



THE HORATIO ALGER SOCIETY

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION

NEWSBOY



Horatio Alger, Jr.

1832 - 1899

A magazine devoted to the study of Horatio Alger, Jr., his life, works, and influence on the culture of America.

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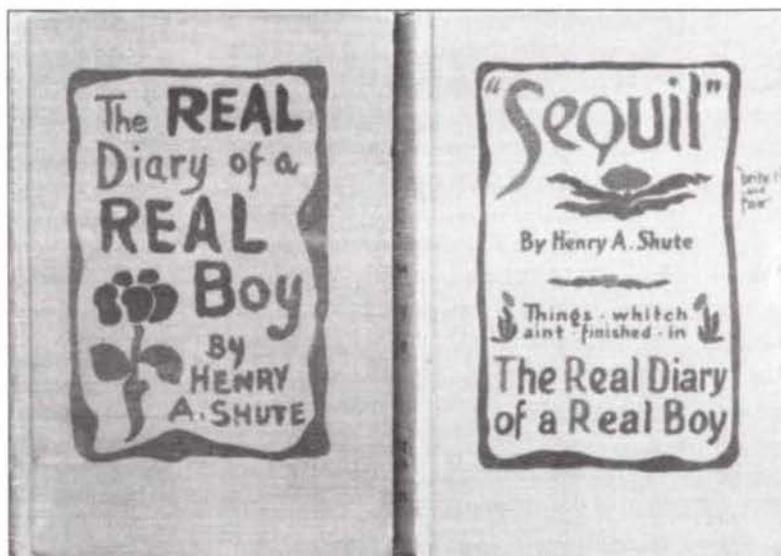
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President's column

I really do need to contact my travel agent, and soon, for arrangements to fly or drive into Stratford, Ontario, Canada for the 1996 Horatio Alger Society convention, because the convention is fast approaching, folks!

The dates of May 2 through May 5 for the first international H.A.S convention are not far off. If you have not already sent in your registration form, please do so as soon as possible. This also applies to calling for your hotel reservations (for up-to-date information, see Page 3). Convention hosts Marg and Ivan McClymont can be reached at 1-519-233-3214 if you have questions.

Please plan on bringing any extra books you might have for sale or auction. There is never any shortage of good books at the conventions and I plan to bring back an armful. We hope to have some good auctions and a fine book sale for the attending members. As you know, all kinds of series books, not just Horatio Alger books, are generally available for sale from various members at each convention. There should something for everyone.

This is my last column for *Newsboy* as the President of the Horatio Alger Society (sounds of sighs of relief and subdued applause). I will be retiring as President as of this year's convention. As President, I have not actually *done* anything for the last two years, which, as it was originally explained to me, about summed up my duties. As ex-President, I intend to continue not doing anything, but I plan to feel a lot less guilt about it.

The next President's column in the May-June *Newsboy* will be by our new President, who will have to nap quite a bit to keep up with my record of inactivity.

On a more serious note, the Horatio Alger Society consists of some of the finest people I have ever met, whose friendliness and caring make each annual convention a gathering of genuine friends, happy to be in each other's company. One of the best decisions I have ever made in my life was to call a stranger (Carl Hartmann) and subsequently join a Society of which I knew basically nothing and of whom I had met not a single soul. I now count the members of this Society as close personal and "partic'lar" friends.

I wish to thank everyone for his and her support and care in the past two years; your friendship is and will always be the most valued item in my collection.

Your partic'lar friend,
Mary Ann Ditch (PF-861)
4657 Mason St.
Omaha, NE 68106

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 is indexed in the Modern Language Association's International Bibliography.

BOOKS RECOMMENDED BY H.A.S.

- Horatio Alger, Jr., A Comprehensive Bibliography*, by Bob Bennett (PF-265).
- Horatio Alger or, The American Hero Era*, by Ralph D. Gardner (PF-053).
- The Fictional Republic: Horatio Alger and American Political Discourse*, by Carol Nackenoff (PF-921).
- Publication Formats of the 59 Stories by Horatio Alger, Jr. as Reprinted by the John C. Winston Co.*, by Bob Sawyer (PF-455) and Jim Thorp (PF-574).
- Horatio Alger Books Published by A.L. Burt*, by Bradford S. Chase (PF-412).
- Horatio Alger Books Published by M.A. Donohue & Co.*, by Bradford S. Chase (PF-412).
- Horatio Alger Books Published by Whitman Publishing Co.*, by Bradford S. Chase (PF-412).
- The Lost Life of Horatio Alger, Jr.*, by Gary Scharnhorst with Jack Bales (PF-258).

Newsboy ad rates: Full page, \$32.00; one-half page, \$17.00; one-quarter page, \$9.00; per column inch (1 inch deep by approx. 3 1/2 inches wide), \$2.00. Send ads, with check payable to Horatio Alger Society, to Robert E. Kasper, 585 E. St. Andrews Dr., Media, PA 19063. The above rates apply to all want ads, along with ads offering non-Alger books for sale. However, it is the policy of the Horatio Alger Society to promote the exchange of Alger books and related Alger materials by providing space **free of charge** to our members for the **sale only** of such material. Send such ads or "Letters to the Editor" to *Newsboy* editor William R. Gowen (PF-706) at 923 South Lake St., Apt. 6, Mundelein, IL 60060.

1996 H.A.S. convention update

'Strive and Succeed in Stratford'

By Ivan McClymont (PF-722)

As I write this, it is difficult to realize that the Horatio Alger Society's 1996 convention is only a couple of months away and when you receive this issue of *Newsboy*, time will be even shorter — less than a month!

Marg and I are busy working out details and confirming commitments made earlier. We are looking forward to welcoming you to the first Alger convention held outside the U.S.

As of March 20, we had 47 people registered for the convention, with more expected to send in their forms in the next few weeks. As I said in my last article, it is important that we get all the registrations in as early as possible in order to plan the annual banquet and other meals included in your registration fee.

Last time, I failed to mention 23 Albert Place as the second hotel making accommodations for us. With the 30 rooms at the Queen's Inn already booked by Society members, 23 Albert Place still has rooms as of this writing (but act fast!). They have increased the rooms they are holding to 20 from the original 10. This, along with the 30 from the Queen's Inn, should be adequate.

Only a couple minutes' walk from the Queen's Inn, 23 Albert Place has been very accommodating to our needs. Our congenial host there, Jerry Heatherly, feels there should be no problems getting rooms even though the March 15 deadline has passed. This hotel is very similar to the Queen's Inn but has rooms only (no restaurants). There is a comfortable lobby with a fireplace.

The Queen's Inn will take reservations for both hotels (see enclosed green sheet) or 23 Albert Place can be called directly at 1-519-373-5800. They will send a confirmation slip, along with a map.

We are also in the process of arranging for the 1996 **Strive and Succeed Award** through arrangements with the local high school guidance counselor.

Canada customs informs me that there should be no problem bringing books in if you explain that you are going to a book collectors' convention and have brought them along to trade. The worst that might happen to dealers would be a 7% sales tax deposit on books brought in with a refund on books taken out.

We have been asked about parking availability. Free parking lots are available for the hotels.

I am concerned that our windmill tour may be off as the owner does not officially open it to the public until June 1, which we knew all along, but were certain he



Twenty additional rooms for the convention have been set aside at 23 Albert Place, a hotel a short walk from the Queen's Inn, the main convention hotel.

would open for us by appointment. However, he has a trip to Holland scheduled for May and hopefully he will still be around on our convention weekend. We'll let you know when you check in on Thursday.

The Stratford Festival Theatre season opens on Monday, May 6, if you intend to stay over a few days.

