ALGER HORATIO JR.

JOE'S LUCK; OR, ALWAYS WIDE AWAKE

Horatio Alger
Joe's Luck; Or, Always Wide Awake

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCES JOE

"Come here, you Joe, and be quick about it!"

The boy addressed, a stout boy of fifteen, with an honest, sun-browned face, looked calmly at the speaker.

"What's wanted?" he asked.

"Brush me off, and don't be all day about it!" said Oscar Norton impatiently.

Joe's blue eyes flashed indignantly at the tone of the other.

"You can brush yourself off," he answered independently.

"What do you mean by your impudence?" demanded Oscar angrily. "Have you turned lazy all at once?"

"No," said Joe firmly, "but I don't choose to be ordered round by you."

"What's up, I wonder? Ain't you our servant?"

"I am not your servant, though your father is my employer."

"Then you are bound to obey me—his son."

"I don't see it."

"Then you'd better, if you know what's best for yourself. Are you going to brush me off?"

"No."

"Look out! I can get my father to turn you off."

"You may try if you want to."

Oscar, much incensed, went to his father to report Joe's insubordination. While he is absent, a few words of explanation will enlighten the reader as to Joe's history and present position.

Joe Mason was alone in the world. A year previous he had lost his father, his only remaining parent, and when the father's affairs were settled and funeral expenses paid there was found to be just five dollars left, which was expended for clothing for Joe.

In this emergency Major Norton, a farmer and capitalist, offered to provide Joe with board and clothes and three months' schooling in the year in return for his services. As nothing else offered, Joe accepted, but would not bind himself for any length of time. He was free to go whenever he pleased.

Now there were two disagreeable things in Joe's new place. The first was the parsimony of Major Norton, who was noted for his stingy disposition, and the second was the overbearing manners of Oscar, who lost no opportunity to humiliate Joe and tyrannize over him so far as Joe's independent spirit would allow. It happened, therefore, that Joe was compelled to work hard, while the promised clothing was of the cheapest and shabbiest

description. He was compelled to go to school in patched shoes and a ragged suit, which hurt his pride as he compared himself with Oscar, who was carefully and even handsomely dressed. Parsimonious as his father was, he was anxious that his only boy should appear to advantage.

On the very day on which our story begins Oscar had insulted Joe in a way which excited our hero's bitter indignation.

This is the way it happened:

Joe, who was a general favorite on account of his good looks and gentlemanly manners, and in spite of his shabby attire, was walking home with Annie Raymond, the daughter of the village physician, when Oscar came up.

He was himself secretly an admirer of the young lady, but had never received the least encouragement from her. It made him angry to see his father's drudge walking on equal terms with his own favorite, and his coarse nature prompted him to insult his enemy.

"Miss Raymond," he said, lifting his hat mockingly, "I congratulate you on the beau you have picked up."

Annie Raymond fully appreciated his meanness, and answered calmly:

"I accept your congratulations, Mr. Norton."

This answer made Oscar angry and led him to go further than he otherwise would.

"You must be hard up for an escort, when you accept such a ragamuffin as Joe Mason."

Joe flushed with anger.

"Oscar Norton, do you mean to insult Miss Raymond or me," he demanded.

"So you are on your high horse!" said Oscar sneeringly.

"Will you answer my question?"

"Yes, I will. I certainly don't mean to insult Miss Raymond, but I wonder at her taste in choosing my father's hired boy to walk with."

"I am not responsible to you for my choice, Oscar Norton," said Annie Raymond, with dignity. "If my escort is poorly dressed, it is not his fault, nor do I think the less of him for it."

"If your father would dress me better, I should be very glad of it," said Joe. "If I am a ragamuffin, it is his fault."

"I'll report that to him," said Oscar maliciously.

"I wish you would. It would save me the trouble of asking him for better clothes."

"Suppose we go on," said Annie Raymond.

"Certainly," said Joe politely.

And they walked on, leaving Oscar discomfited and mortified.

"What a fool Annie Raymond makes of herself" he muttered. "I should think she'd be ashamed to go round with Joe Mason."

Oscar would have liked to despise Annie Raymond, but it was out of his power. She was undoubtedly the belle of the school, and he would have been proud to receive as much notice from her as she freely accorded to Joe. But the young lady had a mind and a will of her own, and she had seen too much to dislike in

Oscar to regard him with favor, even if he were the son of a rich man, while she had the good sense and discrimination to see that Joe, despite his ragged garb, possessed sterling good qualities.

When Oscar got home he sought his father.

"Father," said he, "I heard Joe complaining to Annie Raymond that you didn't dress him decently."

Major Norton looked annoyed.

"What does the boy mean?" he said. "What does he expect?"

"He should be dressed as well as I am," said Oscar maliciously.

"Quite out of the question," said the major hastily. "Your clothes cost a mint of money."

"Of course, you want me to look well, father. I am your son, and he is only your hired boy."

"I don't want folks to talk," said the major, who was sensitive to public opinion. "Don't you think his clothes are good enough?"

"Of course they are; but I'll tell you what, father," said Oscar, with a sudden idea, "you know that suit of mine that I got stained with acid?"

"Yes, Oscar," said the major gravely. "I ought to remember it. It cost me thirty-four dollars, and you spoiled it by your carelessness."

"Suppose you give that to Joe?" suggested Oscar.

"He's a good deal larger than you. It wouldn't fit him; and, besides, it's stained."

"What right has a hired boy to object to a stain? No matter if it is too small, he has no right to be particular."

"You are right, Oscar," said the major, who was glad to be saved the expense of a new suit for Joe. Even he had been unpleasantly conscious that Joe's appearance had become discreditable to him. "You may bring it down, Oscar," he said.

"I dare say Joe won't like the idea of wearing it, but a boy in his position has no right to be proud."

"Of course not," returned the major, his ruling passion gratified by the prospect of saving the price of a suit. "When Joseph comes home—at any rate, after he is through with his chores—you may tell him to come in to me."

"All right, sir."

Before Oscar remembered this message, the scene narrated at the commencement of the chapter occurred. On his way to complain to his father, he recollected the message, and, retracing his steps, said to Joe:

"My father wants to see you right off."

This was a summons which Joe felt it his duty to obey. He accordingly bent his steps to the room where Major Norton usually sat.

CHAPTER II

THE STAINED SUIT

"Oscar tells me that you wish to see me, sir," said Joe, as he entered the presence of his pompous employer.

Major Norton wheeled round in his armchair and looked at Joe over his spectacles. He looked at Joe's clothes, too, and it did strike him forcibly that they were very shabby. However, there was Oscar's stained suit; which was entirely whole and of excellent cloth. As to the stains, what right had a boy like Joe to be particular?

