

FALLING IN WITH FORTUNE



By HORATIO ALGER, JR.

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Horatio Alger, Jr. and Arthur M. Winfield

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FALLING IN WITH FORTUNE

OR

*THE EXPERIENCES OF A YOUNG
SECRETARY*

BY

HORATIO ALGER, Jr.

AUTHOR OF "OUT FOR BUSINESS," "THE YOUNG BOATMAN,"
"SINK OR SWIM," "LUCK OR PLUCK," "PAUL, THE
PEDDLER," "ONLY AN IRISH BOY," ETC.

COMPLETED BY

ARTHUR M. WINFIELD

AUTHOR OF "THE ROVER BOYS AT SCHOOL," "THE ROVER BOYS
ON THE OCEAN," "THE ROVER BOYS IN THE JUNGLE,"
"THE ROVER BOYS OUT WEST," ETC.

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IS THIS YOUR RING, AUNT?
"IS THIS YOUR RING, AUNT?"

FALLING IN WITH FORTUNE.

PREFACE.

"Falling in with Fortune" is a complete tale in itself, but forms the second of two companion volumes, the first being entitled, "Out for Business."

In this story are related the adventures of Robert Frost, who figured in the other volume mentioned. In the first tale we saw how Robert was compelled to leave home on account of the harsh actions of his step-father, and what he did while "out for business," as he frequently expressed it.

In the present tale our hero, by a curious combination of circumstances, becomes the private secretary to a rich lady, and travels with this lady to England and other places. The lady has a nephew whose character is none of the best, and as this young man had formerly occupied the position now assigned to Robert, our hero's place becomes no easy one to fill. Yet his natural stoutheartedness helps him to overcome every obstacle and brings his many surprising adventures to a satisfactory ending.

The two stories, "Out for Business" and "Falling in with Fortune," give to the reader the last tales begun by that famous writer of boys' tales, Mr. Horatio Alger, Jr., whose books have sold to the extent of hundreds of thousands of copies, not alone in America, but likewise in England, Australia, and elsewhere. The gifted writer was stricken when on the point of finishing the tales, and when he saw that he could not complete them himself, it was to the present writer that he turned, and an outline for a conclusion was drawn up which met with his approval--and this outline had been filled out in order to bring the stories to a finish and make them, as nearly as possible, what Mr. Alger intended they should be. The success of the first of the companion tales causes the present writer to hope that the second will meet with equal favor.

ARTHUR M. WINFIELD.

July 1, 1900.

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CHAPTER I.

THROWN OUT OF EMPLOYMENT.

"A telegram for you, Robert."

"A telegram for me?" repeated Robert Frost, as he took the envelope which his fellow clerk, Livingston Palmer, handed him. "I wonder where it can be from?"

"Perhaps it's from your mother. Your step-father may be sick again, and she may want you at home."

"No, Mr. Talbot is quite well now; my mother said so in her letter of yesterday. I imagine this is from Timberville, Michigan."

"Is your friend, Dick Marden, still up there attending to that lumber business for his uncle?"

"Yes."

"Didn't he want you to stay there with him?"

"He did, but I told him I would rather remain in the city. I like working for Mr. Gray, here in the ticket office, a great deal better than I do lumbering."

"I can see that. You are an out and out business boy, Robert. I shouldn't be surprised some day to see you have a cut-rate ticket office of your own."

"I'd rather be in a bank, or some large wholesale house, Livingston. But excuse me while I read the telegram."

"Certainly. Don't mind me."

Tearing open the envelope, Robert Frost pulled out the bit of yellow paper, upon which was written the following:

"I am called away to California and to Canada on business. May remain for

three months. Will write to you later on. My uncle's case is in a bad mix-up again.

"Dick Marden."

Robert read the brief communication with much interest. Dick Marden was much older than the boy, but a warm friendship existed between the pair.

"No bad news, I hope," said Livingston Palmer, after waiting on a customer, who had come in to buy a cut-rate ticket to Denver.