Shakespeare's "King Lear" will run May 6 through Nov. 2; Meredith Willson's "The Music Man" from May 10 through Nov. 3; Peter Shaffer's "Amadeus" from May 7 through Nov. 1; and Lillian Hellman's "The Little Foxes" from July 28 through Oct. 13. The Avon Theatre's summer-long schedule will include Shakespeare's "The Merchant of Venice" from May 13 through Nov. 3; and the Tom Patterson Theatre will present works by Shakespeare, Tennessee Williams and Samuel Beckett June 15 through Sept. 15.

For information or reservations, write Stratford Festival Box Office, P.O. Box 520, Stratford, Ont., Canada N5A 6V2, or phone 1-800-567-1600. We will include a Stratford Festival guide with your convention package.

Here are the members and spouses from whom we have received registrations as of March 20 (in no particular order):

Carl and Jean Hartmann, Doug Fleming, Bob Kersch, Arthur Young, Brad Chase, Bob and Diana Kaiser, Donald Cripe, Paul Cripe, Robert and Jeannette Routhier, Bernie and Marcy Biberdorf, Bill Gowen, Bill and Judith Leitner, Carol Nackenoff, John Dizer, Gordon and Jeanne Huber, Robert Huber, Lou and Mary Lou Peters, Bart Nyberg, Dick and Jackie Pope, Arthur and Linda Smither, Milton and Carol Ehlert, Iddo and Kathleen Pittman, Gene and Wynone Hafner, Chris DeHaan, Samuel Huang, David and Jane McGarry, Jim and Charlotte Towey, Eddie and Rita LeBlanc and Ivan and Marg McClymont.

Editor's notebook

Our first-ever convention outside the United States is just a few weeks away so I hope your plans are almost complete. Hope to see you all there!

I recently received a note from Kathie Williman expressing her heartfelt appreciation for the tribute to her late husband Bob, written by Brad Chase in the last issue. I thought a brief excerpt would be of interest to the membership:

"I can't express the emotions I experienced when I opened the envelope containing the new *Newsboy*. Then, when I started going through it and saw the photo of Bob, the tears started flowing . . . and continued all the way through Brad's wonderful tribute. I have written to Brad to express deepest and most heartfelt gratitude . . . there are no other words to say for the memories he wrote of and the time he took to put it all down . . .

"Bob was a true 'Alger' hero . . . he came from poverty and through very hard work he succeeded . . . not so much in material things, but in the hearts and lives of the many he touched along the way. He always saw the best in people and tried any way he could to help those in any need. He did not abide injustices and it drove him to put things right. He didn't win them all, but he left his mark on all along the way . . .

"My sincerest thanks to you for selecting Brad and making room in *Newsboy* . . . I will cherish the tribute to Bobbie always."

Most sincerely,
Kathie Williman

In this issue . . . The fourth installment in our series on Alger's short stories written for the Boston *American Union* in the early 1850s is one of the most delightful of all. When you read "Mrs. Smith's Soiree" you may recognize some of the personality traits (both positive and negative) found in Mrs. Smith, her family and guests. One thing we can say is things haven't changed much over the years when it comes to human relationships.

Also, Bart Nyberg examines one of the most unique early 20th-century writers of books for boys, Judge Henry A. Shute, author of the famous "Plupy" stories.

Coming in May-June . . . This is our annual convention issue, with articles, photos and other news, plus auction results and the annual treasurer's report.

So a final reminder, if you haven't sent in your convention registration, do it now!

MEMBERSHIP

New members

Michael G. Pagani (PF-974)
P.O. Box 957
Patterson, CA 95363

Michael is an analyst/programmer whose interest in Alger is tied to a general interest in children's books for his children. His other hobbies include reading and tennis. He learned about the Horatio Alger Society through the Henty Society.

Jim Towey (PF-975)
249 Hartland Rd.
W. Granby, CT 06090 (860) 653-7447

Jim is a retired engineer whose main hobby is collecting series books, of which he now has 2,000-plus titles. He learned about the Society from Brad Chase and Bill Gowen and plans to attend his first H.A.S. convention in May.

Change of address

Bernard A. Biberdorf (PF-524)
10726 Gateway Drive
Fishers, IN 46038
(317) 578-7434

Judd Perkins (PF-604)
597 Tournament Circle
Muskegon, MI 49444
(616) 798-2171

Ada V. Chase (PF-438)
The Gables of Farmington
20 Devonwood Drive
Farmington, CT 06032

Cary S. Sternick (PF-933)
425 Holderrieth, #214
Tomball, TX 77375
(713) 351-9806

Donald Choate (PF-608)
33 Fifth Ave.
Leominster, MA 01453-1942
(508) 537-3146

Horatio Alger and the American Union

Part IV

by Peter C. Walther (PF-548)

A reader leisurely scouring the columns of **American Union** will find stories of much diversity. For instance: "A Romance of City Life," "A Stirring Nautical Adventure" or "A Thrilling Tale" represent only a few of the enticements an imaginative editor dangled before the eyes of an eager reading public. A subscriber in Old Boston, upon receiving his issue for October 29, 1853, might have noticed on Page 2 "A Story for the Ladies." This tale, "Mrs. Smith's Soiree" by Carl Cantab, a.k.a. Horatio Alger, Jr., you are soon to read for yourselves.

Didn't someone once write "To Thine Own Self Be True", i.e. extolling the virtues of being genuine? This may well be the underlying theme of "Mrs. Smith's

Soiree." Interestingly enough the later Alger villain, be it boy, girl, adult or relative, often accused our typical Alger hero, unavailingly, of course, of this same deficiency, that of "putting on airs." If Alger was experimenting with these common themes a decade before his popularity reached full flower, it was with an adult reading public in mind.

The dictionary defines *soiree* as "an evening party or social gathering, often for a particular purpose." Miss Pinfeather in Chapter 3 complains to a fellow guest that "I don't believe that woman [Mrs. Smith] knows what the word means." What her particular purpose was in giving the party will be readily apparent as the story unfolds. However, the reader's sympathies certainly lie with poor Mr. Smith.

We would advise any or all husbands to be warned the next time their wives wish to arrange another *sworry*.

Mrs. Smith's Soiree

OR

KEEPING UP APPEARANCES

By Carl Cantab

CHAPTER I

"Better to be out of the world than out of the fashion."
COMMON SAYING.

"So she would get the better of me!
Let her look to 't I am her equal
Nor will I yield an easy victory,
As she shall confess."

OLD PLAY.

"Well, I declare," said Mrs. Celeste Smith, as on her return from a shopping excursion, she entered the sitting-room, where her mother was, I regret to say, engaged in the plebeian task of mending stockings; but then, she didn't expect company in the morning. "Well, I declare! Some folks are getting up in the world."

"What do you mean, Celly?" inquired her mother.

"How often, ma," said Miss Smith, indignantly, "must I request you not to call me by that odious name. It isn't genteel, or *comme il faut* as our French teacher used to say."

"Well, well, I'll try to think next time," said Mrs. Smith in a soothing tone, "but what's the news?"

"Why, that Mrs. Green, the grocer's wife, has been giving a good party, at which sixty or eighty persons were present."

"Mrs. Green given a party!" exclaimed her mother. "Well, I'm astonished. what in the world set her to doing that, I'd like to know; and why, if she must have one, didn't she invite us?"

"I don't know," said Celeste, tossing her head, "nor don't care for that matter, though it is a little odd. I can imagine how the vain creature felt, and that little conceited minx of a daughter, that hasn't sense enough to know how homely she is, how they must have swelled and put on airs. O, it's so ridiculous. But ma, there's one thing I've been thinking of."

"What's that?" inquired Mrs. Smith with interest.

"Why can't we give a party? I'm sure we can afford it as well as Mr. Green, and good gracious if we couldn't get it up in better taste, I'll give up. Can't you ask pa about it?"

"Well, said Mrs. Smith, considering, "it does seem as if we might have one as well as Mrs. Green, and as long as she didn't invite us, we would leave her out. But I'm afraid your father will think it rather foolish."

