

Newsboy

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Monthly Newsletter of
the HORATIO ALGER
SOCIETY. The World's
Only Publication Devoted
to That Wonderful
World of Horatio Alger.



Founded 1961 by Forrest Campbell & Kenneth Butler



'THE PARSONAGE' of the Eliot Church of South Natick will be dedicated as a National Historic site on Nov. 2. The Pleasant Street home was the boyhood home of Horatio Alger Jr., the famous writer. His father, Horatio Alger Sr. was the minister of the Eliot Church from 1860 until 1874. The church, founded by John Eliot in 1630, is one of the oldest churches

in the country and the first Indian Church in America. A plaque will be presented to the Rev. Thomas C. Mayne of the Eliot Church by a representative of the National Park Service at the Church's annual supper to be held in Memorial Hall on Saturday evening. (Photo by Joan Normington)

On page 3 of this month's Newsboy, Dr. Max Goldberg details the proceedings leading up to the dedication of the Alger parsonage as a National Historic Site. (Picture from the Natick Suburban Press, Oct. 31, 1974).

HORATIO ALGER SOCIETY

To further the philosophy of Horatio Alger Jr. and to encourage the spirit of Strive and Succeed that for half a century guided Alger's undaunted heroes - lads whose struggles epitomized the Great American Dream and flamed hero ideals in countless millions of young Americans.

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Newsboy, the official organ of the Horatio Alger Society, is published monthly and is distributed free to our members. Membership fee for any twelve month period is \$10.00. All members' inquiries about their subscription and/or membership status should be directed to the HAS's Secretary, Carl T. Hartmann, 4907 Allison Dr., Lansing, Michigan 48910.

Newsboy recognizes Ralph D. Gardner's Horatio Alger or, the American Hero Era, published by Wayside Press, 1964, as the leading authority on the subject.

Manuscripts relating to Horatio Alger's life and works are solicited by the editor.

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ANOTHER LOOK AT MABEL
by Gary Scharnhorst

Gil Westgard's article in a recent issue of Newsboy (January-February, 1975) has moved me to set pen to paper also. Since I believe I have the only copy, besides Gil's, of the original, I sense an obligation to provide whatever insight I may have concerning it. With only two minor exceptions, I quite agree with all Gil has written. I tend to disagree slightly with the date he

places on its composition, believing it to be perhaps a decade or so later than the circa 1866 he attributes to it. Since Alger mentions in the course of his narration that Mabel's grandfather was an adult during the American Revolution, I place the time setting of the novel two generations later, or about 1820. Alger also mentions that the fictional incidents he describes occurred about sixty years previous to his writing, so a logical date for its composition would be about 1880. Moreover, the fact that the manuscript is in a copyist's hand suggests to me that Alger could afford such a luxury — as he presumably could not in the apprenticeship days before Ragged Dick. Nevertheless, the date the manuscript was written is a rather inconsequential problem. I have no objection to tracing it to about 1866. Certainly the manuscript was found in the archives of Street and Smith, publishers of the New York Sun, for whom we know (thank's to Gil's diligence) Alger wrote in the 1850's and '60's.

From only one other point in Gil's fine essay would I presume to dissent, and it is a bit more basic to my consideration of the novel's theme. Dick Clarke, though a villain, should not be considered a fortune-hunter, for he is willing to sacrifice fortune in order to obtain, albeit perversely, the hand of Mabel in marriage. Indeed, at one point in the story he tells Squire Parker, from whom he is extorting permission to wed his daughter, "'I have the good taste to value youth and beauty above the mere dross of gold.'"* Otherwise, he would have been content to have kept the missing fortune for himself.

This concern of such a reprehensible character as Clarke, it seems to me, is echoed by the virtuous characters in the novel as well, and goes to the heart of a distinction I make between Alger's juvenile fiction and his adult fiction. For example, Mabel claims at one point that, "'I care not for money. To me it is of no value compared with the happiness which I shall enjoy as Henry

[Davenport]'s wife.'*** In the world of Alger's adult novels, the central characters usually aspire not to "wealth" (which is invariably associated with the hero's personal happiness in the juvenile fiction), but to marriage (which in them is associated with happiness too, ratifying that old cliché, "marital bliss").

To Alger, the juvenile goal of success, however that term is defined, corresponds to the mature, adult goal of marriage, hearth and home. In other words, it seems to me that the adult fiction as a whole and Mabel Parker in particular inform the Alger Myth by clarifying beyond any doubt that Alger was a moralist, more concerned with the moral uses of the money his heroes earn or inherit than with the money itself. His adult novels reveal by inference that his juvenile novels are American morality fables, not accounts of budding entrepreneurs on the make.

In my opinion, one of the most salient features of the manuscripted novel is a thinly disguised similarity to one of the Leatherstocking Tales of James Fenimore Cooper, entitled The Pioneers (which might have been one reason why Street and Smith declined to issue it). Both novels are set in the lake district of New York state. Characters are also duplicated, with Elizabeth Temple becoming Mabel Parker, Edward Effingham becoming Henry Davenport, Judge Temple becoming Squire Parker, and Indian John becoming Indian John, or Logan, or Jack.

Similar incidents also appear in them. In both, for example, a deer is shot simultaneously by two characters who then argue over the carcass, a shooting match is held in which the virtuous character emerges victorious, and Indian John is cautioned to abstain from Demon Rum. Both also contain scenes of intimacy between Elizabeth-Mabel and Edward-Henry. It seems, in other words, that Alger borrowed from an earlier work for the skeleton of this one, much as he at other times rewrote Charles Dickens, and much as a panoply of writers have done

since time immemorial.

