



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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NUMBER 6

2006 CONVENTION PREVIEW

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President's column

What a wonderful day here in Michigan, as the temperature is approaching 48 degrees! It isn't sunny, but quite nice. Last week the temperature also climbed a bit and a couple of golf courses allowed the golfers to play — 45 degrees, a little cold for me. If the temperature isn't around 55 degrees, forget it, as I am totally a fair-weather golfer.

Jeanette and I just finished having part of the exterior of our house taken off and replaced, as the West side of this old farmhouse was leaking like a sieve. We had it stripped down to the bare 2x4's and new insulation, OSB, weather rap and new cedar siding. Believe me, it is a lot nicer and we are hoping that it will cut down on the fuel bill.

Jeanette is working a lot of long hours at school, and sometimes we hardly see each other. She is some teacher, and her students really like her. She is really great with the students and likes what she does — and it shows.

Me, I am fully retired and pretty much sell books on the net, clean house, do dishes etc, but I have some time for bowling and golf in season. This winter I have been able to edit my Alger and Optic collections and I have been selling some of the excess books that I don't really need. It gets to a point that there just isn't any place to put them.

I sincerely hope that everyone had a great Holiday Season. Please keep in mind the upcoming convention in Omaha, Nebraska — April 27th-30th. Send Mary Ann and Bart Nyberg your convention registration form (enclosed with this issue) and call "NOW" and make those hotel reservations!

We are looking forward to seeing everyone. Please be sure and try to contact fellow members, asking them to join us at the convention — a new friend is just a phone call away. It would be very nice if each of us would just pick up the phone and call one of the new members (they are listed in your new roster, and in my last President's letter I mentioned those who have joined the Horatio Alger Society in 2004 and 2005). If nothing else, please welcome them to the Society and see if there is anything that we could help them with in their Alger collecting.

Also, please don't forget to bring books to sell at the consignment and donation auction. Of course, the auction is NOT just for books, as you may bring something you made — jelly, afghan, quilt, craft items, etc., and donate them to the Society. We can ALWAYS use the additional

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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 — youngsters whose struggles epitomized the Great American Dream and inspired hero ideals in countless millions of young Americans for generations to come.

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You can visit the Horatio Alger Society's official Internet site at www.ihot.com/~has/

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, P.O. Box 70361, Richmond, VA 23255.

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 ads or "Letters to the Editor" to **Newsboy** editor William R. Gowen (PF-706) at 23726 N. Overhill Dr., Lake Zurich, IL 60047. E-mail: hasnewsboy@aol.com

2006 H.A.S. convention preview

Omaha welcomes you!

By Bart and Mary Ann Nyberg

We are eager to welcome our Horatio Society friends to Omaha in April 2006! Omaha is the home of the Union Pacific Railroad, great restaurants, great steaks, and friendly people. We hope this will be a memorable convention!

The 2006 convention will be Thursday, April 27th through the farewell breakfast on Sunday, April 30th. The convention has been moved back to the last week-

end of April as Omaha becomes full to the brim with people from around the world during the first week of May attending the Warren Buffett/Berkshire Hathaway stockholders' meeting. (Bill Gates sometimes attends also. A local restaurant where they have eaten has a sign up stating "2 Billionaires Served." The restaurant is Petrow's for those who wish to go there!)

The Henry Doorly Zoo has been rated the number one zoo in the United States by Family Magazine, and boasts one of the largest indoor rain forests, complete with swaying rope bridges and some free-ranging birds and animals.

Rosenblatt Stadium, which hosts the College World Series each June, is the home of the Triple A Kansas City Royals farm team. Only a few minutes from the stadium is the Old Market district of Omaha, a charming area of brick and cobblestone streets, restaurants and shops, as well as **Jackson Street Books**, a fine used bookstore. Just around the corner from the Old Market, is the largest used bookstore in Omaha, **The Antiquarium**.

Many travelers to Omaha enjoy visiting Boys Town (now officially Girls and Boys Town) at 144th & Dodge, which was made famous by the Spencer Tracy and Mickey Rooney movies in 1938 and 1941. The site of the church vestibule scene of the first movie was St. Mary

Magdalene, which is located at 109 S. 19th Street.

In addition, Omaha boasts the restored Art Deco Union Pacific Station, which now houses the Durham Western Heritage Museum. The main floor has been restored to a beautiful 1930's train station lobby complete with an operating soda fountain. The lower floor houses many Omaha historical displays, plus an old train for visitors to walk through. It also has the Byron Reed old coin and currency collection.

Another attraction is the Joslyn Art Museum, which

displays a permanent collection of Western American art, in addition to rotating traveling exhibits.

You may also wish to visit the Strategic Air Command Museum, which is just a 20-minute drive west of Omaha, right off Interstate 80.

Several additional points of interest will be described in the next issue of Newsboy.

If you drive to the

convention from east or west, I-80 goes right through Omaha. The hotel is located on 72nd Street, so drivers should take the 72nd Street exit (No. 449), turn north, and proceed to the hotel, which is just one mile north, one light past Mercy Road. Use the tall Travel and Transport building, which is just south of the hotel, as your guide. The Doubletree Suites is on the west side of the street.

Omaha's Eppy Airfield is a convenient airport for travelers, served by a number of major airlines. When you arrive for the convention, please call the Doubletree Suites at (402) 397-5141 for free shuttle service to the hotel. If you intend to rent a car at the airport, please call us for driving directions.

The Doubletree is a beautiful hotel with room accommodations arranged in wonderful suites, along with an indoor pool, whirlpool, steam room, fitness center and

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The Omaha Doubletree Suites, official hotel for the 2006 Horatio Alger Society convention.

Photo by Bart Nyberg

Editor's notebook

It hardly seems that 12 years have passed since my article, "Ralph Henry Barbour: Boys' Books and Much More," appeared in *Newsboy*. Barbour (1870-1944) was one of the most prolific authors of books for boys during their period of greatest popularity between 1910 and 1930. His full book-writing career covered the years 1897 to 1943.

As the title of the article stated, Barbour wrote quite a lot more than boys' books, including a series of 14 adult romances, 11 of them published by J.B. Lippincott of Philadelphia from 1904 to 1915. He also authored numerous magazine serials (including pieces for *St. Nicholas*), many of them later appearing in book form. He co-authored several sports how-to books with La Mar Sarra (football, baseball, basketball), several adult novels as co-author with Henry P. Holt; and during the final years of his life, a handful of adult mystery novels such as *Death in the Virgins* and *Mystery on the Bayou* (the latter published in 1943, his final book). His first boys' book, *The Half Back*, was published by D. Appleton & Co. in 1899 and is included in Jacob Blanck's *Peter Parley to Penrod*.

Barbour's output totaled more than 160 books, not including compilations or books for which he served as editor. Of those, 75 were series books, a great majority of them with prep school and sports settings.

Rather than rehash Barbour's entire career here, if you do not have a copy of the November-December 1992 *Newsboy* handy, I will be most happy to mail you a photocopy of my original article. Just write or e-mail me at the addresses listed at the bottom of Page 2.

I find it fascinating that the old article has held up so well. Except for my omission of the book described below, only a couple of minor changes are needed in the list of Barbour's books at the end of the article. Fortunately, thanks to research by the late Bob Chenu (a legendary pioneer in the boys' book hobby) much of the research on Barbour and his books was done before I happened upon the scene.

Also, a very good first-person profile of Barbour was



Ralph Henry Barbour

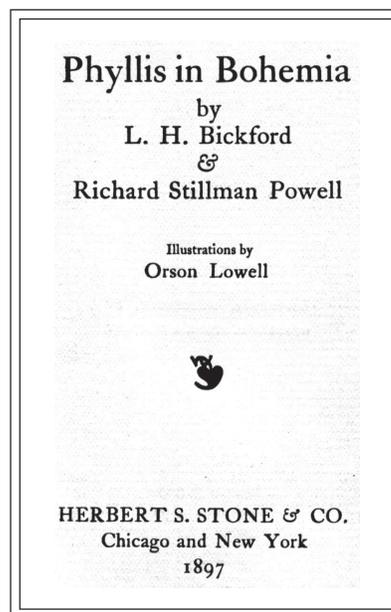


Ralph Henry Barbour's first book, published in 1897

published in *Junior Book of Authors* (New York, 1935: H.W. Wilson Co., pages 21-22).

Portions of that interview were included in my article, and here I repeat an important excerpt:

"At about the age of seventeen, in spite of earlier inclination to become an artist, I broke out with rhymes and jests, which, over the nom de plume of Richard Stillman Powell, were published in such flippant journals as *Life*, *Puck* and *Truth*, and convinced me that it would be a waste of time and opportunity to bother further with an education when editors' checks were so astoundingly easy to obtain. My mother, however — my father had died when I was twelve — was dubious of



Omaha welcomes you!

(Continued from Page 3)

game area. Each suite will have a refrigerator, microwave and coffee maker.