"Ahem!" said the major, clearing his throat. "Oscar tells me that you are not satisfied with the clothes I have I given you."

"He has told you the truth, Major Norton," replied Joe bluntly. "If you will look for yourself, I think you will see why I am dissatisfied."

"Joseph," said the major, in a tone of disapproval, "you are too free spoken. I understand you have been complaining to Doctor Raymond's daughter of the way I dress you."

"Did Oscar tell you the way that happened?" inquired Joe.

"I apprehend he did not."

"When I was walking home with Miss Annie Raymond, Oscar

came up and insulted me, calling me a ragamuffin. I told him that, if I was a ragamuffin, it was not my fault."

Major Norton looked disturbed.

"Oscar was inconsiderate," he said. "It seems to me that your clothes are suitable to your station in life. It is not well for a boy in your circumstances to be 'clothed in purple and fine linen,' as the Scriptures express it. However, perhaps it is time for you to have another suit."

Joe listened in astonishment. Was it possible that Major Norton was going to open his heart and give him what he had long secretly desired?

Our hero's delusion was soon dissipated.

Major Norton rose from his seat, and took from a chair near-by a stained suit, which had not yet attracted Joe's attention.

"Here is a suit of Oscar's," he said, "which is quite whole and almost new. Oscar only wore it a month. It cost me thirty-four dollars!" said the major impressively.

He held it up, and Joe recognized it at once.

"Isn't it the suit Oscar got stained?" he asked abruptly.

"Ahem! Yes; it is a little stained, but that doesn't injure the texture of the cloth."

As he held it up the entire suit seemed to have been sprinkled with acid, which had changed the color in large, patches in different parts. The wearer would be pretty sure to excite an unpleasant degree of attention.

Joe did not appear to be overwhelmed with the magnificence

of the gift.

"If it is so good, why don't Oscar wear it?" he asked.

Major Norton regarded Joe with displeasure.

"It cannot matter to you how Oscar chooses to dress," he said. "I apprehend that you and he are not on a level."

"He is your son, and I am your hired boy," said Joe. "I admit that.

But I don't see how you can ask me to wear a suit like that."

"I apprehend that you are unsuitably proud, Joseph."

"I hope not, sir; but I don't want to attract everybody's notice as I walk the streets. If I had stained the suit myself, I should have felt bound to wear it, but it was Oscar's carelessness that destroyed its appearance, and I don't think I ought to suffer for that. Besides, it is much too small for me. Let me show you."

Joe pulled off his coat and put on the stained one. The sleeves were from two to three inches too short, and it was so far from meeting in front, on account of his being much broader than Oscar, that his shoulders seemed drawn back to meet each other behind.

"It doesn't exactly fit," said the major; "but it can be let out easily. I will send it to Miss Pearce—the village tailoress—to fix it over for you."

"Thank you, Major Norton," said Joe, in a decided tone, "but I hope you won't go to that expense, for I shall not be willing to wear it under any circumstances."

"I cannot believe my ears," said Major Norton, with dignified

displeasure. "How old are you, Joseph?"

"Fifteen, sir."

"It is not fitting that you, a boy of fifteen, should dictate to your employer."

"I don't wish to, Major Norton, but I am not willing to wear that suit."

"You are too proud. Your pride needs taking down."

"Major Norton," said Joe firmly, "I should like to tell you how I feel. You are my employer, and I am your hired boy. I try to do my duty by you."

"You are a good boy to work, Joseph. I don't complain of that."

"You agreed to give me board and clothing for my services."

"So I have."

"Yes, sir; but you have dressed me in such a way that I attract attention in the street for my shabbiness. I don't think I am very proud, but I have been mortified! more than once when I saw people looking at my patched clothes and shoes out at the toes. I think if I work faithfully I ought to be dressed decently."

"Joseph," said Major Norton uneasily, "you look at the thing too one-sided. You don't expect me to dress you like Oscar?"

"No, sir; I don't. If you would spend half as much for my clothes as you do for Oscar's I would be contented."

"It seems to me you are very inconsistent. Here is a suit of clothes that cost me thirty-four dollars, which I offer you, and you decline."

"You know why well enough, sir," said Joe, "You did not tell me you intended to dress me in Oscar's castoff clothes, too small, and stained at that. I would rather wear the patched suit I have on till it drops to pieces than wear this suit."

"You can go, Joseph," said Major Norton, in a tone of annoyance. "I did not expect to find you so unreasonable. If you do not choose to take what I offer you, you will have to go without."

"Very well, sir."

Joe left the room, his face flushed and his heart full of indignation at the slight which had been attempted on him.

"It is Oscar's doings, I have no doubt," he said to himself. "It is like his meanness. He meant to mortify me."

If there had been any doubt in Joe's mind, it would soon have been cleared up. Oscar had been lying in wait for his appearance, and managed to meet him as he went out into the yard.

"Where are your new clothes?" he asked mockingly.

"I have none," answered Joe.

"Didn't my father give you a suit of mine?"

"He offered me the suit which you stained so badly with acid."

"Well, it's pretty good," said Oscar patronizingly. "I only wore it about a month."

"Why don't you wear it longer?"

"Because it isn't fit for me to wear," returned Oscar.

"Nor for me," said Joe.

"You don't mean to say you've declined?" exclaimed Oscar,

in surprise.

"That is exactly what I have done."

"Why?"

"You ought to know why."

"It is better than the one you have on."

"It is too small for me. Besides, it would attract general attention."

"Seems to me somebody is getting proud," sneered Oscar. "Perhaps you think Annie Raymond wouldn't walk with you in that suit?"

"I think it would make ho difference to her," said Joe. "She was willing to walk with me in this ragged suit."

"I don't admire her taste."

"She didn't walk with my clothes; she walked with me."

"A hired boy!"

"Yes, I am a hired boy; but I don't get very good pay."

"You feel above your business, that's what's the matter with you."

"I hope some time to get higher than my business," said Joe. "I mean to rise in the world, if I can."

Oscar shrugged his shoulders.

"Perhaps you would like to be a wealthy merchant, or a member of Congress," he said.

"I certainly should."

Oscar burst into a sneering laugh, and left Joe alone.

Joe's work was done, and, being left free to do as he liked, he

strolled over to the village store.

CHAPTER III

THE RETURNED CALIFORNIAN

The village store, in the evening, was a sort of village club-house, where not only the loungers, but a better class, who desired to pass the evening socially, were wont to congregate. About the center of the open space was a large box-stove, which in winter was kept full of wood, ofttimes getting red-hot, and around this sat the villagers. Some on wooden chairs, some on a wooden settee, with a broken back, which was ranged on one side.