I hope all this has not seemed too presumptuous; above all, I hope that Gil Westgard appreciates my own attempt to make sense of Mabel Parker. He was kind enough to correspond with me several months ago regarding our opinions of the manuscript, for which I am grateful. In the end, I think our slight differences are more a product of perspective than of temperament.

*Horatio Alger, Jr., Mabel Parker; or, The Hidden Treasure. A Tale of the Frontier Settlements, unpublished novel, c. 1880, p. 61. From the Street and Smith Collection, George Arents Research Library for Special Collections at Syracuse University. Quoted by permission of The Conde Nast Publications, Inc.

**Ibid., p. 93.

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THE PARSONAGE AT SOUTH NATICK
DECLARED A
NATIONAL HISTORICAL LANDMARK

Dedicated November 2, 1974

by Dr. Max Goldberg

Before going into details, I must first thank both Forrest Campbell and Stewart McLeish for their endorsements and recommendations to the United States Department of the Interior as to my qualifications. It all took three years, but it was worth the correspondence, phone calls and effort.

On February 3, 1971, the U. S. Department of the Interior wrote to Forrest Campbell, "asking for homes that Alger occupied in Natick as well as in other places." It was signed by Robert M. Utley, Chief Historian.

On February 11, 1971, Forrest Campbell answered Mr. Utley stating, "I recommend that you contact Max Goldberg, 728 Worcester St., Natick, Massachusetts. Mr. Goldberg has done much historical research on the subject of Horatio

Alger home named historic site

The homestead of Horatio Alger Jr., the world-famous author of rags-to-riches boys' stories, has been declared eligible to become a National Historic Landmark.

Granted the title is the Elliot Church Parsonage in South Natick at 16 Pleasant St., where young Alger lived as a boy when his father was minister of the church from 1860 to 1874.

The designation comes from the National Park Service, according to David Dimmick, moderator of the church. The church, as owner of the house, must now formally apply to the park service for a certificate and a plaque to complete the historic designation. This designation will include a listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

Mr. Dimmick expects the church will go ahead and apply for the plaque and the listing.

He said that the park service approached the church a year ago to examine the parsonage as an historic landmark. "They were examining places that were linked with significant American authors," said Mr. Dimmick.

Mr. Dimmick said much assistance in the effort has been provided by Max Goldberg of Natick and the Horatio Alger Society.

The building itself was constructed in 1816, although the present church building at the intersec-

tion of Union Street and Rte. 16 was not constructed until 1828 -- its foundations, said the pastor, Rev. Thomas Mayne, date to John Elliot's time in the mid-seventeenth century.

Little Change

The Rev. Mr. Mayne confirmed that the parsonage is substantially the same as it was in Alger's time. "The kitchen has been remodeled recently," he said, "and the heating system is modern, but apart from that it is pretty much as it was. It's also very comfortable."

Mr. Dimmick said the new designation carries no controls, except the "honorary control not to make a significant change that alters the character of the building."

He said that the parsonage was originally a farmhouse, and had been purchased by the Hunnewell family and given to the church in Alger's time with the understanding that Alger could use it. Prior to that time, Elliot Church pastors lived in a number of houses throughout South Natick.

Alger, having spent his boyhood in Natick, returned later to spend his summers from 1866 to 1877 at the parsonage. After a two-

year trip to the West, he resumed summering in Natick and retired here in 1898.

Natick Suburban Press, Feb. 17, 1971

Alger, Jr., and I am confident that he will be able to provide perhaps all the information you might need."

On February 15, 1971, Mr. Stewart McLeish wrote a letter to Mr. Utley stating, "I would note that with Mr. Goldberg it is a work of love, and he is always pleased to furnish full information regarding this subject."

On February 26, 1971, Mr. Robert Gamble of the U. S. Department of the Interior wrote to Mr. McLeish: "As you suggested, I will contact Mr. Goldberg. Mr. Forrest Campbell of Kalamazoo, Michigan has also recommended Mr. Goldberg."

Mr. Robert Gamble phoned me from Washington. We talked for quite awhile and I gave him the information he needed.

On May 25, 1971, I received a letter from Mr. Utley which said: "Please furnish us with further information concerning buildings connected with the 19th century American author, Horatio Alger, Jr."

The last letter I received was from Mr. A. R. Mortenson, Acting Chief Historian, and it was dated July 7, 1971. He wrote: "The information which you have provided has been helpful to the work of the survey."

On February 17, 1972, the Parsonage of the Eliot Church was named a Historical Site. In the Natick Suburban Press, Mr. Dimmick, moderator of the Eliot Church stated, "Much assistance in the effort has been provided by Max Goldberg of Natick and the Horatio Alger Society."

On November 2, 1974, the official plaque was presented to the Eliot Church, amid greetings and a fine collation.

I phoned Rev. Thomas Mayne inquiring when the plaque will be placed at the Parsonage. I wanted to take a picture and send it to the Society. He informed me that it will not be on the house itself, but that a boulder will be located near the home and the plaque inserted in it. When the boulder is in place, I will send a photo of it to the Society.

Chalk up another achievement for the Horatio Alger Society!!

* * *

"THE TWENTY FRANC PIECE"

by Horatio Alger, Jr.

The following Alger short story is from the collection of President Bob Bennett. It originally appeared in the March 25, 1854 issue of The Flag of Our Union.