The hotel's atrium garden (see photo at right) has cooked-to-order breakfasts each morning, and the Fat Katz Deli serves sandwiches and salads all day. For those who prefer a family-style restaurant, there is a Village Inn directly across the street from the hotel, an easy two-minute walk. When you arrive, we will also provide you with other restaurant options in case you want to savor a legendary Omaha steak!

In case there are any book collectors around, we will provide a list of the local used bookstores and antique malls. We are making a firm promise not to visit these stores in the three months prior to the convention!

Please mail the enclosed convention registration form as soon as possible, along with a check for \$85 per person made out to *Bart Nyberg*.

Hotel registrations should also be made as soon as possible to the Doubletree Suites, on 72nd Street (don't be confused, as there is a second Doubletree location in Omaha). Our hotel's phone numbers are 1-402-397-5141 or 1-800-222-8733, with major credit cards accepted.

As usual, please tell the hotel that you are with the Horatio Alger Society; this will ensure receiving the special convention room rate of \$85, which will also apply if you arrive a day or two earlier in the week.

Hope to see you all here April 27-30!



The atrium garden of the Omaha Doubletree Suites, whose centerpiece is this fountain. Other features of the atrium include a gourmet deli. Photo by Bart Nyberg

verse-writing as a life's occupation and I consented to try real work and so condescendingly accepted a position as reporter on a Boston evening paper.

"Six months later, having been discharged for cause, I went to Denver, Colorado, and for several years found employment on the paper there. Again out of a job, I yearned for the open spaces and found them in the Grand Valley in western Colorado. I ranched there four years, at odd times pounding out short stories on a decrepit typewriter. Back in Denver, and at work on the *Times*, I collaborated with another newspaperman, L.H. Bickford, and produced my part of a first book."

And now to the purpose of this essay: I have finally obtained a copy of that "first book," titled *Phyllis in Bohemia*, published by Herbert S. Stone & Co. in 1897. A little over a year ago, thanks to the sharp eyes of Bart Nyberg (who already had a copy in his collection), he tipped me off about the availability of a copy on the Internet. I forked over \$45, which I consider a premium price (remember, this isn't exactly the same as finding *The Disagreeable Woman*, which came out only a couple

of years earlier). Anyway, the book arrived safely and it inched me closer to completing my Barbour collection.

Phyllis in Bohemia is not Ralph Henry Barbour's finest hour. The writing is pedantic, the conversations between characters stilted and the plot totally forgettable. Perhaps a clue can be found in the publisher's promotional ad in the rear of the book, as follows:

Bickford, L.H.
(and Richard Stillman Powell)

PHYLLIS IN BOHEMIA.

With pictures and decorations by ORSON LOWELL, and a cover designed by FRANK HAZENPLUG. 16mo. \$1.25.

Sentimental comedy of the lightest kind. It is the story of Phyllis leaving Arcadia to find Bohemia, and of her adventures there. Gentle satire of the modern literary and artistic youth and a charming love story running through all.

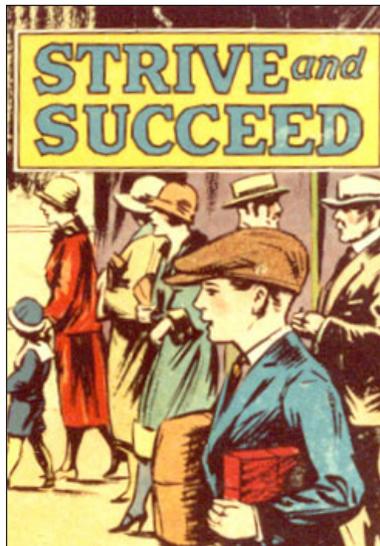
Believe me, getting through one chapter, let alone the whole 233 pages, is tough sledding. "Gentle satire ... charming love story" – sorry. Maybe it was escapist fun

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Strive and Succeed Award

The Horatio Alger Society appreciates the generosity of its members in donating to the H.A.S. **Strive and Succeed Award** fund. The **Strive and Succeed Award** is presented each spring at the annual convention to a deserving high school senior to help defray his or her college expenses. These Partic'lar Friends made contributions during calendar year 2005:

John D. Arnold (PF-1042)
 Bernard A. Biberdorf (PF-524)
 Glen D. Bontrager (PF-1007)
 Lyle Buchwitz (PF-1065)
 Paul A. Cripe (PF-633)
 Harland H. Eastman (PF-128)
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 Lee Switzer (PF-882)
 Marc C. Williams (PF-958)
 Clyde E. Willis (PF-119)
 Carl E. Wulff (PF-900)
 Arthur P. Young (PF-941)

A note on matching gifts: For the second year, H.A.S. Vice President Michael Morley's very generous donation to the **Strive and Succeed Award** fund, made on behalf of himself and his wife Janice (PF-957), was matched in full by his employer, eBay, Inc. Members planning to make a donation for 2006 may want to check with their employers to see whether they sponsor programs through which contributions to not-for-profit organizations are matched in kind.

If you have recently made a **Strive and Succeed Award** donation and your name does not appear on this list, we will publish your donation as being made in calendar year 2006.

President's column

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funds, as we continue to try to increase the scholarship fund for annual **Strive and Succeed Award** recipient.

Also, bring books to sell in your rooms or trade! I am sure that both Mary Ann and Bart have prepared us for a wonderful experience in Omaha — thanks, and see you there!!!

Your Partic'lar Friend,
 Bob Routhier (PF-889)
 12186 W. Hill Rd.
 Swartz Creek, MI 48473
 (810) 621-3435
 E-mail: brr001@charter.net

MEMBERSHIP

Change of address

David W. Thornton (PF-470)
 2100 Pine Knoll Drive, #6
 Walnut Creek, CA 94595
 (925) 944-0730
 E-mail: dthorn0711@aol.com

Important reminder: Please send all address changes — including new e-mail addresses and phone numbers — to Horatio Alger Society, P.O. Box 70361, Richmond, VA 23255.

The Nursery Tales of Horatio Alger

By Michael Zuckerman
University of Pennsylvania

D.H. Lawrence taught us long ago how to approach American literature. "Never trust the artist," he warned. "Trust the tale."¹

But Lawrence never extended his edict or his analysis to our popular culture, and subsequent students of the subject have often been at such pains to be condescending that they could not be bothered comprehending. Accordingly, we have hardly conceived that the very pressures of propriety that made our major writers such darlings of duplicity must have been even more intense for authors with still broader audiences. We have been inclined to discount all possibility of depth and disingenuousness in our hack writers, seeing them simply at their own stated estimation. And in the case of Horatio Alger, we thereby make a serious mistake.

We have imagined Alger our dreamer of success, our rhapsodist of rags-to-riches, our avatar of the self-made man—and it is true that Alger knew that tune and announced it unflinching. He just never played it. In his tales success was but a subterfuge, and self-made men were nowhere to be found. Yet Alger was profoundly, even prophetically, American, and the deflected drive of his stories is essential to an understanding of the emergence of American industrial society.

Alger wrote more than one hundred novels, but he remained so completely within the compass of a few recurrent themes that there is no need to engage his entire corpus. Almost any of his story cycles gives access to his sentiments and obsessions. The most interesting of them is perhaps his first and most famous, the Ragged Dick Series, whose six novels established the Alger formula.²

The tales themselves may be speedily summarized. The first, *Ragged Dick*, is a story of the early adolescence of a New York City bootblack, Dick Hunter; it follows him in alternating episodes of fostering friendship and threatening enmity to a culmination in his dive from a ferry to rescue a drowning boy who proves to be the only child of the wealthy Mr. Rockwell. Its sequel, *Fame and Fortune*, finds the young bootblack ensconced in a privileged position in Rockwell's counting room and assured of the further favors of the rich man, who

helps him survive an attempted frame-up by his disappointed rivals. In *Mark, the Match Boy*, Dick himself becomes a patron, succoring and sheltering the ineffectual little matchboy when he runs away from his exploitive guardian, Mother Watson, until Mark is suddenly discovered to be the long-lost grandson of a prosperous Milwaukee businessman who is only too delighted to relieve Dick of the young boy's care. *Rough and Ready* introduces another hero, a New York newsboy named Rufus, and traces his flight with his sister Rose from their bibulous stepfather, James Martin; its action is dominated by Rufus' successful struggle with Martin for custody of the little girl and, more briefly, by the newsboy's prevention of the armed robbery of a stockbroker, Mr. Turner, who rewards him with a job in the brokerage.

In *Rufus and Rose*, the lad foils another robbery of yet another rich man, Mr. Vanderpool, who adopts him and bequeaths him a small fortune in stocks. *Ben, the Luggage Boy* recounts the runaway of a boy of ten from his stern father and splendid home outside Philadelphia, his six years as a porter in the streets of New York, his chance encounter with a rich cousin which ignites a new determination to return to the swell life, and his triumphant welcome home.

