

Monthly publication of the HORATIO ALGER SOCIETY,
a magazine devoted to the study of Horatio Alger, Jr.,
his life, works, and influence on the culture of America.

Newsboy



Horatio Alger, Jr.

1832 - 1899



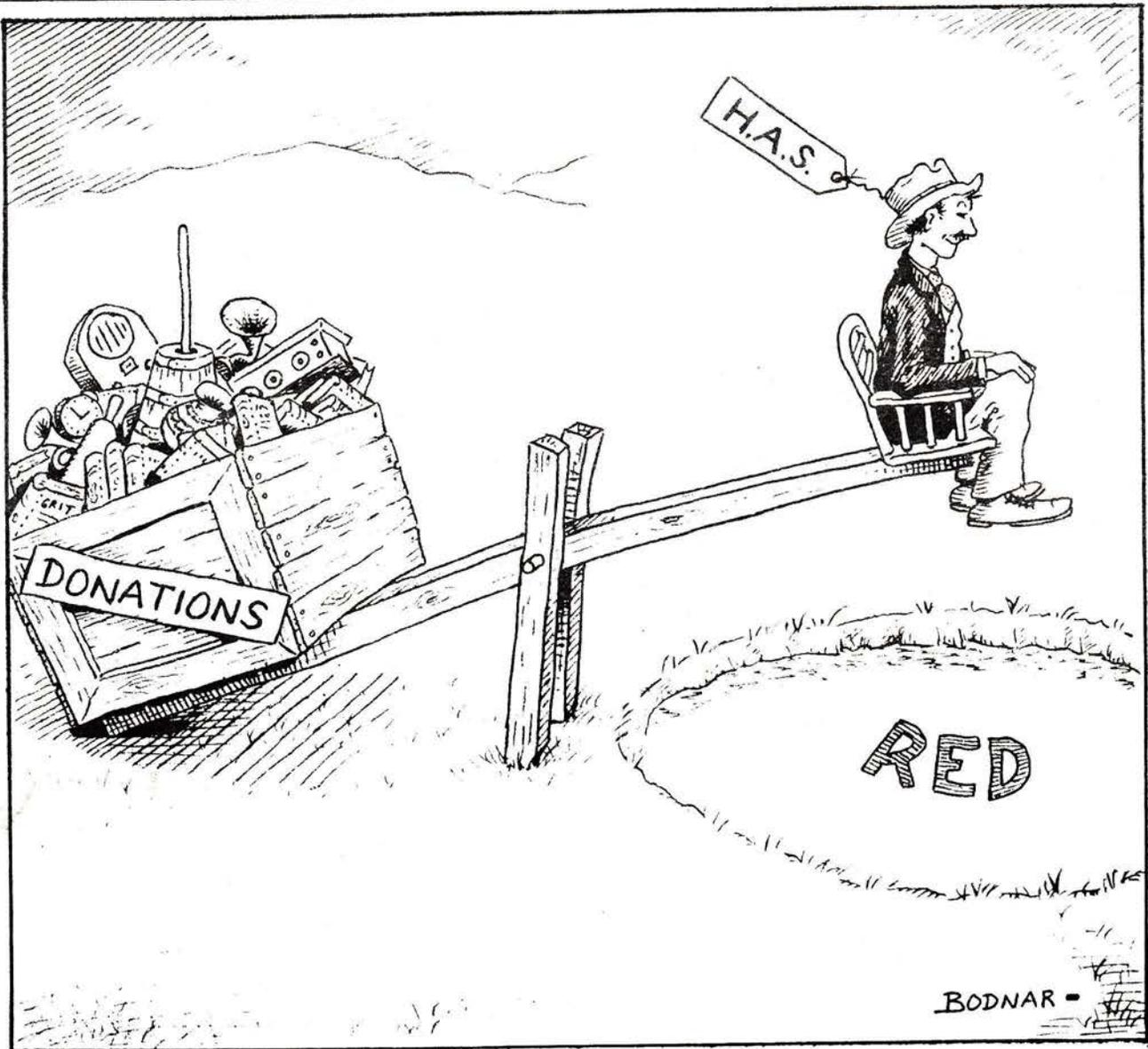
Jack Bales, Editor
1214 W. College Ave.
Jacksonville, IL 62650

Founded 1961 by Forrest Campbell & Kenneth B. Butler

Volume XVII

May, 1979

Number 10



Help the Alger Society stay solvent!! Please donate items for the annual auction, with all proceeds going to the HAS treasury. (Cartoon created and drawn by HAS member Louis Bodnar, Jr., 1502 Laurel Ave., Chesapeake, Virginia 23325).

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 (bimonthly January-February and June-July) and is distributed to HAS members. Membership fee for any twelve month period is \$10.00. Cost for single issues of Newsboy is \$1.00 apiece.

Please make all remittances payable to the Horatio Alger Society. Membership applications, renewals, changes of address, claims for missing issues, and orders for single copies of current or back numbers of Newsboy should be sent to the Society's Secretary, Carl T. Hartmann, at 4907 Allison Drive, Lansing, Michigan 48910.

A subject index to the first ten years of Newsboy (July, 1962 — June, 1972) is available for \$1.50 from Carl Hartmann at the above address.

Manuscripts relating to Horatio Alger's life and works are solicited, but the editor reserves the right to reject submitted material.

* * *
REMEMBER: The HAS Convention —the "Cleveland Connection" will soon be here!! Don't forget the dates, Thursday, May 10 through Saturday, May 12, 1979, in Cleveland, Ohio.
* * *

NEW MEMBERS REPORTED

PF-580 Floyd R. Martin
6025 North Montana
Helena, Montana 59601

Floyd heard of HAS in the People's Almanac. Owner of an IGA Grocery and Meat Supermarket, he owns 136 Alger titles. Besides book collecting, he is interested in coins and photography.

* * *
PF-519, Max Lanctot, of Burlington, Vermont, has recently passed away. Our condolences are expressed to his family.

BOOK MART

The listing of Alger books in this department is free to HAS members. Please list title, publisher, condition, and price.

Offered by John Juvinall, 820 N. County Line Road, Hinsdale, Illinois 60521. (Tel.: 312-323-6112).