"O well, we'll tease him till he can't help yielding. But there's one thing — we won't call it a party, that's so common; a Soiree would sound as much

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Editor's note: Although Newsboy has reprinted several of Alger's American Union short stories over the years and is currently engaged in a series of the seven extant stories (two additional stories are known, but copies have yet to be located), this is the first known publication of "Mrs. Smith's Soiree" since its Oct. 29, 1853 debut.

Mrs. Smith's Soiree

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better, and it would show that we knew something about polite society and so on. Don't you think so, ma?"

Mrs. Smith assented, for she had all confidence in her daughter's knowledge of society.

At dinner, accordingly, for it was deemed advisable to expedite matters, Mrs. Smith broached the subject to her husband.

"My dear," she began (there are two occasions when ladies are always sure to use this endearing term, one when they are about to ask a favor — the other when they are on the brink of quarreling) "my dear," commenced Mrs. Smith. "Celeste and I have set our hearts upon having a soiree."

"A *sworry!*" exclaimed Mr. Smith in amazement. "What's that? If it's anything in the clothing line, and it isn't too expensive, I suppose you can get it."

"O, pa," interrupted Celeste, "how can you be so dreadfully ignorant. A soiree is a party — an evening party. It's all the fashion, and everybody that is anybody, has them."

"What in the world have we to do with fashion?"

"We must maintain our position in society, and we can't do it unless we do as other folks do."

"I didn't know as we had any position in society, and I'm sure I don't care anything about it," persisted the perverse Mr. Smith.

Well, I'm sure I do," said his wife. "I don't intend to have that upstart Mrs. Green outshine me. If she can have a party, I don't see why we shouldn't."

"What's Mrs. Green to us?"

"Why, nothing, but then folks will talk, and if they find we don't do as others in our position are doing, they will begin to suspect that all is not going well with you — that your business is dull or something of the kind. It's always best to keep up appearances.

"But then," said Mr. Smith who in part yielded to the force of his wife's last argument, "it will be a great expense."

"O no, it needn't. Really it won't be much of anything. You know we can make the cake and such things in the house, and all we'll have to do will be to hire two or three to hand about the things, and perhaps get some ice-cream; really, the expense will be but a trifle."

Mrs. Smith, having no experience in such matters really believed what she said, and her husband trusted to her.

"Well, well," said he, "have it your own way. Only

you mustn't expect me to have anything to do with the preparations. You must take it all into your own hands."

This was just what Mrs. Smith and Celeste wanted. They formed themselves at once into a Committee of Ways and Means, being firmly resolved upon two things, first to eclipse Mrs. Green, and secondly to do this at as little cost as could be contrived.

CHAPTER II

Servant. "My lord, the banquet waits."

Lord B. "I will be there forthwith."

BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

The first point to be decided was when the soiree should take place. The next Thursday was fixed upon for that purpose.

The second related to those who should be invited. This occupied rather longer.

"Surely, ma, you won't have that ill-natured old maid Miss Pinfeather. She's such a malicious, ill-tempered creature."

"That's the very reason I mean to ask her. She will be devoured with envy, and perfectly miserable if anything goes off well. It will be quite amusing to watch her."

"Very true, ma. You are right. There's the Misses Homespins, we must have them, for I have heard there's a cousin of theirs, a young lawyer staying with them, and so we can invite them all."

"Yes, it will be very proper; I will put them on the list. What is the name of the young gentleman?"

"Fuller. William Fuller, I believe. At least, Miss Tattle told me so last Sunday."

We will not weary the reader by making him a party to all the conferences which were held before the weighty question — Who shall be invited? — was fully settled. The list grew beyond their anticipations, till it reached one hundred, but as Celeste remarked, "there really was not one of them that decently could be left out."

Mr. Smith's clerk was occupied nearly all the next day in making copies of the following note of invitation.

"Mr. and Mrs. Smith will be happy to receive their friends at a Soiree on the evening of Thursday, the eleventh instant.

Barclay Street, Dec. 6."

The notes were despatched, and now, the preliminaries being settled, the business of active preparation commenced.

The services of Black Nelly, a cook in the neighborhood, who professed to be *au fait* in the mysteries of the kitchen were secured. For the next two or three days Mrs. Smith's kitchen presented a very

active appearance. The beating of eggs, stirring up of ingredients, and so forth, constituted the chief employment of Celeste and her mother for the time being; the former seemed to be seized with an unusual fit of industry, which can only be accounted for by the exhilaration of giving a Soiree.

"How shall we do about the ice-cream?" Shall we buy it at the confectioner's?" inquired Celeste.

"That will be very expensive; I think we can manage to make it ourselves, and that you know will be much cheaper. I have no doubt Nelly knows how to make it."

Nelly on being asked, hesitated, but she valued her professional skill too highly to admit that her knowledge on this point was very limited. She therefore answered that she would undertake it, trusting to chance and good luck for success.

"Have we any lamps available for the occasion?" inquired Celeste.

"Not enough, but I suppose we can borrow."

"Then as long as we must borrow, why not borrow a chandelier? That would give an air of fashion to the room, and nobody need know but it belongs to us."

"But where can we get one?"

"There is Mrs. Jones has just got one, a very handsome one, so I heard, and you know she's the most obliging creature in the world. She'd be perfectly willing to let us have it for one evening, I feel very sure. It will be sufficient to light both rooms at once."

Mrs. Jones' consent being readily procured, it was finally settled that this should be the arrangement of the evening. Mrs. Smith and Celeste were quite elated. They thought everything would pass off in fine style, and already they beheld in fancy their two front parlors brilliant with beauty and fashion. It would be such a triumph over Mrs. Green.

Mrs. Smith's ideas expanded as her preparations went on. She suddenly discovered that the carpets which covered her front rooms looked very shabby — too bad, in fact, to remain on any longer. This she represented in such strong terms to her husband that he, though but half convinced, gave her permission to provide new ones.

"It's always been," said Mrs. Smith, "when you buy an article to get a nice one; it is sure to be cheapest in the end."

On this principle she purchased two Brussels carpets, the price of which nearly startled Mr. Smith from his propriety. As the time was so near

at hand, the home for the next few days was a perfect hive of industry.

At length the carpets were finished and put down. Then it was discovered that the plain, cane-bottomed chairs, which before had looked quite respectable, now appeared very much out of place, and presented too great a contrast with the new carpet. So it was found necessary to buy some fine stuffed chairs of a more fashionable pattern for both rooms, and in addition to these, two handsome centre tables, for Mrs. Smith wished to have both these rooms present the same appearance.

Mr. Smith began to wonder where it would all end, and devoutly hoped his wife would never take it into her head to have another *sworry*.

Of course Mrs. Smith and Celeste found it necessary to provide themselves with new dresses. "They absolutely hadn't anything fit to wear," they said. Dresses were accordingly obtained, and mantua-makers and seamstresses were engaged to get them in readiness, with all possible despatch, for the day which was to form so eventful an era in the history of the Smiths was close at hand.

CHAPTER III

There was a sound of revelry by night,

And Barclay street had gathered then
Her beauty and her chivalry; and bright

The chandelier flamed o'er fair women and brave men;
A thousand hearts beat happily; and when
Music arose with its voluptuous swell,
Soft eyes looked love to eyes which spake again,

And all went merry as a marriage bell;

But, hush! hark! a deep sound strikes like a rising knell!

BYRON, *altered*.

At length the company began to assemble. As Mr. Smith had foreseen — whether from curiosity to see in what way Mrs. Smith would conduct the soiree, or from some other cause — nearly all who had been invited made their appearance.

It was found utterly impossible to crowd ninety persons into two moderate-sized rooms. When those were filled to their utmost capacity, it was found necessary to throw open the dining-room for the rest of the company.

Of course, in the crowded state of the rooms, it was found impossible to do anything but sit and converse. There was no space for dancing — none for whist parties; for the tables, much to Mrs. Smith's mortification, who wished to display them, had been removed in the early part of the evening,

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Mrs. Smith's Soiree

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to make room for visitors.

