*, were angry. It irritated them to be obliged to give up the point, and wait humbly till the other boat had passed through the lock.

The steersman was George Lee. When breakfast was called, he sat down by James.

"What is the matter with you, Jim?" he asked.

"Nothing at all."

"What made you so for giving up the lock last night?"

"Because it wasn't ours. The other boat had it by right."

"Jim, you are a coward," said Lee contemptuously. "You aint fit for a boatman. You'd better go back to the farm and chop wood or milk cows, for a man or boy isn't fit for this business that isn't ready to fight for his rights."

James did not answer. Probably he saw that it would be of no use. George Lee was for his own boat, right or wrong; but James had already begun to reflect upon the immutable principles of right or wrong, and he did not suffer his reason to be influenced by any considerations touching his own interests or his own pride.

As to the charge of cowardice it did not trouble him much. On a suitable occasion later on (we shall tell the story in due season) he showed that he was willing to contend for his rights, when he was satisfied that the right was on his side.

Chapter VI—James Leaves The Canal

James was not long to fill the humble position of driver. Before the close of the first trip he was promoted to the more responsible office of bowman. Whether his wages were increased we are not informed.

It may be well in this place to mention that a canal boat required, besides the captain, two drivers, two steersmen, a bowman, and a cook, the last perhaps not the least important of the seven. "The bowman's business was to stop the boat as it entered the lock, by throwing the bowline that was attached to the bow of the boat around the snubbing post." It was to this position that James was promoted, though I have some doubt whether the place of driver, with the opportunities it afforded of riding on horse or mule-back, did not suit him better. Still, promotion is always pleasant, and in this case it showed that the boy had discharged his humbler duties satisfactorily.

I have said that the time came when James showed that he was not a coward. Edmund Kirke, in his admirable life of Garfield, has condensed the captain's account of the occurrence, and I quote it here as likely to prove interesting to my boy readers:

"The *Evening Star* was at Beaver, and a steamboat was ready to tow her up to Pittsburg. The boy was standing on deck with the selting-pole against his shoulders, and some feet away stood Murphy, one of the boat hands, a big, burly fellow of thirty-five, when the steamboat threw the line, and, owing to a sudden lurch of the boat, it whirled over the boy's head, and flew in the direction of the boatman. 'Look out, Murphy!' cried the boy; but the rope had anticipated him, and knocked Murphy's hat off into the river. The boy expressed his regret, but it was of no avail. In a towering rage the man rushed upon him, with his head down, like a maddened animal; but, stepping nimbly aside, the boy dealt him a powerful blow behind the ear, and he tumbled to the bottom of the boat among the copper ore. Before he could rise the boy was upon him, one hand upon his throat, the other raised for another blow upon his frontispiece.

"Pound the cussed fool, Jim!" cried Captain Letcher, who was looking on appreciatingly. 'If he haint no more sense'n to get mad at accidents, giv it ter him! Why don't you strike?'

"But the boy did not strike, for the man was down and in his power. Murphy expressed regret for his rage, and then Garfield gave him his hand, and they became better friends than ever before. This victory of a boy of sixteen over a man of thirty-five obliterated the notion of young Garfield's character for cowardice, and gave him a great reputation among his associates. The incident is still well remembered among the boatmen of the Ohio and Pennsylvania Canal."

The boy's speedy reconciliation to the man who had made so unprovoked an assault upon him was characteristic of his nature. He never could cherish malice, and it was very hard work for him to remain angry with any one, however great the provocation.

Both as a boy and as a man he possessed great physical strength, as may be inferred from an incident told by the *Boston Journal* of his life when he was no longer the humble canal-boy, but a brigadier-general in the army:

"At Pittsburg Landing one night in 1862 there was a rush for rations by some newly-arrived troops. One strong, fine-looking soldier presented a requisition for a barrel of flour, *and, shouldering it, walked off with ease*. When the wagon was loaded, this same man stepped up to Colonel Morton, commanding the commissary steamers there, and remarked, 'I suppose you require a receipt for these supplies?' 'Yes,' said the Colonel, as he handed over the usual blank; 'just take this provision return, and have it signed by your commanding officer.' 'Can't I sign it?' was the reply. 'Oh, no,' said the affable Colonel Morton; 'it requires the signature of a commissioned officer.' Then came the remark, that still remains fresh in the Colonel's memory: 'I am a commissioned officer—I'm a brigadier-general, and my name is Garfield, of Ohio.'"