Before the city residence of M. Firal, a rich Paris banker, a boy apparently fifteen years of age, might have been heard one fair spring morning playing on a hurdy-gurdy. It was not very melodious, nor was the playing in the highest style of art, yet music under whatever form seldom fails to find its way to the heart. It was this feeling, doubtless, which stayed the steps of the humbler passers-by, and gradually gathered around the poor musician a ring of appreciating, though not remunerating auditors. The modiste's apprentice, the mechanic's journeyman, the servant maid, for of such were the auditors constituted, had nothing to give but their attention, and that they dispensed liberally.

No doubt the boy came to the same opinion, for he was about to pack up his instrument, and move further on, when the outer door of the house opened quickly, and a beautiful little girl, perhaps three years younger than himself, beckoned him to come in.

He obeyed the summons, and followed the young girl, who led the way through the hall into an apartment elegantly but not ostentatiously furnished. The breakfast table was still standing in the centre of the apartment. Before the fire, in a large armchair, was seated a gentleman in the prime of life. He was carelessly attired in a dressing gown, and had evidently just risen from the table. His face had that benevolent expression which is almost sure to accompany a kindly heart.

This was M. Firal, the banker.

When the door opened, he looked round, and beheld the boy whom his daughter Marie ushered in.

"Ah, whom have we here?" said he, turning an inquisitive glance towards the boy, whose eyes were taking a surprised survey of the apartment, which, to his unpractised eye seemed furnished with regal magnificence.

"It is a poor boy, papa, that I found playing in front of our door. I thought he might be hungry and destitute, and so . . ."

"And so you invited him, my little philanthropist. Well, let us see if we can do anything for him. Where are you from, my boy?"

"From Auvergne, sir," said the boy, in a respectful tone.

"And are you here alone in Paris? Have you no friends, no relations here? You are young to take charge of your yourself."

"No sir, I have no relations here. At home, in dear Auvergne, which I hope to

see again some time, if Heaven favors me, I have a mother, and a brother, two years younger than myself."

"And why did you leave them?"

"Because they are poor, and I would not be a burden to my mother who works hard enough already. But I could get no work at home, so one morning I took this hurdy-gurdy, which once belonged to my father, and taking leave of my mother and Louis, my brother, I came to Paris, in hopes of gaining enough to support myself, and more, perhaps, so as to go home, by-and-by, to dear Auvergne."

"I suppose you do not fare very sumptuously?"

The boy looked perplexed. "I beg your pardon, sir, but I did not quite understand . . ."

"I mean, I suppose you do not live on very rich food?"

"No," replied Jean, for this was the boy's name. "A loaf of bread and a cup of water is what I generally get. Now and then, I buy a tart such as the market women sell for a sou, but not very often, for I save all the money I can get to carry home."

"Have you taken breakfast this morning?"

"Not yet."

"Then for once you shall have something better than usual. Marie, give him a seat at the table, and pour him out some chocolate. Take care that he has enough."

Marie clapped her hands at the novelty of the idea, and caused the little Jean to sit at the table. He sat on the edge of the plush velvet chair, for he was afraid of soiling it. The unexpected circumstances in which he found himself placed, at first disinclined him to eat; but the gaiety of Marie, and her persuasions, soon placed him more at his

ease, and he ate with great relish. Hunger is a great appetiser, and the fine roll on which he commenced operations appeared to him so delicious that he could not avoid finishing it.

When he rose from the table, it was with a sigh of gratification, which fully evinced the enjoyment the meal had afforded him.

"Well," said M. Firal, looking up, "are you hungry now?"

"No sir, thanks to your goodness."

The boy made a motion to depart. M. Firal took from his pocket a handful of small change, and placed it in his hand. Jean put it in his pocket, and thankfully retired.

M. Firal drew on his coat and gloves, and taking his hat left the house for his office, feeling at his heart that comfortable feeling which the consciousness of having performed a good action always inspires.

He was walking leisurely along, when he felt a touch upon his coat. He looked back, and perceived that Jean was trying to arrest his attention.

"Ah, what now?" he inquired, with surprise.

"Sir," said the boy, as soon as he could recover breath, for he had been running, "sir, you have made a mistake."

"A mistake! About what?"

The boy held up a gold piece of twenty francs.

"You gave me this, sir, among the other pieces. I suppose you took it for silver. So, here it is again."

"Since you have been so honest as to return it," said the banker, "you shall suffer no loss. It is yours. I give it to you freely."

Jean's eyes sparkled.

"Since you are so kind, sir, I will keep it, and many thanks. I hope I shall some day have a chance to show you how truly grateful I am."

"That I do not in the least doubt. Make a good use of it, and I shall feel more than repaid."

A moment afterwards, and the hoarse notes of the hurdy-gurdy were again heard, as the boy, with a light heart and cheerful spirit, full of glowing anticipations of the future which are so readily kindled in the mind of youth, moved forward to what he considered an eligible station for the practice of his art.

Such a scene as that detailed above recurred too frequently in the life of the charitable banker, to remain long in his memory.

Not so, however, with Marie. She had been much interested in the story of the little stranger, who had wandered so far from home into the streets of a great city, with the design of lightening his mother's burdens.

"Shall I ever see him again?" she asked, with a feeling of interest.

Months passed by, and though she took care to examine particularly all whom she met, who were engaged in the same employment as her protege, she was unable to find Jean.

One day, as she went a little out of her usual course, on the way to school, she was attracted by the sight of some fine oranges at a fruit stall, situated at the corner of a street.

"What is the price?" she inquired, taking one in her hand.

"To you, mademoiselle, nothing," was the reply.

Surprised at this answer, she looked

up, and beheld with pleasure the face of Jean, the whilom hurdy-gurdy player.