Joe frequently came here in the evening to pass a social hour and kill time. At the house of Major Norton he had no company. Oscar felt above him, and did not deign to hold any intercourse with his father's drudge, while the housekeeper—Major Norton being a widower—was busy about her own special work, and would have wondered at Joe if he had sought her company. I make this explanation because I do not wish it to be understood that Joe was a common village lounger, or loafer.

When Joe entered the store he found the usual company present, but with one addition.

This was Seth Larkin, who had just returned from California,

whither he had gone eighteen months before, and was, of course, an object of great attention, and plied with numerous questions by his old acquaintances in regard to the land of promise in the far West, of which all had heard so much.

It was in the fall of the year 1851, and so in the early days of California.

Seth was speaking as Joe entered.

"Is there gold in California?" repeated Seth, apparently in answer to a question. "I should say there was. Why, it's chock full of it. People haven't begun to find out the richness of the country. It's the place for a poor man to go if he wants to become rich. What's the prospects here? I ask any one of you. A man may go working and plodding from one year's end to another and not have ten dollars at the end of it. There's some here that know that I speak the truth."

"How much better can a man do in California?" asked Daniel Tompkins.

"Well, Dan," said Seth, "it depends on the kind of man he is. If he's a man like you, that spends his money for rum as fast as he gets it, I should say it's just as well to stay here. But if he's willing to work hard, and to put by half he makes, he's sure to do well, and he may get rich. Why, I knew a man that landed in California the same day that I did, went up to the mines, struck a vein, and —well, how much do you think that man is worth to-day?"

"A thousand dollars?" suggested Dan Tompkins.

"Why, I'm worth more than that myself, and I wasn't lucky,

and had the rheumatism for four months. You'll have to go higher."

"Two thousand?" guessed Sam Stone.

"We don't make much account of two thousand dollars in the mines, Sam," said Seth.

"It's of some account here," said Sam. "I've been workin' ten years, and I ain't saved up a third of it."

"I don't doubt it," said Seth; "and it ain't your fault, either. Money's scarce round here, and farmin' don't pay. You know what I was workin' at before I went out—in a shoe shop. I just about made a poor livin', and that was all. I didn't have money enough to pay my passage out, but I managed to borrow it. Well, it's paid now, and I've got something left."

"You haven't told us yet how much the man made that you was talkin' about," said Tom Sutter. "It couldn't be five thousand dollars, now, could it?"

"I should say it could," said Seth.

"Was it any more?" inquired Dan Tompkins.

"Well, boys, I s'pose I may as well tell you, and you may b'lieve it or not, just as you like. That man is worth twenty thousand dollars to-day."

There was a chorus of admiring ejaculations.

"Twenty thousand dollars! Did you ever hear the like?"

"Mind, boys, I don't say it's common to make so much money in so short a time. There isn't one in ten does it, but some make even more. What I do say is, that a feller that's industrious, and

willin' to work, an' rough it, and save what he makes, is sure to do well, if he keeps well. That's all a man has a right to expect, or to hope for."

"To be sure it is."

"What made you come home, Seth, if you were gettin' on so well?" inquired one.

"That's a fair question," said Seth, "and I'm willin' to answer it. It was because of the rheumatics. I had 'em powerful bad at the mines, and I've come home to kinder recuperate, if that's the right word. But I'm goin' back ag'in, you may bet high on that. No more work in the shoe shop for me at the old rates. I don't mean that I'd mind bein' a manufacturer on a big scale. That's a little more stiddy and easy than bein' at the mines, but that takes more capital than I've got."

"How much does it cost to go out there?" asked Dan Tompkins.

"More money than you can scare together, Dan. First-class, nigh on to three hundred dollars, I believe."

This statement rather dampened the ardor of more than one of the listeners. Three hundred dollars, or even two, were beyond the convenient reach of most of those present. They would have to mortgage their places to get it.

"You can go second-class for a good deal less, and you can go round the Horn pretty cheap," continued Seth.

"How far away is Californy?" inquired Sam Stone.

"By way of the isthmus, it must be as much as six thousand

miles, and it's twice as fur, I reckon, round the Horn. I don't exactly know the distance."

"Then it's farther away than Europe," said Joe, who had been listening with eager interest.

"Of course it is," said Seth. "Why, that's Joe Mason, isn't it? How you've grown since I saw you."

"Do you think I have?" said Joe, pleased with the assurance.

"To be sure you have. Why, you're a big boy of your age. How old are you?"

"Fifteen–nearly sixteen."

"That's about what I thought. Where are you livin' now, Joe?"

"I'm working for Major Norton."

Seth burst into a laugh.

"I warrant you haven't made your fortune yet, Joe," he said.

"I haven't made the first start yet toward it."

"And you won't while you work for the major. How much does he pay you?"

"Board and clothes."

"And them are the clothes?" said Seth, surveying Joe's appearance critically.

"Yes."

"I guess the major's tailor's bill won't ruin him, then. Are they the best you've got?"

"No; I've got a better suit for Sunday."

"Well, that's something. You deserve to do better, Joe."

"I wish I could," said Joe wistfully. "Is there any chance for a

boy in California, Mr. Larkin?"

"Call me Seth. It's what I'm used to. I don't often use the handle to my name. Well, there's a chance for a boy, if he's smart; but he's got to work."

"I should be willing to do that."

"Then, if you ever get the chance, it won't do you any harm to try your luck."

"How much did you say it costs to get there?"

"Well, maybe you could get there for a hundred dollars, if you wasn't particular how you went."

A hundred dollars! It might as well have been ten thousand, as far as Joe was concerned. He received no money wages, nor was he likely to as long as he remained in the major's employ. There was a shoe shop in the village, where money wages were paid, but there was no vacancy; and, even if there were, Joe was quite unacquainted with the business, and it would be a good while before he could do any more than pay his expenses.

Joe sighed as he thought how far away was the prospect of his being able to go to California. He could not help wishing that he were the possessor of the magic carpet mentioned in the Arabian tale, upon which the person seated had only to wish himself to be transported anywhere, and he was carried there in the twinkling of an eye.

Joe walked home slowly, dreaming of the gold-fields on the other side of the continent, and wishing he were there.

CHAPTER IV

JOE'S LEGACY

The next day was Saturday. There was no school, but this did not lighten Joe's labors, as he was kept at work on the farm all day.

He was in the barn when Deacon Goodwin, a neighbor, drove up.

Oscar was standing in front of the house, whittling out a cane from a stick he had cut in the woods.

"Is Joe Mason at home?" the deacon inquired.

Oscar looked up in surprise. Why should the deacon want Joe Mason?

"I suppose he is," drawled Oscar.

"Don't you know?"

"Probably he is in the barn," said Oscar indifferently.

"Will you call him? I want to see him on business."

Oscar was still more surprised. He was curious about the business, but his pride revolted at the idea of being sent to summon Joe.

