

next morning that banker failed. A list of his assets was published and among them the item of a draft of Alger & Goddard, secured by a gold watch and chain. This announced the failure to the people of Grand Rapids. I cannot tell you how badly I felt that day.

"I remember how I went into one of the hotels where a lot of men were talking, when one of the rich men of the town, a man named Mills, said to me: 'I see, young man, that you have got your name in the paper, and that you have lost your gold watch and chain.' The words were uttered in a sneering tone. They cut me to the heart. I could have sunk through the floor, but I said: 'I know that, Mr. Mills; I gave the banker my watch because I could not pay my debts, and if there is any one here to whom I owe money, I am willing to give him anything I have as security. If I owe you a cent and you want my coat to hold until I can pay you, I will take it off and give it to you.' My deep feeling must have been expressed in my tones, for as I said this the tears came into Mills's eyes. He saw that failure was a serious thing with me, and said: 'No, young man, if you owed me anything, I am sure you would pay it. I beg your pardon for taunting you of your loss.' Well, this failure burst our company. My furniture dealer told me that I could keep the furniture and pay him when I could. Just about this time the war broke out. I raised a company and was chosen captain. When I came out of the army, I found that I had saved enough to be able to pay my debts, and that Mrs. Alger had put aside five hundred dollars in bonds out of the money I had sent home."

"But, general, I thought your fortune was made out of lumber?"

"Yes, that is true, to a large extent," replied Gen. Alger. "The most of the money I have made has been in the lumber business, but my success did not come until later on. When I came out of the army my first investment was in a brick-making concern in Detroit. I lost in this, but while running it I had put a little money in a small vessel. The vessel paid for itself in less than a year. I made other investments in lake vessels, and soon had quite a little capital. The idea that there was money in the lumber business stuck to me, and I induced two capitalists named Moore to put in some money with me to buy pine lands. They were, in fact, to furnish the capital, and I was to have one-third of the profits for managing the business. The first year I bought \$26,000 worth of timber, walking 150 miles through the woods with a pack on my back to select the timber. I picked out a place for a logging camp and spent that winter in getting the logs out for the market. I took Mrs. Alger and my oldest child, who was then with me, into the woods. We drove a distance of one hundred miles in a sleigh to the camp, and our home that winter was a little log cabin. I don't know that I have ever enjoyed a winter so much."

"I had thirty-five men under me and had to get up at 5 o'clock every morning to start to work. Mrs. Alger did her own cooking, and we were happy all winter long. I only got out a million and a quarter feet of logs, board measure, during that winter. The next winter I had formed the co-partnership of Moore & Alger, in which I had a half interest, Mr. Moore doing little more than furnishing the credit. That year we got out about seven million feet of logs, which we sold, and the next year fifteen million feet, and from that time our lumber operations have been in quite large figures. Mr. Moore died soon after, and with some other gentlemen we formed our present concern of Alger, Smith & Co. We

have for years sold as much as one hundred and fifty million feet of lumber a year, our business amounting to something like \$2,250,000 a year."

"What is the best investment you ever made in lumber, General Alger?"

"One of the best things we ever did," said General Alger, "was in the buying of a tract of pine from Mr. William E. Dodge of New York. I had examined the property and could tell to a few thousand feet just how much pine there was on it. Mr. Dodge had an agent named Frost in Detroit. I went to him and asked him what he would take for the land. He replied that Mr. Dodge wanted \$120,000 for it. I told him to telegraph an offer from me of \$110,000. He did so. In a few hours a telegram came back, which read: 'Tell General Alger he can have the tract for \$120,000, and all the time he wants to pay for it in if he will take it now, but that if it is not taken at once the price will be \$130,000.' We took it. Well, we cut one hundred million feet of lumber off that tract and sold it for \$800,000 above the cost of lumbering. At another time we made a nice little investment by buying some canal lands of New York men. There were 1,500 acres in the tracts, and the canal company had estimated that there were 10,000,000 feet of pine on them. I examined the lands, and when the man asked me \$26.50 an acre for it I accepted his proposition. The pine was of high grade, and we cut 78,000,000 feet off of it."

"Is there much money to be made in pine lands today, general?"