For four months James remained connected with the canal-boat. To show that traveling by canal is not so free from danger as it is supposed to be, it may be stated that in this short time he fell into the water fourteen times. Usually he scrambled out without further harm than a good wetting. One night, however, he was in serious pain.

It was midnight, and rainy, when he was called up to take his turn at the bow. The boat was leaving one of those long reaches of slack-water which abound in the Ohio and Pennsylvania Canal. He tumbled out of bed in a hurry, but half awake, and, taking his stand on the narrow platform below the bow-deck, he began uncoiling a rope to steady the boat through a lock it was approaching. Finally it knotted, and caught in a narrow cleft on the edge of the deck. He gave it a strong pull, then another, till it gave way, sending him over the bow into the water. Down he went in the dark river, and, rising, was bewildered amid the intense darkness. It seemed as if the boy's brief career was at its close. But he was saved as by a miracle. Reaching out his hand in the darkness, it came in contact with the rope. Holding firmly to it as it tightened in his grasp, he used his strong arms to draw himself up hand over hand. His deliverance was due to a knot in the rope catching in a crevice, thus, as it tightened, sustaining him and enabling him to climb on deck.

It was a narrow escape, and he felt it to be so. He was a thoughtful boy, and it impressed him. The chances had been strongly against him, yet he had been saved.

"God did it," thought James reverently, "He has saved my life against large odds, and He must have saved it for some purpose. He has some work for me to do."

Few boys at his age would have taken the matter so seriously, yet in the light of after events shall we not say that James was right, and that God did have some work for him to perform?

This work, the boy decided, was not likely to be the one he was at present engaged in. The work of a driver or a bowman on a canal is doubtless useful in its way, but James doubted whether he would be providentially set apart for any such business.

It might have been this deliverance that turned his attention to religious matters. At any rate, hearing that at Bedford there was a series of protracted meetings conducted by the Disciples, as they were called, he made a trip there, and became seriously impressed. There, too, he met a gentleman who was destined to exert an important influence over his destiny.

This gentleman was Dr. J.P. Robinson, who may be still living. Dr. Robinson took a great liking to the boy, and sought to be of service to him. He employed him, though it may have been at a later period, to chop wood, and take care of his garden, and do chores about the house, and years afterward, as we shall see, it was he that enabled James to enter Williams College, and pursue his studies there until he graduated, and was ready to do the work of an educated man in the world. But we must not anticipate.

Though James was strong and healthy he was not proof against the disease that lurked in the low lands bordering on the canal. He was attacked by fever and ague, and lay for some months sick at home. It was probably the only long sickness he had till the fatal wound which laid him on his bed when in the fullness of his fame he had taken his place among kings and rulers. It is needless to say that he had every attention that a tender mother could bestow, and in time he was restored to health.

During his sickness he had many talks with his mother upon his future prospects, and the course of life upon which it was best for him to enter. He had not yet given up all thoughts of the sea, he had not forgotten the charms with which a sailor's life is invested in Marryatt's fascinating novels. His mother listened anxiously to his dreams of happiness on the sea, and strove to fix his mind upon higher things—to inspire him with a nobler ambition.

"What would you have me do, mother?" he asked.

"If you go back to the canal, my son, with the seeds of this disease lurking in your system, I fear you will be taken down again. I have thought it over. It seems to me you had better go to school this spring, and then, with a term in the fall, you may be able to teach in the winter. If you teach winters, and work on the canal or lake summers, you will have employment the year round."

Nevertheless Mrs. Garfield was probably not in favor of his spending his summers in the way indicated. She felt, however, that her son, who was a boy like other boys, must be gradually weaned from the dreams that had bewitched his fancy.

Then his mother proposed a practical plan.

"You have been obliged to spend all your money," she said, "but your brother Thomas and I will be able to raise seventeen dollars for you to start to school on, and when that is gone perhaps you will be able to get along on your own resources."

Chapter VII—The Choice Of A Vocation

James Garfield's experience on the canal was over. The position was such an humble one that it did not seem likely to be of any service in the larger career which one day was to open before him. But years afterward, when as a brigadier-general of volunteers he made an expedition into Eastern Kentucky, he realized advantage from his four months' experience on the canal. His command had run short of provisions, and a boat had been sent for supplies, but the river beside which the men were encamped had risen so high that the boat dared not attempt to go up the river. Then General Garfield, calling to his aid the skill with which he had guided the *Evening Star* at the age of fifteen, took command of the craft, stood at the wheel forty-four hours out of the forty-eight, and brought the supplies to his men at a time when they were eating their last crackers.

