

Vol. 3 No. 02

August 1964

A newsletter

Published monthly for the benefit of people interested in Horatio Alger Jr., Edited and published by Forrest Campbell. Research by Max Goldberg and Gilbert Westgard, II. Kenneth B. Butler, Ragged Dick Fund Trustee. Organized July 1962. A non-profit Organ. *****

Just a word about the new Chairman of our new Society, gleaned from the Brandeis University Bibliophiles of which he is the president. Among his many vocations during the past fifty years, Mr. Levy has been active as a lawyer, banker, editor and publisher, however, he is still vigorously active with many interests; his current and prime interest is the Bibliophiles which supervises the Rare Book and Manuscript Library. He has arranged for an Alger Panel Discussion at the university on October 28th, and Ralph Gardner will appear on this panel. Mr. Levy is very anxious to display an impressive Alger exhibit for this occasion and appeals to our readers to loan Alger items which are known to be rare and scarce. He is especially anxious to obtain the loan of a first edition of FRANK'S CAMPAIGN for this occasion. Mr. Levy believes that we shall receive much publicity from this event. Please inform him direct if you have something to loan--or donate.

Mr. Gardner's Biography and Bibliography of Horatio Alger has received many complimentary reviews and also one to which we should all take offense, if we are to defend Mr. Gardner for the years of research which he put into his book. The NEWSBOY has received many favorable comments on Gardner's book, from our readers who have read all previously published biographies and found them wanting.

The ceremony at Horatio Alger's grave in South Natick on the anniversary of his death, July 18th was said to be very impressive, but the details will have to wait. Max Goldberg arranged and conducted the ceremony in spite of the fact that his aged mother died on July 17th, the day before the Alger ceremony. I am sure that all readers will join me in extending our deepest sympathy to Max and his wife Ida.

The NEWSBOY has added one new state (Iowa) which makes 32 states in which our subscribers are located. The RAGGED DICK FUND has also reached the coveted \$100.00 plateau with the following donations since the last issue of the newsletter:

Donation No. 37	\$5.00	Total	\$93.34
Donation No. 38	2.00	Total	95.34
Donation No. 39	2.00	Total	97.34
Donation No. 40	2.00	Total	99.34
Interest accrued	1.16	Total	\$101.50

Mr. Butler, Trustee of the Fund has

suggested that we focus our attention on the city of New York, in our search for a recipient of this year's award. A very logical suggestion, since Horatio did most of his philanthropic work there.

NEW SUBSCRIBERS SINCE THE LAST ISSUE:

Carl W. Dahlberg, (S-100)
Lake Valhalla,
Montville, New Jersey

Jack W. Row, (S-101)
Clarion, Iowa 50525

Mrs. N.D. Heestand, (Indefinite)
GOLDEN EAGLE ANTIQUES
457 West Cambridge Street,
Alliance, Ohio 44601

Dean H. Keller, (Indefinite)
Office of the Library,
KENT STATE UNIVERSITY,
Kent, Ohio 44240

The usual introductions, of necessity must be postponed until the next issue due to limited space, but I simply must make the following announcement: Hal McCuen, (S-96) is Founder-Director of the Mansfield (Ohio) Children's Theatre, and he has suggested the adaptation of an Alger story to be dramatized in his Children's Theatre. Novice that I am, I am enthused enough to write fresh material. Although still in the thinking stages, I am planning on an 1890 City Hall Square (New York City) setting, with "Perly Gates" as our hero, and "Dirty Shirt" another newsboy, in the supporting role. (more details later).

IMITATION ALGER by Dean H. Keller

It is not a revelation to say that the stories of Horatio Alger, Jr. have been imitated countless times by many authors. The enormous success and popularity of his work was bound to attract those who would duplicate his success. The Alger imitation under discussion here is of special interest because the author of it was well known and because the circumstances, as well as they can be determined, under which the book was written are important in the author's life.

Late in 1886 Albion W. Tourgee, the noted author of A Fool's Errand and many other novels and political works, wrote a story called The Mortgage On the Hip Roof House.

(continued on next page)

IMITATION ALGER (continued from page 1)

He sent the story to S.S. McClure in early 1887 with instructions to place it as a serial in several papers. This was done, but McClure evidently had trouble collecting his money for the story and therefore could not pay Tourgee all that was due him.

This inability to make and keep money had plagued Tourgee for many years. His savings had been wiped out by the failure of his magazine, Our Continent, in 1884, and he was never able to duplicate the success of his early work. His fiction from 1884 on sought to exploit popular trends such as the Columbian Exposition with Out of the Sunset Sea, Christian Socialism with Murvale Eastman, and the exposure of the oil monopolies with Eighty Nine. It is not surprising then that Tourgee should develop an Alger type story with the hope of making a good deal of money out of it. But Tourgee was disappointed again, for the serial publication of the story produced no marked improvement in the family economy.