"Dick Marden has gone to California. He says the Amberton claim to that timber land is in a bad mix-up again."

"I see. Well, that doesn't concern you, does it?"

"Not exactly. But I would like to see Mr. Amberton come out ahead on the deal, for I think he deserves it."

"I know you worked hard enough to get that map for him," said Livingston Palmer, laughing. "Have you ever heard anything more of those two rascals who tried to get the map away from you?"

"No--and I don't want to hear from them. All I want is to be left alone, to make my own way in the world," concluded Robert.

Robert Frost was a lad of sixteen, strongly built, and with a handsome, expressive face. He had been born and brought up in the village of Granville, some fifty or sixty miles from Chicago, but had left his home several months before to do as he had just said, make his own way in the world.

The readers of the companion tale to this, "Out for Business," already know why Robert left home. To new readers I would state that it was on account of his step-father, James Talbot, who had married the widow Frost mainly for the purpose of getting possession of the fortune which had been left to her,--a fortune which upon her death was to go to her only child, Robert.

From his first entrance into the handsome and comfortable Frost homestead, James Talbot had acted very dictatorial toward Robert, and the boy, being naturally high-strung, had resented this, and many a bitter quarrel had ensued. At

last Robert could stand his step-father's manner no longer, and, with his mother's consent, he left home for Chicago, to try his fortunes in the great city by the lakes.

Robert was fortunate in falling in with a rough but kind-hearted miner named Dick Marden, and the miner, who was well-to-do, obtained for the youth a position in the cut-rate ticket office of one Peter Gray, an old acquaintance. Gray gave Robert first five and then seven dollars per week salary, and to this Marden added sufficient to make an even twelve dollars, so the boy was enabled to live quite comfortably.

Dick Marden had an uncle living at Timberville, Michigan, who was old and feeble, and who was having a great deal of trouble about some timber lands which he claimed, but which an Englishman and a French Canadian were trying to get away from him. There was a map of the lands in the possession of an old lumberman named Herman Wenrich, and his daughter Nettie, who lived in Chicago, and this map Robert obtained for Marden and his uncle, Felix Amberton, and delivered it to them, although not until he had had several encounters with the people who wished to keep the map from Amberton. For his services Robert was warmly thanked by both Amberton and Marden, and the lumberman promised to do the handsome thing by the boy as soon as his titles to the lumber lands were clearly established in law.

During the time spent in Chicago Robert had had considerable trouble with his step-father, who was trying his best to get hold of some of Mrs. Talbot's money, with the ostensible purpose of going into the real estate business in the great city of the lakes. But a stroke of paralysis had placed Mr. Talbot on a sick bed, and upon his recovery he had told both his wife and his step-son that he intended to turn over a new leaf. Mrs. Talbot believed him, but Robert was suspicious, for he felt that his step-father's nature was too utterly mean for him to reform entirely.

"I hope he does reform, mother," the boy said to his fond parent. "But if I were you I would not expect too much--at least, at the start. I would not trust him with my money."

"He has not asked me for money," had been Mrs. Talbot's reply.

"But he wanted that ten thousand dollars to open up with in Chicago."

"That was before he had the attack of paralysis, Robert."

"He may want it again, as soon as he is himself once more. Take my advice and be careful what you do." And so mother and son parted, not to see each other again for a long while. But Robert was right; less than two months later James Talbot applied again for the money, stating that he would be very careful of it, so that not a dollar should be lost. He thought himself a keen business man, but thus far he had allowed every dollar that had come into his possession to slip through his fingers.

Robert felt sorry that Dick Marden had gone to California, for he had reckoned on seeing his friend upon his return to Chicago.

"Now, I suppose I won't see him for a long while," he thought.

Robert had settled down at the office, expecting the position to be a permanent one, but on the Saturday following the receipt of Marden's telegram a surprise awaited him. Mr. Gray called him into his private office.

"Robert," he said, "I have bad news for you."

"Bad news, Mr. Gray? What is it?"

"I am sorry to say it, but I shall have to dispense with your services from tonight."