"What, is it you?" she exclaimed.

"Yes, thanks to your goodness, and that of your father, I am a little better off than I was when you took pity on me."

"And, how is it that I find you here? You have renounced the hurdy-gurdy?"

"Yes, mademoiselle, it did not entirely suit me. By good luck, the owner of this stall was willing to sell out his run of custom, and I was able to purchase it. It was the piece of twenty francs which I received from your father, that enabled me to do it. Without that, I should still have been playing on the hurdy-gurdy through the streets, without any prospect of doing better."

"And you are succeeding well here?" inquired Marie, with interest.

"Yes, I attend closely to business, and take care never to sell anything that I do not know to be good. That brings me customers."

"I am glad to hear it."

Marie was about to deposit the price of the fruit, but Jean requested her with so much earnestness to allow him to make her a present of it, that she finally yielded to his entreaties, feeling assured that in no other way could she give him so much pleasure.

After this unexpected encounter with her protege, Marie used to frequently pass by the little stand at which he was stationed, and never without exchanging a few words with him, or, perhaps, purchasing some little article.

She would often lead him, by an expression of kind encouragement, to speak of his mother, and his cottage home in Auvergne, round which clustered so many associations of childish happiness.

Such a state of things, however, was not destined to continue long. Summer came with its long and sultry days, and M. Firal left Paris with his daughter, to pass a few days at a beautiful country retreat not many miles from the metropolis.

On returning to the city, one of Marie's first walks carried her to the little fruit stall of Jean. But it was kept by a different person, and not withstanding the numerous inquiries which she made, she could obtain no clues to his whereabouts. It was with a feeling of regret that she acknowledged this to herself, for she had come to feel a more than ordinary interest in the fortunes of the young adventurer. But it was not likely that they would meet again.

 Several years passed by — years which bore but lightly upon M. Firal, mingling here and there a gray streak in his dark hair.

But with Marie it was different. The school-girl of twelve, had expanded into the young lady of eighteen. Time, so far from robbing her of her youthful bloom and the gaiety which marked her childhood, had rather contributed to heighten the effect of each. Still the change had been so gradual, that her father could scarcely refrain from regarding her in the same light as if she were still the careless school-girl of years gone by.

With the attractions which we have rather hinted at than described, the reader will not doubt that suitors for Marie's hand were not wanting. She encouraged none, though she treated all with kindness and consideration.

"I am not old enough to marry," she would remark, gaily. "Besides, what would my father do without me? I must stay with him, and endeavor to repay by my attention to his comfort, the many obligations under which he has placed me."

In his business affairs, M. Firal went on with a steady flow of prosperity. No bank was more accredited among business men than his; no banker was more trusted.

But who can calculate with certainty on the fluctuating current of worldly success? A time of financial difficulty succeeded, and the failure of several banks doing a large amount of business excited a feeling of distrust in this class of institutions. Those who had made deposits, in their alarm barricaded the doors of M. Firal's bank, and insisted upon withdrawing them. The panic was so sudden in its origin, having sprung up, so to speak, in a single night, that M. Firal had no time to make preparation for it.

It was with an anxious countenance that he met his daughter at dinner.

"If this pressure continues," he remarked, "the bank will be ruined. If they would wait but a day, something might be done. But the mere mention of such a thing seems but to heighten their distrust, and make them all the more anxious to withdraw."

"Keep up a good heart, father," said Marie, "depend upon it, it will all turn out for the best. Perhaps even now, affairs have taken a favorable turn."

M. Firal shook his head despondingly. He found it difficult to become a convert to his daughter's cheerful philosophy.

On reaching the office he was told that two gentlemen wished to see him. "Doubtless," thought he, "they, too, wish to withdraw deposits," and with a sigh, he ordered the visitors to be admitted.

They were young men; one apparently had scarcely attained his majority.

"This is M. Firal?" inquired the elder.

"You are right, sir."

"I understand there is a run upon your bank," he proceeded.

"If you have any deposits which you wish to withdraw," remarked M. Firal, somewhat nettled, "there will be no difficulty."

"On the contrary, sir, we, that is, my brother and I, would like to make a deposit, if it would tend in any way to lighten your pressures. Would fifty thousand francs be of service in that way?"

"Gentlemen, with that assistance, I should be able to carry matters through. I could do without it, if depositors would grant a single day's delay. But to what am I indebted for such a signal service from entire strangers, for such I believe you are?"

The young man drew from his vest-pocket a gold louis.

"Does not this call me to your recollection?" he inquired.

M. Firal confessed that it did not.

"Several years ago," continued the young man, "a boy played on a hurdy-gurdy before your residence. He was invited in, supplied with a warm breakfast, and when he withdrew, it was with a number of coins, of which this was one. Having now a little capital, he purchased the interest of a small fruit-stall, which he conducted successfully for some months. This gave him an increase of capital, which enabled him after a while to lay in a small stock of goods, and set up as a travelling merchant. Gradually, he extended his business and associated his youngest brother with him. It was only a few days since that he encountered this little coin, which has been the origin of his good fortune. He recognized it by this inscription, 'M. F. to J.,' which he scratched upon it rather with the desire than the expectation of

finding it once more. Need I say more? I am Jean, the recipient of your generosity. I cannot better employ the moderate wealth with which Fortune has gifted me than in serving my benefactor."

Jean stepped forward and deposited in M. Firal's hands the amount which he had offered to deposit.

M. Firal congratulated him warmly on his success, and invited the brothers to return with him to the evening meal.

"It will not be the first time," he remarked gaily to Jean, "that you have taken food in my house."