"You'll find him in the barn," said he.

"I don't want to leave my horse," said the deacon. "I will take

it as a favor if you will call him."

Oscar hesitated. Finally he decided to go and then return to hear what business Joe and the deacon had together. He rather hoped that Joe had been trespassing on the deacon's grounds, and was to be reprimanded.

He opened the barn door and called out:

"Deacon Goodwin wants you out at the gate."

Joe was as much surprised as Oscar.

He followed Oscar to the front of the house and bade the deacon good morning.

"Oscar tells me you want to see me," he said.

"Yes, Joe. Do you remember your Aunt Susan?"

"My mother's aunt?"

"Yes; she's dead and buried."

"She was pretty old," said Joe.

"The old lady had a small pension," continued the deacon, "that just about kept her, but she managed to save a little out of it. When the funeral expenses were paid it was found that there were fifty-six dollars and seventy-five cents over."

"What's going to be done with it? he inquired.

"She's left it to you," was the unexpected reply, "You was the nearest relation she had, and it was her wish that whatever was left should go to you."

"I'm very much obliged to her. I didn't expect anything. I had almost forgotten I had a great-aunt."

"The money has been sent to me, Joe," continued the deacon.

"I'm ready to pay it over to you when you want it, but I hope you won't spend it foolish."

"I don't think I shall, Deacon Goodwin."

"It wouldn't take long to spend it, Joe," said the deacon. "Do you want me to keep it for you?"

"I don't know," said Joe; "I haven't had time to think. I'll come round to-night and see you."

"Very well, Joseph. G'lang, Dobbin!" and the deacon started his old horse, who had completed his quarter century, along the road.

Oscar had listened, not without interest, to the conversation. Though he was the son of a rich man, he had not at command so large a sum as his father's hired boy had fallen heir to. On the whole, he respected Joe rather more than when he was altogether penniless.

"You're in luck, Joe," said he graciously.

"Yes," said Joe. "It's very unexpected."

"You might buy yourself a new suit of clothes."

"I don't intend to do that."

"Why not? You were wishing for one yesterday."

"Because it is your father's place to keep me in clothes. That's the bargain I made with him."

"Perhaps you are right," said Oscar.

"I'll tell you what you can do," he said, after a pause.

"What?"

"You might buy a boat."

"I shouldn't have any time to use it."

"You might go out with it in the evening. I would look after it in the daytime."

No doubt this arrangement would be satisfactory to Oscar, who would reap all the advantage, but Joe did not see it in a favorable light.

"I don't think I should care to buy a boat," he said.

"What do you say to buying a revolver?"

"I think it would be better to put it on interest."

"You'd better get the good of it now. You might die and then what use would the money be?"

On the way to the deacon's Joe fell in with Seth Larkin.

"Well, my boy, where are you bound?" asked Seth.

"To collect my fortune," said Joe.

Seth asked for an explanation and received it.

"I'm glad for you and I wish it were more."

"So do I," said Joe.

"What for? Anything particular?"

"Yes; if it was enough, I would go to California."

"And you really want to go?"

"Yes. I suppose fifty dollars wouldn't be enough?"

"No; it wouldn't," said Seth; "but I'll tell you what you could do."

"What?"

"Go to New York and keep yourself till you got a chance to work your passage round the Horn."

"So I might," said Joe, brightening up.

"It wouldn't be easy, but you wouldn't mind that."

"No; I wouldn't mind that."

"Well, if you decide to go, come round and see me to-morrow, and I'll give you the best advice I can."

The deacon opposed Joe's plan, but in vain. Our hero had made up his mind. Finally the old man counted out the money and Joe put it in an old wallet.

The nest thing was to give Major Norton warning.

"Major Norton," said Joe, "I should like to have you get another boy in my place."

"What, Joe?" exclaimed the major.

"I am going to leave town."

"Where are you going?" asked his employer.

"First to New York and afterwards to California."

"Well, I declare! Is it because you ain't satisfied with your clothes?"

"No, sir. I don't see much prospect for me if I stay here and I have heard a good deal about California."

"But you haven't got any money."

"I have almost sixty dollars."

"Oh, yes; Oscar told me. You'd better stay here."

"No, sir; I have made up my mind."

"You'll come back in a month without a cent."

"If I do, I'll go to work again for you."

Monday morning came. Clad in his Sunday suit of cheap and

rough cloth, Joe stood on the platform at the depot. The cars came up, he jumped aboard, and his heart beat with exultation as he reflected that he had taken the first step toward the Land of Gold.

CHAPTER V

AT THE COMMERCIAL HOTEL

Joe had never been in New York and when he arrived the bustle and confusion at first bewildered him.

"Have a hack, young man?" inquired a jehu.

"What'll you charge?"

"A dollar and a half, and half-a-dollar for your baggage."

"This is all the baggage I have," said Joe, indicating a bundle tied in a red cotton handkerchief.

"Then, I'll only charge a dollar and a half," said the hackman.

"I'll walk," said Joe. "I can't afford to pay a dollar and a half."

"You can't walk; it's too far."

"How far is it?"

"Ten miles, more or less," answered the hackman.

"Then I shall save fifteen cents a mile," said Joe, not much alarmed, for he did not believe the statement.

"If you lose your way, don't blame me."

Joe made his way out of the crowd, and paused at the corner of the next street for reflection. Finally he stopped at an apple and peanut stand, and, as a matter of policy, purchased an apple.

"I am from the country," he said, "and I want to find a cheap

hotel.

Can you recommend one to me?"

"Yes," said the peanut merchant. "I know of one where they charge a dollar a day."

"Is that cheap? What do they charge at the St. Nicholas?"

"Two dollars a day."

"A day?" asked Joe, in amazement.

It must be remembered that this was over fifty years ago. Joe would have greater cause to be startled at the prices now asked at our fashionable hotels.

"Well, you can go to the cheap hotel."

"Where is it?"

The requisite directions were given. It was the Commercial Hotel, located in a down-town street.

The Commercial Hotel, now passed away, or doing business under a changed name, was not a stylish inn.

It was rather dark and rather dingy, but Joe did not notice that particularly. He had never seen a fine hotel, and this structure, being four stories in height above the offices, seemed to him rather imposing than otherwise.

He walked up to the desk, on which was spread out, wide open, the hotel register. Rather a dissipated-looking clerk stood behind the counter, picking his teeth.

"Good morning, sir," said Joe politely. "What do you charge to stay here?"

"A dollar a day," answered the clerk.

"Can you give me a room?"

"I guess so, my son. Where is your trunk?"

"I haven't got any."

"Haven't you got any baggage?"

"Here it is."

The clerk looked rather superciliously at the small bundle.

