

Newsboy

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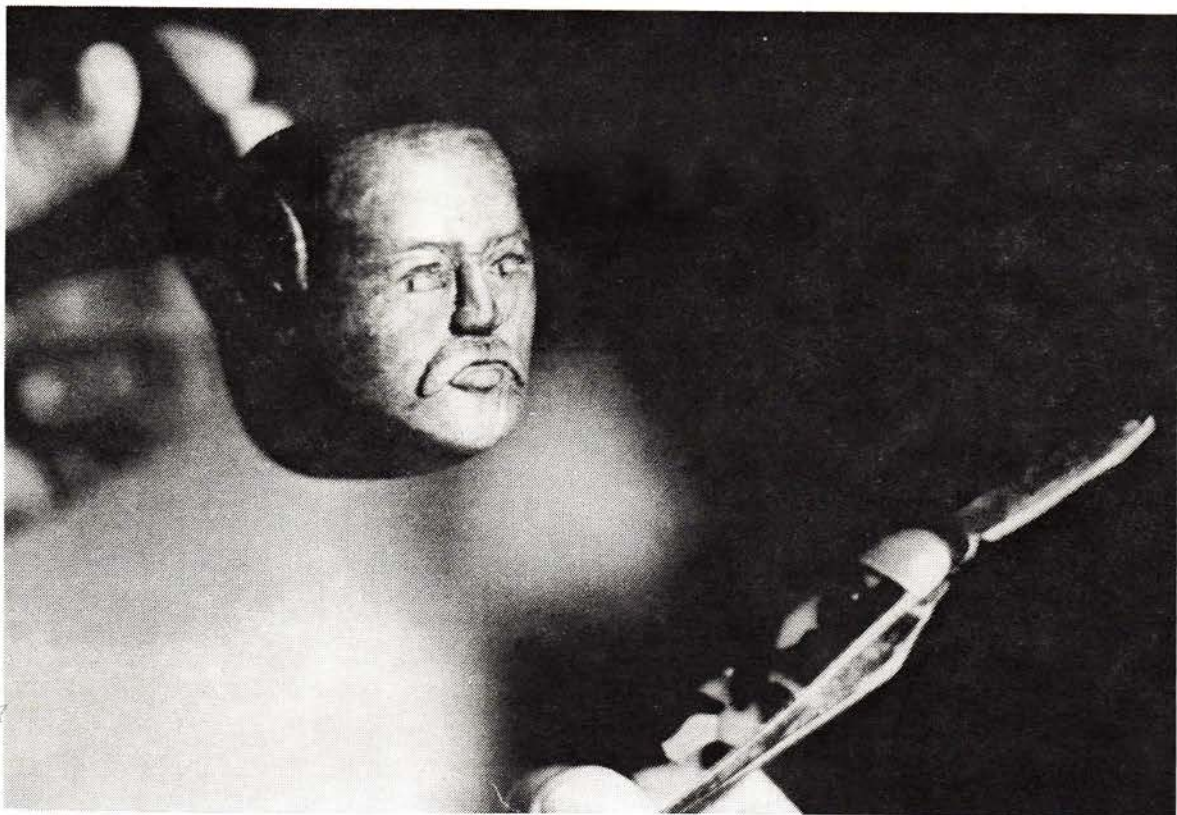


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Monthly Newsletter of
the HORATIO ALGER
SOCIETY. The World's
Only Publication Devot-
ed to That Wonderful
World of Horatio Alger.



Founded 1961 by Forrest Campbell & Kenneth Butler



The above photo shows the Horatio Alger pipe that Alger Society Director Ralph D. Gardner carved. Ralph writes: "Perhaps if you print this picture, it may encourage other members to try their hands at it. All I used was the pen knife shown and sandpaper. I made this last winter in Barbados, whittling away

for 2 - 3 hours each afternoon for about two weeks.

"Many pipe shops have (or can easily get) pipes with uncut bowls. They're generally inexpensive—usually less expensive than a finished pipe. And it's fun to carve. As models I used three photos of Horatio from about 1890-1893."

HORATIO ALGER SOCIETY

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

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Newsboy, the official organ of the Horatio Alger Society, is published monthly (bimonthly January-February and June-July) and is distributed to HAS members. Membership fee for any twelve month period is \$10.00. Cost for single issues of Newsboy is \$1.00 apiece.

