

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
1407A Winchester St.
Fredericksburg, VA
22401

Founded 1961 by Forrest Campbell & Kenneth B. Butler

Volume XX

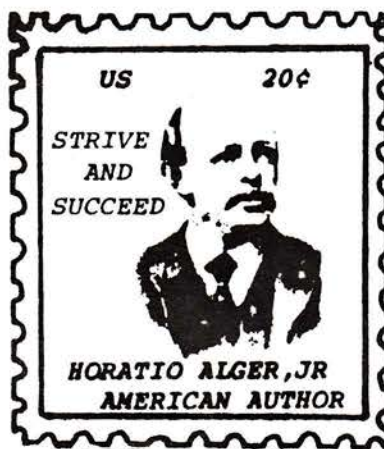
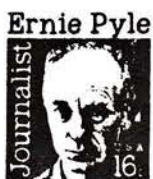
December 1981

Number 5

In This Issue.....A New Horatio Alger Story.....

"PERSEVERE AND PREVAIL; OR, BEATING THE ODDS"

The Story of the Horatio Alger Commemorative Stamp Effort



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 bimonthly (six issues per year) and is distributed to HAS members. Membership for any twelve month period is \$10.00.

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, 4907 Allison Drive, Lansing, Michigan 48910.

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

NEW MEMBERS REPORTED

- PF-636 Oscar Mezey
 % Oscar Mezey Associates
 Management Consultants
 2401 W. Big Beaver
 Troy, Michigan 48084

Although I have not seen Oscar's membership application, in a recent letter to Past President Bob Bennett he writes: "I am looking forward with a great deal of interest to the date of the next annual convention of the membership, for I plan to be there no matter where I may be in the country at the time."

PF-637 Jean-Maurice Poitras
 107 Edgerton Road
 Towson, Maryland 21204

Jean is a retired physician, and explained his interest in Alger to Carl Hartmann: "I have always had an interest in Alger and read every one I could lay my hands on back in the 20's. However, my main interest is the relationship of Horatio Alger with medicine--actually the social aspects of medicine. I know about *Phil, the Fiddler* (the padrone system) and *Julius, the Street Boy* (the Children's Aid Society). But there is still a lot to learn."



LETTERS

Newspaper Carrier
 Promotions
 Box 797
 Watertown, New York
 13601
 August 1, 1981

Hi, Jack:

First--it was great meeting you in Fredericksburg on July 9th. I can't tell you how lucky I considered myself to have been able to contact you just about two weeks ahead of the scheduled visit we had arranged. And, I'm glad you are happy with the newsboy replica. I was particularly appreciative of your interest in the Great Barrington statue replica. Today we are taking the molds out to have more poured in hydrocal as I know we will be selling quite a few this fall. I promised you a velox picture of the Great Barrington statue. Sorry it was delayed until now.

Thanks again, Jack, and I look forward to your next letter.

Sincerely,
Barrie Hughes



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Friendship Facilities
Center for the Handicapped
Ottawa, Illinois 61350
August 20, 1981

Dear Jack:

I read with interest, "My Dad Was an Alger Hero," by Gilbert K. Westgard II (*Newsboy*, June-July 1981).

I also feel that I was wearing the halo of an Alger hero some time ago and have related the story to you below.

Though I had my photo on the front page of the *Ottawa Daily Times*, I, also like Gilbert Hansen, did not receive any reward or advancement like our Algerities did.

However, the fact that I saved lives and property was enough. (Photo of where the train would have plunged is included--the train would be coming towards you).

Your friend,
John F. Sullivan
Superintendent



●●●●

A TRAIN DERAILMENT

by John F. Sullivan

While I was walking along the bottomland at Covell Creek, I listened to a noise of clanking metal coming from the railroad trestle.

At my location, I could not see anyone and at first felt that it was railroad workers fixing tracks. It bothered me that previously I had not seen a track car or railroad personnel, so I decided to check.

Two boys were going west towards Rt. #23 and I felt they had been doing damage to the tracks.

Walking down the quarter mile of track, I found, to my horror, that a section of rail had been shorn of railroad spikes. There is no doubt in my mind that this damage would have caused the entire train to plunge off the trestle with a drop of over sixty feet, killing or injuring everyone aboard.

I followed through and found the culprits after checking with the Sheriff's office, and the two teenagers were apprehended.

●●●●●

119 N. Harper Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90048
September 17, 1981

Dear Jack (The Boy Librarian, or Upward on the Shelves),

Can't get away from the Alger influence! Seems everywhere I turn these days there's some reference to HA, and if I sent you every clip I found you'd have nothing else for the *Newsboy*. Which, I might add, was a hellofan edition, the latest one, that is. I had meant to write much sooner, but both my wife and I had been ill for quite a while after that 3-

country trip. Next time, one only.

I assume you had a vacation this summer and I hope it was a most enjoyable one. How is your bibliography selling? Making you rich, I hope.

We are leaving for the East on the 24th of this month and will be away for a month: Buffalo and New York among others. When I get back I'm gonna write you a piece on Mr. HA Jr. for the *Newsboy*. I had intended (that's what happens when a fella gets on in years) to write it a while ago but things and circumstances and the course of a life influence humans. Ain't it so???

Some day if the HA Society holds a convention somewhere in California (SF or LA) I shall join you, and get on the list of those who have attended such doings at least once.

What have you been reading lately? After all, a librarian should be reading just about every newly published item so he can recommend it or reject it for his constituents.

There was quite a story in the *New York Times Book Review* (do you get it?) on August 30 entitled, "I'm a sucker for hero worship," quoting Mr. R. Reagan, in which it was said tht he's an inveterate reader, and listed his favorites: King Arthur, Frank Merriwell at Yale (Ed LeBlanc should be happy to know that), Edgar Rice Burroughs, then there were phases in which he read Zane Gray, Horatio Alger, Sherlock Holmes, and Mark Twain.

On the same day I had another full-page story in the *Los Angeles Times Book Review* on autobiographies, topically illustrated too. I'm working on a couple of others, of course. Keeps me out of poolrooms, etc.

Anyhow, Jack, take keer of yo'sef and let me hear from you when the rush lets up.

Always, the best,
Dave Soibelman

(*Editor's note:* Among the many clippings which Dave sent--each letter has at least a dozen--was one from the *L.A. Times* that had this to say about Sugar Ray Leonard: "Every major prizefight is like a morality play, a John Wayne movie, a Horatio Alger novel. There's a good guy and a bad guy, a literary device that goes back to Homer or the Brothers Grimm)."



1335 Grant Ave.
South Plainfield, N.J.
07080
October 6, 1981

Dear Jack,

Fantastic! The only word to describe the approval of the Alger stamp. Sorry I have been remiss in my letter writing, Jack, but hope you understand. I'm still home recuperating from my dislocated disc, but with the help of a new brace I am now without pain for the first time. The only good part about being home is that I am catching up on my research and making progress with my newsboy project. Since I have been home my collection has grown in leaps and bounds. I am listed in the new book *The Where to Sell Anything and Everything Book* (New York: World Almanac Publications, 1981). I'm listed as a buyer for anything regarding newsboys of the 1800's. Now all I need is money!

Best regards to you,
Pete Eckel



214 E. 13th St.
The Dalles, Oregon 97058
October 11, 1981

Dear Jack:

Busy time of the year here now, getting in firewood for winter, and cleaning up the yard so that I will be ready for all those leaves that will soon be falling. We have canned food on the shelves, beef and deer in the deep freeze, so when the snowflakes fall, I'll be ready to curl up in the old chair and perhaps reread a few Alger titles. Speaking of reading, here is a lot of good reading for someone out there in Algerland!

Offered by Ralph R. Keeney, 214 E. 13th St., The Dalles, Oregon, 97058. (503) 296-9682.