If such summaries seem overdependent on luck, patronage and the *deus ex machina*, it is because Alger was, too. And if they do not emphasize free enterprise, it is because Alger did not do so either. Despite his homilies and preachments, he was simply not very interested in business, and he was certainly no exponent of entrepreneurial individualism. His heroes neither possess nor prosper by the virtues of self-seeking, and Alger never espoused them. To call him a social Darwinist, as so many have done, is an inconceivable canard.

Alger did not even think comfortably in capitalistic terms. Some of his characters are "ashamed" to use credit,³ others do not see in money an impersonal measure of value,⁴ and none are enmeshed utterly in the mechanisms of the marketplace. The prices they pay and the wages they receive are as often determined by consideration and decency as by supply and demand. Bargains are struck solely on equity between the boys.⁵ Rents are set by people who "don't want to make money" and are renegotiable "if you find it is too hard on you to pay so much."⁶

Alger's heroes are all allowed incomes by their benefactors that are sufficient contradictions in themselves of the primacy of profit in the motives of those worthies.⁷ Indeed, Alger in his own voice quite condemned those who charge what the market will bear, insisting instead that "fair prices in the long run are the best for all parties."⁸ His comprehension of capitalistic individuals was no clearer than his conception of capitalist institutions. Figures of frugality pass through his pages with "thin lips and pinched expression," and though they are flourishing merchants they have "an outward appearance of meanness, which, by the way, did not belie [their] real character."⁹ Men make great fortunes and find that money alone buys

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This article was published in *American Quarterly*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (May 1972), pages 191-209. *American Quarterly* is currently a publication of The Johns Hopkins University Press, which has granted reprint permission to the Horatio Alger Society (See Page 14). The illustrations on pages 8 and 13 were selected by the *Newsboy* editor.

The Nursery Tales of Horatio Alger

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no contentment.¹⁰ People of surpassing villainy “look out for number one” or “mind only their own business,¹¹ and in every volume it is the hero’s enemy who is “intent only upon his own selfish gratifications.”¹²

Alger’s favorites, on the contrary, are strangers to such strategies of self-maximization. For them “the best use of money” is in helping others.¹³ Dick never gets “so much satisfaction” as when he depletes his own savings to assist a fellow bootblack who has “supported his sick mother and sister for more’n a year,” which Dick takes to be “more good than [he himself] ever did.”¹⁴ Rufus puts his money where his morals are, buying a baseball bat from his own earnings to stave off a robbery of a man he does not even know.¹⁵ And all alike lavish charities on the needy, whether worthy or unworthy.¹⁶

In fact, profligacy prevails over parsimony at every turn. All six stories open on a note of heedless indulgence — for the theater, an apartment or food — and all six sustain that note thereafter.¹⁷ Boys who are fortunate splurge immediately and to the limit of their luck, sharing their strike with friends if they cannot spend it alone.¹⁸ Others who are down to their last pennies yet yield to “temptation” and buy apples and ice cream.¹⁹ And few of the boys are any more frugal than Ben, who feels “very well satisfied” if he comes out “even at the end of the day.”²⁰ By and large they all place their bellies before their bank accounts and otherwise set gratification above accumulation.²¹

Nor could their self-indulgence have horrified Alger, for he often allowed it to lead to decisive transformations in their destinies. Mark gets his grubstake while sleeping on an all-night ferry.²² Rufus first gains solid ground financially when he finds five dollars in a barroom he enters on an “idle impulse,” and he overhears the plans for the robbery he prevents in still another saloon to which he repairs upon “the promptings of appetite.”²³ Miss Manning, the kind woman who takes care of Rose after the children flee their stepfather,

discovers the perfect lodging for herself and the little girl on “an impulse which she did not attempt to resist” even though the room seemed obviously “beyond her means.”²⁴

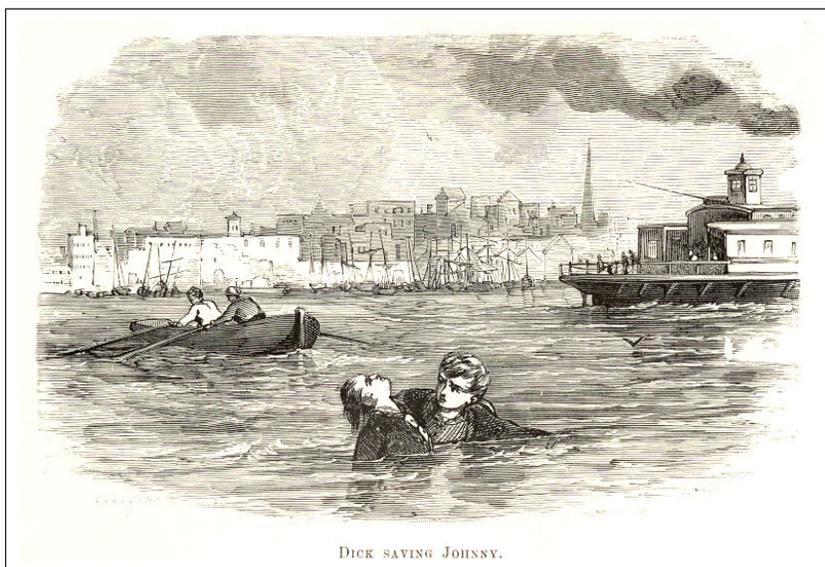
In fact, Alger’s favorites are almost always impetuously improvident. Prudent calculation of prospects, so crucial for the capitalist entrepreneur, is simply not their style. Dick springs with such “alacrity” to the relief of the drowning boy that he does not even hear the father’s shouted offer of reward. Mark, waking to find a dollar in his pocket, sets out on his own without once looking “forward to the time when this supply would be exhausted.” Rufus flies from Martin “without any well-defined plan in his mind” and with no idea where he and Rose “should live in the future.” And Ben runs away from his father so precipitately that he arrives in New York “an utter stranger with very indefinite ideas as to how he was to make a living.”²⁵ Indeed, even when Ben finds himself but two cents

from starvation, “the time had not yet come to trouble himself” about his prospects; and after six years in New York he still does “not think much about the future” for, “like street boys in general, his horizon [is] limited by the present.”²⁶

Unconcerned for the future, Alger’s vagabonds could hardly pursue goals with the perseverance so celebrated in the success manuals of the 19th century. Alger did deliver an occa-

sional descant on diligence, but in the tales themselves his heroes are hares, not tortoises. They work sporadically rather than steadily, and they work when they need money rather than for work’s own sake.²⁷ They are more nearly Galahads than Grad grinds, giving up their own gainful opportunities on a moment’s notice to protect the helpless or follow the action.²⁸ And it is by just that temperamental disposition to knight-errantry rather than discipline or steady application that poor boys prosper. Dick is on the ferry to dive for Rockwell’s son only because he takes “half holidays” to go on “excursions.” Rufus finds economic security only as a consequence of quitting work early one day to wander around Battery Park.²⁹

All six stories are studded with kidnaps, captures, and escapes, robberies and false arrests, detection and derring-do. Some of them are strung entirely on such narrative threads. *Mark, the Match Boy* derives its design from the search for Hiram Bates’ missing grandson. *Rough and Ready* is an account of abduction and recapture. And the others are laced with chapters such as



DICK SAVING JOHNNY.

DICK SAVES MR. ROCKWELL'S SON. *RAGGED DICK*, PAGE 284

“Tracking the Thief,” “A Parley with the Enemy” and “Suspense.” In all, less than one-fourth of the chapters even pretend to show the protagonists at work, while the rest show them established at home or embroiled in adventure.³⁰

Only when the boys are thus beset by danger do they disclose concern for what they do.³¹ At their employment they evince no emotion at all, betraying not the slightest sign that they like or dislike their assigned tasks. Unlike Weber’s Protestant capitalists, for whom the moral worth of work was so central, they find neither purpose nor personal fulfillment in their jobs. They just do what the work requires, gaining no in-trinsic satisfaction from it, and they identify the good life with consumption and gratification far more than with production.³²

Disdaining the ascetic capitalist and the entrepreneurial self-seeker, Alger inevitably anathematized the social Darwinians. Against their assertions of the prerogatives of strength, he held the obligation of the powerful to protect the weak.³³ Against Sumnerian standards of self-reliance, he suggested an endless round of charitable reciprocation.³⁴ And against the Spencerian insistence on laissez-faire individualism, he urged that “we ought all to help each other.”³⁵

Alger admitted quite openly his environmental reformism and his hopes of stirring “a deeper and more widespread sympathy” for the “waifs of the city.”³⁶ He never forgot that they too were “somebody’s children, and that cold, and harshness, and want were as hard for them to bear as for those in a higher rank of life.”³⁷ He made endless excuses for them because they “had never had a fair chance” or “a very good bringin’ up” on the streets: for him, even armed robbers “might have been capable of better things, had circumstances been different.”³⁸ Poverty was not, in his eyes, a measure of personal failings. Many poor boys, he insisted, “have good tendencies and aspirations, and only need to be encouraged and placed under right influences to develop into worthy and respectable men.” More fortunate people might have it in their “power to give some one the chance that may redeem him.”³⁹

