

Marx Hardy Machiavelli Joyce Austen
Defoe Abbot Melville Montaigne Cooper Emerson Hugo
Stoker Wilde Christie Maupassant Haggard Chesterton Molière Eliot Grimm
Garnett Engels Schiller Byron Maupassant
Goethe Hawthorne Smith Kafka
Cotton Dostoyevsky Kipling Doyle
Baum Henry Nietzsche Willis
Leslie Dumas Flaubert Turgenev Balzac
Stockton Vatsyayana Crane
Burroughs Verne
Curtis Tocqueville Gogol Busch
Homer Tolstoy Whitman
Darwin Thoreau Twain
Potter Zola Lawrence Dickens Plato
Kant Freud Jowett Stevenson Andersen
London Descartes Cervantes Burton Hesse Harte
Poe Aristotle Wells Voltaire Cooke
Hale James Hastings Shakespeare Irving
Bunner Richter Chambers Alcott
Doré Chekhov da Shaw Wodehouse
Swift Dante Pushkin Newton



tredition®

tredition was established in 2006 by Sandra Latusseck and Soenke Schulz. Based in Hamburg, Germany, tredition offers publishing solutions to authors and publishing houses, combined with worldwide distribution of printed and digital book content. tredition is uniquely positioned to enable authors and publishing houses to create books on their own terms and without conventional manufacturing risks.

For more information please visit: www.tredition.com

TREDITION CLASSICS

This book is part of the TREDITION CLASSICS series. The creators of this series are united by passion for literature and driven by the intention of making all public domain books available in printed format again - worldwide. Most TREDITION CLASSICS titles have been out of print and off the bookstore shelves for decades. At tredition we believe that a great book never goes out of style and that its value is eternal. Several mostly non-profit literature projects provide content to tredition. To support their good work, tredition donates a portion of the proceeds from each sold copy. As a reader of a TREDITION CLASSICS book, you support our mission to save many of the amazing works of world literature from oblivion. See all available books at www.tredition.com.



Project Gutenberg

The content for this book has been graciously provided by Project Gutenberg. Project Gutenberg is a non-profit organization founded by Michael Hart in 1971 at the University of Illinois. The mission of Project Gutenberg is simple: To encourage the creation and distribution of eBooks. Project Gutenberg is the first and largest collection of public domain eBooks.

The Tin Box and What it Contained

Horatio Alger

Imprint

This book is part of TREDITION CLASSICS

Author: Horatio Alger

Cover design: Buchgut, Berlin - Germany

Publisher: tredition GmbH, Hamburg - Germany

ISBN: 978-3-8472-2212-5

www.tredition.com

www.tredition.de

Copyright:

The content of this book is sourced from the public domain.

The intention of the TREDITION CLASSICS series is to make world literature in the public domain available in printed format. Literary enthusiasts and organizations, such as Project Gutenberg, worldwide have scanned and digitally edited the original texts. tredition has subsequently formatted and redesigned the content into a modern reading layout. Therefore, we cannot guarantee the exact reproduction of the original format of a particular historic edition. Please also note that no modifications have been made to the spelling, therefore it may differ from the orthography used today.

THE TIN BOX

and What it Contained

By HORATIO ALGER, JR.

Author of "The Errand Boy," "Joe's Luck,"
"Mark Manning's Mission," "Mark
Mason's Victory," etc., etc.

A. L. BURT COMPANY, PUBLISHERS

NEW YORK

THE TIN BOX

CHAPTER I

A COLLISION

"Have you finished breakfast already, Harry?" asked Mrs. Gilbert, as Harry rose hurriedly from the table and reached for his hat, which hung on a nail especially appropriated to it.

"Yes, mother. I don't want to be late for the store. Saturday is always a busy day."

"It is a long day for you, Harry. You have to stay till nine o'clock in the evening."

"I am always glad to have Saturday come, for then I can get my money," replied Harry, laughing. "Well, good-by, mother—I'm off."

"What should I do without him?" said Mrs. Gilbert to herself, as Harry dashed out of the yard on the way to Mead's grocery store, where he had been employed for six months.

That would have been a difficult question to answer. Mrs. Gilbert was the widow of a sea captain, who had sailed from the port of Boston three years before, and never since been heard of.

It was supposed that the vessel was lost with all hands, but how the disaster occurred, or when, was a mystery that seemed never likely to be solved.

Captain Gilbert had left no property except the small cottage, which was mortgaged for half its value, and a small sum of money in the savings bank, which, by this time, was all expended for the necessaries of life.

Fortunately for the widow, about the time this sum gave out Harry obtained a situation at Mead's grocery store, with a salary of four dollars a week. This he regularly paid to his mother, and, with the little she herself was able to earn, they lived comfortably. It was

hard work for Harry, but he enjoyed it, for he was an active boy, and it was a source of great satisfaction to him that he was able to help his mother so materially.