86 back issues of *Newsboy*, September 1971 to July 1981, containing at least 45 of Alger's short stories and poems). June 1973 issue of *Argosy*, containing *Silas Snobden's Office Boy*. Ten additional articles about Alger from magazines and newspapers. A detailed list will be sent on request. Will accept highest offer above \$50 for the lot.

Best regards,
Ralph R. Keeney

Rt. 3, Box 337
 Little Falls, N.Y. 13365
 Oct. 13, 1981

Dear Jack,

For those collectors who read their Algers, I can recommend a book which I picked up recently. It's *California, Land of New Beginnings* by David Lavender, Harper & Row, 1972. This has over 100 pages concerning the discovery of gold and the gold rush to California. It's complete with maps. Incidentally, this is a \$10.00 book but it has been remaindered and might be found in local super-markets at reduction.

One of the discrepancies in *most* of the Alger books is the size of the hero as depicted in the frontispiece. I think the most glaring example is in *The Young Outlaw*. Sam Barker, who is 15 years old at the time, is described by Alger on page 18 as "a stout boy, strong and sturdy." The boy in the picture looks about 8 or 9.

In *The Young Miner*, Ben is described on page 15 as "pretty large and pretty strong," on page 19 as "young and strong," on page 20 as "strong and sturdy," on page 22 as "a strong, capable boy," on page 24, "I am almost as strong as a man," and on page 27, "he's strong." However, in the picture Ben's chin is level with the *waist* of Jake Bradley who is described as 6 feet. Ben could stand under Bradley's arm which would make him about 4 feet, 6 inches.

Sincerely yours,
 Milton Salls

P.S. I have prepared a list of 800 duplicates for sale.

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1502 Laurel Ave.
 Chesapeake, VA 23325
 Nov. 10, 1981

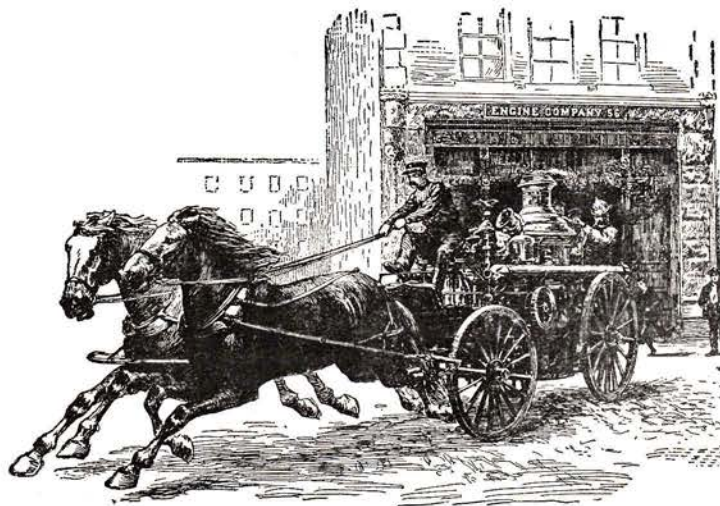
Dear Jack:

I received the October-November 1981 issue of *Newsboy* on October 23rd. There's some interesting ads on the ad-sheet, and I'm sorry to hear that there weren't many ads sent in. "Odds and Ends" reads right interesting. I noticed that some of this issue is typeset, and it looks all right.

Fred Woodworth of the *Mystery and Adventure Series Review* suggested to me an idea and title for an original comic strip. He suggested "Hector, the Collector." I found some time last month and I sketched and drew an original comic strip and mailed it to him. I heard from Fred and he likes the

strip and will use it in the next issue. With good luck, he hopes to get out the next issue on December 1, 1981. "Hector, the Collector" is a four frame comic strip than drawing just one cartoon. This is the first time I ever tried to draw a four frame original comic strip.

Yours truly,
 Louis Bodnar, Jr.



BOOK MART

The listing of Alger books in this department is free to *HAS* members. Thus, it is assumed that all books can be returned if the buyer is not satisfied with them. See September, 1980 "Book Mart" for criteria in determining condition of books. Please list title, publisher, condition and price. If book for sale is a first edition, give bibliography used to determine same.

Offered by Hank Gravbelle, Great Road, Acton, Mass. 01720.

Horatio's Boys, by Edwin P. Hoyt, Chilton Co., 1974, first edition, fine in fine dj, \$12.50 each (2 copies).

Golden Argosy; 13 misc. issues, all containing a chapter written by Alger or Arthur Lee Putnam. One issue, Dec. 24, 1887, shows on front page Luke Walton, the Chicago newsboy, as described in Gardner's *Horatio Alger, or The American Hero Era*, 1978 edition, p. 339. Would like to trade entire lot for any first edition Algers. Your offer please.

The following Algers are reading copies in fair condition. \$2.00 each postage paid.

New York Book Co.: Paul the Peddler, Struggling Upward, The Youth Adventurer, Charlie Codman's Cruise, Making His Way, Andy

Gordon, The Cash Boy, Strong and Steady, Strive and Succeed. *Donahue Co.*: Slow and Sure, Phil the Fiddler, Wait and Hope, A Cousin's Conspiracy, The Cash Boy, The Store Boy. *Superior Printing Co.*: Andy Gordon, The Story Boy. *World Pub. Co.*: Bob Burton, Bound to Rise (dj), The Cash Boy (dj). *Burt*: Sam's Chance, The Young Outlaw. *Chatterton Peck*: Andy Grant's Pluck, In a New World. *Hurst*: Tony the Tramp, Brave and Bold, Making His Way. *Winston*: The Young Adventurer. *Goldsmith*: Do and Dare (dj). *Whitman*: Slow and Sure.

The following paperbacks are all good to very good. *Value Books Inc.*, \$1.00 each post paid. Making His Way, Brave and Bold, Strive and Succeed, The Young Adventurer.

See *LETTERS* pages for additional books for sale.



PERSEVERE AND PREVAIL
 or
BEATING THE ODDS

It is a great pleasure to report that on September 14, 1981, Postmaster General William F. Bolger announced that Horatio Alger will be one of seventeen subjects selected for postage stamp commemoration in 1982. This is a particularly significant success for our Society. Quoting from a letter received from the U.S. Postal Service: "Each year we receive thousands of requests for stamp subjects, but only a few stamps can be issued. Consequently, the vast majority of suggested subjects...including many which are quite meritorious...cannot, of necessity, result in a stamp. This is unfortunate, but the limitations of the stamp

program permit no other course of action."

Following a decision by *HAS* to propose an Alger commemorative stamp, in January 1979, a 24-page proposal, the work of Brad Chase, was submitted to the U.S. Postal Service. Brad had accepted the role of Commemorative Stamp Committee Chairman for *HAS*. Brad wrote numerous letters to public officials and prominent persons. He solicited and received the support of the Horatio Alger Awards Committee of the American Association of Schools and Colleges (now The Horatio Alger Association of Distinguished Americans), directed by Helen Gray. She, in turn, promoted the stamp proposal to her membership. Many members of *HAS* wrote to their Congressmen and the Postal Service in support of the stamp.

At the *HAS* Convention in April 1979, Brad reported on progress of the stamp. It was under consideration but because of the thousands of proposals in competition with it and the few stamps issued each year, the prospects were not too good. It was decided that we would continue our active promotion of our proposal and Bob Williman, because of his closeness to Washington, D.C. and his stamp collecting experience, assumed the Chairmanship of the Commemorative Stamp Committee from Brad. Later that year, Bob received word that the proposal had been passed over by the Citizens Stamp Advisory Committee. The future of our proposal looked bleak, indeed.