Accordingly, Alger’s heroes succeed, to the extent that their own attributes have anything to do with their success, because they are good, not because they have sharper fangs and longer claws than anyone else. Like Rufus, who pinches pennies to buy decent clothes for his sister, their economies and ambitions are as often for another as for themselves.⁴⁰

Like Mark, they are frequently “bolder in behalf of [a] friend than [they] would have been for” themselves.⁴¹ Like Dick, they can be even “more pleased at the prospective good fortune of [a] friend than if it had fallen to” their own benefit,⁴² and like Rose they can be moved more readily by concern for another than by self-interest.⁴³ They are all, presumably, destined to develop like the successful stockbroker Alger so admired, who was

a large-hearted man, inclined to think well of his fellow-men, and though in his business life he had seen a good deal that was mean and selfish in the conduct of others,

he had never lost his confidence in human nature, and never would. It is better to have such a disposition, even if it does expose the possessor to being imposed upon at times, than to regard everybody with distrust and suspicion. At any rate it promotes happiness, and conciliates good will, and these will offset an occasional deception.⁴⁴

Such sentimental reliance on men’s kindness made aggressive imposition unnecessary and even undesirable. It is only the Micky Maguires and the James Martins, the young toughs and the manipulators, and the counterfeiters, confidence-men and others of “few redeeming qualities,” who use force and cunning for personal gain.⁴⁵ Lads like Dick and Rufus have “a certain chivalrous feeling,” that does not “allow” them to exploit anyone weaker,⁴⁶ while other boys such as Mark and Dick’s friend Fosdick are so “timid” that they require the protection of their sturdier allies.⁴⁷ Alger never glorified strength or shrewdness in the struggle for success because he did not believe it was that sort of struggle.

The virtues Alger did exalt, revealingly enough, were the virtues of the employee, not the employer.⁴⁸ Since his heroes do not succeed at the expense of others, it is not essential that they build better mousetraps, cut costs or innovate in any way. They have little enough initiative even in the streets, and less in the shop. Indeed, when they enter upon their white-collar careers, they promise their new bosses primarily to “try to make you as little trouble as possible.”⁴⁹ Dick will do “anything that is required” in the line of duty,⁵⁰ but neither he nor any of the others ever re-think such duties. And no one ever asks them to. Employers themselves assure the boys that they “have only to continue steady and faithful” to be “sure to rise.”⁵¹ None but the heroes’ rivals — the preening pretenders to superiority by birth, such as Roswell Crawford — fail to content themselves with service in subordinate places, and the Roswell Crawfords come to bad ends.⁵²

As Alger would have it, then, success follows dependability and a desire to serve others. It attends those who obey orders cheerfully and serve others willingly. And it is available to all, for Alger posited no pinnacle of pre-eminence for which many compete and a few prove fit.⁵³ The Alger stories were never about the fabulous few who rose from poverty to great riches; they were, at best, tales of a much more accessible ascent from rags to respectability. His nonpareils do not wax wealthy so much as they grow reputable, leaving the promiscuity of the streets for the propriety of a desk job.

Dick is barely begun upon a clerical career at the conclusion of *Ragged Dick*, still six months away from promotion to bookkeeper at the end of *Fame and Fortune*, and headed no higher than a junior partnership in a good mercantile house even at the termination of *Mark, the Match Boy*. Rufus can claim only an eight-dollar-a-week clerkship at the climax of *Rough and Ready*, is still on “the lowest rung of the ladder” halfway through *Rufus and Rose*,⁵⁴ and is destined only for an

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undescribed junior partnership when all is done. Mark is restored to his grandfather, a moderately wealthy broker in Milwaukee, and Ben is reclaimed by his father, a coal dealer outside Philadelphia. There is not a robber baron in the bunch, nor even any remarkable fortune. The boys gain only “the fame of an honorable and enterprising man of business,” which was all they ever aimed at anyway. “I’d like to be a office boy, and learn business, and grow up ’spectable,” Dick confides at his first stirring of ambition; and even as he nears the end of his odyssey he sets his sights no higher. “Take my advice,” he urges Mark, “and you’ll grow up respectable and respected.”⁵⁵

Such commitment to respectability implied also a commitment to others rather than to selfish aspiration. Respectability, in Alger’s idea of it, could not come from within, but could only be conferred by others. Accordingly, his heroes require the good opinion of the herd for their own sense of success and for their very sense of self.⁵⁶ And they seem to believe they can gain it by behaving the way the herd behaves or would want them to behave. Dick, for example, acquires clothes so modish as he moves out into “society” that Fosdick accuses him of dandyism; Dick answers that he wants “to look respectable . . . When I visit Turkey I want to look as the turkeys do.”⁵⁷

Rufus shows a comparable concern for respectable appearance and a similar identification of such respectability with doing as others do when he goes to the theater. At expense he can ill afford, he buys a pair of white kid gloves which he twirls about “in rather an embarrassed way” because he can hardly get them on; “I’d enough sight rather go without any,” he admits, “but I suppose, if I’m going to sit in a fashionable seat, I must try to look fashionable.” Later, though the gloves still do not “feel comfortable,” he looks at his hands “with satisfaction,” for “step by step he was getting into the ways of civilized life.” (The performance itself he enjoys “almost as well” as the less classy ones he had haunted as a newsboy, which he would have attended even that night had he not suspected that the Old Bowery “was not exactly a fashionable place of amusement,” one which he would “hardly have liked to mention” at the boardinghouse table the next day.)⁵⁸

Rufus’ integrity counts for no more than his entertainment in matters of reputation, giving him no pause whatever in telling a lie before his sister sooner than lose face with a total stranger. When he finds a fine new house in which to room, he offhandedly informs the landlady that he will send his trunk up later. Rose lets slip that she “didn’t know [he] had a trunk,” and though he replies smoothly that he does not “carry [his] trunk ’round all the time like an elephant,” he is “a little embarrassed” because “he wanted to keep up appearances in his new character as a boarder at an up-town boarding-

house.”⁵⁹ And appearance is so central for Ben that he bases his entire estimate of his acceptability at home on his outward aspect, building the strategy of his return solely on a plan to “purchase a suit as handsome as that which his cousin wore.” The thought that he might be as welcome without the suit, simply for himself, never enters his mind.⁶⁰

Even the most elemental virtues of individual character acquire an other-oriented flavor in Alger’s hands. Dick may be honest when he informs a fellow boarder that he once shined the man’s shoes, but the author admits that Dick “wouldn’t have said so” if he thought the man might believe him.⁶¹ Ben may decline to steal, but only because “he still felt that he should not like to have a report reach home”; and on the one occasion he does swipe an apple he feels only a fear for what “his friends at home [would] think of it” if they heard.⁶² Rufus may have a superfluity of intrinsic reasons to reject the company of his stepfather, but he spurns him solely from anxiety over what others might think when that “not very respectable-looking object” tries to walk alongside him.⁶³ And almost all the principal characters pursue education simply because they recognize that there is “something more than money needed to win a respectable position in the world.”⁶⁴

The Alger hero’s very notion of his own nature depended, ineluctably, upon others. If Alger’s world was a Carnegie world, it was surely not Andrew’s but Dale’s. Alger could not create self-impelled individuals because his stalwarts required a crowd for their sense of self. The quest for respectability imposed a communal derivation of identity, and a communal dedication of the self as well.

Accordingly, when Alger offered examples outside fiction of the newsboy success story, he cited politicians, journalists, judges, a district attorney and a clergyman before arriving finally at “still others, prosperous and even wealthy businessmen.”⁶⁵ Businessmen brought up the rear while public figures led because it was primarily the redemption of respectable citizens Alger sought. His aims were social and moral more than they were ever economic.

Alger’s inability to conceive convincingly his heroes’ inner resources made it quite impossible for him to maintain the traditional connection of character and success. He could — and did, occasionally — claim it, but he could not bring it to life. His tales contradicted him at every such turn. The path to wealth was not, as it had been for Franklin, “as plain as the way to market.” Instead, there intervened always between constitution and conquest the sudden stroke of luck.⁶⁶

The typical Alger story, therefore, was one of casual contingency, not causal necessity. Bootblacks rise by diving for the drowning son of a rich man, newsboys by foiling attempted robbery, matchboys by the belated beneficence of a grandfather a thousand miles away. None ever attain eminence by diligent application; none are ever on a course of notable advancement before their big break. Alger knew the litany of industry and frugality as well as most men, but for him and his characters, the failure of firm selfhood and the facts of late-

19th century life kept getting in the way.⁶⁷

Primarily, the problems were that these gamins of Gotham could not get the kind of work Alger wished for them and that, even if they could, they could not afford to take it. In the Algerine cosmos, nothing but a white-collar career would do, finally⁶⁸ — protagonists had somehow to quit the street for a store — and in the Ragged Dick series not a single favorite ever secures a clerical position purely on personal initiative.