Robert flushed, and felt dismayed. This announcement was like a thunderbolt from a clear sky.

"Are you dissatisfied with me, Mr. Gray?" he asked.

"Not at all. Your services have been entirely satisfactory."

"Then why do you send me away?"

"I cannot very well help it. I have a nephew from the country who wants a place in the city. His father has written me, asking as a favor that I will give Donald a place in my office. He is poor, and I don't see how I can refuse his request."

"Yes, sir, I see. I am glad you are not discharging me on account of dissatisfaction."

"You may be assured of that. I suppose you have some money saved up?"

"Yes, sir."

"And no doubt your friend Mr. Marden will provide for you?"

"Mr. Marden has gone to California for three months."

"But you know his address there?"

"No, sir."

Peter Gray looked sober, for he was a man of good feelings.

"Perhaps I can arrange to keep you," he said. "You know as much about the business as Mr. Palmer. I can discharge him and keep you."

"I would not consent to that, sir. Livingston Palmer needs his salary, and I wouldn't be willing to deprive him of it. I can get along somehow. When do you wish me to go?"

"My nephew arrived at my house this morning. He will be ready to go to work on Monday morning."

"Very well, sir."

"Of course I will give you a good recommendation--a first class one."

"Thank you, sir."

At six o'clock the broker handed Robert his week's wages, and Robert went out of the office, out of a place, and with prospects by no means flattering.

Fortunately for Robert he had about twenty dollars in his pocket, so that he was not in any immediate danger of suffering from want. He would have had more, but had bought some necessary articles of wearing apparel, assuming that his position was a permanent one.

Of course he began to seek for another place immediately. He examined the advertising columns of the daily papers, and inquired for anything he thought would suit him. But it so happened that business was unusually quiet, and he met

with refusals everywhere, even where it was apparent that he was regarded favorably. There was one exception, however. He was offered three dollars a week in a small furnishing goods store, but this he felt that he could not afford to accept.

As he came back to his boarding place every afternoon, he grew more and more despondent.

"Is there no place open to me in this big city?" he asked himself.

One thing he was resolved upon. He would not go back to his old home. It would be too much of a triumph for his step-father, who had often predicted that Robert would fail in his undertaking to support himself. And yet he must do something.

He began to watch the newsboys near the Sherman House briskly disposing of their merchandise.

"I wonder if they make much," he thought.

He put the question to one pleasant-looking boy, of whom he bought an evening paper.

"I make about sixty or seventy cents a day," was the reply.

Sixty or seventy cents a day! That meant about four dollars a week. It was scarcely better than the salary offered in the furnishing goods store, and the employment would not be so agreeable. He felt that he should not like to have his step-father or any one who knew him in his native town seeing him selling daily papers in the street, so he decided not to take up that business except as a last resort.

One day he went into a large dry goods store to purchase a small article. He made his purchase and started to go out.

All at once he heard a cry, proceeding from a lady.

"I have lost my purse."

"That boy's got it!" said a voice.

Then much to his bewilderment Robert found himself seized by the shoulder, and a pocket-book was drawn out from the side pocket of his sack coat.

"Send for an officer!" said the floor-walker. "The boy is a thief!"

CHAPTER II.

THE ACCUSATION, AND WHAT FOLLOWED.

A person who is entirely innocent is likely to look confused when suddenly charged with theft. It came upon Robert so suddenly that he could not at first summon presence of mind enough to deny it. But at last he said indignantly, "I didn't take it. I never stole in my life."

"That's a likely story," said the floor-walker. "It got into your pocket itself, I suppose."

"I don't know how it got there. I only know I didn't put it there."

"Why did you come into the store--except to steal?"

"I came here to buy a necktie."

Just then in came an officer who had been summoned.

"Arrest that boy!" said the floor-walker. "He is a thief."

Robert started indignantly when the officer put his hand on his shoulder.

"That is false!" he said.

"Come along!" said the officer.

"Is there no one here who will speak for me?" asked Robert, looking about him on the suspicious and distrustful faces that surrounded him.