It was then decided to resubmit the proposal and continue to promote the stamp. The *HAS* donated ten signed copies of Ralph Gardner's Alger biography, *Horatio Alger, or The American Hero Era*. On a trip to Washington, Brad Chase arrived with the books and in the company of Bob Williman, visited the Stamp Development Branch of the U.S. Postal Service, leaving the books for the Committee members. They were cordially received, but the picture was not encouraging. More letters were written to Congressmen, prominent persons and the Postal Service. Our membership was exhorted to write letters. Many members did so. Bob wrote an article in support of the Alger stamp for *Linn's Stamp News*, the largest stamp collectors' publication in the world. His article was excerpted and appeared in that publication. Bob received word that the proposal had again been passed over by the Citizens Stamp Advisory Committee. What else could we do? An Algerite tries and tries again.

We again resubmitted the proposal. More letters

were written. At the *Capital Caucus* Convention in May 1981, Bob again asked the membership to write letters. He reported that the Proposal was still alive but we needed to write more letters to Congressmen and the Postal Service in order to obtain the needed support. Again, many of our members picked up their pens. Bob sent telegrams to every Senator and Representative in Washington urging their support of the proposal. Bob scheduled regular phone calls to Ann Mills of the Stamp Development Branch asking the status of the stamp and passing along an item of interest on Alger: Did you know that our new President, Ronald Reagan, received the Horatio Alger Award in 1969? Did you know that Horatio Alger is America's all-time, best-selling author? Did you know that this month's *Saturday Evening Post* has an article on Horatio Alger? Etc., etc., etc..... Bob would call and say, "This is Bob Williman." "Oh, yes, the Alger stamp," would be the reply. The Postal Service was hearing from Alger stamp supporters frequently.

Writing in the *Washington Post*, October 11, 1981, in his column "Stamps," James H. Bruns says, "... a stamp for Alger is somewhat of a success story in itself. The subject was one of those rejected previously by the Postmaster General's Citizens Stamp Advisory Committee, was resubmitted for consideration and rejected again, only to be approved on a later go-round."

The Horatio Alger Society thanks all those who lent their support and wrote letters, to those who wrote books and articles promoting Horatio Alger, to those who gave their time, efforts, money and other items in the promotion of the stamp. As Alger counseled us to do, "Strive and Succeed"--WE DID!

(Note: As the design for the Alger stamp has not been drawn, the picture on the cover of this *Newsboy* is simply a conception).



SOME REFLECTIONS ON THE ALGER STAMP: THREE OBSERVATIONS

The hard work and ingenuity that has led to the achievement of the Horatio Alger commemorative stamp is one of the peak achievements of our Society in its twenty years of operation. It gives our favorite author, and our Society dedicated to him, the modern age status in America--and indeed in the world--so long deserved.

Horatio Alger, Jr. has become a part of history, now officially recognized. What is hallowed ground to us in *HAS* is now opening up to the world. He is now for everybody, not just for those remaining who read him as youths, or for book collectors. He will now be a figure of mass awareness. Directly and indirectly it will give our Society its biggest boost ever.

Our deep thanks must go to all those members who persisted, despite disappointments. Those members strived . . . and they *succeeded*. We will gain members more rapidly, we will hold our members longer. We did not despair. We fought the good fight. Horatio Alger will live on because of his stories, and be opened up to new-generation masses. Our dream is now the American Dream. Let us use this new luster to invigorate our programs. To me, as one of the two founders, I feel an exultation beyond words.

--Kenneth B. Butler

Co-founder, Horatio Alger Society



It is astonishing to realize that it's already twenty years since Forrest Campbell and Ken Butler met on Thanksgiving Day, 1961, to create the Horatio Alger Society.

Equally amazing is the record of achievements of this current year to add credit, recognition and scholarship to the name of our Partic'lar Hero.

High on this list has got to be the extraordinary efforts of many of our members to help win what long seemed nearly impossible: the issuance, next May, of the Horatio Alger Sesquicentennial Commemorative Postage Stamp. Members also participated--along with The Horatio Alger Association of Distinguished Americans, in both cases--in a Horatio Alger TV special to be released by P.B.S. during 1982.

Add to these accomplishments the current publication, by *HAS* members, of four books that

will enhance Alger scholarship for years to come and will, hopefully, encourage others toward further research.

Yes, it's been a very good year. Actually, a very good *twenty* years!

--Ralph D. Gardner
Author, *Horatio Alger*,
or *The American Hero Era*



Seldom does the country have a hero who has as powerful a *personal* impact on as many individual lives as Horatio Alger had. Alger's name carries his philosophy and that philosophy is the very personification of the American enterprise system.

Now, 150 years after his birth, a nation can look back upon this "kindly son of a New England parson" and realize that he literally shaped their moral fiber with his books, essays, poems and articles.

Many of the Association's members, including President Reagan, attest that they learned through Alger's heroes to take responsibility for their own lives, work hard and look for opportunities. They, like Alger's heroes, became successful even though the odds were most often against them.

It is this principal that has become the backbone of the Horatio Alger Association's educational program and it gives us great pleasure to know that the world will become more conscious of Horatio Alger as the U.S. Postal Service issues a Horatio Alger commemorative stamp in 1982. It is surely a fitting tribute to a man who "stirs warm recollections of good old days, of action-packed stories with happy endings," as Ralph Gardner so eloquently expressed Alger's stories.

*ONLY IN AMERICA,
OPPORTUNITY STILL KNOCKS!!*

--Helen Gray
Director, Horatio Alger Association
of Distinguished Americans

SECRETARY'S REPORT

by Carl T. Hartmann

The 1982 Horatio Alger Society *Roster* will be issued on Feb. 1, 1982. If you desire any changes in your listing please send a card by January 1, 1982 to:

Horatio Alger Society
% Carl T. Hartmann
4907 Allison Dr.
Lansing, Michigan 48910

Only those members up-to-date with their dues will be listed.

With this issue of *Newsboy* we have enclosed a reservation card for the *George Washington Motor Lodge* where the 1982 Horatio Alger Society Convention will be held. If you plan to attend please return the card as soon as possible. We have reserved 35 rooms in one wing of the Motel. The first 35 cards sent in will be in this wing, and after they are gone members will be placed in another wing. The Motel accepts all major credit cards.

We have also enclosed a registration form for the Convention. This should be sent directly to Convention Chairman Bill Russell.

We have Horatio Alger Society bumper stickers for sale. Send 50¢ and a large self addressed, stamped envelope to Carl Hartmann. Other items for sale by the Society are listed on the green order blank enclosed.

We still have a fair supply of back issues of the *Newsboy* for sale. Copies are \$1.00 each.

ALGER'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE NEW YORK *CHRISTIAN INQUIRER*/ *LIBERAL CHRISTIAN*

by Gary Scharnhorst

During a period of eighteen months in the mid-1860's, a weekly Unitarian newspaper published in New York under the title *Christian Inquirer*, renamed the *Liberal Christian* in 1876, received a total of five contributions from the pen of Horatio Alger, Jr. Three of these stories were reprinted from other sources, but two of them, a juvenile story and an autobiographical essay, are new items. The essay in particular is interesting, for in it Alger described what must have been one of his first visits to the Newsboys' Lodging House after his arrival in the city in April 1866. In chronological order, then, these are the items Alger contributed to the paper:

1. "Squire Pitman's Peaches," *Christian Inquirer*, 29 July 1865, p. 4. Reprinted from *Student and Schoolmate*.
2. "How Johnny Bought a Sewing Machine," *Christian Inquirer*, 2 August 1866, p. 7. Reprinted from *Our Young Folks*.
3. "Harry's New Skates," *Liberal Christian*, 16

February 1867, p. 6.

4. "The Newsboys' Lodging-House," *Liberal Christian*, 20 April 1867, p. 6.
5. "A Christmas Dinner," *Liberal Christian*, 7 December 1867, p. 6. Reprinted from *Student and Schoolmate*, where it appeared under the title "Little Phil's Christmas Dinner."