He was now fifteen years old, about the average height for a boy of that age, with a strong frame and a bright, cheerful manner that made him a general favorite.

The part of his duty which he liked best was to drive the store wagon for the delivery of goods to customers. Most boys of his age like to drive a horse, and Harry was no exception to the rule.

When he reached the store Mr. Mead, his employer, said:

"Harness up the horse as soon as you can, Harry. There are some goods to be carried out."

"All right, sir," answered Harry, cheerfully, and made his way to the stable, which stood in the rear of the store. It was but a few minutes before he was loaded up and was on his way.

He had called at several places and left the greater part of the goods, when he found himself in a narrow road, scarcely wider than a lane. Why it had been made so narrow was unaccountable, for there was certainly land enough to be had, and that of little value, which could have been used. It was probably owing to a want of foresight on the part of the road commissioners.

Just at the narrowest part of the road Harry saw approaching him an open buggy of rather a pretentious character, driven by a schoolmate, Philip Ross, the son of Colonel Ross, a wealthy resident of the village.

I have said that Philip was, or rather had been, a schoolmate of Harry. I cannot call him a friend. Philip was of a haughty, arrogant temper. The horse and buggy he drove were his own—that is, they had been given him by his father on his last birthday—and he was proud of them, not without some reason, for the buggy was a handsome one, and the horse was spirited and of fine appearance.

As soon as Harry saw Philip approaching, he proceeded to turn his horse to one side of the road.

Philip, however, made no such move, but kept in the middle.

"Isn't he going to turn out?" thought Harry. "How does he expect to get by?"

"Why don't you turn out, Philip?" he called out.

"Turn out yourself!" retorted Philip, haughtily.

"That's what I'm doing," said Harry, rather provoked.

"Then turn out more!" said the young gentleman, arrogantly.

"I have turned out my share," said Harry, stopping his horse. "Do you expect to keep right on in the middle of the road?"

"I shall if I choose," said Philip, unpleasantly; but he, too, reined up his horse, so that the two teams stood facing each other.

Harry shrugged his shoulders, and asked, temperately:

"Then how do you expect to get by?"

"I want you to turn out as far as you can," he said authoritatively.

Harry was provoked, and not without reason.

"I have turned out my share, and shan't turn out another inch," he said, firmly. "You must be a fool to expect it."

"Do you mean to call me a fool?" demanded Philip, his eyes flashing.

"You certainly act like one."

"You'd better take care how you talk, you beggar!" exclaimed Philip, furiously.

"I'm no more a beggar than you are, Philip Ross!"

"Well, you are nothing but a working boy, at any rate."

"What if I am?" replied Harry. "I've got just as much right on this road as you."

"I'm a gentleman," asserted Philip, angrily.

"Well, you don't act like one; you'd better turn out pretty quick, for I am in a hurry and can't wait."

"Then turn out more."

"I shan't do it," said Harry, with spirit; "and no one but you would be unreasonable enough to ask me to do it."

"Then you'll have to wait," said Philip, settling himself back provokingly in his seat, and eyeing Harry with a look of disdain.

"Come, don't be obstinate, Philip," urged Harry, impatiently. "I only ask you to do your share of turning. We have equal rights here, even if you were three times the gentleman you pretend to be."

"You are insolent, Harry Gilbert. I don't take orders from such as you."

"Then you won't turn out?" asked Harry, gathering up his reins.

"Suppose I don't?" retorted Philip, in a provoking tone.

"Then I shall drive on," said Harry, resolutely.

"You wouldn't dare to!"

"Wouldn't I? You'll see. I will count ten, and if at the end of that time you don't turn out, I will drive on, and make you take the consequences."

Philip glanced at him doubtfully. Would he really do what he said?

"Pooh! I don't believe it!" he decided. "Anyway, I'm not going to give way to a working boy. I won't do it."

I am not going to decide the question whether Harry did right or not. I can only say that he claimed no more than his rights, and was not without excuse for the course he adopted.

"One—two—three!" counted Harry, and so on until he had counted ten.

Then, gathering up his reins, he said: "I ask you, Philip, for the last time, whether you will turn out?"

"I won't till I get ready."

"Go 'long, Dobbin!" was Harry's sole reply. And his horse was put in motion.

The natural result followed. The grocery wagon was strongly made, and fitted for rough usage. The buggy was of light structure,

built for speed, and was no match for it. The two carriages locked wheels. That of the wagon was unharmed, but the wheel of the buggy came off.

The horse darted forward. Philip was thrown out at the side, aiming an ineffectual blow with his whip at Harry, as he found himself going, and landed in a half stunned condition on the grass at the side.