Cast Upon the Breakers	E	\$1.00
(paperback, Popular Library)		
Erie Train Boy	Whitman	F 2.00
Facing the World	S&S	F 4.00
The Cash Boy	Dono.	G 4.00
Jack's Ward	NYB	P 3.00
Jed the Poorhouse Boy	Dono.	P 2.00
Joe's Luck	Dono.	P 3.00
Mark Mason's Victory	NYB	F 4.00
Mark Mason's Victory	Dono.	F 3.00
Phil the Fiddler	Dono.	F 3.00
Sam's Chance	Whitman	G 3.00
Sam's Chance	Whitman	P 2.00
Shifting for Himself	Winston	G 5.00
Silas Snobden's Office Boy	E	1.00
(paperback, Popular Library)		
Slow and Sure	Whitman	F 2.00
Strong and Steady	Whitman	F 2.00
Struggling Upward	Canyon	E 1.00
Tom Tracy	S&S	G 20.00
Try and Trust	Whitman	F 2.00
Wait and Hope	Dono.	F 3.00
Making His Way	Whitman	F 2.00
The Young Adventurer	Dono.	F 3.00
The Young Musician	Dono.	F 3.00
Tom Temple's Career	Whitman	F 5.00
(please add postage to each order of books)		

Offered by J. Gary Newton, 915 Hay Street, P.O. Box 5-3401, Fayetteville, N.C. 28305.

Gary announces that he has more than 100 Algers for sale or trade, all priced from \$1.00 to \$10.00. Please write him for list.

Offered by Emily F. Spalding, 7411 37th Avenue, Kenosha, Wisconsin 53142.

The following are all published by A. L. Burt Co., New York.

Dan the Newsboy	(1893)	E	\$12.50
Frank Fowler	(1887)	E	20.00
Tony the Hero	(1890)	E	15.00
Tom the Bootblack	(1889)	E	15.00

Dick Bales, 1538 Plum Street, Aurora, Illinois 60506 writes that he has 50 various volumes of the hardcover magazine American Heritage for sale for \$50.00. He collects glass antique marbles which he would also take instead of the money. Also, let him know if you have any marbles for sale.

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS MONTH'S "BOOK MART": E = Excellent, G = Good, F = Fair, P = Poor, Dono. = Donohue, S&S = Street and Smith, NYB = New York Book.

* * *

A NEW ALGER SHORT STORY?
by Dick Seddon

4 Edgewater Place
Winchester, Mass.
01890
March 17, 1978

Dear Jack,

In the December, 1977 Newsboy you published a story by Carl Cantab whom I have reason to believe was Horatio Alger, Jr., writing under yet another pseudonym. I had hoped that some one of our research minded members would write in with evidence which would prove or disprove my belief. Actually, I heard from two members who by reason of their conflicting opinions leaves me where I started.

1979

HAS member Gilbert K. Westgard wrote me stating that the style of writing was definitely not Alger's. HAS member Eddie LeBlanc advised me that my source of information was usually correct.

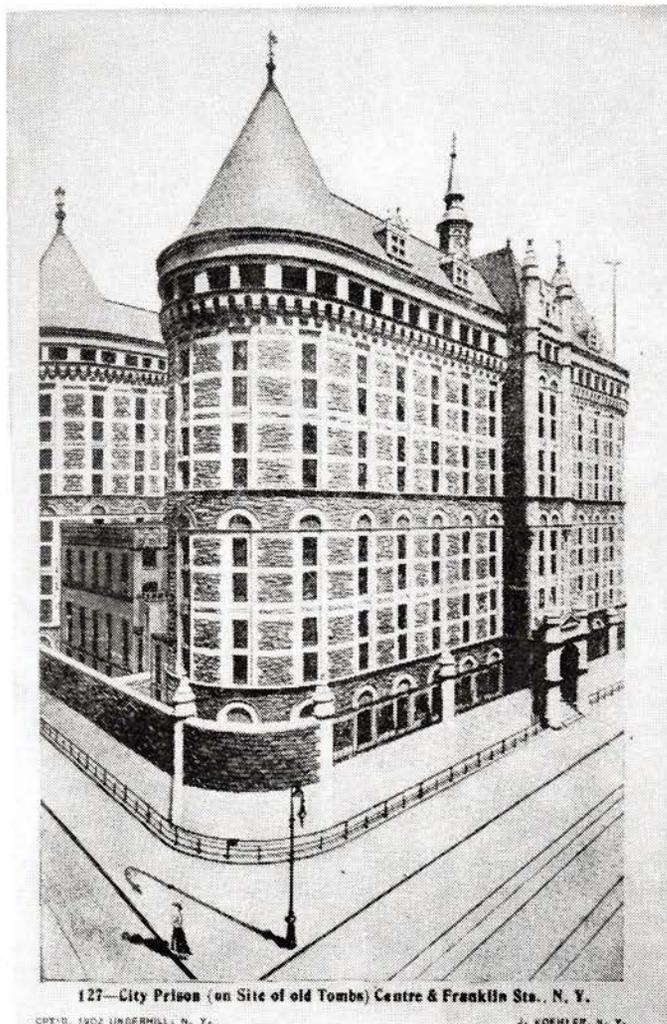
My reason for this letter is that I have located another story by Carl Cantab. Gleason's Weekly Pictorial, January 19, 1878, on page 43 carries a story entitled, "Eliphalet Fogg; Or, The Man Who Couldn't Say No" by Cantab.

If Alger wrote these stories, and perhaps others under this name, I would like to add these to my Alger collection. If on the other hand Cantab and Alger were entirely different story tellers I would like to know that. I will appreciate any information pro or con.

Regards,

Dick Seddon

* * *



127—City Prison (on Site of old Tombs) Centre & Franklin Sts. N. Y.

COPYR. 1902 UNDERHILL, N. Y.

J. KOEHLER, N. Y.

ITALIAN CHILD SLAVERY
AND THE PADRONE SYSTEM
(Part II)

by
Douglas Tarr

(Editor's note: Part I of this paper was presented in the April, 1979 issue of Newsboy).