"Seek all knowledge, however trifling," says an eminent author, "and there will come a time when you can make use of it."

James may never have read this remark, but he was continually acting upon it, and the spare moments which others devoted to recreation he used in adding to his stock of general knowledge.

The last chapter closes with Mrs. Garfield's advice to James to give up his plan of going to sea, and to commence and carry forward a course of education which should qualify him for a college professor, or a professional career. Her words made some impression upon his mind, but it is not always easy to displace cherished dreams. While she was talking, a knock was heard at the door and Mrs. Garfield, leaving her place at her son's bedside, rose and opened it.

"I am glad to see you, Mr. Bates," she said with a welcoming smile.

Samuel D. Bates was the teacher of the school near by, an earnest young man, of exemplary habits, who was looking to the ministry as his chosen vocation.

"And how is James to-day?" asked the teacher, glancing toward the bed.

"So well that he is already beginning to make plans for the future," answered his mother.

"What are your plans, James?" asked the young man.

"I should like best to go to sea," said James, "but mother doesn't approve of it."

"She is wise," said Bates, promptly. "You would find it a great disappointment."

"But, it must be delightful to skim over the waters, and visit countries far away," said the boy, his cheeks flushing, and his eyes glowing with enthusiasm.

"You think so now; but remember, you would be a poor, ignorant sailor, and would have to stay by the ship instead of exploring the wonderful cities at which the ship touched. Of course, you would have an occasional run on shore, but you could not shake off the degrading associations with which your life on shipboard would surround you."

"Why should a sailor's life be degrading?" asked James.

"It need not be necessarily, but as a matter of fact most sailors have low aims and are addicted to bad habits. Better wait till you can go to sea as a passenger, and enjoy to the full the benefits of foreign travel."

"There is something in that," said James, thoughtfully. "If I could only be sure of going some day."

"Wouldn't it be pleasant to go as a man of culture, as a college professor, as a minister, or as a lawyer, able to meet on equal terms foreign scholars and gentlemen?"

This was a new way of putting it, and produced a favorable impression on the boy's mind. Still, the boy had doubts, and expressed them freely.

"That sounds well," he said; "but how am I to know that I have brain enough to make a college professor, or a minister, or a lawyer?"

"I don't think there is much doubt on that point," said Bates, noting the bright, expressive face, and luminous eyes of the sick boy. "I should be willing to guarantee your capacity. Don't you think yourself fit for anything better than a common sailor?"

"Yes," answered James. "I think I could make a good carpenter, for I know something about that trade already, and I daresay I could make a good trader if I could find an opening to learn the business; but it takes a superior man to succeed in the positions you mention."

"There are plenty of men with only average ability who get along very creditably; but I advise you, if you make up your mind to enter the lists, to try for a high place."

The boy's eyes sparkled with new ambition. It was a favorite idea with him afterward, that every man ought to feel an honorable ambition to succeed as well as possible in his chosen path.

"One thing more," added Bates. "I don't think you have any right to become a sailor."

"No right? Oh, you mean because mother objects."

"That, certainly, ought to weigh with you as a good son; but I referred to something else."

"What then?"

"Do you remember the parable of the talents?"

James had been brought up by his mother, who was a devoted religious woman, to read the Bible, and he answered in the affirmative.

"It seems to me that you are responsible for the talents which God has bestowed upon you. If you have the ability or the brain, as you call it, to insure success in a literary career, don't you think you would throw yourself away if you became a sailor?"

Mrs. Garfield, who had listened with deep interest to the remarks of the young man, regarded James anxiously, to see what effect these arguments were having upon him. She did not fear disobedience. She knew that if she should make it a personal request, James was dutiful enough to follow her wishes; but she respected the personal independence of her children, and wanted to convince, rather than to coerce, them.

"If I knew positively that you were right in your estimate of me, Mr. Bates, I would go in for a course of study."

"Consult some one in whose judgment you have confidence, James," said the teacher, promptly.

"Can you suggest any one?" asked the boy.

"Yes, Dr. J.P. Robinson, of Bedford, is visiting at the house of President Hayden, of Hiram College. You have heard of him?"

"Yes."

"He is a man of ripe judgment, and you can rely implicitly on what he says."