Because it is the most significant of these items, Alger's memoir of his visit to the Newsboys' Lodge is reprinted below. The other new item, "Harry's New Skates," will appear in a subsequent issue of *Newsboy*.

THE NEWSBOYS' LODGING-HOUSE

by Horatio Alger, Jr.

At the corner of Nassau and Fulton streets stands a building of six stories, the lower part occupied by the daily *Sun*, while the two upper stories are devoted to the Newsboys' Lodging-House. One evening I climbed the narrow winding staircase until I found myself at the door of the school-room. Entering, I found a broad, low room, with about one hundred and fifty newsboys and boot-blacks. They were arranged on benches facing a raised platform surrounded by a railing, and were listening with every appearance of attention to an exposition of Scripture. This was the Sunday evening exercise. On other evenings instruction is given in the ordinary English branches.

The boys differed largely in personal appearance. Some were apparently seventeen or eighteen; others not more than six or seven. Their faces were not all clean, nor, as may be imagined, was the toilet irreproachable. The garments of many presented a curious mosaic of many-colored patching. Some were clad merely in shirts and pants, with the addition of a fragmentary vest, while in other cases the shirt was wanting. A few were quite decently dressed. But, generally speaking, they were ill and insufficiently clad. But in spite of this external disadvantage, the boys looked bright and intelligent; their faces were marked by a certain sharpness produced by the circumstances of their condition. Thrown upon the world almost in infancy, compelled to depend upon their own energy for a living, there was about them an air of self-reliance and calculation which usually comes much later. But this advantage had been gained at the expense of exposure to temptations of various kinds, and more or less ignorance of books.

After the exercises I was shown the dormitory by the obliging superintendent, Mr. O'Connor. This occupies the fifth story. Here are one hundred and forty neat beds, which must seem luxurious to the weary newsboy, who not unfrequently finds a less comfortable bed in an empty box or old wagon, or on the hard pavement in some arched passage. Indeed, I could sleep upon one of the beds myself without any diminution of my usual comfort. For a night's lodging the charge is but five cents, and the same for a plain meal of coffee and bread, sometimes with soup. But one meal daily is furnished, and that at night. During the day, the young patrons of this establishment can be provided for elsewhere. The charges, of course, are much below what would be required if it was the design to make the institution self-supporting. But for its existence the least sum at which a newsboy could procure a lodging outside, would be twenty-five cents, and that probably in some miserable locality.

There is a newsboys' savings-bank in the school-room, or a table with over a hundred closed boxes appropriated to different boys; through slits in the top they drop such sums as they can spare. In the course of a month this amounts in the aggregate to several hundred dollars. Compartments are also assigned for the custody of such spare clothing as boys may possess, though this is seldom used. Few own a change of underclothing, and the possessor of two suits is regarded as a patrician among these young plebeians.

Opposite the school-room is a room fitted up with a few simple appliances, and used as a gymnasium. This the boys enjoy greatly. "Are they fond of reading?" I asked the superintendent. "Some of them very much so," he answered; "but we have no library to speak of. Some time since Mrs. Astor gave a dozen volumes of the *London Illustrated News*, and one gentleman gave some *Patent Office Reports*, but besides these we have little or nothing. Good boys' books they would gladly receive, and read eagerly."

I could not help thinking that some of our Sunday-schools might afford to make up a parcel of books that had been read, no matter if they were worn, and do more good than they imagined, by sending them to this Newsboys' Lodging-House. Will not some of our public-spirited superintendents and teachers take the hint?

The expense of this institution for the last year was \$11,000. This year it will probably be more, as

the rent has been raised from \$1500 to \$5300. But the present accommodations are insufficient. Sometimes two hundred boys are crowded into the hundred and forty single beds, and oftentimes even more are provided for somehow.

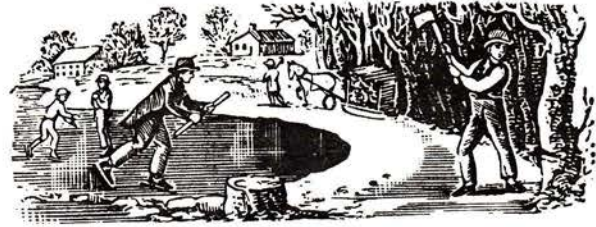
The doors are kept open until twelve at night. From nine o'clock until that time boys straggle in. Some have invested a portion of their scanty earnings in a ticket to the Old Bowery Theatre or Tony Pastor's Minstrels, and that has kept them out till a late hour. Some perhaps have been less innocently engaged at low gambling-houses on Baxter street, where they have staked small sums, and perhaps imbibed a villainous mixture of gin which is sold at these places at two cents a glass. One evening a descent was made upon one of these establishments by the police, and over a hundred boys were arrested. That these friendless boys, left very much to their own guidance, should yield to such temptations is not strange. But for the instruction and advice received at the lodging-house more would doubtless go astray and be ruined. We do not wonder that lodging-houses and similar institutions do not save all, but that with their present means they save and help so many. How cheap is virtue; how costly is crime. For one a little money and care discreetly bestowed at the outset; for the other untold suffering, and losses, and expenses for courts and jails, and a ruined man at the end.

Once a fortnight a company of boys start for the West under the auspices of the society, and of these young emigrants an excellent report is often brought back. Doubtless, many street-boys, through the instrumentality of the newsboys' home and the society that maintains it, will grow up intelligent and useful citizens instead of outcasts and criminals.

Let me add that gifts of cast-off boys' clothing of any kind are always acceptable and useful. Perhaps some of the boys who, I hope, will read this article, may have an old cap or other garments which they would like to bestow on some one of these poor boys in the lodging-house, who, without parents, is sturdily fighting the battle of life on his own account.

The success of this establishment should be encouragement to the charitable everywhere to engage in the same great Christian enterprise. Just think what it is to pluck a boy out of the perils and pitfalls of a great city, and save him from a career of

vice and crime to one of usefulness and honesty, and you will not hesitate to engage in the great work of practical beneficence.



ODDS AND ENDS

by Brad Chase, President, *HAS*

When we returned from the convention in Washington a while ago, I gave my collection a close look. Seems I tend to do that most every year after I've had a chance to chat with other Alger collectors and see the host's Grade-A collection which has been all spruced up for its critical review by the Alger conventioners. We were all much impressed with Bob Williman's living room wall of beautiful Algers when we visited his home this last convention-eve. And I recall vividly Dale Thomas's extraordinary long row of genuine firsts which we saw when we visited Dale and Mary Ellen's home during the "Cleveland Connection" a couple of years ago.

As I look at collections, mine and others, the variety of ways one can collect Algers still amazes me. As have most Alger collectors, I've shifted from saving only titles to developing and expanding some type of special Alger interest. As some of you may know my special interest is in collecting different Alger book formats and series by publisher A.L. Burt. I've just about halted buying first editions and have established a goal of trying to collect all the titles of the different Burt formats and series. I figure I'll complete this at my current rate of acquisition sometime before the end of the century. Well, not really, but sometimes as I sit and look at the rows of books on my shelves, I wonder whether I'll ever reach my collecting goals, and whether I've gone in the right direction collecting-wise.

I suppose the really smart collector with financial resources collects firsts which always have value, since the value is constantly increasing and can be turned into cash relatively quickly. But most of us stumble some in having the financial resources to commit so we have to settle for something less than collecting all firsts. Also, after one gets the initial 30

to 40 firsts which are the easy ones, the opportunities to obtain a new first are seldom. In my view, the real kick in collecting is finding something new for my collection very frequently.