A venturesome young lady was at length found, who, though suffering from a cold, as a matter of course, was prevailed upon to seat herself at the piano, and sing a popular air.

Under cover of this, the company began to converse.

"How perfectly absurd in Mrs. Smith," remarked Miss Pinfeather, the old maid for whom that lady had such a particular regard, to her next neighbor, "how perfectly absurd in Mrs. Smith to invite such a crowd. Any body might know that she had never given a party before — I beg pardon, soiree — or so she chooses to call it. I don't believe that woman knows what the word means."

"Just so; but I suppose Celeste put it into her head. She feels pretty smart, now she's been to boarding school one term."

"I wouldn't give a snap," said Miss Pinfeather, emphatically, "for all she ever learnt there. You see those daubs up there," pointing to the landscapes which looked down from the wall, "well, she did those with the help of the teacher. If I were in her mother's place, I'd throw 'em in the fire sooner than exhibit them in that way. I suppose those animals in the one on the left hand are meant for sheep; *perhaps* they look like them; at any rate, I should feel *sheepish* enough if I had done them."

Miss Pinfeather laughed grimly at her own wit, and her companion followed her example.

"I declare," said Mrs. Gray, who with her three ungainly daughters, was jammed up in a corner, from which she was quite unable to extricate herself. "If *this* is a *soiree*, I hope never to go to another. I might as well go to a Quaker meeting, for all the pleasure I shall get from it."

"And have you noticed, mother," said Sophia Gray, "how absurdly Celeste Smith is dressed? If I had no more taste than she, I never would do anything without consulting somebody."

At this point the young lady who had been exerting herself at the piano for the edification of the company, modestly withdrew, and no one could be found to take her place.

"What is to be done now?" was the thought which arose in the minds of all. It was too soon to bring the refreshments on, or those would have sufficiently occupied the attention of the company.

At length some quiet play was thought of, in which all might engage without involving the necessity of moving about much. In this way the time

was got rid of till it was thought expedient, as one or two of the company were in haste to depart, to bring in the refreshments.

One of the attendants whom Mrs. Smith had engaged, having been unable to appear, Julia, the Irish maid of all work, was pressed into the service.

"Mind," said Mrs. Smith, "and do as I tell you. You will carry round the tea; you must go and fill the sugar bowl with the sifted white sugar, and wait till every one has had time to help themselves to sugar and cream."

"Sure ma'am, and I will," said Julia, confidently.

She was accordingly despatched on her errand.

It so happened that she came first to Miss Pinfeather, who, though an old maid, having a "sweet tooth," supplied herself abundantly from the sugar bowl.

She began to sip her tea, but at the first sip she laid down her spoon, and looked completely mystified.

"What is the world is the matter with the tea?" she asked of her next neighbor.

"I think," said she, "that it tastes very much like salt."

"So it does, that stupid Irish girl has substituted salt for sugar. Well, this is a queer sort of a party."

She was interrupted by a scream from the opposite side of the room. Julia, who had it difficult to make her way through the crowd, had safely disposed of all her tea but one cup, and this she was about to offer to Mr. Fuller, the young lawyer, when she tripped over some object on the floor, and fell towards the lawyer, in whose lap the contents of the cream-pitcher and the last cup of tea were landed.

"Howly Virgin!" ejaculated the discomfited young lady, as she rose from her not very graceful position on the floor; "sure, I hope you ain't hurt, and I'll get you some more tea directly, I will!"

"Thank you," said the lawyer, rather drily, "I shan't have occasion for *any more*," a remark which excited a general laugh, during which the speaker, who did not feel altogether comfortable, withdrew.

Mrs. Smith, who had received a cup of tea from Julia, but had not tasted it, noticing the significant looks of those ladies who had, proceeded to imbibe it, when she found, to her mortification, that salt had been substituted for sugar. She was about to apologize, and have the mistake remedied, when her steps were arrested by a new and unexpected calamity, which capped the climax of her mortification, and overwhelmed

(Continued on Page 15)

Brite and Fair

or, The Real Story of Henry A. Shute

by Bart J. Nyberg (PF-879)

June, 1974. My wife Dawn and I have been invited to spend a weekend at Hi-Lee Cottage, the home of Eugene Lee and his wife Betty.

This was, of course, the summer home and workplace of author Edward Edson Lee, more commonly known by his pen name, Leo Edwards.

As a young collector of Leo's books, I was thrilled by the invitation to spend some time at the cottage with the son and daughter-in-law of the famous author.

We arrived late Saturday morning and were soon treated to a great home-made lunch. The rest of the day was spent in touring the cottage, fishing on Lake Ripley, and talking with the Lees about the days when Hi-Lee Cottage had been the hub of activity for young people from Cambridge, Wisconsin, even drawing visitors from the Madison, Milwaukee and Chicago areas.

We retired that night on the cottage's three-season porch, which combined as the Lee's guest bedroom and library for Gene's large collection of pulp magazines. Imagine our surprise when we discovered we had forgotten to bring our pajamas!

We hoped to wake before our hosts, but Gene was up with first light, and we had to huddle beneath the covers as he bade us good morning! Sunday was spent picking strawberries at a local farm, fishing again, and talking more about Leo and his books.

Late in the afternoon Gene brought out a rather worn copy of a book I had never seen before. Titled *Brite and Fair*, it had been authored by a man named Henry A. Shute. Gene declared it to be one of Leo's favorite books, one that Gene had kept in his own collection. He proceeded to read several selections from it, and then handed me the book to examine. It had been written in the form of a crude diary, with all the misspellings and punctuation errors one would expect of a young, only partially educated boy.

Gene also told me that his boyhood nickname, Beany, had been taken from the book. Thus was I introduced to the writings of Henry A. Shute. Upon returning home, I checked the *United States Catalogue*, and found that Shute had authored 20 books, beginning with *Adventures of Several Hard Characters* in 1897. This title, along with his next venture, *Neighborhood Sketches*, had both been

published in very small editions by his hometown newspaper, the *News-Letter Press* of Exeter, New Hampshire.

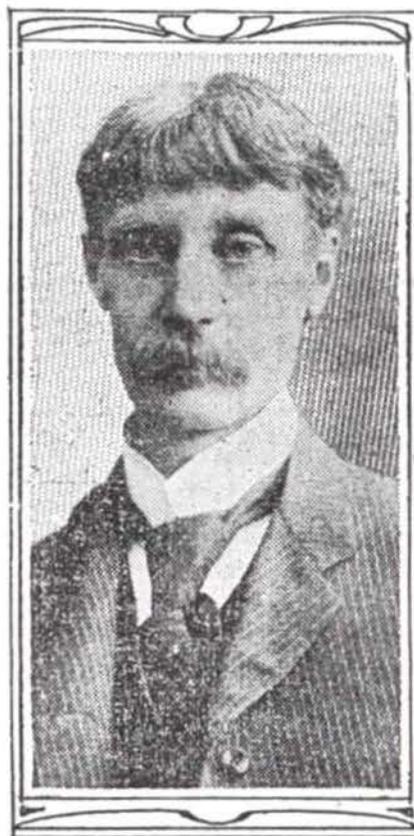
The next title, however, was somehow familiar to me. This was *The Real Diary of a Real Boy*, published by The Everett Press in Boston in 1902. I had seen a copy in a local book store some time before but had left it there. Upon returning to the store, luck was with me, as the book was still there. I had begun my collection of Henry A. Shute's books.

