

HOW TO RISE IN THE WORLD

Turning Points that Led to the Success of Andrew Carnegie.

FROM BOBBIN-BOY TO MILLIONAIRE

Remarkable Features of a Career Illustrative of American Opportunities—Some Advice to Salaried Men.

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Having earned my own living for fifty years and been my own master for thirty-one, I rejoice to look back upon my start in the world with no other capital than honest poverty and a good home. No boy can have greater incentives to success in life than these. Sharing the fruits of my father and mother's industry, I learned in my infancy to respect work and longed to be a contributor to the common purse. We lived in Dunfermline, thirteen miles from Edinburgh, Scotland. My father, William Carnegie, was a successful master weaver; my mother a hard-working housewife, who yet found time to instruct me, until I was 8, in reading, writing and ciphering—the equipment that gave me my first betterment.

It was my first ambition to be a master weaver, like my father; to have four looms of my own; to employ apprentices; to make speeches in the evening, as he did, on public questions—he was a consistent radical. And I might have become a weaver but for something that happened when I was 10 years old and had already been going to school for two years.

One evening I heard my father tell my

our home rested secure on my income. For my father, who had been naturalized as an American citizen in 1853, had died soon afterwards. His naturalization while I was a minor made me an American citizen. At the age of 16 I was the family mainstay. First Business Transactions. About this time came my first independent financial operation. I don't consider that a salaried man, no matter what his work or his wages, is in business, for he works for somebody else, not for himself. There were six newspapers in Pittsburgh and so there had to be six copies made of the press dispatches received in our office. The man who had the job of making these copies got \$5 a week for it. When he offered me \$1 to do his work I gladly agreed. I was working for myself now, on an independent contract, doing something beyond my task. That dollar a week I considered my own. It did not go to the family support. It was my first capital.

February 2, 1854, the Pennsylvania railroad was completed to Pittsburgh. In the telegraph office we knew all about this long before the road got on and began to see, in our office, Thomas A. Scott, superintendent of that end of the road. I became acquainted with him, because I was the operator through whom he sent many of his messages. He asked one of the young men in his employment if he thought I would like to leave the telegraph company and come and work for him as his private operator. The young man said he didn't think so. But when this same young man told me what had occurred I asked him to go and tell Mr. Scott that I would be glad to enter his service. I was; I saw a chance to better myself. The salary was \$35 a month, ten more than I had been getting. There is never a boy or a man employed whose chance doesn't come to him. The thing is to know it, and seize it.

I have spoken of a constant determina-

Every telegram was signed "Thomas A. Scott."

Presently Mr. Scott, who had heard about the trains all being late and an accident on the road, came hurriedly in and sat down to a pile of telegrams. "Here it is 10 o'clock," said he, "and the express train in the freights hung up and the devil to pay. Wire—"

"Excuse me, Mr. Scott," said I, "I wired the orders I thought you would send. Here are the telegrams, and I think you'll find the through freight already in the yards."

He looked hard at me and never said a word. He looked through the telegrams I had sent in his name and he kept on being silent. I wondered what he was thinking, but I didn't say anything. A few days passed. One morning J. Edgar Thomson, the president, came into our office in Pittsburgh. I felt a hand on my shoulder and looked up. "Is this Andy?" he asked. "Yes, sir," said I. "Well," said he, "I've been hearing about you. Scott told us the other night about what that little Scotch devil of a boy had been doing! And with that he laughed and I felt I had a friend in him as well as in Mr. Scott."

On another occasion, when Mr. Scott was away from the office on business, and had left me behind, I held court, dismissed two men—here had been a bad confession—am censured several others. All this time I was a boy only, looking even younger than I was.

Carnegie's First Investment. One day Mr. Scott asked me if I could get \$500 to invest. I didn't have the money, and I didn't know where I could get it. But I was going to have the chance of my life, the opportunity of investing with my chief.

"Oh, yes, sir," I answered him; "I can get it."

"Well," said he, "get it as soon as you can. In fact, I'm waiting for you. I can help you out a little if you can't raise it all. A man has just died who owned ten shares of Adams Express stock. It costs only \$60 a share and it pays 1 per cent a month. You must buy it."

I felt that this was a crisis in my life—a chance to become independent, to get away from the slavery of salary to the independence of competence. And for the means to accomplish this I turned to my one unfeeling, faithful friend, my mother. I didn't think there was anything she could not do. I also felt that if Mr. Scott had known how utterly out of the question it was for me or my family to have \$500 on hand he would have advanced the whole sum for me. But my Scotch pride would never have permitted me to tell anybody how poor we were. Our savings, \$500, we had gradually put into our home—the best investment, anywhere, for anybody, is real estate—and this was now paid for. Should we mortgage it to raise the money for the investment? My mother said yes, unhesitatingly. What is more, she said she would get the money for me, and she did, from her brother, who lived in Ohio.