Who first campaigned against the padrone system is not clear. Certainly the Children's Aid Society played a major role, endeavoring to arouse public opinion in both Italy and the United States. An 1873 report to the Italian Chamber of Deputies commended the C.A.S. for its work. Charles Brace himself received a medal from the King of Italy for his role. (18) Another crusader was G. F. Secchi de Casali who in 1849 established the first important Italian language newspaper in New York City, L'Eco d'Italia. De Casali had supported Brace's Italian School in 1855 and through his paper actively worked to improve the lot of Italian immigrants, both children and adults. (19)

Horatio Alger, Jr., famed author of boys' books, brought the issue to public attention in his own way. In 1872 his Phil, the Fiddler was published. Phil, or Filippi, is in the hands of a padrone as the story opens, but like Alger's other heroes, rises to a position of relative wealth and respectability. Though its plot resembles other Alger books, Phil, the Fiddler is a faithful portrayal of the padrone system albeit toned down, probably because the book was directed primarily to young boys. In a preface Alger acknowledges A. E. Cerqua and Secchi de Casali as sources for Phil, the Fiddler. Alger tells us, "If the story of 'Phil, the Fiddler,' in revealing for the first time to the American public the hardships and ill-treatment of these wandering musicians, shall excite an active sympathy in their behalf, the author will feel abundantly repaid for his labors." (20)

Alger provides further documentation in a footnote when one of Phil's friends

dies in the padrone's house. Alger cites a Neapolitan physician, quoted in L'Eco d'Italia, who said only twenty percent of the children returned home while thirty percent stayed in the United States and adopted various occupations when they grew up. The other fifty percent died from their ill-treatment. (21)

As the book ends, Alger reminds us that that "there are hundreds of young street musicians who have not met with his [Phil's] good fortune, but are compelled, by hard necessity, to submit to the same privations and hardships from which he is happily relieved. May a brighter day dawn for them also!" (22)

Some writers give Alger sole credit or the major credit for ending the padrone system. (23) However, padrone operations were not eliminated for another ten years after the publication of Phil, the Fiddler. As we shall see, the evidence strongly supports giving the New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children the credit for eliminating the padroni. The exact extent of Alger's role remains unknown, but unquestionably Phil, the Fiddler helped awaken public interest in the padroni.

Regardless of who initiated the campaign, by 1872 various newspapers had begun their own exposés. The New York Times, for example, sent one of its reporters along with A. E. Cerqua to the center of padrone operations, Crosby Street. In one building on this

(18) Children's Aid Society, The Children's Aid Society of New York (New York: Wynkoop & Hallenbeck, 1894), p. 28; Brace, Life, p. 207.

(19) Iorizzo and Mondello, p. 26.

(20) Horatio Alger, Jr., Phil, the Fiddler (1872; rpt. Chicago: M. A. Donohue & Co., n. d.), p. vi.

(21) Ibid., p. 222.

(22) Ibid., p. 248.

(23) Ralph D. Gardner, Horatio Alger; Or, The American Hero Era (Mendota, Illinois: The Wayside Press, 1964), pp. 207-26.

tenement-lined street they found a particularly cruel padrone who lived with several boys in a cellar. The padrone's mother looked after the boys. If they failed to bring in their allotted quota for the day, they were starved. The mother sometimes meted out harsher punishments by binding a boy's hands and feet and then inserting pieces of burning rope between his toes. (24) Interestingly, Cerqua and the reporters found in the very same building a rare padrone who treated his four boys relatively well. (25)

Anti-padrone agitation reached its highest level in 1873. In part, at least, this came about through a series of articles either written or inspired by Censo Caesar Moreno, an Italian soldier of fortune. Moreno accused Italian diplomatic officials of conspiring with padroni to kidnap and smuggle Italian children into the United States. (26) In New York City which had the largest Italian community, Moreno leveled his charges against Ferdnando de Luca, the Italian Consul-General.

DeLuca was ably defended by both Cerqua and Secchi de Casali. Cerqua related that as early as 1868 de Luca's statements on the padrone system were distributed as pamphlets in those parts of Italy where the problem was most prevalent. Further proof of de Luca's good faith was contained in the 1873 report to the Chamber of Deputies by a committee which framed an anti-padrone bill. The committee acknowledged the value of de Luca's work in this field. (27) Secchi de Casali likewise gave unqualified support to de Luca. (28)

The Consul-General defended his sincerity by citing the committee's report and its testimonial to his good service. (The act referred to in the report was passed by the Chamber of Deputies in May, 1873 and made it a felony for both parents and padrone to participate in a padrone contract). (29) De Luca further explained that diplomatic protocol prevented his approaching the United States Government directly

concerning measures against the padroni; all communications had to pass through the Ambassador in Washington. (30)

Irritated by the Consul-General's declaration of helplessness, Italian-American groups banded together in July to take action against the traffic in children. (31). Moreno, who took part in this effort, could never prove his charges against any Italian diplomat. Subsequently, he was found guilty of criminal libel against the Italian Ambassador. (32) Though unfounded, Moreno's accusations temporarily alienated de Luca from the Italian community. (33)

De Luca's efforts to reestablish his credibility were not immediately successful. In August de Luca instigated action against one Michele Carcone who had hired two boys for five years at forty dollars per year, promising to teach them music. Instead he sent them out as bootblacks, beating them if they did not earn enough. Many Italians wondered why de Luca took action now and not five years before. To many de Luca appeared to be seeking credit for leading the fight against the padroni now that the battle had begun. Meanwhile Carcone fled New York, apparently never to be caught. (34)

Simultaneously with the Moreno-de Luca controversy other investigators probed into the doings of the padroni. Charles Loring Brace pointed out that American law did not prevent children from immigrating with parents or guardians. To prove a padrone was not the child's real

(24) New York Times, July 7, 1872, p. 3.

(25) Ibid.

(26) Bremner, p. 280.

(27) N. Y. Times, June 13, 1873, p. 5.

(28) Ibid., June 21, 1873, p. 5

(29) Ibid., June 19, 1873, p. 4.

(30) Ibid., June 23, 1873, p. 8.