Henry Augustus Shute was born November 17, 1856, in Exeter, New Hampshire, the eldest son of George and Joanna Simpkins Shute. With the exception of one year the family lived in another town, and the time he spent at Harvard, he would live his entire long life in Exeter. The Shute

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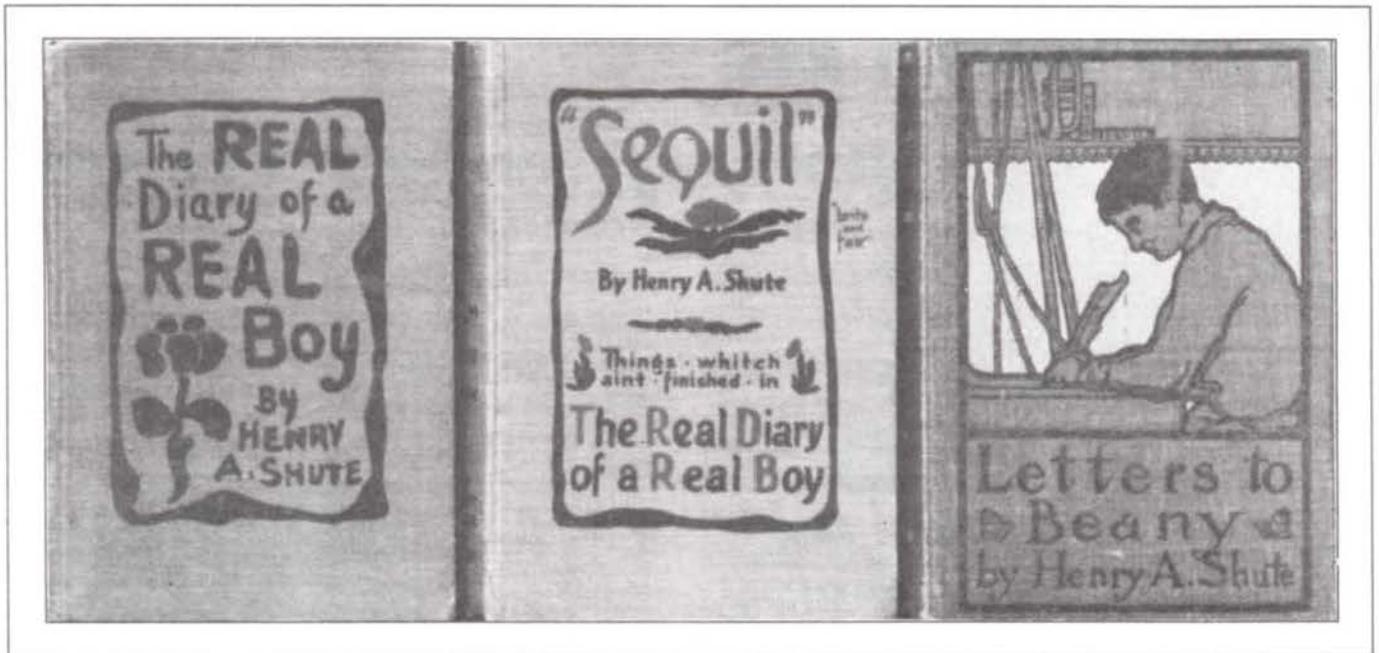
Other authors...
...other books

JUDGE HENRY A. SHUTE, AUTHOR OF BOOKS ON "REAL BOYS."



HENRY A. SHUTE, for the last twenty years judge of the local court in his native town of Exeter, N. H., has recently gained a national reputation as a humorist through his "Real Diary of a Real Boy" and similar books, of which "Real Boys" is the latest. Judge Shute modestly asserts that he is only 48 years old, not 148, as his friends have represented. He is still young enough to remember the escapades of "Piopy" and the other real boys who attended the famous grammar school in Exeter, and ascribes his robust literary imagination to his early training in concocting excuses for breaches of school rules. His favorite sentence as a judge is "Guilty: Sentence deferred during good behavior." Despite the dark deeds revealed in his youthful "diary," Judge Shute is a respected member of his community. His books are published by the G. W. Dillingham Company, New York.

From *The Chicago Record*, 1905 (date unknown)



Shute's first three Plupy books were published by Everett Press of Boston between 1902 and 1905.

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household consisted of his father, George, born in Exeter and for twenty-six years a clerk in the Boston Custom House; his mother, Joanna (commonly known as Joey), born in England but whose family had immigrated to Lowell, Massachusetts, when she was three; two older sisters, Cornelia (Keene) and Celia (Cele); two younger brothers, Frank and Edward (the youngest child); and two younger sisters, Annie and Georgie. Another brother, Willy, died during childhood. George Shute's sister, Sarah, also lived with the family.

For young Henry, or Harry as he was called by his family, growing up in a middle-class family after the Civil War was a combination of riotous good times and hard work. As the oldest boy, he was expected to chop kindlings, keep the water bucket full, weed the garden, shovel the snow and help with sundry other chores about the house and barn. It was common at the time for families to keep chickens, goats, cows and horses, and although these animals were a source of enjoyment for young Harry, they also represented much toil.

School was also a major stumbling block to having fun. Classes were large, often comprising three or more grades in one room under one teacher.

Classroom mischief was not allowed, and punishment was quick and severe for the youthful offender. Sticking gum to a classmate's chair could result in several hours spent in the woodbox, whereas hitting the teacher with a spitball or pouring ink on another student

would result in a licking with a switch or rattan cane. Young Harry would experience these punishments many times. Summer vacation was a time of lively activity for Harry and his friends. Among the latter were two who would share many adventures and remain life long companions, Elbridge (Beany) Watson and Clarence (Pewter or Pewt) Purington.

Harry's common nickname was Plupy, but he was also called Skinny or Polelegs. These boys, along with the Chadwick brothers, Skinny Bruce, Arthur (Potter) Gorham, Billy Swett, Fatty Melcher and others, would spend the warm weather out of doors, swimming in the Squamscott River, collecting bird's nests and eggs, washing carriages for small change, or setting up as shopkeepers with an assortment of flavored water, candy, sweet fern cigars and other boyish truck for "sale," which usually meant that old bones or old nails were used as money. These could then be sold by the pound to local merchants who used the bones for knife handles or fertilizer, and the nails for recycling.

One incident, recounted in *The Misadventures of Three Good Boys* (Houghton Mifflin, 1914), illustrates what can happen when communication between the boys and their parents broke down. Plupy, Beany and Pewt decide that they do not want to return to school in the fall, and they will earn money as "plummers." The parents, of course, believe the boys mean "plumbers," and after conferring on the matter they decide to teach the boys a lesson. A hard stint with the local plumber, acting as "go-fers," will soon see them glad to return to school.

To the boys, however, the term "plummer" is used to

refer to the picking of any fruit or nuts. Consequently, after receiving permission to visit the local hardware store for their "plumbing" supplies, they order pails for collecting berries and nuts, fishing hooks and line to catch fish for the local market and a small pistol to shoot birds and small game. For several weeks they head out early each morning, spending the day in the open collecting their fruit, nuts and fish.

Returning in the evening, they sell their bounty to the local merchants, then head home for dinner, tired but happy, with money in their pockets. The parents are mystified by their sons' endurance.

It is not until George Shute receives the bill from the hardware store that the truth about the boys' activities is discovered. They are promptly

returned to school. It was mischief, however, which captured the boys' attention the most. This was a time when tall top hats were much in vogue, and they made irresistible targets for overripe tomatoes, wormy apples and snowballs.

The windows of irascible neighbors were frequently the target of apples thrown with a pointed stick, or withe, and local dogs, cats, livestock and horses often were sent howling on their way by buckshot from the boys' slingshots. Neighborhood animals that raided the boys' chickens were trapped and placed on freight trains in the dead of night.

Any person in Exeter attempting to grow fruit and vegetables would likely find their gardens and orchards raided on a daily basis.