Approved boy I was when I received a check for my first monthly dividend—\$10. The next Sunday afternoon I strolled out into the woods with my friends, as usual, and pulling the letters from my pocket showed them my dividend check, signed in big letters, "J. C. Babcock, Cashier." Here was money I had received without laboring for it, the interest on my capital. I resolved that we must become capitalists. And several of these men who have since been associated with me in undertakings involving large capital.

I felt now that I not only had a stake in the community in which I lived—in the home we had bought and paid for, but that I had a standing in the world of capital.

In the Government Service. Meanwhile Mr. Scott was doing all the while in the Pennsylvania Railroad company. In 1858 he was made general superintendent, March 4, 1860, he was made vice president, and in May, 1861, he was called to Washington to become assistant secretary of the Pennsylvania Railroad and telegraph company. As he went up with him, and I was now superintendent of the western division of the road. When he decided to go into the government service he said I must go, too. I didn't want to go much, for I had a most responsible position, attending to the moving of troops and stores, but he wouldn't hear of my staying behind. So to Washington I went with him, going from Philadelphia to Annapolis by water, railroad communication having been broken. I was to work with a large force of men to repair the railroad from Annapolis to Washington.

I rode into the capital on the first locomotive that made the journey—but not without being wounded enroute. I was, in fact, the third man wounded in the war, the way it was this: Between Elbridge Junction and Washington the confederates had pinned the telegraph wires to the ground, thus grounding the current, and observing this from my passing locomotive, I got down to release them. The first wire I spoke unfastened from the ground bounced up and struck my cheek, cutting quite a severe gash in it. When I got to Washington I was covered with blood.

I was in charge of railway communication at the battle of Bull Run, and was the official telegraph operator for the army. There was much confusion in getting across to Washington. But it was in Washington, in the War department, that I had my most interesting experiences at this time. I found it impossible to transmit government business over the wires in ordinary language. It could not afford to have everybody know the movements of troops. So, by necessity, a kind of cipher, the first used, was devised then and there. It grew by degrees and at last became extremely valuable. The principle upon which it was constructed was disguise. Calling "Sherman" a chair and "Grant" a sofa, and so, keeping the proper names out of the messages, was not sufficient. We soon made one word do the work of a number. For instance, "the enemy has advanced in force" might be rendered by the one word, "sequel." "Reinforcements are needed at once" could be transmitted by the one word "Bark," for example, when once we all understood it. Lincoln and Stanton, oftenest Stanton, used to come in my room and watch the messages come and go.

Choosing a Wife for Scott. June 1, 1862, Colonel Scott returned to the service of the Pennsylvania railway and I went with him. He had done me many a good turn and I was soon enabled to do him one. Among the young women I knew in Pittsburgh was Miss Riddle, the daughter of Robert M. Riddle, the owner and I think the editor of the Pittsburgh Journal. Colonel Scott was a widower, and knowing him as intimately as I did, I had often spoken jocosely to him about his marrying again. Without mentioning any names, I told him several times that I knew the very girl he ought to marry. He was now stationed in Philadelphia, of course, while I was in Pittsburgh, superintendent of an old division. One day I got a letter from him in which he asked: "Who is that young woman of yours, anyway?" I kept quiet, for I knew he would come to Pittsburgh on business soon, and I was sure enough he did.

"I'm going back Tuesday, Andy," he said. "No, you are not, Mr. Scott," I replied; "you are not going until Thursday. And, what is more, you are going to escort to Philadelphia on Thursday one of the sweetest girls in Pittsburgh."

"Nonsense, Andy," said he. "I can't wait till Thursday. But who is this charming lady?"

"The very one of whom I have spoken to you," said I.

I had learned from Miss Riddle some days before that she was going to Philadelphia, and as soon as I got Colonel Scott's consent to wait over I went and told her of

For New Years Day—

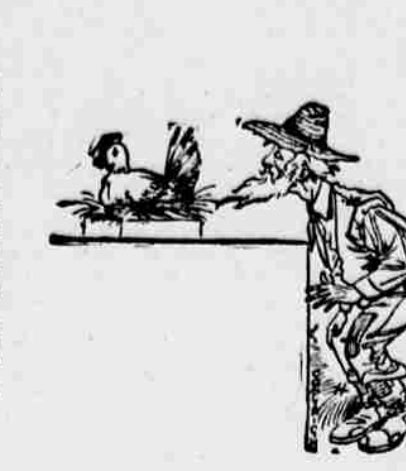
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my plan. At first she would have none of it, but I persuaded her. I assured her she could rely on my care not to place her in a false position, and finally she agreed. Well, the trip was made as I had planned it, and eventually Colonel Scott and Miss Riddle were married. She was a charming girl and made him a good wife. And that is why I say I was able to do him one good turn, anyway, in repayment of the many he did me.