I think even the first edition collector has to eventually find other Alger interests in order to keep his collecting interest vibrant and alive. For example, Dale Thomas has done this by collecting different publisher editions of a specific title. Jim Thorp of Nashua, New Hampshire has done the same thing by concentrating on collecting all editions of *Phil the Fiddler*. As an aside, I visited Jim a while ago and found that he has papered one wall of the room that houses his Alger collection with pages from two Donohue editions of *Phil the Fiddler*. One can start at page one at the top of his wall and read the entire book without turning a page....!

The bottom line of where one goes with his or her collection has to be determined by a combination of basic collecting interest, financial resources and the availability of Alger books. I'm sure my Alger interest will gradually change and hopefully mature as time passes. Each time that I return from the annual Alger convention I give my collection another look and try to assess whether or not I can change a few things in order to better meet my collecting interests. I try to apply what I've learned from other fellow collectors and build upon their experience and thereby make the whole Alger hobby a more meaningful experience for me.

HORATIO ALGER, JR. AND THE SUN TRAVEL ESSAYS

From the Collections
of Jack Bales and Gary Scharnhorst

(*Editor's note:* In the April 1981 *Newsboy*, Jack Bales and Gary Scharnhorst printed the texts of twelve previously unknown Alger essays, written while Alger was touring Europe. Following are three additional essays recently discovered, all bearing the Alger pseudonym *Carl Cantab*).

"Going to Italy," *New York Sun*, 22 January 1861, p. 1, col. 4.

To the Editor of the New York Sun:

Sardinia, Dec. 19.

To the names of Hannibal, Napoleon, and other illustrious men who have achieved the passage of the

Alps, must now be added the name of your correspondent. Desirous of entering Italy in this way rather than via Marseilles, it was not until I reached Geneva that I decided to undertake a journey which is of course much more formidable in the middle of December than in summer. Having definitely made up my mind, I went by rail from Geneva to the little town of St. Jean de Maurienne, near the foot of Mount Cenis. It is a dirty little town, so hemmed in by lofty snow-crowned summits, that it is a mystery how a railroad was ever got here. Arriving late at night, I was obliged to remain there until 2 P.M. the next day--an interval during which I had time to make inquiries respecting the passage. "Mt. Cenis," said one of my informants, pointing to a lofty cliff near by, "is about a mile higher than that mountain. You will find it fearfully cold on the summit. Not long since a diligence was overturned in the deep snows, and the passengers were compelled to pass twenty-four hours in a small hospice before being able to continue the journey.

This was decidedly encouraging, but as information from other quarters proved of a more hopeful character, and above all as the diligence went regularly in spite of the weather, I booked my name and entered the *coupe* with the desperate resolve of facing the peril, fortifying myself by the high examples of Hannibal and Napoleon aforesaid, and in the event of the worst happening, consoling myself by the thought that I should become the subject of a startling paragraph, which would no doubt be extensively copied.

The day had been unusually warm at St. Jean, but as the diligence, drawn by seven stout horses ascended, the cold increased. Snow also began to fall. The road over Mt. Cenis was constructed by order of Napoleon, and is a permanent monument to the memory of that remarkable man. It is excellent, the inclination except close to the summit being moderate. To reach the top required ten hours, during which we changed horses four times at stations on the mountain side. Two hours before attaining the greatest elevation we exchanged the diligence for sledges, the snow having become too deep for wheels. Although it was certainly very cold, it hardly equalled my anticipations, excited as they had been by my bilious informant. Still we found the foot-stoves which had been supplied very useful, and were moved to indignation when at one of our stops the postillion came to the window, and let in the sharp air, merely to ask us for some drink-

money. This we peremptorily declined giving, knowing well that the fellow was infringing the regulations of the line in preferring his request. On our way we could look out of the side windows down into deep chasms, not more than three or four feet from us, down which a drunken driver or a refractory horse might have plunged us. But the chief danger does not spring from this cause. There are occasionally formidable snow slides whose momentum is sufficient to sweep all before them. In spite, however, of the cold and the possible danger, we enjoyed the wild and lovely scenery through which we were riding, and did not regret having undertaken the passage. The descent of the mountain was effected in less than half the time required by the ascent, and at 6 A.M. we found ourselves at Lusa, whence after examination of passports and luggage we proceeded to Turin by rail.

We were now fairly in Italy--a fact which the bright sunshine, forming so vivid a contrast with the weather on the other side, would have sufficiently attested.

Turin, as you know, is the capital of Sardinia, and the home of Victor Emanuel. The interest which attaches to this ruler at present, led us to wish to visit his palace--a thing quite possible, provided you are willing to invest a franc or so in fees to the servants. As it would not be easy nor interesting to describe the palace, I shall forbear, merely remarking that it compares very favorably with my own residence, both in size and elegance of adornment.

CARL CANTAB.

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"Feast of San Antonio--What I saw in a Neapolitan Cafe." *New York Sun*, 18 March 1861, p. 1, cols. 3-4.

Naples, Jan. 27, 1861.

Some ten days since, on the 17th of January, as I was returning about dusk from a visit to the buried city of Pompeii, on entering the great square, the Largo di Castello, my attention was drawn to a series of bonfires on all sides. Puzzled to understand the meaning of this demonstration, I at first imagined there had been a political reaction, but the absence of any extraordinary noise or tumult led me to abandon this conjecture. I afterwards learned that my visit to Pompeii had lost me the chance of witnessing the peculiar Neapolitan festival of San Antonio Abbate. St. Antonio is the patron saint of

animals, and this day his constituents (if I may so call them) are brought to the Church of San Antonio gaily caparisoned, and receive a formal benediction. Sooth to say, the poor animals richly deserve one gala day in the year, for in Naples they are a hard-working, much enduring, and ill-treated race. The Neapolitans seem inclined to make their beasts of burden share the oppression to which in times past they have themselves been subjected.

To return to the festival. It is part of the programme to bring out towards evening all the old chairs and table which are too far gone for further use, and make bonfires of them. Whether chairs and tables are chosen, because being four-legged, they may be regarded as an appropriate offering to the patron saint of quadrupeds, I am not informed. In this celebration the priests take a prominent part.

The cafes in Naples are very good places to study the people, since to a greater extent than elsewhere they are places of resort not only for guests, but for small traders of every kind. Let me give you a brief description of one of these institutions at which I was in the habit of dining. Having taken my seat at a table and given my order, I begin to look about me, quite satisfied that I must wait from twenty minutes to half an hour before I shall be attended to. A Frenchman sits at the next table who evidently has no admiration for Neapolitan restaurants. I hear him grumbling that the poorest cafe in Paris is superior to the best in Naples. A bright-eyed little fellow enters from the street and offers me the daily paper, recently started by Dumas, the French novelist. Out of curiosity I buy a copy, and recognize at once the style of the greatest of egotists. At the head of the paper is a sentence from Garibaldi, nearly in these words: "I rejoice that my friend Dumas has resolved to start a journal, the more especially that I know he will be the first to assail me if I prove recreant to my duties as a child of the people." Garibaldi, whose heart is apt to mislead his judgment, has estimated Dumas at much more than his real value. In the leading editorial, signed A. Dumas, I find this sentence: "Among the *thousand* volumes which I have written, and the *sixty* dramas which I have caused to be represented, I am proud to say, that not one contains a line which is aimed at religion or humanity." Elsewhere we have a sentiment in honor of Dumas given at some public dinner. everywhere Dumas. I should not be surprised to learn that the man was endeavoring to prove that the well known A. D., usually supposed

to stand for Anne Domini, really signifies Alexandre Dumas.