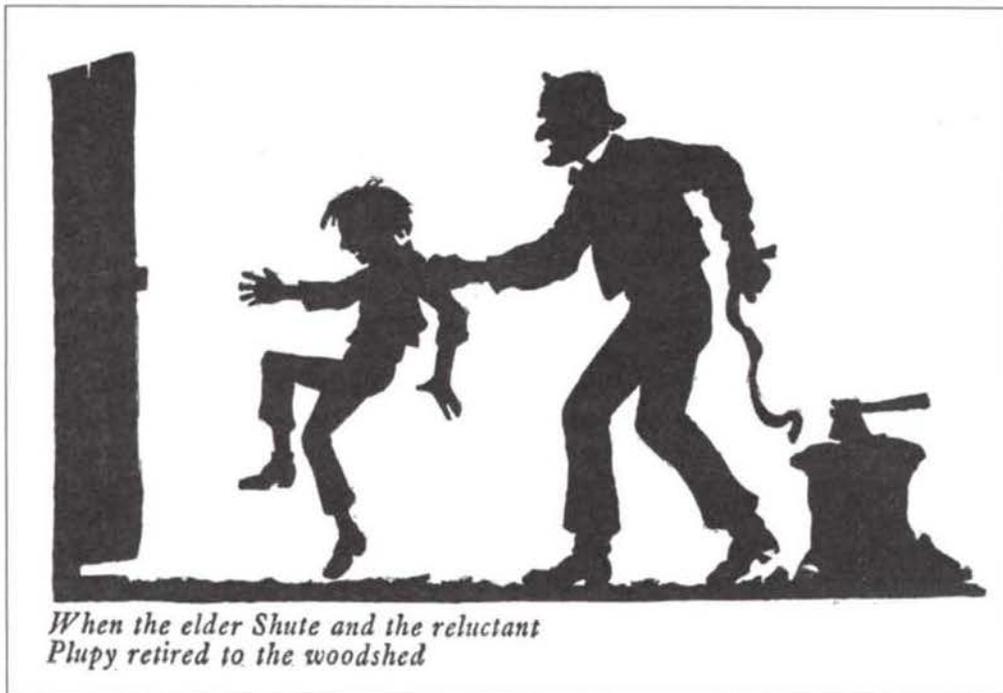
Getting caught, however, was part of the picture also. Many were the whippings administered in the woodshed by fathers, many of whom had done much the same things years before. When caught breaking windows,

the boys were forced to make recompense out of their own pockets.

Plupy tried for years to save money to buy a cornet, but was never successful due to reparations made for his mischief. Fighting was also a regular activity of the boys. Fights were scheduled affairs, with many onlookers betting on the outcome. Plupy was often the loser because of his slight stature, but he was always game. If a boy was ill and unable to go out with his friends, fights

were staged for him, often in his yard where he could watch out his window, but sometimes right in his room!

Parents, of course, would break up these fights whenever they could, much to the dismay of the boys, who would now never know who would have "licked."



When the elder Shute and the reluctant Plupy retired to the woodshed

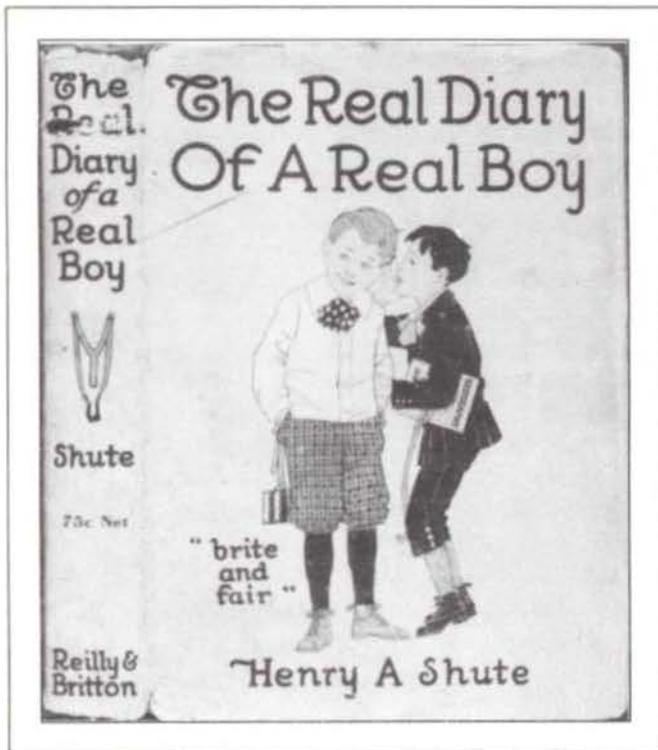
One of Warren Rockwell's many silhouette illustrations found in Plupy, "The Real Boy" dramatically shows a favorite means of punishment meted out by a father to his mischievous son.

Plupy's biggest desire as a boy was to become a member of the Exeter Brass Band. He would spend hours listening to them practice, and when he had the chance, he would attempt to learn an instrument himself. Along the way he played an old E-flat alto horn, a flute, and a clarinet, and he spent many years in the Exeter Band playing the latter instrument. Although he eventually acquired a cornet, he evidently did not play it in public.

Many of the incidents described in Shute's books actually happened to his father and his friends. George Shute and his companions, Irving (Wats) Watson, Brad Purington, Jim Melcher and Charles Taylor had fully as checkered careers as their sons. Plupy's Aunt Sarah often related the exploits of her brother and his friends, and Shute used many of these stories to enhance his books.

As with Plupy, George Shute and his boyhood companions would remain life-long friends. Exeter has long been the site of Phillips Exeter Academy, and confronta-

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When Reilly & Britton reprinted *The Real Diary of a Real Boy* in 1917, the dust jacket and frontispiece used this illustration by James McCracken.

Brite and Fair

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tions between the students, known locally as "stewdcats", and the town boys were inevitable.

The students often dressed in the latest fashions, and in doing so became the targets of the townies. Fights were commonplace after students in their fancy clothes were "plugged" with tomatoes or snowballs. But the students were also useful. Plupy regularly picked bouquets of flowers for the students to present to their dates, mostly town girls, and was paid the handsome price of 25 cents apiece for them.

Shute himself entered Phillips Exeter in the fall of 1872 and graduated three years later. He had decided to study law, entering Harvard in 1875. While a student there he concentrated his studies on languages and literature, courses which would prove valuable to him later in life.

After graduation he spent three years reading law with Judge William Stickney in his Exeter law office. Shute was admitted to the bar in 1882, and he remained a local lawyer until his retirement in 1936.

In 1885 he married Amanda F. Weeks, and the couple had two children, Richard (who would later become his law partner), and Nathalie. The year 1885 also saw his

appointment as Judge of the Exeter Police Court, a position that he held until 1926, with the exception of the years 1912-14.

By the 1890's Shute's sister Celia had become a well-known writer of short stories, and he began to write also. His first two efforts, mentioned above, were originally serialized in the *Exeter News-Letter*, and saw hard-cover publication by the same press, the first in an edition of only fifty copies, the second in an edition of only one hundred. Needless to say, they are extremely scarce today, and I have not been able to examine copies.

The first, however, dealt with the boyhood themes that he greatly expanded on later, and the second with his adult life in Exeter. Much of the the material from his first book would appear in his later writings, some times almost verbatim and other times in much more detail.

In 1901 the *Exeter News-Letter* serialized his third book, *The Real Diary of a Real Boy*. It ran from August through November of that year.

The Everett Press of Boston was impressed with the style, that of a 12-year-old boy keeping a diary, and brought the book out in hardcover in November, 1902. A small book, just 6-1/4" x 4-1/2", it would go through at least 16 printings by The Everett Press and several more by Reilly & Britton and later Reilly & Lee.

In the introduction to this book, Shute states:

"In the winter of 1901-02, while rummaging an old closet in the shed-chamber of my father's house, I unearthed a salt-box which had been equipped with leather hinges at the expense of considerable ingenuity, and at a very remote period ... an eager examination of the box disclosed ... a copy book inscribed 'Diry'."

While it is believed that this was merely a literary device, it provided a means for Shute to present his format to the public. The writing style is what made the book unique.