"Not so much as in the past," said General Alger. "The pine of Michigan and Wisconsin have been pretty well thinned out and that which is left is valued at about what it is worth. I doubt not that there are some good chances in the Southern States and along the Pacific coast, but the high freight rates across the continent prevent the very general use of Pacific lumber here. Canada has some lumber, but it is not as good as Michigan pine, besides wood is not used so much now as it has been in the past. The age we live in is one of iron and steel, rather than wood. Buildings are now being made of steel, fences are made of wire, and iron has taken the place of wood in a great variety of things."

"Just one word more, general," said I, as the secretary of war rose. "Won't you give me a word of advice for the young men of today? Can you not in a few words say what constitutes the elements of success?"

"I believe that success in life depends largely upon the man," replied General Alger. "I think that will power has a great deal to do with it. If one decides that he will succeed he is pretty sure to do so provided he devotes all his energies to it. It is the man who goes ahead, who never knows that he is whipped, who never loses confidence in himself, who succeeds. Success is the result of hard work and sticking to it. My rule is to do the thing that is before me and to do it as well as I can. There are several things, however, I would say: A man should do as he agrees and his word should always be as good as his bond. Every man should live within his income and should try to save something. He should remember that a successful life is not a battle, but it is a long campaign, and that the contest must be kept up for years."

"There is one thing that ought to be said concerning the hardships of the laborer," concluded General Alger. "I know all about it, for no one ever worked longer hours per day and in less easy places than I. Hard work is as essential to happiness as exercise is to physical growth, and physical effort is nothing compared to mental la-

bor in its wear or tear upon the man or woman. The pleasure of accumulation is in the battle for it with its excitement and not in the possession of it. You seldom see a man who gives himself up to the so-called enjoyment of his wealth by spending it. A man thrives physically and mentally upon effort and occupation. When he has gotten through and says he has finished his labors he is usually taken at his word and soon to the cemetery. I have no patience with the false idea of extreme sympathy for the toiler. Labor is man's best estate, it is the hungry mouth that grumbles with a just cause—none other—and the happiest life is the busy one."

FRANK G. CARPENTER.

OUR SAN FRANCISCO LETTER.

San Francisco, Cal., Oct. 27, 1897.—Nothing of startling importance has disturbed the quietude of this peaceful community during the past week. The Merchants' association, in which the commercial interests center, is progressing rapidly and the merchants are gradually falling into line to protect themselves against the unjust discriminations of the transportation companies, and judging from reports, before long they will again be enjoying the success their efforts deserve. Political reformers are still agitating investigations in state and municipal offices, from the governor's down to the humble janitor's. Ever since Mayor Phelan through his agent instituted an investigation into the conduct of the board of supervisors the public has been kept in a continual state of uneasiness through the suggestion of other official reforms. While there is no doubt in the public mind that there is a great deal of corruption and dishonesty among its elected servants, and much need of a change, at the same time they realize that to thoroughly investigate and weed out the guilty ones entails an expense to the city far in excess of an amount that could possibly be misappropriated by these dishonest officials.

From one branch of the city government to the other, the angel of reform has passed on her round of inspection, and the police department has attracted attention as being the most worthy of a thorough examination, so a real genuine Lexow investigation is promised. Rumors to this effect have been current for some time past, but it was only within the last week that the have assumed anything like definite shape, and now depend upon the necessary charges being preferred by some reputable citizen, as has been suggested by the finance committee of the board of supervisors. This suggestion undoubtedly emanated from the spirited controversy between Police Commissioner Mose Gunst and Chief of Police Lees, in which the former charged the chief with many underhanded transactions. Commissioner Gunst sought to have the matter thoroughly and properly investigated by the police commissioners and gained their enmity thereby, as his colleagues are staunch friends of Chief Lees and refused to entertain any charges that might reflect upon his official honor, giving as an excuse that it would damage the reputation of the department and cause dissension among the force. Now the finance committee has revived the matter and proposed another plan upon which to proceed, and it is to be hoped the department will receive the attention and renovation it requires, and again be placed in condition to be respected instead of distrusted. For the police commissioners, with the exception of Mr. Gunst, to try to pull the wool over the public eyes by simply declaring the department to be above reproach, sounds ridiculous; it is an