My reading is interrupted by a vendor o (*sic*) eye-glasses, who invites me to purchase. His appeal, which is unavailing, is followed by that of a dry goods dealer who has handkerchiefs and other small articles for sale. Here the waiter arrives with the first installment of dinner, and absorbed in more agreeable employment I neglect utterly the advances of a dealer in books, who is going his rounds. The sound of music arrests my attention, and looking up I perceive that a young woman, quite tastefully and even fashionably dressed, has entered the cafe, and is performing a popular air on a guitar. At the conclusion she goes from table to table, presenting a cup for offerings with the air of a queen exacting tribute. Of course, I cannot resist this appeal. Next enters a merchant on a larger scale. He has blankets for sale, and opening one, displays it in the middle of the room, vaunting its qualities. No one, I believe, is won by his seductive tongue. The tragic succeeds the comic. The next entrance is a poor creature, looking the very embodiment of destitution, who craves not money, but whatever I may have to spare from my dinner. I give her my loaf of bread--the allowance of cash--and with a grateful "Grazia, Signore," she departs, provided with a dinner for this day at least.

And thus succeed the actors in this real drama. When I rise from the table, I feel that I have accomplished something more than dining--I have been brought face to face with the people, and have had an opportunity of studying their peculiarities.

CARL CANTAB.



Correspondence of the Sun," New York *Sun*, 25 March 1861, p. 1, col. 5.

The Festival of Mardi-Gras.--Scenes on the Boulevards.--A Masked Ball.

Paris, Feb. 13, 1861.

Yesterday was the well-known Mardi-Gras, and, with the two preceding days, was celebrated in the usual manner. Let me essay a description. It may briefly be characterized as a grand triumphal procession of fat cattle through the streets of Paris. Antiquity and custom have elevated what would otherwise be a trivial affair into a grand civic celebration. It is now in the hands of the young butchers of Paris, who annually select three or more of the fattest oxen to be found in the empire, and these are set apart to figure during the carnival. The

selection the present year took place at Passy, and the choice fell upon the following animals, the particulars respecting which I draw from the official programme:

1. Chang-Hai; age 5½ years, weight 2800 pounds.
2. Peking; age not stated; weight 2825 pounds.
3. Qu'en dira-t-on (What will be said of it?) a sort of Parisian "What is it?" age 5 years; weight 2970 pounds.

There were two others of inferior size, intended probably as a reserve, in case anything should befall (*sic*) their fat compeers.

On Saturday, official programmes, giving the route of the cortege for each of the three days, were sold in the streets. On Sunday, at 10 A.M., the procession started, "Chang Hai" occupying the post of honor. Resplendent with gilt horns, and gaily decorated, His *Greatness* was drawn by six horses, attached to a car, from which he looked with placid wonder upon the multitudes that thronged about him on either side. In a wagon, just behind, was an humble satellite in the person of a lamb, tastefully decorated with ribbons, and having a pretty little girl on each side. The cortege was preceded by a band, fantastically dressed, who were called upon to do frequent duty. A cavalcade of young butchers, well mounted, also formed an important feature of the procession.

It is the custom for the cortege to pay complimentary visits to the chief official dignitaries of the Empire, including the Emperor, and also to some of the foreign ambassadors. Custom also requires individuals so complimented to present a purse containing from a hundred to two hundred francs to the managers of the reception, and this money is used to defray the expenses, which are considerable. After the three days are over, the oxen who received such exalted honors experience a sudden reverse of fortune, being killed, and distributed in choice cuts among the dignitaries whose liberal contributions have entitled them to the honor. The embassies visited were those of (*sic*) Spain, Austria, Denmark, England and Russia. Why the American minister was left out I know not. Perhaps he is not fond of roast beef. But on that point I am unable to speak with certainty.

The names of the animals figuring in this pageant, you will see are suggested by the recent success of the allies in China.

During the three days all Paris was out of doors. Numberless carriages thronged the streets, and

crowds of well dressed people jostled each other on the sidewalks and in the Boulevards. On the third day the crowd was greatest. A grand masked ball was to close the three day's fete, and many who were to participate in it were promenading the streets in the bizarre costume designed for the evening. Some of these dresses exhibited a latitude which would, doubtless shock sober Boston and even cosmopolitan New York. Women dressed in male attire jauntily made their way through gazing crowds. I also saw a few of the stronger sex who returned the compliment by arraying themselves in elegant dresses duly set out with crinoline, their heads surmounted by bonnets trimmed with choice lace, which might tempt many a woman to sigh that it should be so thrown away.

Here comes a fellow with his face made preternaturally pale by the free application of chalk. Another has enhanced his natural beauty with lines of charcoal which form a marked contrast with his flowing white drapery. Here is a little boy encased in a set of brazen armor, breast-plate, helmet and all complete, a very youthful representative of the middle ages. But who comes next? I very much fear from his appearance that it is his Satanic Majesty, and having no desire to fall into his clutches, I will step aside. In the street a set of musicians ride by, making the air resound with blasts from their horns.

At midnight the doors of the theatre in which the ball was to be held were thrown open. I made my way to the outside of the theatre, directed by pyramids of light, and made one of a multitude watching the parties in the masquerade, as they drove up and descended from their carriages. It was certainly an amusing scene, and no doubt still more amusing within. But I had passed a fatiguing day, and felt too sleepy to sit up till morning. I am told, however, that on these occasions an astonishing amount of license is permitted, which I can readily believe, as the Parisians never do things by halves, whether they concern themselves in grave matters or in trifles.

CARL CANTAB.

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Due to conflicts, the next Alger Society convention will *not* be in the Chicago area as originally planned. "Philled in Philadelphia," hosted by Bill Russell, will take place around April 29, 30 or May 1, 2, 1982. Details will appear in *Newsboy*.



THE NEWSBOY. (From a Photograph.)

THE FACE AT THE WINDOW:

A New Year's Story

by Horatio Alger, Jr.

(*Editor's note:* The following Alger short story is from the collection of Gilbert K. Westgard II. It originally appeared in *Gleason's Pictorial*, January 7, 1860).

Up and down the streets he walked—alone in the midst of hurrying multitudes—homeless, though surrounded by homes.

Little Gerald Grant walked slowly onward, for it was warmer so than standing still. He could have no other motive, for among the thousands of homes that were all about him there was none that awaited him.

The New Year's bells were ringing. It was a glad sound for thousands of children, for they knew that

the New Year would bring them gifts and happy festive gatherings.

The toy-shops were full of purchasers. The light streamed from the windows upon the sidewalks, making it almost as light and cheerful as at noonday. There were groups of well-dressed ladies and gentlemen passing in different directions, selecting from the shops their annual offerings for the little ones at home.

None of them seemed to notice the thinly clad boy who kept on his way shivering, but with as stout a heart as he could manage to preserve under the disheartening circumstances; for Gerald could not quite forget that a year ago he had a home—not here, but in a distant city. His parents were in humble but comfortable circumstances. At length, in the hope of obtaining more profitable employment, they moved hither. But fortune proved unpropitious,—disease found them out, and never left them till both parents had fallen victims, and Gerald was left alone.

Since then—it was a month ago—he had lived as he could. Sometimes he obtained a little job—sometimes a charitable person gave him a meal—and for lodging, he did as so many houseless poor are obliged to do. More than once he had been without any roof than the sky above him.

But to-night a sense of unusual desolation came over him. The sight of the general joy in which he had no share, was well calculated to make him feel his own isolation.

He paused before a gaily illuminated shop window and looked wistfully in. He would like to have gone in a moment to enjoy the comfortable warmth that reigned within. But the clerks, who would have looked complacently upon him if he had been well-dressed, would have harshly ordered him out as an intruder if he had presented himself in his poverty-stricken attire.

A stout, comfortable looking man was walking briskly along the street. Everything looked bright and cheerful to him. He did not feel the cold. How could he, with his well-padded coat of Moscow beaver, his thick gloves and his fur mantle?