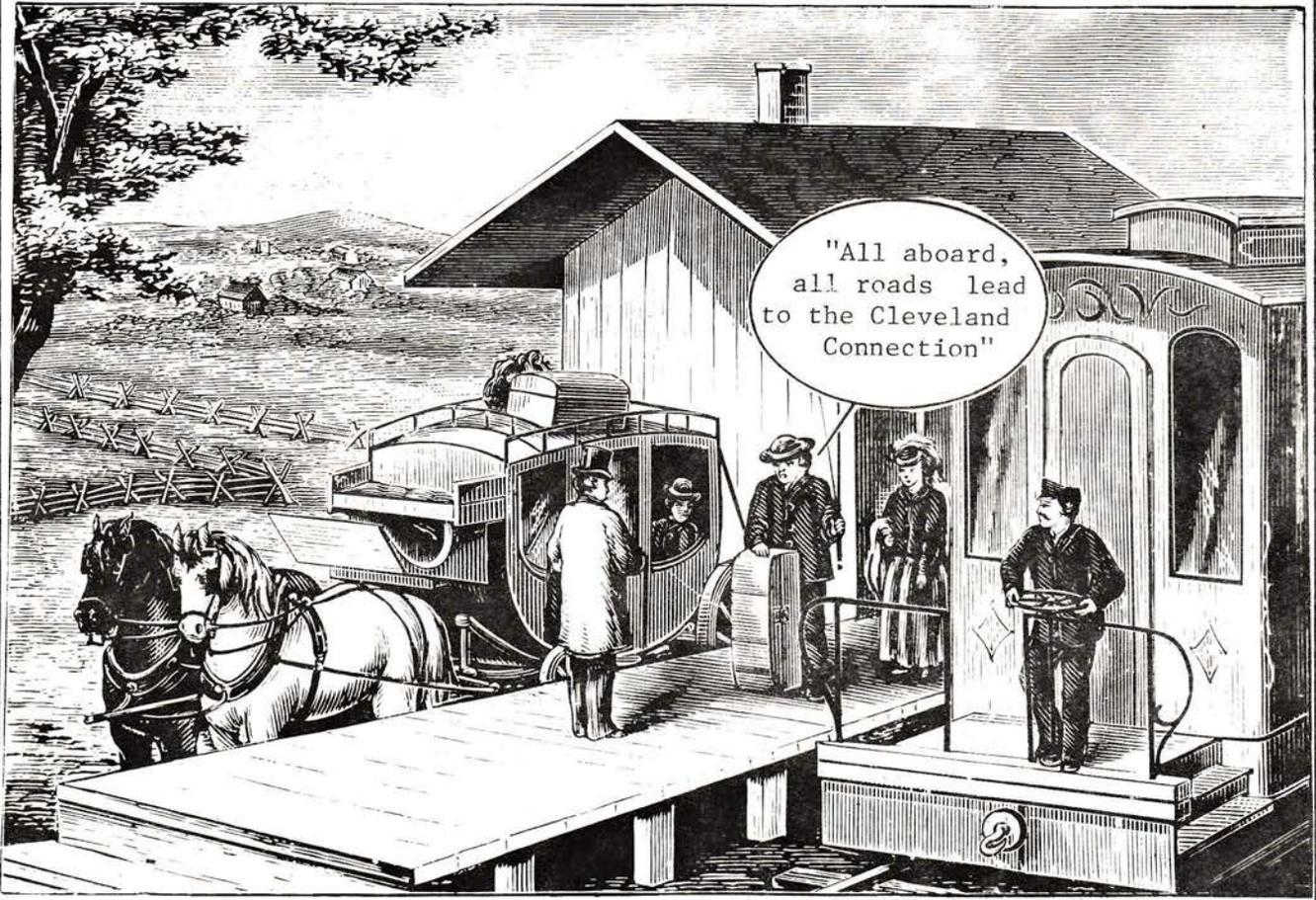
(31) Ibid., June 25, 1873, p. 2; July 1, 1873, p. 5; July 3, 1873, p. 5.

(32) Bremner, p. 281.

(33) New York Times, July 2, 1873, p. 5.

(34) Ibid., August 1, 1873, p. 5; A August 2, 1873, p. 5.

HORATIO ALGER SOCIETY 15TH ANNUAL MEETING



SHERATON HOPKINS
AIRPORT HOTEL
CLEVELAND HOPKINS AIRPORT
MAY 10, 11, 12, 1979



parent or guardian was nearly impossible. Brace identified Paris as the center for the traffic in Italian children. There, said Brace, was the "Bureau" which acted as a kind of clearinghouse for sending children out with a padrone. (35)

The press also brought to light new instances of the harsh treatment accorded children in the hands of a padrone. In one tenement reporters discovered a small, filthy room, less than twelve by twenty feet, in which ten boys lay sleeping on straw while hanging above them were clotheslines full of dirty rags. There was no ventilation except through the door. One boy, aged eight, had recently been tied and lashed as evidenced by the marks on his body. (36)

On another occasion reporters questioned three boys aged six, eight, and twelve. The task was not an easy one: The padrones had carefully instructed the boys to either say nothing or to reply with a stock answer devised by the padrone. He had, for example, instructed each boy to say he had been sold for sixty ducats by his mother. Nonetheless, certain facts were elicited, mostly from the younger boys who had not served the padrone as long as the twelve year old. The boys explained their grimy condition, saying they were washed only once a month at which time they received a clean shirt and the old one was burned. Otherwise they never took their clothes off. As for their work, a typical day began at daybreak. First they practiced their instruments for an hour. Then came breakfast consisting of macaroni and bread after which they took to the streets until midnight or later. Upon returning home they received more macaroni and bread, or nothing at all if they did not bring back enough money. A few hours sleep on a pile of straw and they were up again for another day on the streets. (37) [TO BE CONTINUED]

(35) Brace, Dangerous Classes, p. 195; New York Times, June 19, 1873, p. 4.

(36) N. Y. Times, June 23, 1873, p. 8.

(37) Ibid., June 19, 1873, p. 5.

NEWSBOY BOOK NOTICE

by Jack Bales

In Search of History: A Personal Adventure. By Theodore H. White. New York: Harper & Row, 1978. 561 pages. Hard-bound: \$12.95.

(Editor's note: As reported in the October, 1978 Newsboy, the August, 1978 issue of Atlantic Monthly had a huge picture of a newsboy on the cover, taken from one of Alger's books. The title reads: "Pluck and Luck - Growing Up Poor and Ambitious - by Theodore H. White." The lengthy excerpt is from White's autobiography, and following is the introductory paragraph that precedes portions of In Search of History in the Atlantic Monthly:

"He didn't have time to read Horatio Alger - he was too busy being a Jewish version of an Alger hero. In the Hebrew school he learned about the God of the Jews; in the public school he was aroused to the call of history; and in the streets he learned the American 'hustle.' Then at Harvard, the aggressive, ambitious young man, from the Jewish ghetto of Boston, studying under a newsboys' scholarship, got his compass boxed and set out 'in search of history.' As they say, 'Only in America.'")

Anyone who is fascinated with the American political scene will find this volume compelling reading, for Theodore White has devoted over two decades to reporting American politics, and in these memoirs he addresses himself to the fundamental question of "What is history?" It is a question he asked himself early in life. "My sense of history was drawing me outward, with no particular purpose of political passion. I hoped eventually to come back to Harvard. But first I must satisfy curiosity, my absolute lust to see what was happening in the China I had studied. How did history actually happen?"

His quest took him to China during war time, throughout Asia as a Time

correspondent, and to the United States during the peaceful Eisenhower days through the more turbulent times of the Kennedy era and Camelot. And throughout the book he tells how power is used in America and how politicians take advantage of it. "Accident had drawn him into that slipstream as one of its chroniclers; he had seen American power peak at the moment of victory in Asia; seen it used with majesty to save liberties and people in postwar Europe; then followed it home to find out where the power came from, and found the trail led to politics."