The following is an excerpt from the book:

June 21, 186- brite and fair. went fishing today with Potter Gorham. i cought 5 pirch and 4 pickeril. i cleaned them and we had them for supper. father said they was the best fish he ever et. i also cought the biggest roach i ever saw, almost as big as a sucker, and i cant tell what i did with him. i dont know where i put that roach.

June 23. there is a dead rat in the wall in my room. it smells aful.

June 25. more trouble today. it seems as if there wasent any use in living. nothing but trouble all the time. mother said i coodent sleep in that room until the rat was taken out. well father he came into my room and sniffed once and said, whew, what a alimity smell. then he

held his nose and went out and came back with mister Staples the father of the feller that called me Polelegs. well he came in and put his nose up to the wall and sniffed round until he came to where my old close hung. then he said, thunder George, this is the place, rite behind this jacket, it is the wirst smell i ever smelt. then father said to me, look in those close and see if there is ennything there. so i looked and found in the poket of my old jaket that big roach i lost, when i went fishing with Potter Gorham. it was all squashy and smelt aful. father was mad and made me throw the jaket out of the window and wont let me go fishing for a week. ennyway i know now what became of my roach."

Shute would go on to publish *Sequil, or Things Whitch aint Finished in the First* in 1904, continuing his boyhood chronicle. 1905 saw the publication of *Letters to Beany and the Love-Letters of Plupy Shute*, a book containing letters purportedly written to Beany, who was away for the summer, and letters written to a young lady named Mary, evidently one Shute's early loves.

Both were published by The Everett Press in the same small format. The year 1905 also saw the publication of Shute's first Plupy book written in standard narrative style, *Real Boys*, published by G.W. Dillingham. This recounts more adventures of Plupy, Beany and Pewt, along with his myriad other friends, enemies, and townfolk. This and three subsequent volumes (*Plupy, "The Real Boy," Badger*, 1910; *The Misadventures of Three Good Boys*, Houghton Mifflin, 1914 and *The Youth Plupy or the Lad with the Downy Chin*, Houghton Mifflin, 1917) are written from the adult point of view; reminiscences, if you will.

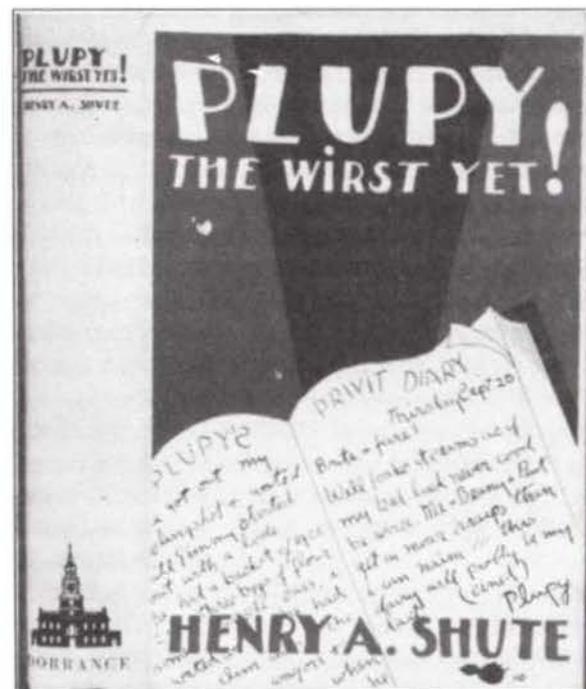
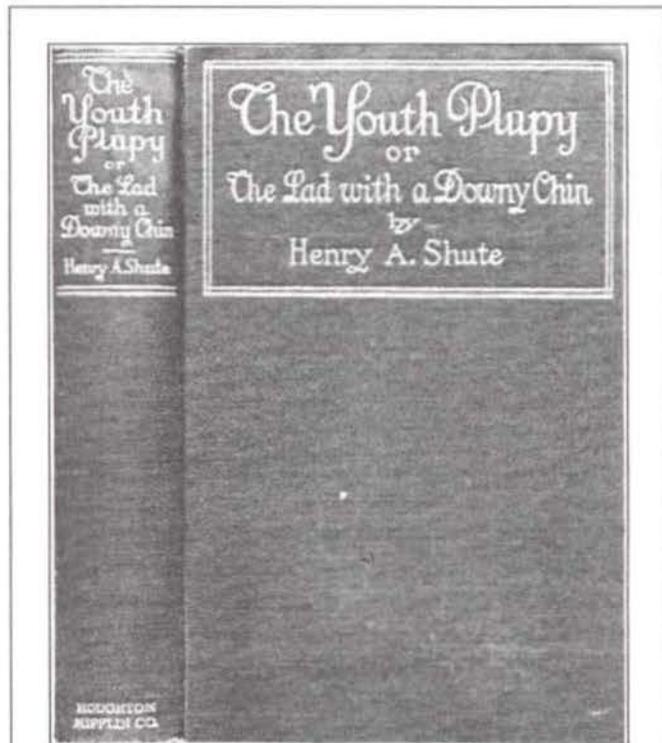
After entering the date in his diary, Plupy would always give a short account of the weather that day. His favorite phrase, with all that it implied, was "brite and fair."

In 1920, returning to his diary format, he published a new book under that title. *Brite and Fair* was published by Cosmopolitan Book Corporation, and for the first time a diary contained illustrations, four plates by Worth Brehm. (Unbelievably, I did not find a copy of this title until 1990).

This book contains one of the funniest scenes in any of Shute's books. Plupy, Beany and Pewt have for some time been secretly acting as "The Terible 3," basically harassing older men who shag them off their property and report their misdeeds to their parents. They tack warnings to their victims' front doors in an attempt to scare them, and they even go so far as to attach a large snapping turtle to one old geezer's bell pull.

The climax is reached when George Shute purchases a watch with no works from an itinerant peddler set up in

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The Youth Plupy or, The Lad With the Downy Chin (Houghton Mifflin, 1917) is one of several of Henry A. Shute's Plupy stories which are narrated from an adult viewpoint, while Shute's final book in the series, *Plupy, The Wirst Yet!* (Dorrance, 1929) uses Shute's earlier diary format.

Brite and Fair

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Exeter's town square. The boys load their pockets with three dozen rotten eggs, wait for dark and climb into an office overlooking the square. A large crowd has gathered around the peddler and his wagon, and, from their vantage point above the scene, they are able to pelt the peddler and the local police with their rotten eggs. Many of the eggs do not find their intended targets, however, and members of the crowd are also struck, Pewt's father among them. The peddler quickly exits the town.

Shute would go on to write four more books, all in the diary format. All were published by Dorrance and Co. *Plupy and Old J. Albert* appeared in 1924; *Plupy, Beany and Pewt: Contractors* in 1926; *Chadwick & Shute: Gob Printers* in 1927 and *Plupy, The Wirst Yet!* in 1929. Much of this material had originally been published serially in *The Saturday Evening Post*.

Beginning with *Real Boys* in 1905, illustrations began appearing in Shute's books. F.R. Gruger, who would go on to illustrate many of *The Lawrenceville Stories*, created 12 plates for this title. Warren Rockwell would provide 52 silhouette-style illustrations for *Plupy, "The Real Boy."* Sears Gallagher illustrated six plates for *The Misadventures of Three Good Boys*, and Reginald Birch provided six plates for *The Youth Plupy, or the Lad with the Downy Chin*. Worth Brehm did four plates for *Brite and Fair*, and Leslie Turner provided four plates for *Plupy, Beany and Pewt: Contractors*.

When Reilly and Britton reprinted *The Real Diary of a Real Boy* in 1917, a frontispiece, drawn by James McCracken, was included, the same illustration showing a boy whispering into another boy's ear, used for the dust jacket. The rest of the titles were not illustrated.

With the exception of *The Real Diary of a Real Boy*, reprints of these books are uncommon. Most were never issued by a second publisher, although M.A. Donohue is known to have reprinted *Real Boys*. In 1968 *Brite and Fair* was reprinted by Noone House, a small firm in Peterborough, New Hampshire. The book was illustrated by Tasha Tudor.