The Mortgage On the Hip Roof House lay dormant until the publishing firm of Jennings and Graham of Cincinnati brought it out in book form in 1896. It is a slim volume of 206 pages and five full page illustrations, bound in green cloth with a dark green floral pattern and title stamped on the front cover and spine. The book is not well known and there is no mention of it in Tourgee's correspondence of this period. Tourgee was in poor health and the lack of money persisted. If this book brought him any financial relief it was evidently too little to mention. Finally, in 1897, President McKinley appointed him United States Consul at Bordeaux, France, and there he died in 1905.

The story itself has a young hero named Joe Thompson who saves the farm of Killis Waugh, his grandfather by adoption, from Perkins, the villain, who would foreclose the mortgage. After several adventures, Joe is able to pay the mortgage, make plans to continue his schooling, set up a business for himself, and there is a hint that he may one day marry the granddaughter of Killis Waugh. Such was the general outline of the story and certainly the influence of Alger can be seen in it.

Many of Tourgee's novels are autobiographical, and The Mortgage On the Hip Roof House is one of these, at least in its setting. The story takes place in upper New York State on Lake Erie west of Buffalo, and for many years Tourgee made his home at Mayville, New York, in this same location. The descriptions of the locale in the book resemble this area very much.

Commentators on Tourgee have generally paid little attention to this book, but Theodore L. Gross, in his recent study, summed up the essential character of the story and the situation out of which it grew when he wrote: ".... there is a

pathetic quality that grows out of Tourgee's concentration on the poverty of his family. His fiction has always had the unmistakable quality of autobiography, and here it is the tone of despair that affects the reader."

Editor's Note: Dean has prepared this commentary on Tourgee especially for the NEWSBOY readers. He learned of us through The Booklover's Answer, who mentioned us in a recent issue. He is Head of the Humanities Division of Kent State University Library, Kent, Ohio. He has been granted an indefinite subscription to the NEWSBOY for his efforts in our behalf. More from and about Dean will be printed in coming issues.

INTRODUCTION AND BIBLIOGRAPHY ON HORATIO ALGER JR.'S SHORT STORY - BEN'S ATONEMENT, by Stanley A. Pachon, (S-87).

This story, one of Alger's lesser known, originally appeared in the first issue of The New York Waverly, a weekly story paper patterned after the New York Weekly, New York Ledger, Saturday Night, and similar papers of the time. The address of the firm was given as the Waverly Publishing Co., Publisher, 81 Warren St., New York. As the Golden Argosy was also published from this address it has given rise to the erroneous belief that the New York Waverly was being published 'sub rosa' by Frank A. Munsey, the publisher of the Golden Argosy. One of Munsey's group of editors who had been associated with him almost from the beginning of his publishing career, in a reply to a query stated emphatically that Munsey did not publish the New York Waverly, or had anything to do with it.

The periodical was actually published by E.G. Rideout who had in 1882 given Munsey his chance by publishing the Golden Argosy. After Rideout's failure the Golden Argosy was taken over by Munsey. Rideout essayed another venture into the field of publishing. Seeing the huge successes of the well established weekly story papers, he entered a field fiercely competitive and already greatly saturated with the result that after only a year's effort, he was forced to suspend his publication.

His periodical was well edited and some of the better known writers of the day contributed serial stories, among them was Nathan D. Urner under his own name and his pseudonym of "Burke Brentford" and a close friend of Alger's, George W. Goode; "Rett Winwood" (Frank Corey); "Annie Ashmore", (Miss Margaret B. Stuart); W.F. Mott and many others. Horatio Alger also contributed a serial under the title of "The Hermit's Heir; or, Mark Manning's Mission." which started June 19, 1886, Vol. I #7 and was later published in book form in 1905 by A.L. Burt, as Mark Manning's Mission.

The story, BEN'S ATONEMENT can be found in; (1) The New York Waverly, Vol. I #1, May 8, 1886; (2) People's Literary Companion, Vol. 34, #11, Whole number 298, June 1902; (3) Sunshine for Youth, Vol. 16 #5, Whole number 297, June 1902; (4) The Illustrated Family Herald, Vol. 26, #5, Whole number 298.

BEN'S ATONEMENT By Horatio Alger Jr.
(continued from the July issue)

"I have three times that amount in a bank in New York, and I will gladly pay the note and give you back the farm."

"God be thanked for all his goodness!" ejaculated the deacon with pious thankfulness. "He has raised up help for us in our sore need. But where did you get so much money, Ben?"