Besides, his heart was warm with the thoughts of the four children who were awaiting his return at home. Children with bright rosy cheeks, glowing with health and happiness, filling his home with merry, gladsome shouts—that was the home to which Randolph Percy was hastening.

I suppose it was because his mind was so

preoccupied that he did not distinguish little Gerald, who stood before the window of the toy-shop in mute admiration of the paradise from which penury shut him out.

At any rate, he stumbled and nearly fell over the child, who turned a frightened glance towards him.

Now, there is always something ridiculous and irritating in the thought of falling in the street, and Mr. Percy was not proof against it.

“Don’t you know any better than to place yourself in my way, you little ragamuffin? You nearly made me fall.”

“I didn’t mean to, sir,” said the child, looking up in his face.

“Why don’t you go home, then, where you won’t be in people’s way?”

“I have no home.”

There was a world of pathos in this simple utterance, but Mr. Percy had not yet got over his irritation.

He resumed his homeward course, having in his heart only harsh thoughts for the poor child, who had at the least full as just cause of complaint as he.

But the anger of a kind-hearted man is brief. When the irritation of the moment was over, he could not help recalling with a feeling of pity the shivering little outcast whom he had but just encountered.

“Poor boy!” he murmured, compassionately, “and I allowed myself to call him a ragamuffin, as if that were his fault. I wish I had stopped and given him something, if only a quarter of a dollar. It would have made me feel more comfortable now. Happy New Year! I am afraid there isn’t much happiness or even comfort in store for him. I declare, I shan’t sleep so comfortably tonight for thinking of my cruelty to him. I believe—yes, I will go back and see if I can’t find him, and offer him something. It isn’t for those whom God has prospered as he has me to add to the unhappiness of those who are less favored.”

Such were the reflections of the really kind-hearted Mr. Percy, as he deliberately turned about and retraced his steps to the toy-shop, in front of which he had encountered our hero. It was a full quarter of a mile—no slight trouble to take—but Mr. Percy would have felt amply repaid if he had but found the object of his search.

He looked all about him, up and down the street on both sides, but in vain. He looked into the shop, thinking it just possible that the boy might have

gone in there to warm himself. But here, too, he was destined to be disappointed.

"I suppose I must give him up," he soliloquized. "I am sorry, very sorry, for it would have eased my conscience to do something for him."

However, as there seemed to be no likelihood of finding the boy, the merchant once again set his face homewards, where he soon arrived, and in the joy of a well-ordered home, soon forgot the hero of his little misadventure.

Meantime, what had become of little Gerald?

Quite unconscious that he was drifting away from the only good fortune that he was likely to meet with for a long time, but keenly conscious of the cold, which was increasing, he kept moving. What a luxury, if somewhere in the great city he could have a home and a comfortable bed to go to.

But all this was as far beyond Gerald's anticipations—although he wished for them—as Aladdin's lamp is from the sober hopes of the children who form vague wishes that they had it.

Meanwhile, it was growing later. Nine o'clock had already struck, and Gerald began to feel sleepy. It had been a fatiguing day to him. From early morning he had been on his feet. All day long he had been moving on. There was not a square foot in the great city that belonged to him. He hadn't any business anywhere. That lesson he was not long in learning. If he remained in any one place any length of time, there was not wanting a rough voice to ask him what he was about—a harsh order to move on. So, with some anxiety, he began to consider how and where he should pass the night.

He had left the main thoroughfare. That was too brilliantly lighted. If he sank down in the shadow of a doorway the intrusive gaslight would find him out and reveal his whereabouts. He turned into a retired street—a street which business had not invaded—but which was appropriated to private residences. These, from their size and elegant exterior, were undoubtedly occupied by wealthy citizens. Here it was comparatively quiet. There were no hurrying crowds along the pavements—only here and there a passer-by, one, perhaps, who lived in one of these elegant houses, and was hastening to his comfortable home.

"I wonder if I couldn't find some place out of sight along here," thought Gerald. "I don't believe the watchmen would find me out. I'm *so* sleepy."

Just then the hearty ringing laughter of children, and the indistinct sound of merry voices floated out upon the air. There was something contagious in it. It even went to the heart of little Gerald, who looked all about him for the house from which these sounds proceeded. He did not have to look long. A fresh burst of laughter showed him that they issued from the house which he was then passing.

Then a sudden impulse seized Gerald—I think it must have been providential—to become a spectator of the merry scene of which he could hear the indications. He could remember when he had been merry and happy—it seemed a long time ago—some centuries at least—for misfortune makes the time pass slowly. He thought it might revive the memory of the happy past, if he could only see children enjoying themselves as he used to do.

Perhaps Gerald was not aware of all these reasons that influenced him. To his own mind it only seemed an impulse—a sudden impulse—to which he at once yielded.

"It won't be wrong, I don't think," he said to himself. "It can't do any harm, that I know of."

So he clambered up by the railing on the outside of the steps, and bending to one side, had a good chance to look in. It was a large and brilliantly-lighted double parlor. There was a thick carpet on the floor. Sofas and ottomans were scattered here and there, and in the midst of all were four happy, romping children.

It was New Year's eve, and on this occasion they had been allowed to remain up beyond their regular time of retiring. They were playing the good old-fashioned game named "Blind Man's Buff," and the merry shouts showed that they were enjoying it highly.

The parents were sitting on a sofa looking at the sports of their children with beaming faces. Gerald's attention, however, was confined to the children. He followed their sport with eager eyes and with keen enjoyment.

Just then one of the little ones noticed him and called out:

"Why, papa, there's a boy looking in at the window!"

Gerald swiftly slid down, but not till he had been seen.

"Good gracious!" exclaimed Mr. Percy—for it was his house, and the children were his—"it's the very boy I tried to find tonight!"

He slipped on his hat, and without waiting for his

coat, hastily left the house. He came quickly upon Gerald, who had not expected pursuit, and placed his hand on his shoulder.

Gerald looked up, and not without apprehension recognized the gentleman who had spoken harshly to him once that evening.

"I didn't mean any harm," said he quickly.

"Nor do I, my poor child," said Mr. Percy, gently. "But if you will come into the house with me, I may do you some good."

Hardly knowing what to think, Gerald followed Mr. Percy into the house. The children quickly gathered about him, and looked compassionately at his face and hands, red with the cold. They extended to him a cordial welcome, and even induced him to join in their merry play.

From that New Year's day little Gerald was no longer homeless. Mr. Percy assumed the expenses of his education, and the boy promises to his benefactor.

Dear reader, if some day Penury should present her face at the window of your heart, open wide the door and bid her enter.



THE TURNING POINT:

A Temperance Sketch

by Horatio Alger, Jr.

(*Editor's note:* The following Alger short story is from the collection of Gilbert K. Westgard II. It originally appeared in *Gleason's Weekly Line-of-Battle Ship*, November 19, 1859).

William Sprague had once been an honest, industrious, temperate mechanic, enjoying the respect of his fellow men, and maintaining his wife and children in comfort. But in an evil hour he yielded to the invitation of a comrade to "take a drink" at the village tavern. From this moment his downward steps became more and more rapid,—not that he loved drink. At first it was distasteful to him; but by degrees he began to crave it for its stimulating effect, and to think that it was necessary to his constitution. Besides, he enjoyed the conviviality of the party that were wont to meet at the tavern night after night to carouse and make merry.

I am speaking of a time twenty years since, when drunkenness was more openly practised than now.

Of course these habits were not without their effect upon his pecuniary interests. He had inherited from his father a cottage and a couple of acres of land, which were worth, perhaps, fifteen hundred dollars. Besides this, his occupation—that of a carpenter—brought him, in good times, two dollars a day; so that there seemed to be nothing to prevent his laying up a good sum every year. In fact, he had already some four hundred dollars on deposit in the savings bank when he first came to take the downward path. But this soon melted away, being transferred to the landlord's pockets for rum.