"As soon as I am well enough I will do as you advise," said James.

"Then I am satisfied. I am sure the doctor will confirm my advice."

"Mr. Bates," said Mrs. Garfield, as she followed out the young teacher, "I am much indebted to you for your advice to James. It is in accordance with my wishes. If he should decide to obtain an education, where would you advise him to go?"

"To the seminary where I have obtained all the education I possess," answered the young man.

"Where is it?"

"It is called the 'Geauga Seminary,' and is located in Chester, in the next county. For a time it will be sufficient to meet all James' needs. When he is further advanced he can go to Hiram College."

"Is it expensive?" asked Mrs. Garfield. "James has no money except the few dollars his brother and I can spare him."

"He will have plenty of company. Most of the students are poor, but there are chances of finding work in the neighborhood, and so earning a little money. James knows something of the carpenter's trade?"

"Yes, he helped build the house we live in, and he has been employed on several barns."

My readers will remember that the Garfields no longer lived in the humble log-cabin in which we first found them. The money Thomas brought home from Michigan, supplemented by the labor of James and himself, had replaced it by a neat frame house, which was much more comfortable and sightly.

"That will do. I think I know a man who will give him employment."

"He is a boy of energy. If he gets fairly started at school, I think he will maintain himself there," said Mrs. Garfield.

The teacher took his leave.

When Mrs. Garfield re-entered the room she found James looking very thoughtful.

"Mother," he said, abruptly, "I want to get well as quick as I can. I am sixteen years old, and it is time I decided what to do with myself."

"You will think of what Mr. Bates has said, will you not?"

"Yes, mother; as soon as I am well enough I will call on Dr. Robinson and ask his candid opinion. I will be guided by what he says."

Chapter VIII—Geauga Seminary

I have stated in a previous chapter that James became acquainted with Dr. Robinson while still employed on the canal. This statement was made on the authority of Mr. Philo Chamberlain, of Cleveland, who was part proprietor of the line of canal-boats on which the boy was employed. Edmund Kirke, however, conveys the impression that James was a stranger to the doctor at the time he called upon him after his sickness. Mr. Kirke's information having been derived chiefly from General Garfield himself, I shall adopt his version, as confirmed by Dr. Robinson.

When James walked up to the residence of President Hayden, and inquired for Dr. Robinson, he was decidedly homespun in appearance. He probably was dressed in his best, but his best was shabby enough. His trousers were of coarse satinet, and might have fitted him a season or two before, but now were far outgrown, reaching only half-way down from the tops of his cowhide boots. His waistcoat also was much too short, and his coat was threadbare, the sleeves being so short as to display a considerable portion of his arms. Add to these a coarse slouched hat, much the worse for wear, and a heavy mass of yellow hair much too long, and we can easily understand what the good doctor said of him: "He was wonderfully awkward, but had a sort of independent, go-as-you-please manner that impressed me favorably."

"Who are you?" asked the doctor.

"My name is James Garfield, from Solon."

"Oh, I know your mother, and knew you when you were a babe, but you have outgrown my knowledge. I am glad to see you."

"I should like to see you alone," said James.

The doctor led the way to a secluded spot in the neighborhood of the house, and then, sitting down on a log, the youth, after a little hesitation, opened his business.

"You are a physician," he said, "and know the fiber that is in men. Examine me and tell me with the utmost frankness whether I had better take a course of liberal study. I am contemplating doing so, as my desire is in that direction. But if I am to make a failure of it, or practically so, I do not desire to begin. If you advise me not to do so I shall be content."

In speaking of this incident the doctor has remarked recently: "I felt that I was on my sacred honor, and the young man looked as though he felt himself on trial. I had had considerable experience as a physician, but here was a case much different from any I had ever had. I felt that it must be handled with great care. I examined his head and saw that there was a magnificent brain there. I sounded his lungs, and found that they were strong, and capable of making good blood. I felt his pulse, and felt that there was an engine capable of sending the blood up to the head to feed the brain. I had seen many strong physical systems with warm feet and cold, sluggish brain; and those who possessed such systems would simply sit round and doze. Therefore I was anxious to know about the kind of an engine to run that delicate machine, the brain. At the end of a fifteen minutes' careful examination of this kind, we rose, and I said:

"Go on, follow the leadings of your ambition, and ever after I am your friend. You have the brain of a Webster, and you have the physical proportions that will back you in the most herculean efforts. All you need to do is to work; work hard, do not be afraid of over-working and you will make your mark."