I feel that it is unnecessary for me to proceed farther. The reader will divine that Marie's scruples against marriage were not insurmountable, and that in her hand Jean received from M. Firal a gift, far more precious than the TWENTY FRANC PIECE.

* * *

The following essay was sent me by PF-314, Dave Kanarr. It is chapter five of Younger Days of Famous Writers, published in 1925 by the Century Company. The author of the book is Katherine Dunlap Cather, and the title of the following piece is "Shepherd of the Friendless."

Anybody could see that the boy was hungry. His eyes were fixed so intently upon the pies and bread-loaves in the bakery window that they seemed to be riveted there. The wind, icy with the breath of the Atlantic, sent blinding sheets of snow along the street, and people hurried homeward as if determined not to stay out a second longer than was necessary on such a bitter night. Many of these carried packages tied with bright red string or ribbon. Here and there was a box or bag gayer than the others in its covering of flower-garlanded paper. Between the pies and bread-rows in the window were sprigs of holly, standing upright like dwarfed, red-fluted trees. Festoons of scarlet paper swung behind, and from these

depended shining cardboard bells; for it was Christmas eve, and New York had wreathed its windows in keeping with the holiday spirit.

The boy shivered as he stood there. His coat was worn and thin; though on such a night a covering of fur would have been none too warm. Once he started, moving toward the door as if about to enter the warm, food-filled shop. Then he stopped, thrust his hand into his pocket, took out something, and looked at it. Horatio Alger, in the shadows behind him, saw it was a few small silver pieces.

He reached for the door-knob, but instead of going into the shop he suddenly shook his head and pushed the money down into his pocket again. Once again he looked yearningly at the window. Then with quick decision, as if he feared delay might shake him from his resolve, he turned and started up the street.

Alger was much puzzled. There was no mistaking the fact that the boy was hungry. He had the money to buy some of the food spread temptingly before him, yet he did not buy it. There was something appealing about him, something likable, a frankness about his face and eyes that invited friendship; but along with the frankness was a pinched, worn look that showed life had not dealt pleasantly with him.

Not only was Alger's curiosity keyed to a high pitch concerning his curious actions. His sympathy was aroused. He was only a boy himself, come to New York on a vacation from Harvard, to spend part of the holidays with friends, and, being the son of fairly prosperous people, knew nothing about hardship himself. But the thought that here was a lad who wanted, needed food and had the money to pay for it, yet for some reason dared not buy, touched him deeply. He wanted to find out what lay behind the holding back. He decided to follow and see if he could.

The boy moved north along Broadway, turned east at Fifteenth Street and into Union Square. There he headed toward another window gay with Christmas wreaths and swaying bells, but it was not the window of a food-shop. Books were on display there, some gaudily attractive with trees, mountains, animals, or people embossed upon their covers, some somber and plain, but all looking invitingly at passers-by. Even more than they had shone at sight of the food, the boy's eyes now kindled as they glimpsed the volumes. This time he did not hesitate. Opening the door, he went inside. Horatio, more curious than before, followed him.

An old man came from the shadows in the rear of the store to see what the prospective buyers wanted. At sight of the youth his face brightened with a glance of recognition.

"You've come for the book?" he asked.

"Yes," the lad returned. "You don't need to wrap it. I live close by here. I'll just slip it under my coat."

"You'll not be sorry to own it, I'm sure," the old man remarked, going over to a table and picking up a volume bound in paper.

Once it had been a light tan color. Now, however, through much use it was stained to a muddy brown. As the boy turned the pages before tucking it under his coat Horatio Alger saw it was a copy of The Spy, by James Fenimore Cooper, which had appeared about three years before, and about which all America was still talking. The boy paid for it with the coins from his pocket, and when the bookseller gave him the change Horatio saw there was five cents left. This he slipped back to the place where the silver pieces had been and went into the street.

"You, sir?" the man asked, turning toward young Alger.

"Just some writing-paper," Horatio

answered; "ten cents' worth of that over in the case."

He laid the money for it on the counter, but did not wait to receive the purchase. The boy had quickened his pace. Already he had disappeared beyond the window and before many minutes would be lost in darkness, the crowds, and the whirling snow.

Alger hurried after him.

"Very likely I'll never know any more about him than I know now if I just go on following him," he thought as he went. "He said he lives near here. Any minute now he may turn in at a door, and then I'll lose him for good. I'm going to speak to him."

He swung almost into a run in order to overtake the fast-moving figure, and then he called in a friendly way, "Terribly blustery this evening, isn't it?"

The lad turned in surprise, wondering who it was that had suddenly spoken to him.

"Yes," he answered pleasantly. "It's an awful night. I'm going to get inside the minute I can."

"I must say something that will draw him out," Horatio thought, wondering how he could get at his story immediately. A youth who gazed hungrily at food in a window, yet turned from it and bought a book, was sure to have a story.

"I saw you get Cooper's Spy at the bookstore," he said, hoping the remark might be a key to unlock the door of the boy's confidence. "It's a splendid book, isn't it? I've read it twice."

"I haven't read it at all yet; just looked through it enough to know I want to. So I bought it for my Christmas present."

Alger laughed. "Folks don't usually buy their own Christmas presents," he replied. "They let other people do that for them."

"Some do," came the quick retort, "or they don't get any. I'm one of the some. I have nobody but myself, so I have to buy my own presents."

"No folks at all?" the older boy questioned.

A shake of the head answered him. Then, as if disposed to be friendly, the boy said: "My name's Dick Richards. I live in the next house. Want to come out of the cold? I like people who like books."