Harry kept on until his wagon was clear of the wreck of the buggy, and then halting it, jumped oft to find the extent of Philip's injuries.

The latter's horse, which had by a violent jerk freed himself from the shafts, was galloping up the road.

CHAPTER II

SIGNS OF A TEMPEST

"Are you hurt, Philip?" asked Harry, anxiously, as he bent over the prostrate form of his antagonist.

As he opened his eyes and saw the face of Harry bending over him, all came back to him, and his animosity revived.

"Get away from me!" he exclaimed furiously, as he staggered to his feet.

"I certainly will, if you don't need help," said Harry, glad that Philip had suffered no harm.

"Where is my horse?" demanded Philip.

"He has run away."

"And it's all your fault!" exclaimed Philip, angrily. "My buggy's broken, too, and all because you ran into me, you beggar!"

"I wouldn't allow you to call me names if you hadn't been punished already for your unreasonable conduct," said Harry, calmly. "Whatever has happened you brought upon yourself."

"Catch my horse!" ordered Philip, with the air of a master addressing a servant.

"I've got something else to do," said Harry, coolly, and he sprang into the store wagon.

"Are you going to drive off and leave me here?" demanded Philip, enraged.

"I must, for my time isn't my own. It belongs to Mr. Mead. I would help you otherwise—though you are to blame for what has happened."

"You will suffer for this!" exclaimed the rich man's son, gazing at his broken buggy in helpless anger. "You'll have to pay for all the damage you have done!"

"You can go to law about it, if you want to," said Harry, as he gathered the reins into his hands, and he drove off. "I've a good defense."

To Philip's disgust, Harry drove off, leaving him alone with his disabled carriage. It was a good time to consider whether he had acted wisely in demanding more than the law or custom allowed him, but Philip was too angry for cool consideration.

He could not persuade himself that a boy like Harry, the son of a poor widow, who had to work for his own living, had equal rights with himself.

In the end he had to go home and bring back his father's hired man to take charge of the wreck. He learned that the frightened horse had already found his way to the stable, terrifying the family with fears that Philip had been seriously hurt on the way.

Philip gave a garbled account of the affair to his father and mother, and excited the indignation of both, but especially his mother.

"I never heard of such an outrage—never!" exclaimed Mrs. Ross, emphatically. "To think that boy should deliberately run into you and endanger your life—my poor Philip!"

"That's just what he did, mother," said Philip, enjoying the indignation he had aroused.

Colonel Ross was not quite so thoroughly convinced that his son was right.

"Did you give Harry half the road?" he inquired.

"I gave him room enough to get by," answered Philip, evasively.

"The law requires that you should give him half the road."

"I hope, Mr. Ross, you don't justify that horrid boy in running into Philip?" said Mrs. Ross, sharply.

"No, my dear; I consider that he acted very badly. But, in order to make him amenable to the law for the damage Philip's team suffered, it must appear that Philip gave him half the road."

"Then the law ought to be altered," said Mrs. Ross, with more anger than reason. "I've no doubt that Philip gave him all the room he needed."

"When you were thrown out, did the heartless boy ride on and leave you to your fate?" asked the mother.

"No; he got out and asked me if I was hurt," Philip admitted, reluctantly.

"Much he cared!" said Mrs. Ross, contemptuously.

"I suppose he was afraid he would be put in prison if I was killed," said Philip.

"Yes, that was his motive, undoubtedly. He didn't offer to help you, I suppose?"

"No; I asked him to, and he wouldn't," answered Philip, glad that he could blacken poor Harry's character.

"The unfeeling young villain!" ejaculated Mrs. Ross. "He ought to be put in the State's prison!"

"Do you think he can be?" asked Philip, eagerly.

"Of course he can, if your father exerts himself as he ought."

"Nonsense, Lucinda!" said Colonel Ross, who was not a fool. "It was a boyish misunderstanding."

"You may call it that," retorted Mrs. Ross, raising her voice. "I call it a high-handed outrage. The boy ought to be arrested. Are you going to do anything about it, Philander Ross?"

Mrs. Ross generally addressed her husband by his Christian name when she was angry with him.

"I will tell you what I will do, Lucinda. I will see Mead, and tell him that a boy who acts in that way is not fit to drive for him."

"That's right, father. Make him discharge Harry. Then he'll have to go to the poorhouse, or beg."

"And a very suitable punishment for him," said Mrs. Ross, approvingly.

"I don't quite like to take the boy's means of living away from him," said Colonel Ross, who was by no means as unfeeling as his wife and son. "That would make his mother suffer, and she has been guilty of no crime."

"She will uphold him in his iniquity, you may rest assured, Mr. Ross," said his wife, nodding emphatically. "If she had brought up the boy to be respectful to his superiors this would not have happened."