It will be easily understood that these words from a man whom he held in high respect were enough to fix the resolution of James. If he were really so well fitted for the work and the career which his mother desired him to follow, it was surely his duty to make use of the talents which he had just discovered were his.

After that there was no more question about going to sea. He deliberately decided to become a scholar, and then follow where Providence led the way.

He would have liked a new suit of clothes, but this was out of the question. All the money he had at command was the seventeen dollars which his mother had offered him. He must get along with this sum, and so with hopeful heart he set out for Geauga Seminary.

He did not go alone. On hearing of his determination, two boys, one a cousin, made up their minds to accompany him.

Possibly my young readers may imagine the scene of leave-taking, as the stage drove up to the door, and the boys with their trunks or valises were taken on board, but if so, imagination would picture a scene far different from the reality. Their outfit was of quite a different kind.

For the sake of economy the boys were to board themselves, and Mrs. Garfield with provident heart supplied James with a frying-pan, and a few necessary dishes, so that his body might not suffer while his mind was being fed. Such was the luxury that awaited James in his new home. I am afraid that the hearts of many of my young readers would sink within them if they thought that they must buy an education at such a cost as that. But let them not forget that this homespun boy, with his poor array of frying-pan and dishes, was years after to strive in legislative halls, and win the highest post in the gift of his fellow-citizens. And none of these things would have been his, in all likelihood, but for his early struggle with poverty.

So far as I know, neither of his companions was any better off than James. All three were young adventurers traveling into the domains of science with hopeful hearts and fresh courage, not altogether ignorant of the hardships that awaited them, but prepared to work hard for the prizes of knowledge.

Arrived at Geauga Seminary, they called upon the principal and announced for what purpose they had come.

"Well, young men, I hope you mean to work?" he said.

"Yes, sir," answered James promptly. "I am poor, and I want to get an education as quick as I can."

"I like your sentiments, and I will help you as far as I can."

The boys succeeded in hiring a room in an old unpainted building near the academy for a small weekly sum. It was unfurnished, but they succeeded in borrowing a few dilapidated chairs from a neighbor who did not require them, and some straw ticks, which they spread upon the floor for sleeping purposes. In one corner they stowed their frying-pans, kettles, and dishes, and then they set up housekeeping in humble style.

The Geauga Seminary was a Freewill Baptist institution, and was attended by a considerable number of students, to whom it did not, indeed, furnish what is called "the higher education," but it was a considerable advance upon any school that James had hitherto attended. English grammar, natural philosophy, arithmetic, and algebra—these were the principal studies to which James devoted himself, and they opened to him new fields of thought. Probably it was at this humble seminary that he first acquired the thirst for learning that ever afterward characterized him.

Let us look in upon the three boys a night or two after they have commenced housekeeping.

They take turns in cooking, and this time it is the turn of the one in whom we feel the strongest interest.

"What have we got for supper, boys?" he asks, for the procuring of supplies has fallen to them.

"Here are a dozen eggs," said Henry Bounton, his cousin.

"And here is a loaf of bread, which I got at the baker's," said his friend.

"That's good! We'll have bread and fried eggs. There is nothing better than that."

"Eggs have gone up a cent a dozen," remarks Henry, gravely.

This news is received seriously, for a cent means something to them. Probably even then the price was not greater than six to eight cents a dozen, for prices were low in the West at that time.

"Then we can't have them so often," said James, philosophically, "unless we get something to do."

"There's a carpenter's-shop a little way down the street," said Henry. "I guess you can find employment there."

"I'll go round there after supper."

Meanwhile he attended to his duty as cook, and in due time each of the boys was supplied with four fried eggs and as much bread as he cared for. Probably butter was dispensed with, as too costly a luxury, until more prosperous times.

When supper was over the boys took a walk, and then, returning to their humble room, spent the evening in preparing their next morning's lessons.

In them James soon took leading rank, for his brain was larger, and his powers of application and intuition great, as Dr. Robinson had implied. From the time he entered Geauga Seminary probably he never seriously doubted that he had entered upon the right path.

Chapter IX—Ways And Means

James called on the carpenter after supper and inquired if he could supply him with work.

"I may be able to if you are competent," was the reply. "Have you ever worked at the business?"

"Yes."

"Where?"

"At Orange, where my home is."

"How long did you work at it?"

"Perhaps I had better tell you what I have done," said James.