"Then you'll have to pay in advance."

"All right," said Joe. "I'll pay a day in advance."

A freckle-faced boy was summoned, provided with the key of No. 161, and Joe was directed to follow him.

"Shall I take your bundle?" he asked.

"No, thank you. I can carry it myself."

They went up-stairs, until Joe wondered when they were going to stop. Finally the boy paused at the top floor, for the very good reason that he could get no higher, and opened the door of 161.

"There you are," said the boy. "Is there anything else you want?"

"No, thank you."

"I'm sorry there ain't a bureau to keep your clothes," said the freckle-faced boy, glancing at Joe's small bundle with a smile.

"It is inconvenient," answered Joe, taking the joke.

"You wouldn't like some hot water for shaving, would you?" asked the boy, with a grin.

"You can have some put on to heat and I'll order it when my beard is grown," said Joe good-naturedly.

"All right. I'll tell 'em to be sure and have it ready in two or

three years."

"That will be soon enough. You'd better order some for yourself at the same time."

"Oh, I get in hot water every day."

The freckle-faced boy disappeared, and Joe sat down on the bed, to reflect a little on his position and plans.

So here he was in New York, and on the way to California, too —that is, he hoped so. How much can happen in a little while. Three days before he had not dreamed of any change in his position.

"I hope I shan't have to go back again to Oakville. I won't go unless I am obliged to," he determined.

He washed his hands and face, and went down-stairs. He found that dinner was just ready. It was not a luxurious meal, but, compared with the major's rather frugal table, there was great variety and luxury. Joe did justice to it.

"Folks live better in the city than they do in the country," he thought; "but, then, they have to pay for it. A dollar a day! Why, that would make three hundred and sixty-five dollars a year!"

This to Joe seemed a very extravagant sum to spend on one person's board and lodging.

"Now," thought Joe, after dinner was over, "the first thing for me to find out is when the California steamer starts and what is the lowest price I can go for."

In the barroom Joe found a file of two of the New York daily papers, and began to search for the advertisement of the

California steamers.

At last he found it.

The steamer was to start in three days. Apply for passage and any information at the company's offices.

"I'll go right down there, and find out whether I've got money enough to take me," Joe decided.

CHAPTER VI

JOE BUYS A TICKET

The office of the steamer was on the wharf from which it was to start. Already a considerable amount of freight was lying on the wharf ready to be loaded. Joe made his way to the office.

"Well, boy, what's your business?" inquired a stout man with a red face, who seemed to be in charge.

"Is this the office of the California steamer, sir?"

"Yes."

"What is the lowest price for passage?"

"A hundred dollars for the steerage."

When Joe heard this his heart sank within him. It seemed to be the death-blow to his hopes. He had but fifty dollars, or thereabouts, and there was no chance whatever of getting the extra fifty.

"Couldn't I pay you fifty dollars now and the rest as soon as I can earn it in California?" he pleaded.

"We don't do business in that way."

"I'd be sure to pay it, sir, if I lived," said Joe. "Perhaps you think I am not honest."

"I don't know whether you are or not," said the agent

cavalierly.

"We never do business in that way."

Joe left the office not a little disheartened.

"I wish it had been a hundred dollars Aunt Susan left me," he said to himself.

Joe's spirits were elastic, however. He remembered that Seth had never given him reason to suppose that the money he had would pay his passage by steamer. He had mentioned working his passage in a sailing-vessel round the Horn. Joe did not like that idea so well, as the voyage would probably last four months, instead of twenty-five days, and so delay his arrival.

The afternoon slipped away almost without Joe's knowledge. He walked about, here and there, gazing with curious eyes at the streets, and warehouses, and passing vehicles, and thinking what a lively place New York was, and how different life was in the metropolis from what it had been to him in the quiet country town which had hitherto been his home. Somehow it seemed to wake Joe up, and excite his ambition, to give him a sense of power which he had never felt before.

"If I could only get a foothold here," thought Joe, "I should be willing to work twice as hard as I did on the farm."

This was what Joe thought. I don't say that he was correct. There are many country boys who make a mistake in coming to the city. They forsake quiet, comfortable homes, where they have all they need, to enter some city counting-room, or store, at starvation wages, with, at best, a very remote prospect of

advancement and increased risk of falling a prey to temptation in some of the many forms which it assumes in a populous town. A boy needs to be strong, and self-reliant, and willing to work if he comes to the city to compete for the prizes of life. As the story proceeds, we shall learn whether Joe had these necessary qualifications.

When supper was over he went into the public room of the Commercial Hotel, and took up a paper to read. There was a paragraph about California, and some recent discoveries there, which he read with avidity.

Though Joe was not aware of it, he was closely observed by a dark-complexioned man, dressed in rather a flashy manner. When our hero laid down the paper this man commenced a conversation.

"I take it you are a stranger in the city, my young friend?" he observed, in an affable manner.

"Yes, sir," answered Joe, rather glad to have some one to speak to.

"I only arrived this morning."

"Indeed! May I ask from what part of the country you come?"

"From Oakville, New Jersey."

"Indeed! I know the place. It is quite a charming town."

"I don't know about that," said Joe. "It's pretty quiet and dull—nothing going on."

"So you have come to the city to try your luck?"

"I want to go to California."

"Oh, I see—to the gold-diggings."

"Have you ever been there, sir?"

"No; but I have had many friends go there. When do you expect to start?"

"Why, that is what puzzles me," Joe replied frankly. "I may not be able to go at all."

"Why not?"

"I haven't got money enough to buy a ticket."

"You have got some money, haven't you?"

"Yes—I have fifty dollars; but I need that a hundred dollars is the lowest price for a ticket."

"Don't be discouraged, my young friend," said the stranger, in the most friendly manner. "I am aware that the ordinary charge for a steerage ticket is one hundred dollars, but exceptions are sometimes made."

"I don't think they will make one in my case," said Joe. "I told the agent I would agree to pay the other, half as soon as I earned it, but he said he didn't do business in that way."

"Of course. You are a stranger to him, don't you see? That makes all the difference in the world. Now, I happen to be personally acquainted with him. I am sure he would do me a favor. Just give me the fifty dollars, and I'll warrant I'll get the ticket for you."

Joe was not wholly without caution, and the thought of parting with his money to a stranger didn't strike him favorably. Not that he had any doubts as to his new friend's integrity, but it didn't

seem businesslike.

"Can't I go with you to the office?" he suggested.

"I think I can succeed better in the negotiation if I am alone," said the stranger. "I'll tell you what—you needn't hand me the money, provided you agree to take the ticket off my hands at fifty dollars if I secure it."

"Certainly I will, and be very thankful to you."

"I always like to help young men along," said the stranger benevolently. "I'll see about it to-morrow. Now, where can I meet you?"