By-and-by his account at the tavern had swelled to two hundred dollars more. The landlord was perfectly willing to give him credit, knowing that his place would secure him. Indeed, he had fixed his eyes upon it, and meant to get it into his possession sooner or later.

When his bill amounted to two hundred dollars he presented it for payment. The amount staggered William Sprague, who had no idea it was so much.

"I can show you the items," said the landlord, confidently.

"I suppose you are right," said his victim, "but I can't pay you now."

"I am sorry to press you, but I must insist upon

it."

"But I haven't it in my possession."

"O well, you can easily raise it."

"Who would lend me?"

"Your uncle Thomas."

"No hope there," said Sprague, who well knew that his uncle disapproved of the course he had been pursuing for some months past. "No hope there. I am no great favorite with him."

"Well," said the landlord, after a pause, "I'll tell you what I'll do. You owe me two hundred dollars. I'll lend you three hundred more, and you shall give me a mortgage for five hundred on your house and land."

William was at first startled at this suggestion, but after all, thought he, "why shouldn't I? It will pay off my debt and give me three hundred dollars in hand. I guess I'll do it."

The landlord received his assent with joy, and would not let him rest till the documents were drawn up and the mortgage given.

Mrs. Sprague heard of her husband's action with pain. She tearfully expostulated with him, but in vain. She well knew that the three hundred dollars would go the same way with the other two, and that the landlord would never release the hold he had now got on her husband. She could divine that at no distant time she and her children would be without a home, and her husband, perhaps, in a drunkard's grave.

The course of subsequent events seemed likely to verify her anticipation. In just six months from the time the mortgage was given, the three hundred dollars had wasted away. Most of it had found its way back to the landlord's drawer.

William Sprague was about contemplating a second mortgage, when an unexpected incident most fortunately set him to thinking and eventuated in restoring him a temperate man to his wife and children.

This is the way it happened: One evening he left the tavern in a state of partial intoxication, and directed his steps homeward. It was a distance of a mile, and when half way he sat down by the side of the road to rest. Pretty soon he heard the steps, and soon after the voices of two men who were approaching, and appeared to be earnestly engaged in conversation.

They proved to be the landlord and a brother of his who was visiting him from a neighboring town.

"That is a pretty place of Sprague's," said the

latter.

"Yes," said the landlord, "but it won't be his long."

"Ah, how is that?"

"O, he's a miserable fellow; gets drunk every night in my bar-room."

"Getting rid of his money fast, is he?"

"Yes, at a galloping rate."

"Is his house mortgaged?"

"Yes, and the mortgage is in my hands."

"For how much?"

"Five hundred dollars."

"It must be worth three times that."

"Richly. I'll tell you what I propose to do. Send him two hundred dollars on a second mortgage, and when the amount becomes due force a sale of the place."

"And you will bid it in yourself?"

"Precisely. I shouldn't wonder if I could get it for eleven hundred dollars. There will probably be no one else to bid. His uncle might, but he has lost confidence in him. When I get it, I shall put my son John into the house. He is to marry this fall."

All this William Sprague hears as he lay on the grass by the roadside. The night was so dark that he was not seen by the parties who were conversing. It produced a strong revulsion of feeling in him. It showed him just how rapidly he was travelling on the road to ruin, and roused his hearty indignation at the man who could so coolly consign him and his family to destitution, and scheme to deprive them of their home.

"So, I'm a miserable fellow, am I?" he repeated to himself. "I begin to think that I am, and that I have been a confounded fool for the last two years. But it isn't too late yet to reform. That man will have to wait a little longer before he gets hold of my place. God helping me, I have tasted my last draught of liquor."

William Sprague staggered to his feet and went thoughtfully home. He said nothing of his new resolution to his wife. He resolved to wait a little first. Immediately after breakfast he went over to the house of his uncle. The latter was surprised to see him, and received him a little coolly.

"Uncle Thomas," said he, "you don't appear very glad to see me, and I am not surprised. I have been playing the fool for two years past. I have resolved to turn over a new leaf."

"Are you in earnest?" exclaimed his uncle, with a look half of hope, half of distrust.

"To prove to you that I am, let me tell you what it is that has changed my purposes so suddenly."

He proceeded to detail the scenes which the reader has already been made acquainted with.

"The rascal!" exclaimed uncle Thomas, warmly. "His plans must be defeated at all hazards. Can I depend upon the firmness of your resolution, William?" he proceeded to inquire.

"You can, uncle. Things appear to me now very different from what they did. By God's help I mean to win back the respectable place I once held in society."

The uncle grasped the hand of his nephew warmly.

"Then," said he, "my help shall not be wanting. I will take up this mortgage which the landlord holds, and while you keep steady I will never trouble you about it."

"Will you, indeed?" exclaimed William, gladly. "I will accept your kind offer, being confident that I can at some time repay you, if my health be spared."

The next morning William Sprague went over to the tavern as usual.

"Ah, Sprague, glad to see you," said the landlord, with professional cordiality. "Won't you have a glass of bitters this morning?"

"Not just now," said William, quietly. "I want to see you a few moments on business."

"Step right in here, then," said the landlord, pointing to a little room supplied with a desk and chairs.

"It was about the mortgage."

"O yes," said the landlord, urbanely. "I suppose you would like to raise a little more money on your place. Well, I'll advance you two hundred dollars on a second mortgage."

"That was not exactly my meaning."

"Indeed!" said the landlord, looking surprised.

"I wanted to take up the present mortgage."

"What! have you got the money?" queried the astounded landlord.

"I have," said Sprague, producing a roll of bills.

"Better let it lay," said the landlord; "you may want to use the money for some other purpose."

William insisted, and the landlord reluctantly complied with his demand.

When the formalities were concluded, and William felt himself a free man, he turned round and addressed the landlord meaningly:

"I am sorry you will be disappointed about getting possession of my place for your son John.

Perhaps you can find another to your mind."

The landlord turned red and muttered something in a confused manner. William Sprague turned on his heel and walked away, and from that moment has not allowed himself to taste a glass of anything stronger than water. He considers the conversation to which he was a chance listener as the turning point of his life.

FROM THE EDITOR'S FILES

Ralph D. Gardner's latest book, *Horatio Alger, A Fancy of Hers/The Disagreeable Woman*, published by Van Nostrand Reinhold, is one of eleven chosen from thousands of entries by The English-Speaking Union for their 1981 Books-Across-the-Sea program. Another book selected is *Publishers for Mass Entertainment in Nineteenth Century America*, for which Ralph wrote a history of Street & Smith.

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HAS member George W. May, Route 1, Box 221, Metropolis, Illinois 62960, has recently written *Down Illinois Rivers*, "a personal narrative of float-paddle trips down 18 little rivers, interlaced with local history, nature and river lore, entertaining adventures in the Thoreau and Tom Sawyer-Huck Finn tradition." Copies are \$16.00 each, and can be ordered from George.

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Bob Williman comments on the May 1981 *Newsboy*: "Photo on front of *Newsboy* shows the street boys shooting marbles, not craps, evidenced by the fact that they are not shooting against the wall and the presence of other marbles on the floor. Don't you think so? Oh, well....."

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Marilyn Miller Saurer and Terry E. Saurer report "a new Alger collector" in the family--Corey Elizabeth Miller Saurer, born October 9, 1981, 7 lbs, 3 oz, 19" long. Congratulations! We can imagine what his bedtime stories will be!!

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Newsboy readers may enjoy the *Mystery and Adventure Series Review*. Published four times a year, \$5.00 per year. Write Fred Woodworth, P.O. Box 3488, Tucson, Arizona 85722. Make checks payable to L.M. Wood.



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