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

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

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

* * *

REMEMBER: Convention time will soon be here!! Don't forget the date — — — Thursday, May 12 through Sunday, May 15, 1977, in Waltham, Massachusetts, a suburb of Boston.

* * *

CHANGES OF ADDRESS

PF-000 Forrest Campbell
415 Miller
Fairhope, Alabama 36532
* * *

NEW MEMBERS REPORTED

PF-495 Vincent L. Barker, Jr.
3880 Brookside Rd.
Toledo, Ohio 43606

Vincent is an attorney in Toledo and owns twenty-six Algers. A history and tennis buff, his interest in Horatio relates to the prominence the author has in the field of historical Americana. The "Curious Bookstore" in East Lansing, Michigan told Vincent of the Alger Society. As stated on his membership application, he is the "father of four overactive children."

* * *

Horatio Alger Society cofounder Ken Butler recently sent me a thirty-two page colorful book (size: 8½" x 11") all about his "Time Was Village Museum," located in Mendota, Illinois. Although I have mentioned this museum several times in Newsboy, its beauty and attractiveness cannot be overstated. The book is a fascinating "picture tour" through the twelve buildings, and the history of the museum is given. For all those who are interested in any facet of Americana, a trip to Ken and Doris Butler's Time Was Village Museum is a must!!

* * *

The July, 1976 (the bicentennial issue), of Dun's Review had a short article on "our hero" entitled, "Who Was Horatio Alger." Thanks go to both Ralph D. Gardner and Dick Bowerman for sending me copies of it.

* * *

As mentioned in the last issue of Newsboy, Gilbert K. Westgard II is publishing Number 91, a very scarce Alger. Gil says that this is a rousing story in the best Alger tradition, and he wonders why the book was not as popular as some of the author's other works. Following is the first chapter from Number 91:

PAUL, THE TELEGRAPH BOY.

ON Broadway, not far from the St. Nicholas Hotel, is an office of the American District Telegraph. Let us enter.

A part of the office is railed off, within which the superintendent has a desk, and receives orders for boys to be sent to different parts of the city. On benches in the back part of the office are sitting perhaps a dozen boys varying in age from fifteen to eighteen, clad in the well known blue uniform prescribed by the company. Each wears a cap on which may be read the initials of the company, with the boy's number.

At the end of the benches sat a stout, well made boy, apparently sixteen years of age. He had a warm, expressive face, and would generally be considered good looking.

On his cap we read this inscription :

A. D. T.
91.

Some of the boys were smaller, two or three larger than Number 91. But among them all, he was the most attractive in appearance. The boys sat on the benches in patience waiting for a call from the superintendent. They were usually selected in turn, but sometimes the fitness of a particular boy for the errand required was taken into consideration.

"Number 87!" called the superintendent.

A small boy of fifteen, but not looking over thirteen, left his seat and advanced to the desk.

"No, I don't think you'll do," said the superintendent. "There's a man at the New England Hotel who wants a boy to go down with him to the Cortlandt Street Ferry, and carry his valise. A larger boy will be required."

He glanced at the boys in waiting and called :

"Number 91!"

The boy of whom we have spoken rose with alacrity, and stepped up to the desk. He had been sitting on the bench for an hour, and was glad of an opportunity to go out on an errand.

The superintendent wrote on a card the name "D. L. Meacham, New England Hotel," and handed it to the boy.

"Go at once to the New England Hotel, and call for that gentleman," he said. "If he is not in, wait for him."

"Yes, sir."

Paul Parton, for this was his name, did not need any further directions. He was perfectly acquainted with the city, especially in the lower part, where he had lived for years. He crossed Broadway, and, taking an easterly course, made his way to the Bowery, on which, at the corner of Bayard Street, the New England Hotel stands. This is a very respectable inn, and by its fair accommodations and moderate prices attracts a large number of patrons.

Entering, Paul advanced to the desk.

"Is Mr. D. L. Meacham in?" he asked, referring to the card given him by the superintendent.

"Here he is!" replied, not the clerk to whom the question was addressed, but a tall, elderly man with gray hair, clad in a rusty suit, evidently a gentleman from the rural districts.