He led the way to a door opening into a dingy house in Madison Avenue. To get away from the wind and the snow-flurries into the protection of the hall was a relief, even for Horatio, who was warmly clad.

"It must seem like being in paradise for Dick," he thought.

Yet the long, narrow passage, unlighted except for a smoky, dimly flickering lantern, was anything but a paradise.

They started up-stairs. Narrow stairs they were, like the passage, and steep, the kind the Dutch built when they erected the first houses on Manhattan. Two flights the boys climbed. At the top of the second they came to a large, unfinished garret.

"Here's where I live," Dick said, leading the way and lighting a candle. "Two other fellows live with me, but they're not here now."

Horatio looked around. It seemed to him nothing could want to live there, except possibly a rat. The floor was bare. The panes in the windows that looked down upon the street were cracked and broken. Several of the holes were pasted over with paper to keep out the cold. Three beds stood at intervals

along the wall, not beds deserving the name, but rough boxes set on legs, covered with straw pallets and several shabby quilts. A small, neglected-looking stove provided warmth for the place, but there was no warmth now, for the fire had gone out. Dick hurriedly set about rekindling it, and as he did Horatio noticed beyond the stove an unpainted table on which was a cup, a plate, and a saucer containing some brownish-looking stuff he knew was the remains of bread-crust soaked in coffee. Two tumble-down chairs, and on the other side of the table a box that probably served as a cupboard, completed the furniture.

"In this miserable, hovel-like place Dick lives; exists, rather," Horatio thought. "Yet he spends almost the last money in his pocket to buy something to read."

As the fire blazed and the cold began to leave the garret, Dick talked freely, and Horatio soon had the story. Dick was born in Vermont and lived there with his parents until he was thirteen. Then, in 1849, his father started for California to join the gold-seekers, shipping out of Nantucket around the Horn, leaving his wife and son to live alone until the fortune was made and he returned east or sent for them. The boat on which he sailed, a clipper bound for Chinese ports to take on a cargo of tea, was wrecked off Patagonia, and John Richard's voyage ended in the bottom of the Atlantic. Dick's mother died the following autumn, and he started out to shift for himself, drifting to New York, where he had heard there were many opportunities for a boy to get ahead. He managed to earn his way there by helping a drover take a herd of cattle gathered up in New England to the city market, for in the forties cattle were moved on the hoof.

That had been more than a year ago. Since then he had lived by devious ways, doing whatever he could find to do, selling papers, sweeping sidewalks, making fires for housewives, cleaning

out cellars and burning refuse, and helping load and unload boats in the harbor. He was not strong enough to do this latter work constantly. About two days a week of it was as much as he could stand. The rest of the time he had to fall back on smaller, lighter jobs. But by keeping his eyes open and being always ready with his hands, and joining with two other boys who were alone in the world like himself, so as to reduce the cost of a roof over his head, he had managed to keep soul and body together.

"I did intend to buy a pie this evening and a German apple cake," he said, not dreaming that Horatio had seen him look hungrily at them, "and have a Christmas feast. But I wanted the book, and could not have both. So I took the book. It won't be a bad Christmas, though, having The Spy to read," he added.

"Why don't you and the other boys go in together and have the feast anyway?" Horatio asked.

"They've gone for a week, maybe longer," the ragged lad answered. "They do carpenter work sometimes. A man they helped last summer has a cabin in the Hudson Valley this side of Tarrytown. He asked them to stay with him until after New Year's, so that leaves me alone. But I don't mind," he added bravely. "There'll be snow to shovel, so I'm sure of something each day, and owning The Spy all by myself seems splendid. I've always liked to read. At home we had a whole shelf of books, Robinson Crusoe, Pilgrim's Progress, Irving's Life of Washington, Arabian Nights, and one or two others. But when everything was sold after mother died to pay the money she owed, they had to go. I haven't had a book of my own since being in New York," he went on wistfully. "But I'm going to have this one, if I must be a little hungry in order to do it."

Horatio was filled with admiration for the courage of this lad. Fourteen years

old! He himself was almost seventeen, and he doubted if he would have the pluck to face life alone with empty pockets and only his hands to aid him. He wanted to give Dick the Christmas feast he had hoped to provide for himself, but in the short time they had talked together he knew Dick was too proud to accept anything offered in what might seem a spirit of charity. A call to Christmas eve service sounded from a church steeple across on Broadway. Horatio had not realized it was so late and started up with a bound.

"I must be going," he exclaimed. "Haven't had a bite to eat since before noon, when I took the train from Cambridge, and am hungry as a bear."

Then, hesitating a moment, he added: "Come on and have supper with me. You're alone, and I'm alone. I hate eating all by myself."

Dick's body suddenly stiffened, and a look of suspicion came into his eyes.

"You can eat at your friends' house, can't you?" he asked, making it very clear that even though he was almost penniless he would not accept charity as long as he could shift for himself.

"It's too late to get anything to eat there," Horatio answered truthfully. "They dine at five." Then, in genuine cordiality, for he liked this waif and wanted him to go, he added, "I wish you'd come along."

His manner seemed to convince Dick that the invitation was given out of friendliness, and his frank winsomeness returned as quickly as it had left him.

"All right, I'll go," he exclaimed. Then, impulsively, he added, "It's awfully nice of you to want me."