He then gave an account of the barns he had been employed upon, and the frame house which he had assisted to build for his mother.

"I don't set up for a first-class workman," he added, with a smile, "but I think I can be of some use to you."

"I will try you, for I am rather pressed with work just now."

So, in a day or two James was set to work.

The carpenter found that it was as he had represented. He was not a first-class workman. Indeed, he had only a rudimentary knowledge of the trade, but he was quick to learn, and in a short time he was able to help in many ways. His wages were not very large, but they were satisfactory, since they enabled him to pay his expenses and keep his head above water. Before the seventeen dollars were exhausted, he had earned quite a sum by his labor in the carpenter's-shop.

About this time he received a letter from his brother.

"Dear James," he wrote, "I shall be glad to hear how you are getting along. You took so little money with you that you may need more. If so, let me know, and I will try to send you some."

James answered promptly: "Don't feel anxious about me, Thomas. I have been fortunate enough to secure work at a carpenter's-shop, and my expenses of living are very small. I intend not to call upon you or mother again, but to pay my own way, if I keep my health."

He kept his word, and from that time did not find it necessary to call either upon his mother or his good brother, who was prepared to make personal sacrifices, as he had been doing all his life, that his younger brother might enjoy advantages which he had to do without.

At length the summer vacation came. James had worked hard and won high rank in his respective studies. He had a robust frame, and he seemed never to get tired. No doubt he took especial interest in composition and the exercises of the debating society which flourished at Geauga, as at most seminaries of advanced education. In after-life he was so ready and powerful in debate, that we can readily understand that he must have begun early to try his powers. Many a trained speaker has first come to a consciousness of his strength in a lyceum of boys, pitted against some school-fellow of equal attainments. No doubt many crude and some ludicrous speeches are made by boys in their teens, but at least they learn to think on their feet, and acquire the ability to stand the gaze of an audience without discomposure. A certain easy facility of expression also is gained, which enables them to acquit themselves creditably on a more important stage.

James early learned that the best preparation for a good speech is a thorough familiarity with the subject, and in his after-life he always carefully prepared himself, so that he was a forcible debater, whom it was not easy to meet and conquer.

"He once told me how he prepared his speeches," said Representative Williams, of Wisconsin, since his death. "First he filled himself with the subject, massing all the facts and principles involved, so far as he could; then he took pen and paper and wrote down the salient points in what he regarded their logical order. Then he scanned these critically, and fixed them in his memory. 'And then,' said he, 'I leave the paper in my room and trust to the emergency.'"

When the vacation came James began to look about for work. He could not afford to be idle. Moreover, he hoped to be able to earn enough that he might not go back empty-handed in the fall.

Generally work comes to him who earnestly seeks it, and James heard of a man who wanted some wood cut.

He waited upon this man and questioned him about it.

"Yes," he answered, "I want the wood cut. What will you charge to do it?"

"How much is there?"

"About a hundred cords."

James thought of the time when he cut twenty-five cords for seven dollars, and he named a price to correspond.

"I'll give you twenty-five dollars," said the proprietor of the wood.

It was a low price for the labor involved, but, on the other hand, it would be of essential service to the struggling student.

"I will undertake it," he said.

"When will you go to work?"

"Now!" answered James promptly.

How long it took him to do the work we have no record, but he doubtless worked steadfastly till it was accomplished. We can imagine the satisfaction he felt when the money was put into his hands, and he felt that he would not need to be quite so economical in the coming term.

Accordingly, when the vacation was over and James went back to the seminary, he did not re-engage the room which he and his two friends had rented the term before. He realized that to be in a condition to study well he must feed his body well, and he was in favor of a more generous system of diet. Besides, the labor required for cooking was so much time taken from his study hours.

He heard that a widow—Mrs. Stiles—mother of the present sheriff of Ashtabula County, was prepared to receive boarders, and, accordingly, he called upon her to ascertain if she would receive him.

She knew something of him already, for she learned that he had obtained the reputation of a steady and orderly student, and was disposed to favor his application.

The next question was an important one to young Garfield.

"How much do you expect me to pay?"

He waited with some anxiety for the answer, for though he had twenty-five dollars in his pocket, the term was a long one, and tuition was to be paid also.

"A dollar and six cents will be about right," said Mrs. Stiles, "for board, washing, and lodging."

"That will be satisfactory," said James, with a sigh of relief, for he saw his way clear to pay this sum for a time, at least, and for the whole term if he could again procure employment at his old trade.