"By honest means, father. Two years since I went to California--struck it rich, as they say--and today I am able to pay a debt I have long owed. Let this be my atonement for the past."

So the day which dawned so sorrowfully closed in quiet happiness. Ben went into business in a large town not far away, speedily married, and now, ten years later, his children have no greater pleasure than in visiting the old farm, where they are made much of by the aged deacon and his venerable wife, whose last years are the happiest.

The end.

(Taken from People's Literary Companion, June 1902, Vol. 34 No. II Whole No. 298)

An Alger short story contributed from the collection of Edward G. Levy, (S-04)

TOMMY'S ADVENTURE by Horatio Alger Jr.

Tommy Carver stood on the banks of the little river that ran through the town where he lived. Over his head waved the branches of a large willow-tree. At its foot floated upon the bosom of the river a small boat, which was fastened by a rope to the tree.

Tommy was eight years old, and had never been in a boat, though he had long desired to do so, in consequence of the glowing account given by his friend Edwin Samson, of the pleasure of a boat-ride. But his mother felt timid about the water, and it so happened that he had never been allowed to enter a boat.

"I could get in that boat just as easy as not," thought Tommy, "There isn't anybody looking, and I am out of sight of home. I'd like to know how it feels to be in a boat."

Tommy knew very well he ought not to disobey his mother, but still he couldn't get the delights of the boat out of his head; and the more he thought about it the more he thought he might step into the boat just a minute.

At length he yielded to temptation, and stepped in. The boat began to rock with him, frightening him a little at first, but after a while he liked it. Still there was not much chance for motion on account of the boat's being tied. Soon Tommy became bolder, and seriously contemplated cutting the rope, or, rather, untying it. The question occurred to him about rowing, which he had never tried. There was an oar in the boat, and this gave him confidence. He had seen boats, and it seemed to him a very easy matter.

"Pooh!" thought Tommy, "just as if I couldn't stick the oar into the water and draw it out again! It's easy enough to

row." So, as one wrong thing leads to another, Tommy soon made up his mind to cut the rope, for he found that he could not untie it. He had a knife in his pocket which was rather dull, and it took him a good while to saw through the rope. He succeeded in doing it at length without cutting his fingers, which was rather remarkable. Bravo! he is off.

There was a considerable current in the river, and Tommy found, to his surprise and pleasure, that he could get along without rowing at all, as the boat glided down stream rapidly, without any effort on his part. It troubled him occasionally by veering round, in consequence of conflicting currents.

Tommy sat on the seat at one end of the boat, and enjoyed the sport.

"It's bully fun," he thought, "much better than riding in a wagon. When I get to be a big man I mean to have a boat of my own; that is, if I have money enough. I guess I will have."

Just at that moment the boat bumped again against a sunken rock, which frightened Tommy considerably. However, as it just grazed and then went on, he got over this fright, and began to enjoy his voyage once more. The current was pretty strong, and bore him on rapidly. I neglected to say that Tommy lived in Maine, and the river of which I am speaking was the Penobscot, some distance above Bangor, where the settlements were comparatively few and small, and the river was lined part of the way by forests reaching to the water's edge.

After a while Tommy found that he had got beyond the limits of the village where he lived, and on either side there were nothing but forest trees.

"I guess I've gone far enough," thought Tommy. "I'd better go back now."

He wished the current would carry him back, just as boys often wish that they could coast up hill without the fatigue of drawing up their sleds; but as neither of these things takes place very often, Tommy knew that he must row back.

He took the oar, therefore, and commenced operations, having no serious misgivings as to his ability to row. It was only "sticking the oar into the water, and then pulling it out again." But somehow, though Tommy tried it faithfully, it did not seem to work. In fact, it seemed to make very little impression upon the course of the boat.

"I didn't get it right," thought Tommy. "I must use the oar just as if it was a broom in sweeping."

This did produce an effect, as it whirled the boat round in a circle; but it still kept drifting down stream.

"Plague on it!" thought Tommy, "I wonder how the old thing works? It looks easy enough when other people do it."

So Tommy continued to experiment, but all his experiments proved equally unfortunate.

"Oh, dear me!" he thought, as the awful conviction flashed upon him that he was getting farther and farther away from home.

"I don't believe I shall get home to-night."

He began to get hungry, too, as it was nearly supper-time when he started, and the twilight was coming on.

"I wish I was at home, eating supper."

Alger short story continued from page -3-

he thought. "What'll mother think, when I don't come home? I think there's something wrong about the boat, or maybe it's the oar." However, be the cause what it might, there was one thing sure, that Tommy was in a pickle from which there seemed little chance of his being extricated. About this time an unusually energetic movement of his oar sent the boat toward one side of the river, where its course was arrested by a log jutting out into the river.