"He won't be able to pay damages if he loses his place," said Colonel Ross.

"I don't care. I want him discharged from his situation."

"Well, Lucinda," said her husband, shrugging his shoulders, "you had better undertake the management of the affair. I am very busy, and can't spare the necessary time."

"I will!" said Mrs. Ross, with alacrity. "I will call on the boy's mother, and also on Mr. Mead."

"Don't be too extreme, Lucinda. Remember, it isn't a hanging matter."

"I am not so sure but it ought to be. My poor child might have broken his neck. Oh, it makes my blood run cold when I think that he might be lying lifeless before me at this moment."

"Don't say such things, mother," said Philip, nervously, unpleasantly affected by the picture his mother had drawn.

"I can't help saying it, for it might have happened."

"Where are you going to first, mother?" asked Philip.

"I will go first and call on Widow Gilbert. I consider her responsible, for if she had brought up the boy better this would never have happened."

"May I go with you?"

"No; I would rather go alone."

If Philip had only been scarred, or had a wound to show, his mother would have taken him with her, to make her reproof more

effective, but, as he showed no marks of the encounter, she saw no advantage in his presence.

"You just give it to her, mother," said Philip, in a tone of satisfaction.

"I shall know what to say, my son."

"Just frighten her, and make her think we are going to have Harry arrested."

"I shall make her understand that the boy has done a very serious thing, and has made himself amenable to the law."

"That's right, mother. Harry is too airy altogether. He seems to think that I am no better than he is—a common working boy like him!"

Mrs. Ross sailed out of the room, and dressed herself with unusual care, not out of respect for Mrs. Gilbert, but rather with the purpose of impressing her with her grandeur.

CHAPTER III

MRS. ROSS MAKES TWO UNSATISFACTORY VISITS

It was very seldom that Mrs. Ross condescended to visit her poorer neighbors, and it was, therefore, not without considerable surprise that Mrs. Gilbert called to the door about eleven o'clock, just as she had put on the potatoes to boil for dinner—recognized in the visitor on the doorstep Mrs. Colonel Ross.

"Pray come in, Mrs. Ross. I am glad to see you," said the widow.

"I will come in for five minutes," said Mrs. Ross, carefully gathering up her skirts, lest they should be soiled as she entered the humble cottage. She need not have been alarmed, for there was not a cleaner house in the village.

Mrs. Gilbert brought forward the most comfortable chair in her little sitting-room, and the visitor seated herself.

"I am come on an unpleasant errand, Mrs. Gilbert," she commenced, frigidly.

"Unpleasant!" repeated the widow, with quick apprehension. "Has anything happened to my boy to Harry?"

Improbable as it seemed that in such an event Mrs. Ross should be the messenger of ill tidings, it occurred to Mrs. Gilbert that she had come to inform her of an accident to Harry.

The visitor's lips curled. What did it matter, she thought, whether anything happened to him or not?

"Something has happened to my boy!" she said, with emphasis.

"I am very sorry," said the widow, with quick sympathy. "I hope he is not hurt."

"He might have had his neck broken," said Mrs. Ross; "and by your son," she added, spitefully.

"They haven't been fighting, have they?" asked Mrs. Gilbert, nervously.

"No; but your son deliberately and maliciously, while driving Mr. Mead's store wagon, drove into my son's light buggy, damaged it seriously, and my poor Philip was thrown out. Your son drove off, leaving him insensible by the roadside."

It will be perceived that Mrs. Ross had somewhat embellished the story, with the intention of producing a greater effect.

"Was Philip much hurt?" asked the widow, anxiously.

"He providentially escaped any serious injury, so far as we know. He may have suffered some internal injuries."

"I am sorry to hear that there has been any difficulty," said the widow, regaining her composure when she learned that neither of the two boys were hurt; "but I cannot accept your account. Harry is quite incapable of deliberately and maliciously running into Philip."

"I regret that you uphold your son in his wickedness," said Mrs. Ross, coldly; "but I am not surprised. I told my husband before I set out that you would probably do so."

"Mrs. Ross," said the widow, in a dignified tone, "I have known my boy for fifteen years, and watched him carefully, and I tell you positively that he wouldn't do what you have charged upon him."

"Do you question my statement?" demanded Mrs. Ross, haughtily.

"Did you witness the encounter?"

"No; but my son, who is the soul of truth, told me all the circumstances."

"Your son was probably angry with Harry, and could not be depended upon to give an impartial statement."

"Slander him as much as you please," said the visitor, angrily. "I have acquainted you with your son's outrageous conduct, and this is all I proposed. Of course we shall expect you or your son to pay for the damage done to the buggy, and he will be fortunate if we do not have him arrested for assault and battery."

Mrs. Gilbert did not look as much terrified as Mrs. Ross expected.