They went together down the narrow stairway and through the night to a little restaurant. Horatio ordered stew with bread and butter for two; and as they ate the steaming, fragrant

concoction that a stocky German waiter set before them Dick talked more and more of his experiences, and of the many ways in which a fellow can make his way in the world if he has a mind to do so. He was so hungry he fairly gulped the food down, but he was so intent on what he was saying that he did not notice how nearly empty his plate had become. So Horatio quietly motioned the German to bring another helping. He knew he would have to go without something himself because of spending the money, for he had only funds enough to get him to New York and back to Cambridge and a very little to spend while in the city. But he felt he had rather miss almost any pleasure than not give this brave lad at least one nourishing meal. He wished he might have the entire evening with him, and part of the next day; but that was out of the question. The friends he was to visit would not want him to go wandering away with strangers. Also, they would think it strange if he did not reach the house until nine o'clock or after, as he had written he would be in on the train that arrived at five. So he said good-by to Dick, expressing pleasure over having met him.

"I'm certainly glad you spoke to me and that we got to know each other," the ragged boy returned whole-heartedly as they parted. "It's been a very nice Christmas eve. Come and see me the next time you're in New York. Guess I'll be in that same loft for a good while yet. Of course, when I get to earning big money," he exclaimed, as if not for a minute did he doubt that he would be prosperous some day, "I'll move to a better place. When I do I'll write and tell you so. Good-by, and a Merry Christmas."

He set off through the snow for his cheerless garret, but as he went it seemed to him a very inviting place. He would curl up beside the stove and read the book that was now his very own, Cooper's Spy for which he had been longing for many months.

Horatio Alger never saw Dick again. After his visit to New York he returned to Harvard and, graduating there, settled down in his Massachusetts home to write. Once when he went back to the city he tried to find Dick, but the ragged urchin and his companions were gone from the garret, and nobody living there knew what had become of them. Horatio hoped it meant that Dick had got the fine job he so confidently talked of getting, and that he was no longer having to choose between hunger and a book. But whether that was the case or not he never knew.

Meeting the waif, however, quickened his sympathies for all homeless, unfortunate boys. He found that there were many struggling to keep alive and to go on to something better, and that those who were making the fight in great cities had to fight hardest, because, although they found many opportunities there there were more and bigger obstacles for them to surmount. He had a father to stand back of him and to send him to college, yet even he felt sometimes that life was not wholly rosy. Dick and others of his kind had nobody; only their hands, their heads, and their pluck. It began to seem that those who make their own way and succeed are worth ten times more than those who go to success aided upon every side. Horatio felt a desire to help all waifs, to encourage them, and before he realized such a thing was possible a way opened for him to do it.

New York offered more opportunities to a writer than any other place in America. The publishers were there. It was the market to which to take one's wares. So Horatio Alger settled in New York, and while writing there his chief recreation was to go about the streets and follow up the lives of boys. He found many a ragged Dick and tattered Tom and Harry, and whenever he did he made friends with them, trying to help them stand on their own feet and go on. His home came to be their headquarters. He lent them books, taught those who wanted to study, for there were no night

schools in those days, and helped them to find jobs and to get into better places than the ones they had already. And the boys gave back as much as he gave to them. While he was getting their confidence and coming to know their hardships and their hopes, they furnished him with something to write about; and he wrote freely, eloquently sometimes, because he was very full of his subject. In stories that he called Ragged Dick, Tattered Tom, and the like, in keeping with their characters, he pictured the lives of struggling boys he knew. He always brought his books to a happy ending, had the wrong punished and virtue rewarded, because that was what he hoped would be in store for each of his young friends. He knew, also, that to read books in which boys struggling against heavy odds succeeded at last would help them to go on. He became a shepherd of the friendless, a bringer of hope and happiness into lives that held little brightness. And perhaps but for seeing Dick Richards look hungrily into a bakery window one bitter Christmas eve it would not have turned out that way at all.

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ANOTHER REVIEW OF HORATIO'S BOYS
by Jack Bales

When I printed Gilbert K. Westgard's review of Edwin P. Hoyt's Horatio's Boys [Radnor, Pennsylvania, Chilton Book Co., 1974], in the December, 1974 issue of the Newsboy, I had not yet read the volume, and was therefore unable to write my own comments regarding this biography. Now, however, after having studied Hoyt's book, I find that I am of the opposite opinion of Gil - I feel that it is a significant contribution to Alger history, and believe that it is a well researched documentary of Alger's life.

As Gil points out, there are errors in Horatio's Boys, and some pretty careless ones at that. But notwithstanding this, there are so many notes appended to the volume (a boon to the Alger scholar desiring more information), that one gets the impression that Hoyt had

definitely done his homework. Also, since many facts are brought to light that I was not aware of before (and that are documented in the "Notes and Acknowledgments" section), I am inclined to regard them with a strong degree of plausibility until they are proven false.

The gay aspect of Alger's life is nothing new. As HAS member Herb Risten noted in a recent letter to me, Richard Huber probably first brought it to light (very matter-of-factly too, with no trace of sensationalism) in his The American Idea of Success [New York, McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1971]. As many know, when the book was released, wire services across the country saw fit to publicize only this portion of a truly excellent work.

However, if Alger were a homosexual, really, what difference does it make? It is currently in vogue in the literary world to dust off the skeletons in notable people's closets and to bring them forth, clad in all the dirty linen that authors can fit (or stretch to fit) upon them. Personally, all I care about is Alger's writing and the effect that he had on the social and cultural times of the nineteenth century. As to his personal life - that's his own business.