"Are you the telegraph boy?" he asked.

"Yes, sir."

"I want to go down to the ferry to take the train to Philadelphia."

"All right, sir. Is this your valise?" asked Paul,

pointing to a shabby traveling bag that might, from its appearance, have been used by Noah when he was on board the ark.

"Yes, that's mine."

"Do you want to start now, Mr. Meacham?"

"Well, I might as well. I hain't got nothing to keep me here. How fur is it?"

"About a mile. Perhaps a little more."

Paul took the valise in his hand, and went out of the hotel, followed by the old man.

"Do you know the way all round here, sonny?" he asked.

"Yes, sir."

"Well, it beats me. I get turned round, and don't know where I am. If it wasn't for that, I could have gone to the ferry alone. But land's sake! I might wander all round till tomorrow morning without finding it."

"Then I guess it's better to have a boy with you," said Paul, laughingly.

"You look like a smart boy," said the old man, attentively examining Number 91. "Do you like your business?"

"Pretty well," answered Paul.

"Is the pay pretty good?"

"I get four dollars a week."

"That's more than I got when I was your age, sonny."

"It doesn't go very far in the city, when you have your board and clothes to pay for," replied the young telegraph messenger.

"That's so. I didn't think of that. I was reared on a farm, where they didn't make much account of the victuals you ate."

"We have to make account of it here, sir."

"So you don't have much left out of your four dollars?"

"No, sir; but I get rather more than four dollars. Sometimes the gentlemen I am working for give me a little extra for myself."

"How much does that come to—in a week?"

"Well, sometimes I make a dollar or two extra. It depends a good deal on whether I fall in with liberal gentlemen or not. I don't mean this as a hint, sir," added Paul, smiling. "I am not entitled to anything extra, but, of course, when it is offered I take it."

Paul had a motive in saying this. He abhorred the idea of seeming to beg for a gratuity. Besides, judging from the appearance and rusty attire of the old man, he decided that he was poor, and could not afford to pay anything over the regular charges.

"I see," said the old farmer, as Paul supposed him to be, with a responsive smile. "You're right there, sonny. If you're offered a little extra money, it's all right to take it."

By this time they had reached the City Hall Park, and were crossing it. Then, as now, the Park swarmed with bootblacks of all sizes, provided with the implements of their trade.

Frequently, in the rivalry which results from active competition, the little fellows are pushed aside, and the bigger and stronger boys take possession of the customers they have secured. There was a case of this sort which fell under the attention of Paul and his elderly companion.

A pale, delicate looking boy of twelve was signaled by a gentleman, a rod or two from the City Hall. He hastened eagerly to secure a job, but unhappily the signal had also been seen by a bigger boy, larger, if

anything, than Paul, and he, too, ran to get in ahead of the smaller boy. Without ceremony, he put out his foot and tripped little Jack, and with a triumphant laugh sped on to the expectant customer. The little boy, who had been bruised by the fall, rose crying and disappointed.

"That's mean, Tom Rafferty," he said. "The gentleman called me."

Tom only responded by another laugh. With him, might made right, and the dominating law was the will of the stronger.

"Oh, you'll get another soon," he said.

He got down on his knees, and placed his box in position. But all was not to be as smooth sailing as he expected. Paul, with a blaze of honest indignation, had seen the outrage. He was not surprised, for he knew both boys.

"Never mind, Jack," he said. "I'll fix it all right."

"Please mind the valise a minute, sir," he added, and rather to the surprise of Mr. Meacham, he left him standing in the park, while he darted forward, seized Tom Rafferty by the collar, pulled him over backwards, and called, "Now, Jack!"

The little boy, emboldened by this unexpected help, ran up, and took Tom's place at the foot of the customer.

"I'm the boy you called, sir," he said.

"That's true, my boy. Go ahead! Only be quick!" said the gentleman.

Tom Rafferty was furious.

"Don't you know any better, you overgrown bully, than to get away little boys' jobs?" asked Paul, indignantly.

"I'll mash yer!" roared Tom.

"You mean if you can," said the undaunted Paul.

"You think you're a gentleman, just because you're a telegraph boy. I could be a telegraph boy myself if I wanted ter."

"Go ahead—I have no objection."

"I'll give that little kid the worst lickin' he ever had, soon as he gets through, see ef I don't."