"Yes, I will do so," said a voice, and a tall, dignified looking gentleman with white hair pressed forward toward him.

All eyes were turned upon the gentleman.

"The boy is not a thief!" he said.

"Then perhaps," said the floor-walker sarcastically, "you can tell who is?"

"I can," returned the other calmly. "*There* is the thief!"

He pointed to a flashily attired young man who started to go out--protesting that it was all a mistake.

"That won't go down," said the floor-walker. "Who are you, sir, that try to screen the boy at the expense of an innocent man?"

"I am the Rev. Dr. Blank; I am pretty well known in Chicago, I believe."

This statement made a sensation. Some of those present recognized the clergyman, and even the floorwalker was impressed.

"Are you sure of this, sir?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Did you see the young man steal the pocket-book?"

"No, but I saw him put it into the boy's pocket."

By this time the policeman's attention had been called to the real thief.

"The minister is right, I make no doubt," he said. "I recognize that man. He is a well-known thief."

"Arrest him then!" said the floor-walker sullenly, for he was really sorry that Robert had been proven innocent.

The officer released his hold on our hero, and prepared to leave the store in charge of the real thief, who had, of course, emptied the pocket-book before placing it in Robert's pocket.

"Will you be present at the trial?" he asked the clergyman.

"Yes. There is my address. You can summon me."

"How can I thank you, sir?" said Robert warmly. "You have saved me from arrest."

"Thank God for that, my boy. I am glad that word of mine should do you such a service."

Robert walked out of the store feeling that he had had a very narrow escape. This was a relief, but it was quickly succeeded by anxious thoughts--for he was nearly out of money. His prospects were so uncertain that he blamed himself for incurring the expense of a necktie, though it had only cost him twenty-five cents.

Robert continued to seek for a position, but he seemed out of luck. Once he came near success. It was in a furnishing goods store. The shopkeeper seemed inclined to engage him, but before the decisive word was spoken his wife entered the store. She looked at Robert scrutinizingly.

"I think I have seen you before," she said sharply.

"I don't know, madam. I don't remember you."

"But I remember you. It was two days since. I saw you in a store on State Street. You were about to be arrested for stealing a wallet."

Robert blushed.

"Did you stay till it was discovered that someone else took it?" he asked.

"I know you got off somehow."

"I got off because I was innocent. I was as innocent as you were."

"Do you mean to insult me, boy?" asked the lady sharply.

"No, madam. I only say that I was innocent. It was shown that a man then in the store took the wallet. He was arrested, and I was released."

"Very likely he was a confederate of yours."

"If he had been he would have said so."

"At any rate, circumstances were very suspicious. Were you thinking of hiring this boy, William?"

"Yes, I liked his looks," answered the shopkeeper.

"Then be guided by me, and don't hire him."

"Why not? The charge seems to have been false."

"At any rate, he has been under suspicion. He can't be trusted."

"In that case," said Robert proudly, "I withdraw my application. I need the place enough, but if you are afraid to trust me I don't care to come."

"I am not afraid to trust you," said the owner of the shop kindly, "but my wife seems to have taken a prejudice against you."

"In that case I will go."

Robert bowed and left the store. His heart was full of disappointment and bitterness, and he resented the cruel want of consideration shown by the woman who had interfered between him and employment.

In fact, he had but fifteen cents left in his pocketbook. It was time for dinner, and he felt that he must eat. But where his next meal, outside of his boarding house, was to come from, he could not tell.

He was on State Street, and must go to another part of the city to find a cheap restaurant. He chanced to be passing the same store where he had almost suffered arrest.

"I wish I had never gone in there," he reflected. "It cost me a place."

As this thought passed through his mind a lady, richly dressed, passed through the portals of the store and stepped on the sidewalk.

Her glance rested on the boy.

"Didn't I see you in this store day before yesterday?" she asked.

"What!" thought Robert. "Does she remember me also?"

"I was here, madam," he replied.

"You were charged with stealing a wallet?"