"In this room. How will that do?"

"Perfectly. I am sure I can get the ticket for you. Be sure to have the money ready."

"I'll be sure," said Joe cheerfully.

"And hark you, my young friend," continued the stranger, "don't say a word to any one of what I am going to do for you, or I might have other applications, which I should be obliged to refuse."

"Very well, sir. I will remember."

Punctually at four the next day the stranger entered the room, where Joe was already awaiting him.

"Have you succeeded?" asked Joe eagerly.

The stranger nodded.

"Let us go up to your room and complete our business. For reasons which I have already mentioned, I prefer that the transaction should be secret."

"All right, sir."

Joe got his key, and led the way up-stairs.

"I had a little difficulty with the agent," said the stranger; "but finally he yielded, out of old friendship." He produced a large card, which read thus:

CALIFORNIA STEAMSHIP COMPANY.

THE BEARER

Is Entitled to One Steerage Passage

FROM NEW YORK TO SAN FRANCISCO STEAMER COLUMBUS.

Below this was printed the name of the agent. Joe paid over the money joyfully.

"I am very much obliged to you," he said gratefully.

"Don't mention it," said the stranger, pocketing the fifty dollars.

"Good day! Sorry to leave you, but I am to meet a gentleman at five."

He went down-stairs, and left Joe alone.

CHAPTER VII

JOE GETS INTO TROUBLE

"How lucky I have been," thought Joe, in the best of spirits. "There wasn't one chance in ten of my succeeding, and yet I have succeeded. Everything has turned out right. If I hadn't met this man, I couldn't have got a ticket at half price."

Joe found that after paying his hotel expenses, he should have a dollar left over. This would be rather a small sum to start with in California, but Joe didn't trouble himself much about that.

In the course of the day Joe found himself in the upper part of the Bowery. It seemed to him a very lively street, and he was much interested in looking in at the shop windows as he passed.

He was standing before a window, when a stone from some quarter struck the pane and shivered it in pieces.

Joe was startled, and was gazing at the scene of havoc in bewilderment, when a stout German, the proprietor, rushed out and seized him by the collar.

"Aha! I have you, you young rascal!" he exclaimed furiously. "I'll make you pay for this!"

By this time Joe had recovered his senses.

"Let me alone!" he exclaimed.

"I let you know!" exclaimed the angry man. "You break my window!

You pay me five dollar pretty quick, or I send you to prison!"

"I didn't break your window! It's a lie!"

"You tell me I lie?" shouted the angry German. "First you break my window, then you tell me I lie! You, one bad boy—you one loafer!"

"I don't know who broke your window," said Joe, "but I tell you I didn't. I was standing here, looking in, when, all at once, I heard a crash."

"You take me for one fool, perhaps," said his captor, puffing with excitement. "You want to get away, hey?"

"Yes, I do."

"And get no money for my window?"

By this time a crowd had collected around the chief actors in this scene. They were divided in opinion.

"Don't he look wicked, the young scamp?" said a thin-visaged female with a long neck.

"Yes," said her companion. "He's one of them street rowdies that go around doin' mischief. They come around and pull my bell, and run away, the villians!"

"What's the matter, my boy?" asked a tall man with sandy hair, addressing himself to Joe in a friendly tone.

"This man says I broke his window."

"How was it? Did you break it?"

"No, sir. I was standing looking in, when a stone came from

somewhere and broke it."

"Look here, sir," said the sandy-haired man, addressing himself to the German, "what reason have you for charging this boy with breaking your window?"

"He stood shoost in front of it," said the German.

"If he had broken it, he would have run away. Didn't that occur to you?"

"Some one broke mine window," said the German.

"Of course; but a boy who threw a stone must do so from a distance, and he wouldn't be likely to run up at once to the broken window."

"Of course not. The man's a fool!" were the uncomplimentary remarks of the bystanders, who a minute before had looked upon Joe as undoubtedly guilty.

"You've got no case at all," said Joe's advocate. "Let go the boy's collar, or I shall advise him to charge you with assault and battery."

"Maybe you one friend of his?" said the German.

"I never saw the boy before in my life," said the other, "but I don't want him falsely accused."

"Somebody must pay for my window."

"That's fair; but it must be the boy or man that broke it, not my young friend here, who had no more to do with it than myself. I sympathize with you, and wish you could catch the scamp that did it."

At that moment a policeman came up.

"What's the matter?" he asked.

"My window was broke—dat's what's de matter."

"Who broke it?" asked the policeman.

"I caught dat boy standing outside," pointing to Joe.

"Aha, you young rascal! I've caught you, have I? I've had my eye on you for weeks!"

And Joe, to his dismay, found himself collared anew.

"I've only been in the city two days," said Joe.

"Take him to jail!" exclaimed the German.

And the policeman was about to march off poor Joe, when a voice of authority stayed him.

"Officer, release that boy!" said the sandy-haired man sternly.

"I'll take you along, too, if you interfere."

"Release that boy!" repeated the other sternly; "and arrest the German for assault and battery. I charge him with assaulting this boy!"

"Who are you?" demanded the officer insolently.

"My name is –, and I am one of the new police commissioners," said the sandy-haired man quietly.

Never was there a quicker change from insolence to fawning.

"Oh, I beg your pardon, sir," said the officer, instantly releasing Joe. "I didn't know you."

"Nor your duty, either, it appears," said the commissioner sternly. "Without one word of inquiry into the circumstances, you were about to arrest this boy. A pretty minister of justice you are!"

"Shall I take this man along, sir?" asked the policeman, quite subdued.

At this suggestion the bulky Teuton hurried into his shop, trembling with alarm. With great difficulty he concealed himself under the counter.

"You may let him go this time. He has some excuse for his conduct, having suffered loss by the breaking of his window. As for you, officer, unless you are more careful in future, you will not long remain a member of the force."

The crowd disappeared, only Joe and his advocate remaining behind.

"I am grateful to you, sir, for your kindness," said Joe. "But for you I should have been carried to the station-house."

"It is fortunate I came along just as I did. Are you a stranger in the city?"

"Yes, sir."

"You must be careful not to run into danger. There are many perils in the city for the in experienced."

"Thank you, sir. I shall remember your advice."

The next day, about two hours before the time of sailing, Joe went down to the wharf.

As he was going on board a man stopped him.

"Have you got a ticket?" he asked.

"Yes, sir," said Joe, "a steerage ticket. There it is."

"Where did you get this?" asked the man.

Joe told him.

"How much did you pay for it?"

"Fifty dollars."

"Then you have lost your money, for it is a bogus ticket. You can't travel on it."

Joe stared at the other in blank dismay. The earth seemed to be sinking under him. He realized that he had been outrageously swindled, and that he was farther from going to California than ever.