But another book will be necessary to tell how men reach for power. However, for any Alger Society member who wants to read a true Alger success story coupled with an intriguing political history of the last forty years, this volume is recommended.

* * *

MRS. GORDON'S LOT

by Horatio Alger, Jr.

(Editor's note: The following Alger short story is from the collection of HAS member Evelyn Grebel. It has previously appeared in the March 17, 1860 issue of Gleason's Literary Companion and the September 29, 1888 issue of Yankee Blade. Thanks go to Evelyn for sending me this).

It not unfrequently happens that men who are doing a large business are quite ignorant of how they stand, and when death intervenes their families are left unprovided for. Such was the case with William Gordon. He was stricken down suddenly and died in less than a week from the time of his attack. His family had scarcely roused themselves from the grief which this bereavement brought with it, when they were called upon to bear another. It was found that on settling up Mr. Gordon's affairs not more than a couple of hundred dollars were left for the maintenance of his family. In addition to this, though it was hardly thought worth mentioning, there was a tract of land located somewhere in Illinois, which Mr. Gordon had purchased some

years back for a mere song, and which was probably worth no more now than at that time.

The Gordon family consisted, besides Mrs. Gordon, of two children, one a daughter of eighteen, the other a boy of twelve. Isabel Gordon was attractive both in mind and person, and before her father's decease had been quite a belle in society. Then, however, her father was thought to be wealthy. Now that the family was almost penniless a change quickly took place. Those who had before been considered intimate friends became chilly in their manners and seldom called. Still there was one ground of hope left. Isabel had been sought in marriage by a young man who was in an excellent business producing a large income, and at her marriage her mother and brother would undoubtedly be invited to make their home with her husband. But failing prosperity was a touchstone which revealed the inherent baseness of Gerald Ropes. He did not call upon the family for some time after its affliction. At length he called, but did not appear as easy as usual.

"We have expected you before," said Mrs. Gordon, with something of reproach in her tone. "I hardly thought you would wish to see me while you were overcome with grief," he said.

This was plausible and might be true, but that there was a stiffness in his tone which led to a suspicion of his sincerity.

"I am glad you are here," said Mrs. Gordon, "I wish to consult you about our plans for the future. You know, of course, that we are left with little or nothing."

"So I have heard," said the young man in a constrained tone.

"And we must of course make up our minds to be doing something. I have heard that you have a vacancy in your store. Perhaps you would receive Charlie into it? I feel obliged to

take him away from school."

"I am afraid he is too young for my purpose," said Gerald Ropes in rather a forbidding manner.

"How old a boy do you expect to get?"

"About fourteen."

"Charlie is twelve."

"I---the fact is---I scarcely think he would answer."

"I think you mentioned two months since," said Mrs. Gordon with justifiable indignation, "that you should like very much to have Charlie in your employ. But perhaps your feeling towards other members of the family have been affected by our change of circumstances. I am confident that Isabel will not wish you to consider yourself bound to her against your will."

"I was about to speak of that," said Gerald Ropes, in a tone half of shame, half of determination. "I have been led to think of late that we were not so well suited to each other as we supposed, and perhaps it would be well to sever the connection."

"I am quite of your opinion, Mr. Ropes," said Isabel, who had just entered the house, and had heard the last words of the speaker, "and I cannot be too grateful to the change of circumstances, bitter as it may be in other respects, which has revealed to me the true character of the man to whom I was about to sacrifice my life."

As she stood erect, with flashing eyes and flushed cheeks, looking down upon her recreant lover, he cowered beneath the glance, and stammered out that he wanted to do what was right, and hoped he had not hurt her feelings.

"You need not trouble yourself on that score, sir," said Isabel, proudly, "nor could you have taken a more effectual method for dissipating whatever regard I once had for you. For that I feel

grateful to you."

Gerald Ropes did not find it agreeable to remain much longer.

"Well, I'm glad it's over," muttered he as he left the house. "I don't want to be tied to a beggar. When I marry I want to extend my business connections. How fortunate it was that I didn't marry last spring as I thought of doing. Then I couldn't have helped myself. Now I'm well off with it. And yet she did look handsome when she stood there looking at me. I wish things hadn't happened so, for I shan't soon meet with one that would have done more credit to my choice."

It was now necessary for the family to seek some employment. Isabel procured a school, which yielded her an income, which, though not large, was of essential service in procuring the family comforts. Charlie also obtained a place in a store, and he too was able to contribute his share--while Mrs. Gordon took charge of the housekeeping, and did plain sewing. Of course they had moved into a smaller, cheaper house, and lived very frugally. Of course, too, they were obliged to submit to many privations, and Charlie's education was suspended. From this condition they were finally relieved, and singularly enough by Gerald Ropes himself. As the reader's curiosity is no doubt excited by this statement, I will proceed without delay to detail the circumstances.

In the course of business he was called to Chicago the spring after Mr. Gordon's decease. As this was the first time of his visit to this enterprising Western city, he of course had a curiosity to look about him, and mark the evidences of its prosperity. His attention was called in the course of a morning walk to a large tract of land just outside the city.

"That land," he remarked, "will soon become of great value."

"Yes," was the reply, "the city is fast reaching it, and it will soon be

Boston Sunday Globe, March 4, 1979

Alger offered chance for American dream

By Frank Bonzagni

This year marks the 80th anniversary of the death of Horatio Alger, one of the great successes in American publishing history. Alger's titles sold, according to one biographer, 400 million copies. Even if this figure is exaggerated, he nonetheless far outdistanced any other writer of his time. Sixty years after his death a one-book paperback containing two of his stories sold more than 300,000 copies.

Hardly a boy today could read the stilted prose especially as it relates to "the other sex" without hooting. What then was the secret of his success? Sex? No. Mystery? No. Brilliant Plotting? No. Clever dialogue? No. What he told his readers was simply that however poor, down-trodden and low on the social scale, one had the chance of fulfilling the American Dream.

Born in Revere and residing at least part time in South Natick, Horatio Alger, after graduating from Harvard College seemed destined for the ministry until his stories found an enthusiastic reception. His books, strongly influenced by his Unitarian minister father who tended a flock in Chelsea, preached firm Protestant ethics: hard work, high moral principles, loyalty, bravery in the face of bullies or danger and readiness to accept risks. If saving an heiress from drowning was the turning point in our hero's upward progress, it was only that he had prepared himself to take advantage of lady luck.