Dick makes “several ineffectual applications” and surrenders for the season. His friend Fosdick solicits 50 appointments and suffers “as many failures.” Ben gives up entirely after a few rebuffs; Rufus never even tries.⁶⁹ And the reason is always the same: “it was generally desired that the boy wanted should reside with his parents” or “bring good references.”⁷⁰ Fosdick finds that to confess himself “a boy of the street” is usually “sufficient of itself to insure a refusal,”⁷¹ and the others all share his discouragement in a system that supports no self-made men. They hustle on the streets precisely because they are alone and unaided and consequently can do no better, for they have no access to a counting-house unless they can claim a place in a household. Un-sponsored and unspoken for, their success can only be extra-systemic. In the very structure of the situation, they can advance by no means but the lucky acquisition of a patron who will provide the protection they require.

In the very structure of the situation, too, young men on their own are all but obliged to remain independent rather than seek employment, because the financial price of propriety is too steep. Energetic newsboys and bootblacks in Alger’s New York make far more money than beginning clerks do — Dick, for instance, sees at once that on an office salary he would “be nothin’ but skin and bones” within a year⁷² — and such stalwarts of the street have far fewer expenses besides.

They worry little about lodging, less about clothes and cleanliness, and not at all about education. It is all the same to them if they sleep in a box, an illegal hideout between the wharves or a suitably impressive address.⁷³ An aspiring book-keeper, on the other hand, cannot afford to be so cavalier. He has a position to uphold, so he has to incur the costs of a regular room, presentable clothes and perhaps even a few luxuries for the sake of such respectability.⁷⁴ His office job, if he is but beginning, nets him less than the expenses of his own support; and even Dick recognizes this for bad budgeting, asserting as he does his disinclination “to give up a independent and loocreative purfession” for the pittance he would be paid in a store.⁷⁵

Luck, then, does not simply seal the success of those on the proper path. On the contrary, fortune’s favor is indispensable to lift poor boys out of the ditch. Ragged Dick is not on his way before he saves Mr. Rockwell’s son, for there is no way. Orphans of the city cannot afford an apprenticeship in respectability, since they have no parental subsidy to tide them over and can hardly survive on status alone. Only by benevolent patronage can they manage their entry upon a white-collar walk of life. Only from parental surrogates who set defiance of the market’s determination of wages at “no consequence” can

they extract salaries they cannot economically earn.⁷⁶ Dick speaks for them all when he admits that he “was lucky” to have “found some good friends who helped [him] along.”⁷⁷

So far from telling of a system so bountiful that any earnest lad could succeed if he tried, Alger’s tales implied one that held the disprivileged down so securely that only by the unlikely advent of chance and championship could the impoverished even set foot on the social ladder. In the Alger novels of New York, a steady undertone of desperation resonated beneath the scattered cries of lucky triumph.

As essential as luck was to the manifest social action of the stories, it was still more imperative at their latent levels of intimate familial relationships and personal fantasies of fulfillment. For if Alger could not in the end cleave a straightforward course from character to success, it was because he could not from the first conceive of any satisfactory character at all. In an era whose leading spokesmen defined character — at least male character — in terms of will,⁷⁸ Alger’s deepest desire was persistently for a denial of the will.

At first, of course, it does not seem so. His heroes have always to fend for themselves, often in adversity, and generally they enjoy their lot. Dick delights in being his “own boss,” trumpeting it as “the difference” between himself and his storeboy sidekick.⁷⁹ Mark exults in being “free and independent.”⁸⁰ Rufus, disdainful of another boy’s servility, announces that he does not “want anybody to give [him] money.”⁸¹ And Ben becomes “so accustomed to the freedom and independence of his street life, with its constant variety, that he would have been unwilling to return, even if the original cause of his leaving home were removed. Life in a Pennsylvania village seemed ‘slow’ compared with the excitement of his present life.”⁸²

But such bold sentiments are the artist’s asseveration, not the tale’s truth, and they are always spoken before opportunity offers. As soon as it does, Dick decides he would rather be Mr. Rockwell’s hireling, Mark accepts his grandfather’s guidance, Rufus takes Mr. Turner’s money and Mr. Vanderpool’s, too, and Ben goes back home. In every case their independence is only for the interim. In the end they abandon all autonomy, willingly. Ben declares it “a good deal pleasanter resting in the luxurious bedchamber . . . than the chance accommodations to which he had been accustomed.” Dick is “rather pleased” that his old rags are stolen, since their loss seems “to cut him off from the old vagabond life which he hoped never to resume.”⁸³

Not one of Alger’s elect is ever self-employed at the end of a novel, nor do any of them ever really wish to be. Mark most obviously needs “somebody to lean on,”⁸⁴ but even Dick admits that his deepest dreams involve “some rich man” who “would adopt me, and give me plenty to eat and drink and wear, without my havin’ to look so sharp after it.” It is not with his usual levity that he adds that he would “like to have somebody to care for me,” and later, when he wishes explicitly for a mother, there is the same “tinge of sadness in his tone.”⁸⁵

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Dick's fantasied confusion of men and mothers comes very close to the emotional core of the Alger stories, for though the boys all crave care-taking, they are quite particular about its provenance. Not any parent will do. Each of Alger's prodigies is seeking something very special, and it is no accident that in a nation still two-thirds rural and presumably patriarchal, every story in the series is conditioned on father-absence. Only one of the six tales even admits a flesh-and-blood father, and Ben runs away from him. In the others there are a few self-sacrificing mothers, an indulgent grandfather, a stern stepfather and a monstrous mother-substitute; and only those among them who abdicate their authority succeed in sustaining a relation with their wards. All who play the traditional masculine part — demanding and commanding — discover one day that their fledglings have flown the coop.⁸⁶

Over and over again in these stories, Alger returned to the problem of proper parentage. His fixation was overt in *Mark, the Match Boy* and *Ben the Luggage Boy*, more muffled in the others — the first two tell quite focally of falls from family and re-entry into its bosom, the rest dwell less on literal than on figurative kinships that are reclaimed as the protagonists find their patrons — but it pervaded the entire series.⁸⁷ In every novel the hero experiences the unsettling sense that his own parents have failed him, that somewhere else his true parents are waiting to be found by accident and good luck.

Proper parents such as these are invariably defined in terms of nurturance and even indulgence, not discipline and hard knocks. It is because his stepfather "couldn't take care of [him]self, much less of anyone else" that Rufus so often reminds him, "I am not your son."⁸⁸ It is because Mother Watson assumed charge of him "rather for her own advantage than his" that Mark finally realizes that she "had no claim on him" and pronounces her "no relation."⁸⁹ And it is because his father, though a good provider, is intolerant of impulse and unbending in righteousness that Ben runs away and refuses to return:

knowing his father's sternness, he knew that he would be severely punished. Unfortunately for Ben, his father had a stern, unforgiving disposition, that never made allowances for the impulses of boyhood, He had never condescended to study his own son, and the method of training he had adopted with him was in some respects very pernicious. His system hardened, instead of softening...⁹⁰

Proper parents, then, are permissive. Like Ben's mother, who is "quite different from her husband, being gentle and kind," such parents are sweet but not strong.⁹¹ They give, and

they ask little or nothing in return. Every Alger favorite finds a few of them on his way, and the occasions of these encounters are the hinges on which his history turns.

Dick's advancement, for example, can be traced quite completely through his successive sponsors, who provide him the incentives and resources for his rehabilitation.⁹² Mark's merest survival, to say nothing of his brief flight to freedom, is conditioned on the support, first, of an older street urchin who fends off Mark's former guardian by claiming to have "adopted that boy," and then, of course, by Dick himself, who declares Mark his ward and explains that he will "look after" the little boy "just as if I was your uncle or grandfather,"⁹³ Ben is squired by a series of street people who provide him present comfort and promises of future assistance at any time he is "in need" of them, and later he is assured by a wealthy merchant that "when you need a friend, you will know where to find me."⁹⁴ Rufus alone requires scant succor before his decisive break, but only because the focal roles are reversed so that he protects his sister, sheltering her from any obligation "to go out into the street to earn any thing" though "many girls, no older than she," do work; and even Rufus dreams of the day Rose "grows up, and can keep house for me."⁹⁵

In truth, almost every character establishes his connection to others on an axis of caring or being cared for, or defaulting on such fostering duties, And the narratives move almost wholly on these matters of maintenance, *Rough and Ready*, for instance, is at its core an adventure of abduction and recovery, of nurture ruptured and restored. Success is so peripheral to the story that Rufus quite literally thwarts the thieves and gains his clerkship in an interlude while waiting to save his sister. His own advancement never does concern him so much as her sustenance, which is why her stepfather steals her in the first place, knowing "that nothing would strike the newsboy a severer blow than to deprive him of his sister."⁹⁶