CHAPTER VIII

JOE'S LUCK CHANGES

The intelligence that his ticket was valueless came to Joe like a thunderbolt from a clear sky. The minute before he was in high spirits—his prospects seemed excellent and his path bright.

"What shall I do?" he ejaculated.

"I can't tell you," said the officer. "One thing is clear—you can't go to California on that ticket."

Poor Joe! For the moment hope was dead within his breast. He had but one dollar left and that was only half the amount necessary to carry him back to the village where we found him at the commencement of our story. Even if he were able to go back, he felt he would be ashamed to report the loss of his money. The fact that he had allowed himself to be swindled mortified him not a little. He would never hear the last of it if he returned to Oakville.

"No; I wouldn't go back if I could," he decided.

"Wouldn't I like to get hold of the man that sold me the ticket!"

He had hardly given mental expression to this wish when it was gratified. The very man passed him and was about to cross the gangplank into the steamer. Joe's eyes flashed, and he sprang

forward and seized the man by the arm.

The swindler's countenance changed when he recognized Joe, but he quickly decided upon his course.

"What do you want, Johnny?" he asked composedly.

"What do I want? I want my fifty dollars back."

"I don't know what you are talking about."

"You sold me a bogus ticket for fifty dollars," said Joe stoutly.

"Here it is. Take it back and give me my money."

"The boy must be crazy," said the swindler.

"Did you sell him that ticket?" inquired the officer.

"Never saw him before in my life."

"Ain't you mistaken, boy?" asked the officer.

"No, sir. This is the very man."

"Have you any business here?" asked the officer.

"Yes," said the man; "I've taken a steerage ticket to San Francisco.

Here it is."

"All right. Go in."

He tore himself from Joe's grasp and went on board the steamer. Our hero, provoked, was about to follow him, when the officer said:

"Stand back! You have no ticket."

"That man bought his ticket with my money."

"That is nothing to me," said the officer. "It may be so, or you may be mistaken."

"I am not mistaken," said Joe.

"You can report it to the police—that is, if you think you can prove it. Now, stand back!"

Poor Joe! He had been worsted in the encounter with this arch-swindler. He would sail for San Francisco on the Columbus. Perhaps he would make his fortune there, while Joe, whom he had so swindled, might, within three days, be reduced to beggary.

Joe felt that his confidence in human nature was badly shaken. Injustice and fraud seemed to have the best of it in this world, so far as his experience went, and it really seemed as if dishonesty were the best policy. It is a hard awakening for a trusting boy, when he first comes in contact with selfishness and corruption.

Joe fell back because he was obliged to. He looked around, hoping that he might somewhere see a policeman, for he wanted to punish the scoundrel to whom he owed his unhappiness and loss. But, as frequently happens, when an officer is wanted none is to be seen.

Joe did not leave the wharf. Time was not of much value to him, and he decided that he might as well remain and see the steamer start on which he had fondly hoped to be a passenger.

Meanwhile, the preparations for departure went steadily forward. Trunks arrived and were conveyed on board; passengers, accompanied by their friends, came, and all was hurry and bustle.

Two young men, handsomely dressed and apparently possessed of larger means than the great majority of the passengers, got out of a hack and paused close to where Joe was

standing.

"Dick," said one, "I'm really sorry you are not going with me. I shall feel awfully lonely without you."

"I am very much disappointed, Charlie, but duty will keep me at home.

My father's sudden, alarming sickness has broken up all my plans."

"Yes, Dick, of course you can't go."

"If my father should recover, in a few weeks, I will come out and join you, Charlie."

"I hope you may be able to, Dick. By the way, how about your ticket?"

"I shall have to lose it, unless the company will give me another in place of it."

"They ought to do it."

"Yes, but they are rather stiff about it. I would sell it for a hundred dollars."

Joe heard this and his heart beat high.

He pressed forward, and said eagerly:

"Will you sell it to me for that?"

The young man addressed as Dick looked, in surprise, at the poorly dressed boy who had addressed him.

"Do you want to go to California?" he asked.

"Yes, sir," said Joe. "I am very anxious to go."

"Do I understand you to offer a hundred dollars for my ticket?"

"Yes, sir; but I can't pay you now."

"When do you expect to be able to pay me, then?"

"Not till I've earned the money in California."

"Have you thought before of going?"

"Yes, sir. Until an hour ago I thought that it was all arranged that I should go. I came down here and found that the ticket I had bought was a bogus one, and that I had been swindled out of my money."

"That was a mean trick," said Dick Scudder indignantly. "Do you know the man that cheated you?"

"Yes; he is on board the steamer."

"How much money have you got left?"

"A dollar."

"Only a dollar? And you are not afraid to land in California with this sum?"

"No, sir. I shall go to work at once."

"Charlie," said Dick, turning to his friend, "I will do as you say.

Are you willing to take this boy into your stateroom in my place?"

"Yes," said Charles Folsom promptly. "He looks like a good boy. I accept him as my roommate."

"All right," said the other. "My boy, what is your name?"

"Joe Mason."

"Well, Joe, here is my ticket. If you are ever able to pay a hundred dollars for this ticket, you may pay it to my friend, Charles Folsom. Now, I advise you both to be getting aboard, as

it is nearly time for the steamer to sail. I won't go on with you, Charlie, as I must go back to my father's bedside."

"Good-by, sir. God bless you!" said Joe gratefully. "Good-by, Joe, and good luck!"

As they went over the plank, the officer, recognizing Joe, said roughly:

"Stand back, boy! Didn't I tell you you couldn't go aboard without a ticket?"

"Here is my ticket," said Joe.

"A first-class ticket!" exclaimed the officer, in amazement. "Where did you get it?"

"I bought it," answered Joe.

"I shall go to California, after all!" thought our hero exultingly.

CHAPTER IX

THE FIRST DAY ON BOARD

"We will look up our stateroom first, Joe," said his new friend. "It ought to be a good one."

The stateroom proved to be No. 16, very well located and spacious for a stateroom. But to Joe it seemed very small for two persons. He was an inexperienced traveler and did not understand that life on board ship is widely different from life on shore. His companion had been to Europe and was used to steamer life.

"I think, Joe," said he, "that I shall put you in the top berth. The lower berth is considered more desirable, but I claim it on the score of age and infirmity."

"You don't look very old, or infirm," said Joe.

"I am twenty-three. And you?"

"Fifteen—nearly sixteen."

"I have a stateroom trunk, which will just slip in under my berth.

Where is your luggage?"

Joe looked embarrassed.

"I don't know but you will feel ashamed of me," he said; "but the only extra clothes I have are tied up in this handkerchief."

Charles Folsom whistled.