Tommy seized the opportunity to escape to the log, on which he walked to the shore. The boat, getting entangled, remained fast. The wood reached down to the water's edge. No house was to be seen.

"If I could only find somebody. I'd ask 'em to take me home," thought Tommy. I guess I'll strike up through the woods, and maybe I'll find a house."

So he made his way with some difficulty up the bank, and into the woods. But there were no signs of any clearing. At last, however, he came to a small hut built round a tree.

"I wonder if anybody lives there? he thought. "I'll go and see."

So he went up and looked in through an opening which served for a door, and was almost frightened to death when a large Indian got up from his seat in the corner and advanced toward him.

"What white boy want?" he asked.

Tommy had only recently moved to Maine, and this was the first Indian he had seen. He had read about them, however, in his little history, and about their scalping people, and he was very much alarmed at the unexpected sight of the live Indian before him.

"Don't scalp me, Mr. Indian!" ejaculated Tommy, frightened.

The Indian laughed, a low guttural laugh.

"That for should Indian scalp white boy?" he said.

"Then you won't scalp me?" said Tommy, relieved. "I am glad of it. It must hurt awfully."

Again the Indian laughed.

"Didn't you ever scalp anybody?"

The Indian shook his head.

"Then you're a good Indian. Do you live here?"

"Yes."

"I should think the roof would leak." said Tommy, whose interest was aroused.

"You haven't got any windows."

"Don't need 'em," said the Indian.

"Are you married? Have you got any wife?" asked the inquisitive Tommy.

"Got no squaw," said the Indian.

"That's a funny name for a wife, anyway. What do you call baby?"

"Papoose."

"That's funny, I've got a little baby brother at home. What would mother think of calling him a papoose?"

"Where white boy's home?" asked the Indian.

"In Fordville."

"Up the river. How white boy come down?"

"In a boat," said Tommy; "the awfulest boat you ever saw, it came down well enough, but it won't go back a step."

"I don't see how I'm ever going to get home. I'm glad you're not a bad Indian, for I don't know what mother would say if I should come home without a scalp."

The Indian looked as amused as an Indian can look, but said nothing.

"What do you do for a living?" asked Tommy suddenly. "My father was a lawyer. I s'pose you don't have Indian lawyers?"

"We make baskets," said the Indian.

"Oh, let me see!" said Tommy. "My mother's got a beautiful basket made by an Indian. Won't you show me how you make 'em?"

The obliging Indian brought out a basket partly made, and showed it to his young visitor. Tommy was very much interested.

"Do you think I could learn to make baskets?" he said.

"Me guess so."

"I wish mother'd let me come and learn basket-making of you. I might make money, you know. Besides, I wouldn't have to go to school."

But meanwhile it was growing darker, and Tommy thought of home and supper.

"Have you eaten supper?" he asked suggestively. "I'm awful hungry."

"Me give white boy something to eat," said the Indian. And he brought out some flat cakes that seemed to be made of very coarse ground corn, mixed up with water only. At home Tommy would have turned up his nose at them; but he was really hungry, and ate them with relish.

"Haven't you any pies or cake?" he asked.

The Indian shook his head.

"I should think you'd get tired of this bread all the time. Oh, dear, how shall I get home?"

"White boy wait till morning, Indian carry him home."

"Well, I guess I'd better, as it's getting dark. But you haven't got any bed, have you?"

The Indian pointed to a bearskin inside of the wigwam.

"White boy lie there," he said.

"But where'll you sleep?" asked Tommy.

"Never mind Indian. Indian sleep anywhere."

"I guess I won't undress," said Tommy. "I'm a papoose now, and I must do like papooses. You wake me up when the sun rises."

Tommy slept peacefully all night, and woke quite refreshed in the morning. The Indian set out with him on the return home, which they reached by noon, greatly to the relief of Tommy's almost distracted mother, who was so overjoyed to find her darling boy again that she forgot to scold him. As for the friendly Indian, he received a very liberal order for baskets, which kept him at work for the next three months, and Tommy struck up a friendship with him which still exists. The end.

(Taken from TIP TOP WEEKLY No. 627 April 18, 1908) (Reissued as ONE GOOD INDIAN in TIP TOP WEEKLY, November 4, 1911) (Tommy's Adventure--probably appeared for the first time in BALLOU'S DOLLAR MONTHLY, October, 1886, and later in GOOD NEWS on December 11, 1890--reference- Gardner, 1964).

(Editor's note: I have used sentence structure and punctuation, verbatim, however, I am doubtful of its originality, since this is not the first use of the material.)