In *Rufus and Rose*, the former newsboy himself escapes from his stepfather and the criminals Martin has fallen in league with; and he is able to do so because one of them unjustly beats the hunchback guard Humpy, whose "rude sense of honor" had previously held him "faithful to his employer." Humpy determines to betray his masters for that failure — regretting that he "wouldn't have gone ag'inst" them had they been more supportive — and he single-handedly engineers Rufus' rescue.⁹⁷

In *Mark, the Match Boy*, Hiram Bates triggers the action not merely by setting Dick to search for his grandson but also by having failed, years before, to accept his daughter's love for his clerk. She married the man anyway, Bates "disowned her" and "hardened [his] heart against her," and it is his remorse that drives him to try to make amends when he learns that his daughter and her husband are dead. "I cannot forgive myself," he swears, "when I think of my unfeeling severity."⁹⁸ And in *Ragged Dick* and *Ben, the Luggage Boy* alike, the young hero's ascent is fired by first fostering, Dick's when he is encouraged as "nobody ever talked to [him] so before," Ben's

when he is assured that his cousin's love for him is unconditional, "no matter how he looked, or how poor he might be."⁹⁹

Ultimately, then, Alger's every novel was a novel of nurturance, a novel whose dearest ideal was to be cared for and indulged, not to be self-sufficient and self-reliant. Each of them begins with a boy alone and on his own, but each of them concludes with that boy safely sheltered in some secure niche where his future is assured because his protector will look after him forevermore. Alger allowed his every hero and half his supporting cast this movement from the streets to easy street, and it afforded him the essential drama and the irresistible consummation of all his narratives. Dick gains Mr. Rockwell's undying gratitude, Mark secures "a comfortable and even luxurious home, and a relative whose great object in life is to study his happiness," Rufus has Mr. Turner's pledge that there will be many ways "in which I shall find an opportunity to serve you" while Rose has Rufus' reassurance that she is "safe now, and nobody shall trouble" her, and Ben is welcomed home by all to take over the family firm.¹⁰⁰ In every case the womb is warm; in no case will the hero have to struggle any longer.

At this level, the public and the private themes of the tales merge and reinforce each other superbly. The quest for a patron that provides much of the explicit action of

the stories parallels — and is finally the very same as — the quest for a new and more nurturing parent that provides the covert action. The social and the personal themes are one and the same, and they are both fantasies of fosterage. The hero eludes stern parental authority and secures a more supportive champion who supplies rather than demands. His lot is unconditional love, from a guardian much like the father Ben goes back to, who "seems to have changed greatly" and "is no longer stern and hard, but gentle and forbearing."¹⁰¹ The thrust of the stories is not the growth of the heroes but the alteration of their environments; Ben can return because his father and his home have changed.

All the stories are, in a similar sense, tales of a return to respectable estate. Their movement is not even from rags to respectability, for their subjects never really start in rags. They pass their formative years in the bosom of a family, and they are quite familiar with its comforts before they run away or are orphaned. In their success, they simply recover

a condition that was originally theirs. Like Mark and Ben, they reclaim a literal birthright with a reformed relative; or, like Rufus and Fosdick, they find a fonder patron altogether. In either case their progression is the same: from respectability to rags to respectability, from home to street to a new and more nurturing home.¹⁰²

Indeed, homes are crucial concerns for Alger even before his heroes consummate their quest,¹⁰³ for such lodgings symbolize superbly the fusion of public and private aspiration to passive security and indulgence in their desires. The boys move constantly to more expensive and commodious quarters, even though they can scarcely afford to feed themselves and cannot save a penny after they have paid their rent,¹⁰⁴ because they need both to signify the stations of their advancement to social respectability¹⁰⁵ and to simulate the safety of the cradle. As Alger explained, "those young men who out of economy

contented themselves with small and cheerless rooms ... were driven in the evening to the streets, theatres, and hotels, for the comfort which they could not find at home."¹⁰⁶ An ample home is, in Alger, the alternative to the real independence and loneliness of the large city, and none of the boys want such self-reliance if they can avoid it. They pay so excessively for a room because it is so much more important to

them than saving. It is a sanctuary, a veritable womb.

So, too, in the end, do the dependence on luck and the cultivation of the employee virtues conduce to the same comfort. The reliance on chance issues from a passivity before the environment, an impingement of favorable circumstance upon the individual; the sanction of subordination clarifies the heroes' progress by patronage, since the very virtues the boys acquire represent efforts to come to the attention of their superiors and gain such support.¹⁰⁷ And success itself is attained not by fighting to the top in constant, clawing struggle, but precisely by moving out of the fray entirely, into another's custody.

If Horatio Alger was the mentor of an emergent industrial society, then the Americans who grew up under his tutelage were surely schooled for service in the corporate bureaucracies, which would in time transform the culture. For Alger never encouraged his audience to care so much for work as for the gratifications of income, and he never dared his readers to

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be as they might be so much as to do as their neighbors did. Beneath his explicit emphasis on striving upward ran a deeper desire for stability and security; beneath his paeans to manly vigor, a lust for effeminate indulgence; beneath his celebration of self-reliance, a craving to be taken care of and a yearning to surrender the terrible burden of independence.

Zuckerman, Michael. *The Nursery Tales of Horatio Alger. American Quarterly* 24 (1972), 191-209. © The American Studies Association. Reprinted with permission of The Johns Hopkins University Press.

NOTES

1. *Studies in Classic American Literature* (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor ed., 1951), p. 13.

2. The Ragged Dick Series, listed as such in the advertising pages of any number of his subsequent stories, was published between 1867 and 1870. For ease of access and common reference, I have used the paperback reprint of the pair that are presently in print; for the other four I have used the editions in the Historical Children's Collection of the Free Library of Philadelphia. Two of these are original editions, the other two are 19th century reprints, and all four are likely to differ somewhat in pagination from other editions other students may find available. The six, in order of initial publication, are: *Ragged Dick* (New York: Collier, 1962); *Fame and Fortune* (Boston: Loring, 1868); *Mark, the Match Boy* (New York: Collier, 1962); *Rough and Ready, or, Life among the New York Newsboys* (Philadelphia: Porter and Coates, n.d.); *Ben, the Luggage Boy, or, Among the Wharves* (Boston: Loring, 1870); *Rufus and Rose, or The Fortunes of Rough and Ready* (Philadelphia: Winston, 1898). They will be cited hereafter as *Dick*, *Fame*, *Mark*, *Rough*, *Ben* and *Rufus*, respectively.

The representativeness of the Ragged Dick Series may be gauged most conveniently by consulting another modern collection, Horatio Alger, *Struggling Upward and Other Works*, intro. by Russel Crouse (New York: Bonanza Books, 1945). The four novels reprinted there — *Ragged Dick*, *Phil the Fiddler* (1872), *Struggling Upward* (1886, 1890) and *Jed the Poorhouse Boy* (1892, 1900) — span Alger's literary career from beginning to end and include both country and city novels; and without exception they exemplify the themes to be developed in this article. The only stories that do not display all those themes straightforwardly are Alger's tales of the West, e.g., the Pacific Series, but even in them his fundamental conceptions and concerns are evident, if somewhat more muffled and convoluted.

3. *Dick*, p. 78.

4. *Rough*, p. 233.

5. *Fame*, pp. 12-14; *Mark*, pp. 220-22, 237; *Rough*, pp. 136-37.

6. *Rufus*, pp. 49-50; *Rough*, p. 63.

7. *Dick*, p. 214; *Fame*, pp. 134, 161, 216, 272; *Mark*, p. 371; *Rough*, pp. 297-98; *Rufus*, pp. 139, 141, 249-50.

8. *Mark*, p. 290.

9. *Ben*, p. 241; see also pp. 241-45.

10. *Mark*, pp. 235, 371-72; *Rough*, pp. 48-49.

11. *Rufus*, p. 30; *Rough*, p. 34. See also *Mark*, pp. 246-47; *Rufus*, pp. 127, 178-79.

12. *Mark*, p. 340. See also *Dick*, p. 159; *Fame*, p. 257; *Mark*, pp. 261, 317, 344.

13. *Mark*, p. 381.

14. *Dick*, p. 177; *Fame*, p. 47. See also *Dick*, pp. 170, 192-93.

15. *Rough*, p. 246.

16. *Dick*, pp. 133-34, 154-56, 193, 198, 199, 216; *Fame*, pp. 39, 48, 191, 209-10, 279; *Mark*, pp. 304, 381; *Rough*, pp. 15, 65, 225-26. Compare Dick's rival, Roswell Crawford, who gives nothing: *Mark*, p. 261.

17. Each novel is studded with examples. For some sense of their tone, see *Dick*, pp. 39, 49; *Mark*, pp. 253, 363-64; *Rough*, pp. 138, 173-74, 199, 290; *Ben*, pp. 34, 36-37, 39, 68, 113, 149-51, 165; *Rufus*, pp. 25, 68.

18. *Dick*, pp. 42-43, 45-46, 54, 86-87, 111-13, 121, 133-34; *Mark*, pp. 237, 281, 381; *Rough*, pp. 19-20, 134-35; *Ben*, pp. 12, 135; *Rufus*, pp. 98-99, 250.