A dollar and six cents! It was rather an odd sum, and we should consider it nowadays as very low for any sort of board in any village, however obscure or humble. But in those days it was not so exceptional, and provisions were so much lower that the widow probably lost nothing by her boarder, though she certainly could not have made much.

James had no money to spare for another purpose, though there was need enough of it. He needed some new clothes badly. He had neither underclothing nor overcoat, and but one outside suit, of cheap Kentucky jean. No doubt he was subjected to mortification on account of his slender supply of clothing. At any rate he was once placed in embarrassing circumstances.

Toward the close of the term, as Mrs. Stiles says, his trowsers became exceedingly thin at the knees, and one unlucky day, when he was incautiously bending forward, they tore half-way round the leg, exposing his bare knee.

James was very much mortified, and repaired damages as well as he could with a pin.

"I need a new suit of clothes badly," he said in the evening, "but I can't afford to buy one. See how I have torn my trowsers."

"Oh, that is easy enough to mend," said Mrs. Stiles, cheerfully.

"But I have no other pair to wear while they are being mended," said James, with a blush.

"Then you must go to bed early, and send them down by one of the boys. I will darn the hole so that you will never know it. You won't mind such trifles when you become President."

It was a jocose remark, and the good lady little dreamed that, in after years, the young man with but one pair of pantaloons, and those more than half worn, would occupy the proud position she referred to.

Chapter X—A Cousin's Reminiscences

During his school-life at Geauga Seminary James enjoyed the companionship of a cousin, Henry B. Boynton, who still lives on the farm adjoining the one on which our hero was born. The relationship between the two boys was much closer than is common between cousins; for while their mothers were sisters, their fathers were half-brothers. Henry was two years older than James, and they were more like brothers than cousins. I am sure my young readers will be glad to read what Henry has to say of their joint school-life. I quote from the account of an interview held with a correspondent of the Boston *Herald*, bearing the date of September 23, 1881:

When General Garfield was nominated to the Presidency his old neighbors in Orange erected a flag-staff where the house stood which Garfield and his brother erected for their mother and sisters with their own hands, after the log hut, a little farther out in the field nearer the wood, had become unfit for habitation. Thomas Garfield, the uncle of the President, who not long since was killed by a railroad accident, directed the manual labor of rearing the shaft, and was proud of his work.

There is nothing except this hole left to mark his birth-place, and the old well, not two rods off, which he and his brother dug to furnish water for the family. In the little maple grove to the left, children played about the school-house where the dead President first gathered the rudiments upon which he built to such purpose. The old orchard in its sere and yellow leaf, the dying grass, and the turning maple leaves seemed to join in the great mourning.

Adjoining the field where the flag floats is an unpretentious home, almost as much identified with Gen. Garfield's early history as the one he helped to clear of the forest timber while he was yet but a child. It is the home of Henry B. Boynton, cousin of the dead President, and a brother of Dr. Boynton, whose name has become so well known from recent events.

"While rambling over this place the correspondent came upon this near relative of Garfield, smaller in stature than he was, but in features bearing a striking resemblance to him.

"General Garfield and I were like brothers," he said, as he turned from giving some directions to his farm hands, now sowing the fall grain upon ground which his cousin had first helped to break. "His father died yonder, within a stone's throw of us, when the son was but a year and a half old. He knew no other father than mine, who watched over the family as if it had been his own. This very house in which I live was as much his home as it was mine.

"Over there," said he, pointing to the brick school-house in the grove of maples, around which the happy children were playing, "is where he and I both started for school. I have read a statement that he could not read or write until he was nineteen. He could do both before he was nine, and before he was twelve, so familiar was he with the Indian history of the country, that he had named every tree in the orchard, which his father planted as he was born, with the name of some Indian chief, and even debated in societies, religion, and other topics with men. One favorite tree of his he named Tecumseh, and the branches of many of these old trees have been cut since his promotion to the Presidency by relic-hunters, and carried away.

"Gen. Garfield was a remarkable boy as well as man. It is not possible to tell you the fight he made amid poverty for a place in life, and how gradually he obtained it. When he was a boy he would rather read than work. But he became a great student. He had to work after he was twelve years of age. In those days we were all poor, and it took hard knocks to get on. He worked clearing the fields yonder with his brother, and then cut cord-wood, and did other farm labor to get the necessities of life for his mother and sisters.

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