Few children today can appreciate the thrill boys and girls of another generation had in reading "Ragged Dick," "Luck and Pluck," "Tom the Bootblack," "The Train Boy," "Dan the Detective," all part of more than 100 novels. Once hooked on these inspiring tales, one had to beg, borrow, buy but (not steal) any other unread Alger story that might be around. Horatio addicts included Alfred E Smith, Carl Sandburg, Christy Mathewson, Knute Rockne, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway, Joyce Kilmer, James Farley and Cardinal Francis Spellman.

Interest in Alger's books understandably waned during the depression but revived after World War II, perhaps stimulated by the Horatio Alger Society formed in 1961 by Forrest Campbell and Ken Butler, two collectors. The books have some value in the rare book market. Those published from 1865 to 1880 can command as

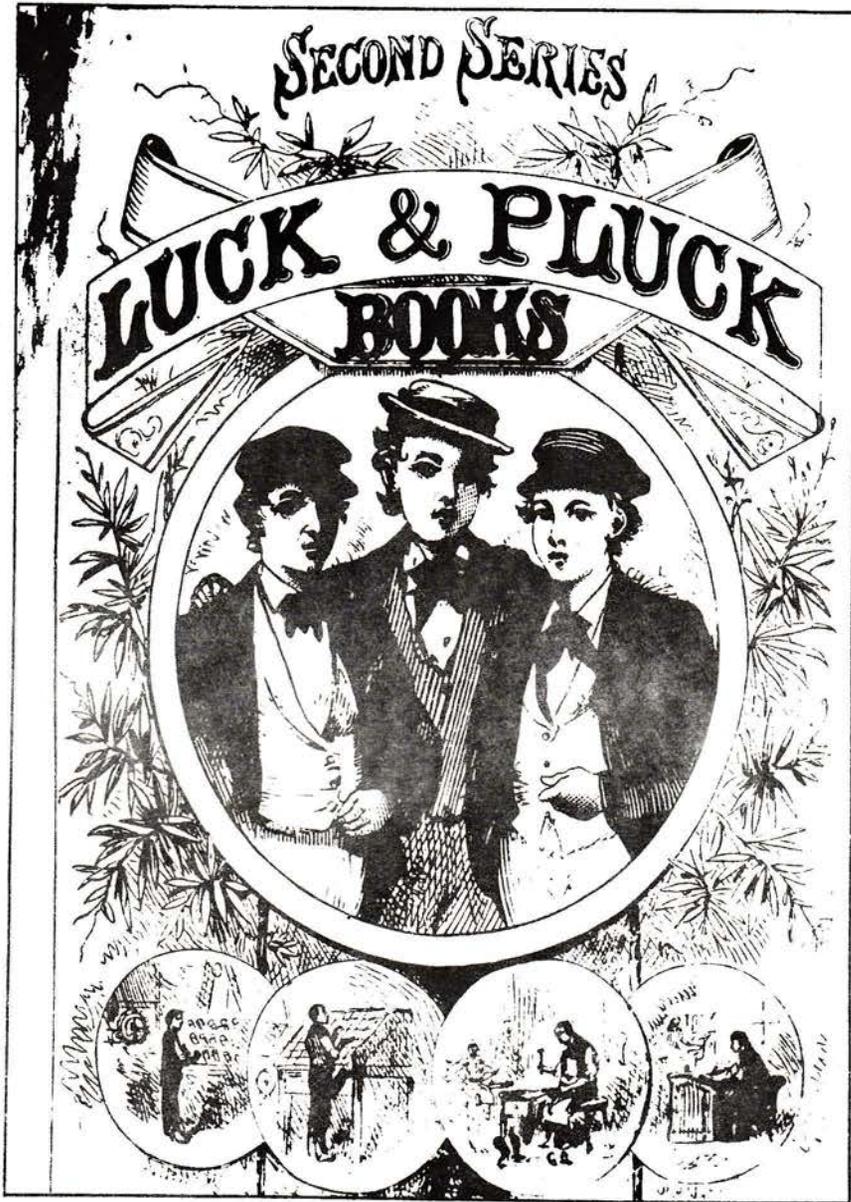


HORATIO ALGER
... success story

high as \$1000 for a first edition of "Timothy Crump's Ward" and an average of \$40 for other first editions. According to George Gloss of the Brattle Book Store, later editions, often originally sold in five and dime stores, will sell for between two and five dollars.

Some of Alger's appeal was in his compassion for the friendless, incredibly poverty-stricken immigrants who crowded the teeming tenements of lower east side New York. He sponsored the New York Newsboys' Foundation for homeless boys and created in "Phil the Fiddler" the moving story of youthful Italian street musicians working in virtual slavery for "padrones." So outraged was the public that the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children was formed in New York, the first in the nation.

Of course, there were many imitators and detractors. One enterprising publisher, Thomas Niles, Jr. of Roberts Brothers, a Boston house, conceived the idea of having someone write books for girls as Alger had for boys. Louisa May Alcott was engaged and she produced in two volumes from 1868 to 1869, the classic "Little Women," a great and lasting success. She was by far the best of the writers of young people's stories, but was disdainful of the quality of her rivals' work, to the extent of disparaging it in the press. Such criticism had no effect on Alger nor others who produced such popular series as



Oliver Optic and later, the Rover Boys, Tom Swift and the Motor Boys and the Bobbsey Twins.

If Horatio Alger's writings fail to survive on their literary merit, Holy Horatio, as he was once nicknamed by his schoolmates, will be long remembered as the subject of one of the most successful hoaxes of the 20th century. In 1926, Herbert R. Mayes wrote "Alger: A Biography Without a Hero." Mayes, a successful magazine editor (*Good Housekeeping*) and former president of *McCall's*, decided to write a spoof on Alger who for generations had a reputation as a strict moralist, a shy bachelor and quiet sort of fellow. Mayes invented an Alger diary which recorded affairs with Parisian prostitutes, dalliance with American wives and some wild western tales. His book, based on the diary, was hailed as the first authoritative

biography of Horatio Alger and cited as such in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Once the biography was published, both Mayes and his publisher were too embarrassed to reveal the truth in view of the enthusiastic reviews of literary critics many of whom were friends. In 1974, at the age of 73, Mayes confessed all and, forgiven, was offered a membership in the Horatio Alger Society.

In retrospect the Alger books were the forerunners of Today's How to Do It manuals and although the precepts of Work, Strive, Save and Succeed have been replaced by more sophisticated formulas, Horatio still remains as the pioneer.

Can a poor hardworking boy make good? The answer is yes, yes, yes. Provided, of course, he writes books on how to do it!