19. *Ben*, p. 39.

20. *Ben*, p. 164.

21. *Rough*, pp. 37, 56, 58-62, 79; *Ben*, pp. 50-51, 63, 103, 105.

22. *Mark*, p. 266.

23. *Rough*, pp. 111-12, 240. Ben also gets a good break in a "bad" place (a German beer hall); see *Ben*, pp. 63, 66, 68.

24. *Rufus*, pp. 17, 19. The fates of the villains are sometimes tied to appetite too; see *Rough*, pp. 149-50, 152; *Rufus*, p. 239. And deeds of generosity were often rewarded by immediately subsequent strokes of good luck; e.g., *Dick*, pp. 133-35, 154-56; *Mark*, pp. 281-87.

25. *Dick*, pp. 208-9; *Mark*, pp. 272, 299; *Rough*, p. 44; *Ben*, p. 26. See also *Ben*, pp. 41-42, 61, 83.

26. *Ben*, pp. 55, 154. See also *Dick*, p. 155; *Rough*, pp. 43, 56; *Ben*, pp. 135, 158-62; *Rufus*, p. 185. Even when a boy does begin to budget, he invariably makes no provision for contingencies such as sickness or bad weather, so that his accounting is still hand-to-mouth and present-oriented.

27. E.g., *Ben*, p. 135. In the very nature of the work, bootblacking and baggage-smashing were unsteady, through the day and through the seasons; see *Ben*, pp. 28-30, 155.

28. *Dick*, pp. 79-83, 102-7, 133, 152, 185; *Mark*, pp. 219-21, 284-86, 296-300; *Rough*, pp. 24, 225-26, 240-51; *Ben*, pp. 100, 211, 246; *Rufus*, p. 158.

29. *Dick*, p. 208; *Rough*, pp. 111-12.

30. About six of the 26 chapters per novel show anyone at work; scarcely any show the actual conditions of work. About five of each 26 show the heroes at home.

31. *Rough*, pp. 235, 241-43; *Ben*, p. 211; *Rufus*, p. 158.

32. *Rufus*, p. 101.

33. *Dick*, pp. 125-27, 133; *Rough*, pp. 24, 225-26; *Ben*, p. 100.

34. *Dick*, p. 193; *Fame*, pp. 238-39, 279; *Mark*, pp. 266, 299, 304, 381; *Rough*, pp. 225-26.

35. *Mark*, p. 239.

36. *Fame*, p. viii. See also *Mark*, pp. 291, 304.

37. *7Mark*, p. 299.

38. *Fame*, pp. 238-39, 188; *Rough*, p. 244. See also *Mark*, p. 256; *Fame*, p. 275; *Rough*, pp. 16-18; *Ben*, pp. 22, 30, 178-79; *Rufus*, pp. 12, 47. For unhesitating assumptions that a bad environment could turn a tyke to theft, dirt, dishonesty and the like, see *Ben*, pp. 22, 30, 31, 85, 152.

39. *Ben*, p. 11; *Fame*, p. 275. See also *Rufus*, preface.

40. *Rough*, p. 30. See also *Fame*, p. 47.

41. *Mark*, p. 316. See also p. 317.

42. *Mark*, p. 230.

43. *Rough*, p. 166. See also *Rough*, p. 267; *Rufus*, p. 47.

44. *Ben*, pp. 226-27; see also p. 87.

45. *Fame*, p. 136. See also *Dick*, pp. 122-29, 149-53; *Rough*, pp. 34, 83-84, 101-3; *Ben*, pp. 241-45; *Rufus*, pp. 30, 120-21, 127, 151-53, 167-69, 172, 178-79.

46. *Dick*, p. 133. See also pp. 125-27 for Dick's refusal to fight even under provocation and for the way he finally defeats Micky by defensive prowess. See also *Rough*, pp. 24, 225-26; *Ben*, p. 100.

47. *Mark*, p. 271. For Fosdick, see *Dick*, p. 133; *Fame*, p. 53. It might be added that even fighting on no provocation but “to check ruffianism” is merely “less censurable” by Alger’s lights; see *Rough*, p. 25.

48. This point was first developed, so far as I know, by John Cawelti, *Apostles of the Self-Made Man* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1965).

49. *Fame*, pp. 36-37.

50. *Fame*, p. 50. See also *Dick*, p. 214; *Rufus*, pp. 73-74, 138.

51. *Fame*, pp. 258-59. See also *Fame*, p. 274; *Mark*, pp. 318, 319; *Rough*, p. 297; *Rufus*, p. 141.

52. E.g., *Dick*, pp. 158-60; *Fame*, pp. 118, 126-30, 216; *Mark*, pp. 312-19. Significantly, Roswell’s undoing is his attempt to steal from his employer and place the blame upon another; see *Mark*, chaps. 17-23.

53. The essential mobility Alger aimed to inspire was moral mobility, a change in life-style more than in *life situation*, e.g., *Dick*, pp. 108-9, 140-41, 167; *Rough*, pp. 17-18.

54. *Rufus*, p. 141.

55. *Dick*, p. 73; *Mark*, p. 309. For the consistency with which Dick maintains this motif, see *Dick*, pp. 128-29, 132, 167; *Fame*, pp. 22, 25, 159-60, 203; *Mark*, pp. 224, 293. For the other heroes, see, e.g., *Ben*, pp. II, 278; *Rufus*, preface.

56. *Fame*, pp. 159-60. For the general vapidness of such opinion, see *Rufus*, pp. 96-97, 101-4.

57. *Fame*, p. 61.

58. *Rufus*, pp. 101-2, 104. See also *Rough*, pp. 254-55.

59. *Rufus*, pp. 60-61. Dick and Fosdick also buy trunks they do not need with savings they do when they move to new quarters, and they do so quite explicitly for the purpose of respectability; see *Fame*, p. 17. For other instances of extravagance for the sake of a respectable appearance, often in the face of more immediate necessities, see *Rough*, pp. 37-38, 56; *Rufus*, pp. 51-52, 68.

60. *Ben*, pp. 193-94; see also pp. 128-29, 275. For other indications of the importance of judgment by appearances, see *Fame*, p. 256; *Rufus*, pp. 75, 76.

61. *Fame*, pp. 60-61; see also pp. 213-14.

62. *Ben*, pp. 178-79, 85; and see esp. p. 211.

63. *Rufus*, p. 108.

64. *Dick*, p. 130. See also *Dick*, p. 167; *Fame*, p. 66; *Mark*, p. 359; *Ben*, pp. 255-56. Fosdick is, of course, something of an exception. It might be added that Dick also thinks of religious observance as “an important step toward securing that genuine respectability which he was anxious to attain” (see *Dick*, p. 141).

65. *Rufus*, preface.

66. The first developed analysis of the centrality of luck was R. Richard Wohl, “The ‘Rags to Riches Story’: An Episode of Secular Idealism,” in Reinhard Bendix and Seymour Martin Lipset, eds., *Class, Status and Power* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1953), pp. 388-95.

67. Alger is such a revealing source precisely because he does not—the temptation is to say cannot-suppress such facts. For some suggestive instances of his literalism and passivity before the flow of his own experience and environment, see *Ben*, pp. vii-viii, 59-60, 172n, 259n; *Rufus*, preface.

68. It is true that Alger sometimes affirmed the equal honorability of all honest employments, but some were generally more equal than others. See *Dick*, pp. 109, 128, 147; and esp. *Rufus*, p. 70.

69. *Dick*, pp. 207, 157; *Ben*, pp. 42-45.

70. *Dick*, p. 157; *Ben*, p. 88. See also *Fame*, p. 43; *Mark*, p. 307; *Ben*, pp. 46-47, 48, 73; *Rufus*, p. 138.

71. *Dick*, p. 157. When he does finally obtain employment, it is by the happenstance that Mr. Greyson, a merchant he knows through Dick, enters the very store where Fosdick is applying at the very moment he is being interviewed; even Fosdick admits he is hired “only because Mr. Greyson spoke up for me.” See *Dick*, pp. 161-62. The only other boy to gain an appointment by his own endeavor is Mark, but he does so only at Dick’s urging and with Dick’s assurance of a reference; see *Mark*, pp. 307-12.

72. *Dick*, p. 73. Three or four dollars a week was the normal beginning wage in these novels — see *Dick*, pp. 73, 158-59, 177; *Fame*, p. 44; *Mark*, p. 312; *Rough*, pp. 297-98 — while bootblacks and paperboys could scuffle for a weekly income quite double that — see *Dick*, p. 166; *Rough*, pp. III, 297-98; *Ben*, pp. 28-30, 120.

73. *Dick*, p. 40; *Ben*, p. 170.

74. E.g., *Dick*, pp. 113-14, 141, 159; *Fame*, pp. 109, 241; *Rough*, p. 151; *Rufus*, pp. 51-52, 60-61.

75. *Dick*, p. 159; see also *Rough*, pp. 295-96. For the excess of expenses, see *Dick*, pp. 166, 177; *Rough*, pp. 111, 297-98.