"Well," said he, "you are poorly provided. What have you got inside?"

"A couple of shirts, three collars, two handkerchiefs, and a pair of stockings."

"And you are going a journey of thousands of miles! But never mind," he said kindly. "I am not much larger than you, and, if you need it, I can lend you. Once in California, you will have less trouble than if you were loaded down with clothes. I must get you to tell me your story when there is time."

They came on deck just in time to see the steamer swing out of the dock.

There were some of the passengers with sober faces. They had bidden farewell to friends and relatives whom they might not see for years—perhaps never again. They were going to a new country, where hardships undoubtedly awaited them, and where they must take their chances of health and success. Some, too, feared seasickness, a malady justly dreaded by all who have ever felt its prostrating effects. But Joe only felt joyful exhilaration.

"You look happy, Joe," said young Folsom.

"I feel so," said Joe.

"Are you hoping to make your fortune in California?"

"I am hoping to make a living," said Joe.

"Didn't you make a living here at home?"

"A poor living, with no prospects ahead. I didn't mind hard work and poor clothes, if there had been a prospect of something

better by and by."

"Tell me your story. Where were you living?" Charles Folsom listened attentively.

"Major Norton didn't appear disposed to pamper you, or bring you up in luxury, that's a fact. It would have been hard lines if, on account of losing your aunt's legacy, you had been compelled to go back to Oakville."

"I wouldn't have gone," said Joe resolutely.

"What would you have done?"

"Stayed in New York, and got a living somehow, even if I had to black boots in the street."

"I guess you'll do. You've got the right spirit. It takes boys and men like you for pioneers."

Joe was gratified at his companion's approval.

"Now," said Folsom, "I may as well tell you my story. I am the son of a New York merchant who is moderately rich. I entered the counting-room at seventeen, and have remained there ever since, with the exception of four months spent in Europe."

"If you are rich already, why do you go out to California?" asked Joe.

"I am not going to the mines; I am going to prospect a little for the firm. Some day San Francisco will be a large city. I am going to see how soon it will pay for our house to establish a branch there."

"I see," said Joe.

"I shall probably go out to the mines and take a general

survey of the country; but, as you see, I do not go out to obtain employment."

"It must be jolly not to have to work," said Joe, "but to have plenty of money to pay your expenses."

"Well, I suppose it is convenient. I believe you haven't a large cash surplus?"

"I have a dollar."

"You've got some pluck to travel so far away from home with such a slender capital, by Jove!"

"I don't know that it's pluck. It's necessity."

"Something of both, perhaps. Don't you feel afraid of what may happen?"

"No," said Joe. "California is a new country, and there must be plenty of work. Now, I am willing to work and I don't believe I shall starve."

"That's the way to feel, Joe. At the worst, you have me to fall back upon. I won't see you suffer."

"It is very lucky for me. I hope I shan't give you any trouble."

"If you do, I'll tell you of it," said Folsom, laughing. "The fact is, I feel rather as if I were your guardian. An odd feeling that, as hitherto I have been looked after by others. Now it is my turn to assume authority."

"You will find me obedient," said Joe, smiling. "Seriously, I am so inexperienced in the way of the world that I shall consider it a great favor if you will give me any hints you may think useful to me."

Folsom became more and more pleased with his young charge. He saw that he was manly, amiable, and of good principles, with only one great fault—poverty—which he was quite willing to overlook.

They selected their seats in the saloon, and were fortunate enough to be assigned to the captain's table. Old travelers know that those who sit at this table are likely to fare better than those who are farther removed.

While Folsom was walking the deck with an old friend, whom he had found among the passengers, Joe went on an exploring expedition.

He made his way to that portion of the deck appropriated to the steerage passengers. Among them his eye fell on the man who swindled him.

"You here!" exclaimed the fellow in amazement.

"Yes," said Joe, "I am here."

"I thought you said your ticket wasn't good?"

"It wasn't, as you very well know."

"I don't know anything about it. How did you smuggle yourself aboard?"

"I didn't smuggle myself aboard at all. I came on like the rest of the passengers."

"Why haven't I seen you before?"

"I am not a steerage passenger. I am traveling first-class."

"You don't mean it!" ejaculated the fellow, thoroughly astonished.

"You told me you hadn't any more money."

"So I did, and that shows that you were the man that sold me the bogus ticket."

"Nothing of the kind," said the other, but he seemed taken aback by Joe's charge. "Well, all I can say is, that you know how to get round. When a man or boy can travel first-class without a cent of money, he'll do."

"I wouldn't have come at all if I had had to swindle a poor boy out of his money," said Joe.

Joe walked off without receiving an answer. He took pains to ascertain the name of the man who had defrauded him. He was entered on the passenger-list as Henry Hogan.

CHAPTER X

THE DETECTED THIEF

"Do you expect to be seasick, Joe?"

"I don't know, Mr. Folsom. This is the first time I have ever been at sea."

"I have crossed the Atlantic twice, and been sick each time. I suppose I have a tendency that way."

"How does it feel?" asked Joe curiously.

Folsom laughed.

"It cannot be described," he answered.

"Then I would rather remain ignorant," said Joe.

"You are right. This is a case where ignorance is bliss decidedly."

Twenty-four hours out Folsom's anticipations were realized. He experienced nausea and his head swam.

Returning from a walk on deck, Joe found his guardian lying down in the stateroom.

"Is anything the matter, Mr. Folsom?"

"Nothing but what I expected. The demon of the sea has me in his gripe."

"Can I do anything for you?"

"Nothing at present, Joe. What art can minister to a stomach diseased? I must wait patiently, and it will wear off. Don't you feel any of the symptoms?"

"Oh, no—I feel bully," said Joe. "I've got a capital appetite."

"I hope you will be spared. It would be dismal for both of us to be groaning with seasickness."

"Shall I stay with you?"

"No—go on deck. That is the best way to keep well. My sickness won't last more than a day or two."

The young man's expectations were realized. After forty-eight hours he recovered from his temporary indisposition and reappeared on deck.

He found that his young companion, had made a number of acquaintances, and had become a general favorite through his frank and pleasant manners.

"I think you'll get on, Joe," said he. "You make friends easily."

"I try to do it," said Joe modestly.

"You are fast getting over your country greenness. Of course you couldn't help having a share of it, having never lived outside of a small country village."

"I am glad you think so, Mr. Folsom. I suppose I was very green and I haven't got over it yet, but in six months I hope to get rid of it wholly."

"It won't take six months at the rate you are advancing."

Day succeeded day and Joe was not sick at all. He carried a good appetite to every meal and entered into the pleasures of sea

life with zest. He played shuffle-board on deck, guessed daily the ship's run, was on the alert for distant sails, and managed in one way or another to while away the time cheerfully.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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