Frank Bonzagni is an Arlington lawyer.

Thanks go to HAS member Roy Wendell for sending me this clipping.

all cut up for building lots. Five years hence and it will be worth, I am confident, not far from a hundred thousand dollars."

"To whom does it belong?" inquired Gerald, with interest.

"If I am not mistaken it was purchased years ago for a mere trifle by a Mr. Gordon of your city. I was acquainted with the former owner, who regrets very much that he did not retain his hold upon it."

"Mr. Gordon!" exclaimed Gerald, starting.

"Yes, do you know him?"

"I did formerly," said the young man, evasively.

Gerald Ropes had now plenty to think about. He had no doubt in his own mind that this was the lot belonging to Mrs. Gordon, and it was very evident that she was entirely ignorant of its value. After all, it would have been a good speculation to marry Isabel. A hundred thousand dollars in five years was no trifle. It would at least treble his wealth.

Then came the thought, "Perhaps I can yet win Isabel for my wife. I always liked her, and the only objection I had was her poverty. Now that this is removed I need feel no hesitation. I don't believe she will refuse me. A husband with fifty thousand dollars is too great a catch to be given up."

Accordingly, within two days after his arrival at home, he dispatched the following letter to Isabel:

"Dear Isabel:

I hope the former relations subsisting between us will permit me to address you in this manner. When some months since we agreed to separate, I did not know my own heart, nor how much you were endeared to me. I fancied that there was an uncongeniality, but I

confess that it was a delusion. I have since found that I did not know myself. You will not, I hope, think that your change of circumstances had anything to do with influencing me. Fortunately I have enough to make it quite indifferent to me whether my wife has or has not any property. My chief desire is to find one whom I can esteem and love. Let me hope to receive a favorable answer, and that the old relations subsisting between us may be renewed.

Yours affectionately,

Gerald Ropes

P.S.--There is a vacancy in my store, and I shall be happy to receive your brother Charlie into my employ."

The amazement of Isabel on receiving this letter can scarcely be conceived. She did not for a moment think of accepting the proposal which it contained. She had once lost confidence in Gerald Ropes, and with her confidence and respect had vanished her love. Was it possible that he had so changed as this letter would seem to imply? Was it possible that after all he had been cured of the meanness which she supposed inherent? She did not know, but even if her love had remained the change was too great and too sudden for her to credit without suspicion. Besides, she had met another young man in every respect superior to Gerald Ropes, except in wealth, for of this he had little, and she felt that she had never truly loved until she had met him. On the next day after his own letter had been sent, Gerald Ropes received the following:

"Mr. Gerald Ropes:

Sir--I acknowledge the receipt of your note of yesterday, in which you express desires to revive the relations subsisting between us before my father's decease. Since that time my feelings have entirely changed towards you, and I am led to doubt whether they were ever of such a character as to justify matrimony. I may add that I have plighted my faith

to another, and the marriage will take place at an early day. You will see, therefore, that I am obliged to answer you in the negative. Nevertheless, courtesy requires me to thank you for the preference you have indicated.

Isabel Gordon

P.S.--My brother is already in an excellent place."

"Confounded cool!" muttered Gerald Ropes, discomfited, when he read this note. He would propose to buy the land, which he could undoubtedly do for a small sum, as Mrs. Gordon could not be acquainted with its value. Thus he would get it without the incumbrance of a wife. It would not be prudent, however, for him to transact the business in person, since they would be likely to suspect him of some design in the affair, especially when they remembered his renewed proposal. He accordingly placed the matter in the hands of a lawyer, with these instructions:

"You are to offer one thousand dollars in the first place. If not accepted, gradually increase your offer. I authorize you to go as high as ten thousand, and will place the money in your hands. If they agree, draw up the papers at once."

The next day Mrs. Gordon received a call from Erasmus Quill, attorney at law.

"I am informed, Madam," he said, "that you have a lot of western land in your possession."

"My husband had such a lot, and I retain it."

"Would you like to sell?"

"If I could get a fair price," answered Mrs. Gordon.

"I am authorized by a client to offer you a thousand dollars for it," said the lawyer.



GREATER NEW YORK, WALL STREET--SUR-TREASURY.

Mrs. Gordon had little acquaintance with business, but she had shrewdness enough to perceive that if a thousand dollars was the first offer for the land, it must be worth a good deal more. She accordingly declined the proposition.

"I will give you two thousand," said Mr. Quill. This confirmed her first thought.

"Mrs. Quill," said she, "will you oblige me by mentioning the utmost that your client authorizes you to offer. Otherwise our conference closes."

"Ten thousand dollars," said the lawyer with some hesitation.

"I will sell for that sum," said Mrs. Gordon.

"Then we will draw up the papers at once," said Mr. Quill.

In fifteen minutes the sale was effected and the money paid. With the deed in his pocket, Gerald Ropes again went out to Chicago, when what was his dismay to find that he had been misinformed--that the Gordon lot was situated five miles from the city, and was not worth five hundred dollars. In his cupidity he had overreached himself, and Mrs. Gordon was the gainer. This piece of good fortune enabled Isabel to marry at once. Fortune has smiled upon her husband till even in a pecuniary view Isabel had done quite as well as if she had married Gerald Ropes.

* * *

THE HAS CONVENTION IS ALMOST HERE!

This will be the last issue of Newsboy before the "Cleveland Connection," the annual convention of the Horatio Alger Society. Hosted by HAS Treasurer Dale Thomas, this meeting promises to be the best one yet as members converge on Cleveland, Ohio from all points in the U.S.

Dale wishes to remind all members of our annual auction. Each year at the convention Ralph Gardner auctions off donated items for the benefit of HAS. We raised over \$1400 last year and hope to beat that mark at Cleveland. The money each item brings is tax deductible, and remember, it's for a good cause. Help keep your society in the black!!

* * *

MY WORD, MR. ALGER, TSK, TSK!
by Forrest Campbell

(Editor's note: Forrest Campbell has authored a number of articles for Newsboy during the last few years. But his interest in HAS began years before this. In 1961 he became co-founder of the Society, and served as the first editor of its publication, Newsboy. Since that time he has written one Alger-fashioned story which appeared in serial form in the Newsboy, one play that was presented in Mansfield, Ohio in 1967, and a number of other

Alger-type stories. He is also engaged in a project of compiling a list of all HAS members over seventy years old. Thanks go to Forrest for his continued interest in the Horatio Alger Society).