Another Paying Venture. I was examining the railroad track one day after my return to the service of the Pennsylvania Railroad company when a tall man with a green bag in his hand came up and asked me if I was connected with the Pennsylvania Railroad company. When I said yes, he drew out the model of a sleeping berth and showed it to me. He did not need to explain it at all, it was so simple. I seemed to see its value at a flash. Railroad cars in which people could sleep on long journeys—of course there were no railroads across the continent yet—struck me as being the very thing for this land of magnificent distances. I told him I would speak about his model to Mr. Scott, and I did so, enthusiastically. He did not share my enthusiasm, but said I might bring the inventor to see him. So I introduced T. T. Woodruff, the inventor of the sleeping car. And the result was not only the building of two trial cars, which were run over the Pennsylvania railroad, but the formation of a sleeping car company in which I was offered an interest. I promptly accepted, although I didn't quite know where my share of the capital was coming from. But this, my third business venture, turned me confident in my ability to overcome difficulties. I had secured the money to buy the Adams Express stock; I would get the money to buy the sleeping car stock.

But how? At last I went to the bank, and telling the president the exact facts, offered

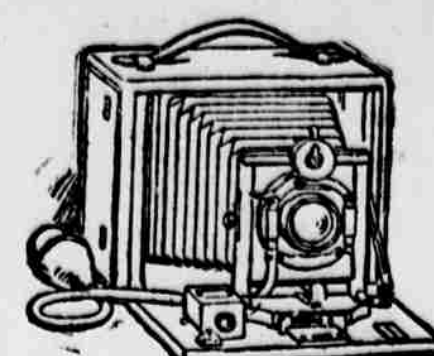
him my note for \$217.50—my share of the first payment on the stock—if he would advance me the money and let me pay him back out of my salary at the rate of \$15 a month. To my delight, he patted me on the back and said: "You are all right, Andy," and discounted my note. My subsequent payments for stock in the Woodruff Sleeping Car company I was enabled to meet without giving any more notes, from the receipts of the cars themselves. It was thus I made my first substantial capital.

Opportunity in Oil. When I heard of the oil strike on the Stovey farm, on Oil creek, I resolved to invest in oil lands. I visited that famous well from which quantities of oil were running waste into the creek. The capacity of the well was several hundred barrels a day, but when my associates and I bought the farm for \$40,000 we had no confidence that this flow would continue, and built a pond big enough to hold 100,000 barrels. We ran our oil into this pond until we had run in several hundred thousand barrels, part of which leaked and some of which evaporated. Yet this investment of \$40,000 paid us in one year \$1,000,000 in cash and dividends, and the farm itself eventually became worth, on a stock basis, the sum of \$5,000,000.

Start in the Steel Business. There were so many delays on railroads in those days from burned or broken wooden bridges that I felt the day of wooden bridges must end soon, just as the day of wood-burning locomotives was ended. Cast iron bridges, I thought, ought to replace them, so I organized a company, principally from railroad men I knew, to make these iron bridges, and we called it the Keystone Bridge Irons. The development of this new company required my time, so I resigned from the railroad service in 1867. I had risen from telegraph operator to be superintendent of the western division. I no

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ANDREW CARNEGIE (MOST RECENT PHOTOGRAPH).

mother that steam looms were coming into the trade and bothering him. This steam machinery, he said, was best handled in big factories, which made it bad for the independent master weaver. His work was selling off. He was not getting so many orders from the merchants who had been in the habit of sending him the raw material to be woven up.

Not very long afterward—it was in 1847—he came in one day from delivering some finished damask, looked at me quizzically, and said: "Andy, I have no more work."

Where should we go? The same conditions that drove us from Dunfermline might confront us anywhere else in Scotland. But we remembered that we had relatives who had crossed the Atlantic and settled near Pittsburgh. "We'll go there, too," said my mother; it's best for the boys to begin life in a new country."

We reached Allegheny City in 1848. I was only 11 years old, but my mother was big for the future; I was determined to make my way in this new country.

Earning His First Money. My father went to work in a cotton factory and I followed him as bobbin boy. From sunrise to sunset I worked, glad to feel that each day added 20 cents to my credit on the book. Saturday noon I drew \$1.20, with a feeling not so much of pride as of joy to have money to take home.