76. *Rough*, pp. 297-98. See also *Dick*, p. 214; *Fame*, pp. 134, 216, 272, 277-78; *Rufus*, pp. 139, 141, 249-50.

77. *Mark*, p. 236. See also *Fame*, pp. 74, 238-39, 255. Alger often added that his hero’s luck was deserved; see, e.g., *Fame*, p. 264; *Mark*, p. 221; *Rufus*, pp. 253-54.

78. See Donald Meyer, *The Positive Thinkers* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1965).

79. *Dick*, p. 165. See also *Fame*, p. 121.

80. *Mark*, p. 287; also p. 289. The chapter in which Mark secures such freedom is entitled “Mark’s Victory.”

81. *Rough*, pp. 14-15; also pp. 253-54.

82. *Ben*, pp. 153-54; also pp. 160-62, 163-64, and *Rufus*, p. 94. The preference for the city’s excitement is echoed by other characters: see *Dick*, pp. 47-48; *Mark*, p. 310.

83. *Ben*, p. 285; *Dick*, p. 215. For Rufus, see *Rufus*, pp. 51-52.

84. *Mark*, p. 271; also p. 299.

85. *Dick*, pp. 99, 171. Even this early his fantasy is fulfilled; Frank tells him, “I will care for you.”

86. Cawelti: *Apostles* is sensitive to some of these issues, but his analysis is far too Freudian. The heroes’ needs are rather more oral than oedipal.

87. The most fascinating development is at the conclusion of *Rufus*, when Miss Manning, Rose’s guardian, marries rich Mr. Vanderpool while Rufus and Rose go to live in his house and Rufus inherits from him.

88. *Rough*, p. 202; see also, e.g., *Rufus*, pp. 158, 188-89.

89. *Mark*, pp. 271, 286; also pp. 249, 251, 270.

90. *Ben*, pp. 73-74; also pp. 24-25, 59-60, 128-29, 140, 144, 145, 232.

91. *Ben*, pp. 137-38. Significantly, it is “to her that Ben always went for sympathy, in any trouble or difficulty.”

92. *Dick*, pp. 72-73, 74-75, 87-89, 108-11, 131-33, 143-44, 161-62, 202, 213-14; *Fame*, pp. 91-92.

93. *Mark*, pp. 285, 303; also pp. 265, 273, 298-99, 301, 307. Dick does similar services for Fosdick; see, e.g., *Dick*, pp. 133-36, 155-62; *Fame*, p. 76; *Mark*, pp. 228, 241.

94. *Ben*, pp. 63, 232; also pp. 66, 69, 89-91, 93-103, 119, 120, 123.

95. *Rough*, pp. 89-90, 174; also pp. 163, 184, 190, 214, 267, 287; *Rufus*, pp. 47, 233-34. Rufus is vitally assisted at one crucial juncture by the young hunchback Humpy; see *Rufus*, chaps. 20-24.

96. *Rough*, p. 109. Even Martin’s ability to manage the kidnap in the first place depends on (Miss Manning’s) failure to watch over the girl closely enough; see *Rough*, pp. 152-53. And in the end it is Rufus’ nurturance regard for his sister that Alger invokes to justify the lad’s luck; see *Rufus*, pp. 253-54.

97. *Rufus*, pp. 196-97, 223; see, generally, chaps. 20-24. Since Humpy cannot return to his employers after he helps Rufus, the hero promises to take care of him — “I won’t forget the service you have done me” — and, through Mr. Turner, Rufus keeps his promise. See *Rufus*, pp. 227-33, for these wheels within wheels of nurturance and patronage.

98. *Mark*, pp. 234-35. Mark’s departure from Mother Watson is also due to a deficit of nurturance; see p. 271.

99. *Dick*, p. 75; *Ben*, pp. 187-88. For another example of the connection of nurturance and ambition, see *Fame*, p. 265.

100. *Dick*, p. 211; *Mark*, p. 382; *Rough*, pp. 297-98; *Ben*, pp. 280, 281, 285-89.

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The Nursery Tales of Horatio Alger

(Continued from Page 15)

101. *Ben*, p. 289.

102. Dick is the only protagonist who does not demonstrably follow this sequence, and his origins are ambiguous.

An interesting index to this retrieval of position is the progression of names Alger allows his heroes. Almost without exception they begin with nothing but their street nicknames, reclaim their given first names as they begin to advance, and assume their full familial names when they are securely settled in a protected place. Thus Ragged Dick becomes Dick becomes Richard Hunter; and Rough and Ready becomes Rufus becomes Rufus Rushton. Ben admits to his father's name only when he is reconciled to returning home, and Mark is discovered as the grandson

Hiram Bates was seeking when he reveals his real name to Dick. Even Humpy, the young hunchback who handles Rufus' escape, resumes his original name, William Norton, after Rufus promises to "be [his] friend" and "get [him] something to do" (*Rufus*, pp. 227-29).

103. Symptomatically, Alger devotes at least a part of the first chapter of five of the six novels to a detailed description of the protagonist's place of lodging. In the sixth, *Rough*, such discussion is deferred to the second chapter.

104. *Fame*, pp. 9, 12-14, 152-54; *Rough*, pp. 58-64, 79; *Rufus*, pp. 51-52. At one point, Rufus is spending his entire income on rooming costs; see *Rufus*, pp. 51-52.

105. *Dick*, pp. 113-14; *Ben*, pp. 193-94; *Rufus*, pp. 51-52.

106. *Mark*, p. 222; also *Fame*, pp. 152-54; *Ben*, pp. 201-2.

107. Alger's favorites often snub an immediate superior who is arrogant toward them and could hardly play the patron in any case; but they are unfailingly respectful of the counsel of higher authorities, especially owners, who are kindly and can conceivably help them. See *Fame*, pp. 30-34; *Mark*, p. 318; *Ben*, pp. 203-7.

Editor's notebook

(Continued from Page 5)

in 1897, but not in 2006.

Look again at the ad on Page 5. Bickford is listed as the primary author, with "and Richard Stillman Powell" following in parentheses, this quite likely indicating a "supporting" role.

So let's blame Bickford, not Barbour. And yet my copy is listed as a Second Edition, published in October 1897, so at least the first print run apparently sold out in just a few months.

Despite the mediocre text, the book's cover design is delightful, somewhat reminiscent of the Alger first edition of *Walter Sherwood's Probation*, by H.T. Coates. And at 16mo (sextodecimo), the cover is smaller than the usual 12mo (duodecimo) series book. In inches, the front cover measures $4\frac{1}{2} \times 6\frac{3}{4}$.

About those Alger illustrations: As I have noted several times in this space, I do not "collect" Horatio Alger, even though I have been an H.A.S. member since 1983. I joined the Society at the urging of then-president Bob Sawyer, because of our mutual interest in the Rover Boys, of all things!

My personal Alger "collection" at the time consisted of one book — an M.A. Donohue reprint of *Risen from the Ranks*. However, over the years I have accumulated more than 80 different Alger titles, including a handful of first editions. These books are shelved not in my library but right behind my desk, to be used as tools for the production of Newsboy.

For example, the two illustrations accompanying Professor Zuckerman's article in this issue were scanned from my Porter & Coates reprint editions of *Ragged Dick* and *Rufus and Rose*. These editions were printed from the same plates as the Loring first editions, so for my

purposes they are ideal. Attempting to scan illustrations from a fragile Loring edition would undoubtedly split the book's spine. I also scanned the decorative *Ragged Dick Series* title page illustration reproduced on the front cover of this issue, as well as the *Campaign Series* title page used on the 2006 H.A.S. roster.

Thanks to an improved scanner and up-to-date Adobe Photoshop software, these illustrations are now much easier to reproduce (and with better clarity) than they were several years ago.

Whenever I need an image for Newsboy and don't have an original at hand, thanks to other members with scanners and e-mail, we now can bring them to you. The most prominent example is last year's issue featuring color reproduction of covers from Aldine Publishing Company's *Garfield Library*, courtesy of Bob Sipes (PF-1067). He scanned the images from his collection of *Garfield* covers and e-mailed them to me.

Another example is the scan of the first-edition cover of *The \$500 Check*, which Rob Kasper e-mailed to me specifically for use with Ralph Gardner's reminiscence in the last issue on how he found that elusive first edition for five dollars in Los Angeles.

In the next Newsboy, along with more preview information on the Omaha convention, I will offer my own well-illustrated article on one of the most beloved artists ever to contribute to series books. We'll keep his name a secret for now, although it may be quite easy for many of you to guess.

In the meantime, please consider attending the 2006 convention in Omaha. Many of our Particular Friends have never attended one of our annual get-togethers, and they are missing out on a good time!

Just fill out the enclosed convention registration form and return it with your check for \$85 to Bart and Mary Ann Nyberg at the address provided. Also, don't forget to make your hotel reservations!