This is my only fault with Hoyt. I definitely agree with Gil when he writes in his review: "He [Hoyt] never lets you forget his contention that his subject was a homosexual, child-molesting sodomist." The author does this in a variety of methods. He has the title, Horatio's Boys; there is a picture on the cover of Alger with his hand on a newsboy's shoulder; a line below that states that the book is "the only tell-it-all biography of America's all-time best-selling author"; a chapter is entitled, "Lion Among the Juveniles"; and finally, a quotation from the church records in Brewster is placed prominently on the back cover.

Enough of the negative aspects of

Horatio's Boys; there are more than enough positive ones to atone for them.

Though I do not pretend to be as knowledgeable about Alger's life and works as others in the Society, I have consistently collected reference books and articles to increase my fund of Alger erudition. Hoyt's book adds greatly to this. Though of course we all know the story of the Mayes' hoax, Edwin Hoyt details it all. I know that there is not much information on Alger's life, but was unaware until I read Horatio's Boys that this is due to the Alger family's habit of discarding papers. Naturally, I am familiar with the padrone system, but was ignorant of the fact that, according to Hoyt, a man named George Nelson Maverick first brought it to Alger's attention. Though we in the HAS are familiar with the Newsboys' Lodging House, Hoyt details its founding by Charles Loring Brace, quoting liberally from Brace, and discussing such places as Rag Pickers Den, the Thieves' Lodging House, Rotten Row and Poverty Lane - all locations that the philanthropist visited in order to learn about the problems of vagrant children. And finally, how many HAS members are aware that on Alger's entrance examinations to Harvard College, "he did not do as well as had been expected, . . . [and] was accepted conditionally as a probationary student"? (Hoyt - p. 17)

In his review Gil writes that Hoyt bulk[s] up his book to a point where over half of the volume is taken up with plot summaries of over two dozen Alger tales." Though this is true, Hoyt does this to give his analyses of Alger's writings. For example, in his synopsis of Ben, the Luggage Boy, Hoyt states that "well into the Ragged Dick series, Horatio had established firmly the style in which he would work" (p. 101), and how Alger would employ the "snapper [opening line] to bring the reader into the tale." (p. 101)

Also, when Hoyt deals with Ben's return home, he notes how unemotional

the homecoming is: "There are no re-criminations, no probing of emotions, no problems. It is hardly a Dostoyevskian treatment of human feelings, but then it was aimed at young men from the age of ten to about sixteen, who eschewed such weakness with the same horror that they felt at the prospect of washing or of kissing maiden aunts. Horatio knew his boys and he knew what they wanted. The emotional level of the scene was just proper for the market." (p. 103-104)

This method of dissecting Alger's style is carried on to other summaries. For example, in Hoyt's discussion of The Young Explorer, Hoyt observes that in one instance Alger is making a comment on a public affair of the times. Quoting from The Young Explorer (as quoted in Horatio's Boys): "Mr. Patrick O' Reilly appeared to hold the opinion that gold hunting should be confined to the Caucasian race. He looked upon a Chinaman as a rather superior order of monkey, If he could have looked forward twenty-five years and foreseen the extent to which these barbarians would throng the avenues of employment, he would, no doubt, have been equally amazed and disgusted." (p. 203)

Hoyt succeeds this by bringing out the historical allusion that "eight years before Horatio had gone west to California, the Burlingame Treaty had given the Chinese the unlimited right of immigration." (p. 203). At this time the railroad companies needed manpower to "build the lines, and they were ready to welcome the Chinese then. But by 1876 and 1877 when Horatio was in California, the white residents were up in arms because Chinese, with their frugality and hard work, were out-Algering Alger, so to speak." (p. 203)

I feel that the subject of Alger's homosexuality is too far lost in history to adequately explain now. For example, one must be fully acquainted with the moral attitudes of that day before he/she passes judgment. Also, "The Brewster Affair" occurred over 100 years ago, and outside of the Church records, there is just not much material with which to research,

In spite of my differences with Hoyt on this subject, and notwithstanding the errors pointed out by Gil Westgard, I firmly believe that his painstaking and methodical efforts have produced an extremely scholarly book on Alger - one that belongs in every Alger collection.

* * *
RANDOM REPORTS FROM ALGERLAND
by Jack Bales

As a souvenir of the 1974 Alger Society Convention, Phil Atkins reproduced the first dialogue from Seeking His Fortune. HAS Secretary Carl Hartmann still has a few copies of this booklet left, and if you desire one, send \$2.25 to him at 4907 Allison Drive, Lansing, Michigan 48910.

Also, Irene Gurman prepared a souvenir booklet for the same Convention. It contained two pieces - the poem, "A Welcome to May," and the short story, "Borrowing from Economy." This first edition of 295 numbered and signed copies is still available - send \$2.50 to Irene at 540 Sherman Dr., #49, Royal Oak, Michigan 48067.

Harry Boniece sent me a circular from Dover Publications, Inc., 11 East 2nd St., Mineola, N. Y. 11501. For \$3.50 plus \$.35 postage one can obtain a paper bound copy of Eight Dime Novels, edited by E. F. Bleiler. (See Ralph Gardner's review, June-July, 1974 Newsboy). One of the novels is Adrift in New York by Horatio Alger, Jr. (The order number for this book is 22975-0).

The Horatio Alger Society received in care of Carl Hartmann a very nice letter from PF-347 Benjamin F. McAdoo. Addressed "Dear Partic'lar Friends", Benjamin writes in part: "It is good to see critical articles on Alger and his works for I believe it shows our objectivity and that we realize that Alger was human too. In my view, some of Horatio Alger's other works were superior in the literary sense to his boys' books and your reprinting of his lesser known stories is greatly appreciated." Thanks for your letter, Benjamin!