Six days a week I breakfasted by candle light and five days a week I got home after dark. But nothing could have induced me to give this up, except an offer of better work. The I went down from a Scotch friend of ours, John Hay, who had a bobbin factory. I was set to fring the boiler—with wood chips—and to tend the engine. Responsible work, too, for a boy of 13, not big for his age. Gradually I grew nervous under the strain of minding the engine, and working all alone down in Hay's cellar, I would wake up nights, sitting bolt upright in bed, hands clenched, brows knitted, from dreaming about trying the steam gauges and finding them wrong!

Mr. Hay needed a clerk upstairs in the office. He knew I could write a good hand and he offered me this place. After filling this position for some time I heard that boys were wanted in the Ohio telegraph office in Pittsburgh. I felt as though my fortune would be made if I could get into that office, so my father went with me and persuaded the superintendent, James D. Reid, to employ me. Mr. Reid often told me, in after years, that he remembered exactly how I looked that morning in my little blue jacket, with my white hair.

Now that I'd got my job, at \$2.50 per week, I was on thorns for fear I couldn't keep it. I knew nothing about the streets of Pittsburgh and the business houses to which I had to deliver messages. So I started in and learned all the addresses by heart, up one side of Wood street and down the other. Then I learned the other business streets in the same way. The work felt safe. How pleasant it was to me to work now in a clean, bright office, with desks and paper and pencils about, instead of down in dingy cellar or in a noisy factory! The tick of the telegraph instruments fascinated me. I tried to understand it, by listening, by going to the office early and playing with the key. Mr. Reid finally agreed to help me to learn and I was soon able to receive any message by ear alone, and at that time there were possibly only two other people in the country who could do this. I had become an operator, but I was still getting a messenger's pay.

One morning, when I was in the office early, I heard a death message come over the wires from Philadelphia. I knew that sort of message required prompt handling, so I wrote it out and delivered it at the proper address. From that time the operators began to use me to 'sub' for them. Then Mr. Reid made me an operator and I had a great rise in the world, for now I got \$25 a month, \$200 a year, and I felt that

tion, from the first, to get on in the world. There is a great deal more in feeling that way than some people think. There was another determination that I formed in my boyhood in Pittsburgh, which I have been able to carry out. A gentleman named Colonel Anderson let it be known to the working boys that he could always be found in his library Saturday afternoons and would be glad to see them there. I went, as soon as I heard of this. Strange to say, there was some question about my right to come in under the head of working boys, as I was now a telegraph operator. That made me indignant. So I sat down and wrote my first contribution to print in a letter to the Pittsburgh Dispatch. I insisted that any young man or boy who worked, whether with his head or his hands, was entitled to be known by the honorable designation of "Working Boy," as I signed myself. After that I had no trouble. And I found that Colonel Anderson permitted us to take his books home with us. I saw how much good he was doing, and I determined then and there that if I were ever able to do it, I would provide free libraries for people who worked. That has been one of my hobbies

that I have carried out in Allegheny, Bradford, Johnstown, Pa., Fairfield, Ia., Edinburgh, Dunfermline—the home of my boyhood—Aberdeen, Peterhead, Inverness, Ayr, Elgin, Wick and Kirkwall. And if I live there will be more yet, especially in and about Pittsburgh libraries, combined with art galleries and halls.

From Mr. Scott's private telegraph operator I became his private secretary. I worked with him and under him and J. Edgar Thomson for thirteen years, from 1854 to 1867. I soon became attached to him and learned to look up to him almost as a father. I went wherever he went, traveled with him and could not help feeling, from his attachment to me—almost dependence on me—that I had won his affection.

Another Opportunity Accepted. One morning Mr. Scott was a little late getting to the office and there had been an accident on the eastern division, the best of my recollection a bridge had been burned, or washed away, and the through express was away behind time. There was only one track and the freight trains were on the sidings all along our western division waiting for the express, which had the right of way. I gleaned the situation from the telegrams I found and sat down at once to do what I knew Mr. Scott would do if he were there. I wired to the conductor of the express that I was going to give the freight trains three hours and forty minutes of his time and told him to answer me, so that I might know that he understood the situation. He answered me that he did. I then wired to the conductor of each freight train and started the whole string of them.



ANDREW CARNEGIE AS A YOUTH.

my plan. At first she would have none of it, but I persuaded her. I assured her she could rely on my care not to place her in a false position, and finally she agreed. Well, the trip was made as I had planned it, and eventually Colonel Scott and Miss Riddle were married. She was a charming girl and made him a good wife. And that is why I say I was able to do him one good turn, anyway, in repayment of the many he did me.

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