Henry Shute continued to be active in local affairs after his retirement in 1936. He is still remembered fondly in his native Exeter, where for a time he worked with the local Historical Society. He died of a stroke on January 25, 1943. However, his accounts of growing up in 1860's New England endure to this day.

I would like to thank Nancy C. Merrill, Director of Collections for the Exeter Historical Society, for providing me with much-needed biographical material for this article.

The Plupy Stories

by Henry A. Shute

The Real Diary of a Real Boy

1902 Everett Press, Boston

Sequil, or Things Whitch aint Finished in the First

1904 Everett Press, Boston

Letters to Beany and the Love-Letters of Plupy Shute

1905 Everett Press, Boston

Real Boys

1905 G.W. Dillingham, New York

Plupy, "The Real Boy"

1910 Richard G. Badger, Boston

The Misadventures of Three Good Boys

1914 Houghton Mifflin, Boston and New York

The Youth Plupy, or the Lad with the Downy Chin

1917 Houghton Mifflin, Boston and New York

Brite and Fair

1920 Cosmopolitan Book Corp., New York

Plupy and Old J. Albert

1924 Dorrance & Co., Philadelphia

Plupy, Beany and Pewt: Contractors

1926 Dorrance & Co., Philadelphia

Chadwick & Shute: Gob Printers

1927 Dorrance & Co., Philadelphia

Plupy, The Wirst Yet!

1929 Dorrance & Co., Philadelphia

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2. Runser, Robert E.: *Henry A. Shute: A Checklist*, The Rob Run Press, Detroit & Rochester, Michigan, 1967.
3. Tardiiff, Olive: *Plupy Shute's Exeter*, Infotech Desktop Publishing, Exeter, New Hampshire, 1988.

HENRY A. SHUTE'S ADULT BOOKS

Adventures of Several Hard Characters, The News-Letter Press, Exeter, NH, 1897.

Neighborhood Sketches, The News-Letter Press, Exeter, NH, 1901.

A Few Neighbors, Doubleday, Page & Co., New York, NY, 1906.

A Profane and Somewhat Unreliable History of Exeter, privately printed, 1907.

The Country Band, R.G. Badger, Boston, MA, 1908.

Farming It, Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, MA and New York, NY, 1909.

A Country Lawyer, Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, MA and New York, NY, 1911.

The Real Diary of the Worst Farmer, Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, MA and New York, NY, 1920.

Mrs. Smith's Soiree

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all with confusion.

Notwithstanding the asseveration of Mr. Plane, the chandelier was not firmly hung. It was jarred in the course of the evening, so that its hold became even more precarious. At last it fell with a grand crash. Of course the light was extinguished, the chandelier broken, and the oil spilled upon the new Brussels carpets.

All were in consternation. Afraid to move in the darkness, lest they should spoil their dresses with the oil, the ladies indulged in a succession of shrieks, until a lamp was brought and they could see how much damage was done. Many of the ladies had spots of oil upon their clothes — but of all, Miss Pinfeather suffered the most. She was standing beneath the chandelier, which, in falling, struck her on the head, and broke a tortoise shell comb, which she valued very highly, besides deluging her dress — a silk one, of which he was highly proud — with oil.

Of course, this was the end of the soiree. All were anxious to get home, and Mrs. Smith and Celeste, mortified and disappointed, were quite as anxious to have them go.

At last all were gone, and they were left to their own reflections. It is said that "nothing is more gloomy than a banquet room deserted." It was true enough in the present case. Mrs. Smith sat down in dismay, as she surveyed the ruin. The borrowed chandelier was a complete wreck. The Brussels carpets on which she had so prided herself, were ruined hopelessly, by the stream of oil which had soaked into them; and, to crown all, the evening had not proved pleasant to any who attended. Tired and despondent, Mrs. Smith retired, to seek in sleep, if possible, oblivion of the evening's mishaps.

The next morning early, a note was left at the door for "Mrs. Smith." It proved to be from Miss Pinfeather, and was as follows: —

"Madam: — At your soiree, last evening, I had a new silk dress completely spoiled by the fall of the chandelier — likewise a valuable tortoise shell comb broken. As this would not have happened but through carelessness on the part of some of your household, I consider it no more than fair that you should make reparation to me for any loss.

Yours respectfully,
Prunella Pinfeather."

This note aroused Mrs. Smith's ire.

"The mean creature! As if we hadn't suffered a much greater loss than she. I'll come up with her!"

In the course of an hour a bundle was despatched to Miss Pinfeather, with a note from Mrs. Smith, which read as follows:

"Miss Pinfeather: — I have received your very polite note of this morning, and fully appreciate the delicate kindness which dictated it. In the accompanying bundle you will find ten yards of fourpenny calico, which I doubt not will set off your natural charms to admiration. In requital for the comb which you had broken, I venture to send you a *fine tooth comb*, which I haven't the least doubt you will find *extremely serviceable*.

Trusting that you will be satisfied with this reparation, I remain yours, &c.,

Mehitable Smith."

I will not attempt to describe the storm of indignation which this note aroused in the house of Miss Pinfeather. She returned the bundle without an answer.

Mrs. Smith was obliged to take up her Brussels carpets, and put down the old ones, which she had pronounced "so shabby." She did not dare to speak of new ones. Her husband had the satisfaction of buying a new chandelier for Mrs. Jones, to replace the one which had been broken. He did not openly reproach his wife for the ill-success of her scheme, though it was a heavy drain upon his resources. He only alluded to it indirectly one day, when, after drawing up a list of the expenses which had been occasioned by the soiree, he placed it in his wife's hands.

She glanced at the sum total, and found with dismay that it amounted to two hundred and eighty dollars.

"Is it possible?" she exclaimed.

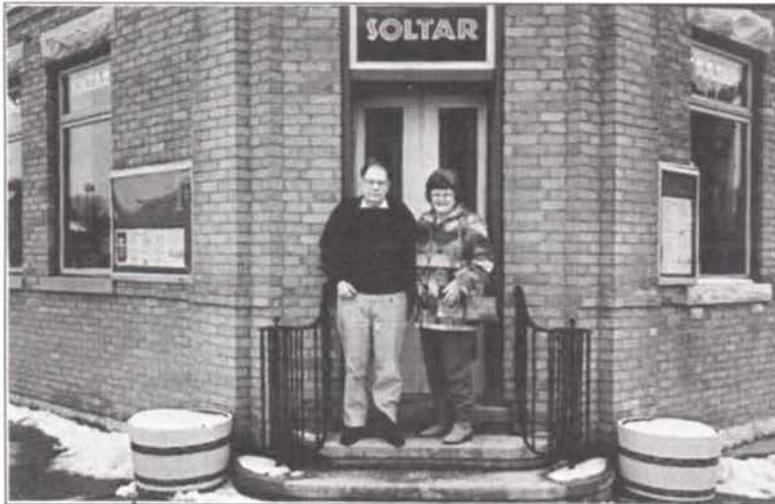
"Yes," said he, calmly; "quite so. And now, when shall we have another?"

"Never, I hope," said she, fervently, and her tone was such that he could not doubt her sincerity.

"We have all learned a lesson, I hope," said her husband; "and perhaps the two hundred and eighty dollars will not be thrown away after all."

Miss Pinfeather did not soon recover from her loss. She carefully laid away her spoiled dress and broken comb, and occasionally she casts a rueful glance at them. She always shakes her head indignantly whenever allusion is made in her presence to *Mrs. Smith's Soiree*.

Welcome to Stratford!



Convention hosts Ivan and Marg McClymont at the entrance of the Queen's Inn, the H.A.S. convention headquarters.

The Shakespeare Festival Theatre, home of the annual Stratford Festival, which in 1996 will run from May 6 to November 3.



The Gardens and Avon River looking west from the stone bridge in downtown Stratford, Ontario.

Photos by Ivan McClymont