Horatio Alger was a Harvard graduate, and evidence of it is sprinkled throughout his numerous juvenile stories which were written specifically for young boys and girls and written about his young street boy friends and acquaintances in New York City. But, my word, Mr. Alger, why was it necessary to use college level words on your boy readers?

True, your stories were read by many adults as well as the designed for juvenile readers, but if all adult readers will be honest with some of us, they must admit certain words of your choice have sent them to their dictionaries for a better understanding of your choice of words.

Tsk, tsk! Mr. Alger, we are not all college graduates, much less Harvard! And I would venture to say that a large percentage of your readers are not even high school graduates! Yet I will venture to say that if they understood all words in your stories they are certainly entitled to a passing grade in orthography.

Here are some of the words, Mr. Alger, which we are stumbling over. And, here are their definitions, and a listing of the stories in which they can be found. Plethoric, (bulging), Andy Gordon; Ablutions, (to wash), Ben Bruce; Contumacious, (stubborn), Tom Brace; Metamorphosis, (changed), Mark Stanton; Lugubriously, (dismal), Jack's Ward; Efficacious, (effective), Jack's Ward; Valetudinarian, (sickly), Facing the World; Plenipotentiary, (diplomat or an authority), Frank's Campaign; Euphemistic, (substitute), Adrift in New York; Ignominious, (humiliate), Adrift in the City; Surreptitiously, (secretly), Dean Dunham; Punctillious, (to observe), Strong and Steady; Panegyric, (praise), The Young Acrobat; Casuistry (unethical), Ralph Raymond's Heir; Vicissitudes, (variations), A

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P.S. If my readers had no trouble with this list of ten dollar words, just show me your college diploma, and I will believe you, and then you can go to the head of the class!!

* * *

RANDOM REPORTS FROM ALGERLAND
by Jack Bales

HAS member Donald Elder of Chelsea, Massachusetts recently sent me a clipping from the October, 1978 issue of Big Reel. It says:

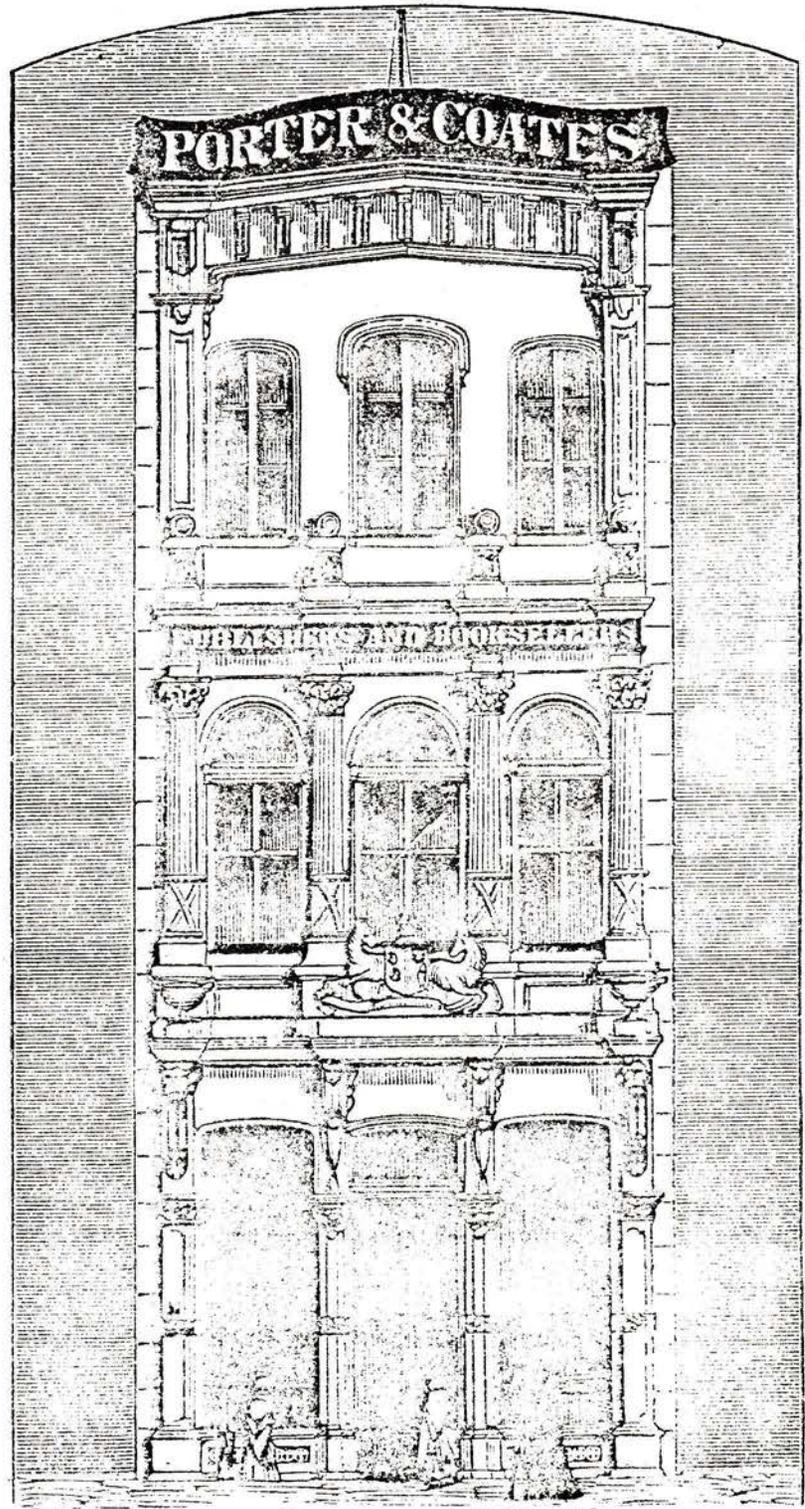
"Donald F. Elder, one of the most successful merchandisers of cameras, projectors, recorders and film, at 203 Newbury Street, Boston, gained his prominence the hard way - work and determination.

"He not only maintains a retail store but he has developed a mail order business of national scope which involves upwards of 5,000 customers. He did it the hard way - work and determination to succeed. He didn't build the business by waiting for customers. He campaigned to attract them after he had launched his business on borrowed funds.

"He is a native of Chelsea who worked in his youth in a wall paper plant and devoted his evenings to succeeding in his ambition to operate a mail order business.

"In a warehouse in Chelsea he has a large and interesting collection of old-time silent movie films and he highly prizes a personal film of the late George Eastman."

Thanks go to Don for sending me this very interesting clipping.



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Porter & Coates Company published many of Horatio Alger's first editions.