"Do it if you dare!" said Paul, his eyes flashing.

"If you do, I'll thrash you."

"You dassn't."

"Remember what I say, Tom Rafferty. Now, Mr. Meacham, we'll go on. I hope you'll excuse me for keeping you waiting."

"Yes, I will, sonny. It did me good to see you pitching into that young bully. I'd like to have done it myself."

"I know both boys, sir. Little Jack is the son of a widow, who sews for a living, and she can't make enough to support the family, and he has to go out and earn what he can by shines. He is small and weak, and the big boys impose upon him."

"I'm glad he has some friends; Number 91, you're a brave boy."

"I don't know about that, sir. But I can't stand still and see a little kid like that imposed upon by a big brute like Tom Rafferty."

They crossed Broadway, and presently neared Cortlandt Street. Just at the corner stood an old man, with bent form and white hair, dressed with extreme shabbiness. His hand was extended, and he was silently asking for alms.

Paul's cheek flushed, and an expression of mortification swept over his face.

"Grandfather!" he said, reproachfully. "Please go home! Don't beg in the streets. You make me ashamed!"

MORE DISCOVERIES BY GARY SCHARNHORST

As related in the August-September, 1976, issue of Newsboy, Gary Scharnhorst discovered that the anonymous publication, The New Schoolma'am, was written by Horatio Alger, Jr. The December, 1976 Newsboy gave an Alger poem which no one previously knew about and which Gary came across. Following is an extract from a letter from him dealing with more research:

"... I'm enclosing for your consideration and possible publication in Newsboy a copy of a hitherto unknown Alger poem. A seven page manuscript written in Alger's hand and housed in the Duyckinck Collection of the New York Public Library has written upon it three of Alger's poems. The first, "Carving a Name," concludes with a notation that it appeared in the New York Evening Post; a second, the one I have enclosed (one of the very worst poems I have ever read, but for better or worse it is an authentic Alger), precedes the notation that it appeared in Harper's Weekly for November 1, 1862 (p. 694); the third, "Barbara's Courtship," concludes with a note that it appeared in Harper's Magazine (vol. 14, April, 1857, p. 658).

"For what it's worth: Alger published at least two other poems in Harper's Weekly: "Grand'ther Baldwin's Thanksgiving" appeared, probably for the first time anywhere, in the issue of December 6, 1862, p. 774; and "King Cotton" appeared in the February 13, 1864, issue, p. 98. In addition, Alger's poem "June" appeared, again probably for the first time, in Putnam's magazine, vol. 9, June, 1857, p. 630."

HE HAS GONE, AND I HAVE SENT HIM!
by Horatio Alger, Jr.

He has gone, and I have sent him!

Think you I would bid him stay,

Leaving, craven-like, to others

All the burden of the day?

All the burden? nay, the triumph!

Is it hard to understand

All the joy that thrills the hero
Battling for his native land?

He has gone, and I have sent him!
Could I keep him at my side
While the brave old ship that bears us
Plunges in the perilous tide?
Nay, I blush but at the question,
What am I, that I should chill
All his brave and generous promptings
Captive to a woman's will?

He has gone, and I have sent him!
I have buckled on his sword,
I have bidden him strike for Freedom,
For his country, for the Lord!
As I marked his lofty bearing,
And the flush upon his cheek,
I have caught my heart rebelling
That my woman's arm is weak.

He has gone, and I have sent him!
Not without a thought of pain,
For I know the war's dread chances,
And we may not meet again.
Life itself is but a lending,
He that gave perchance may take;
If it be so, I will bear it
Meekly for my country's sake.

He has gone, and I have sent him!
This henceforward be my pride,
I have given my cherished darling
Freely to the righteous side.
I, with all a mother's weakness,
Hold him now without a flaw;
Yet when he returns I'll hail him
Twice as noble as before.

* * *

ALGER'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO
FRANK LESLIE'S ILLUSTRATED NEWSPAPER
by Gary Scharnhorst

(Editor's note: One of Gary's recent "finds" was the discovery of a new Alger short story, entitled, "What Came of a Valentine," published under the pseudonym Charles F. Preston in Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, the February 20, 1864, issue. In honor of Valentine's Day, the story is reprinted in this issue of Newsboy, following Gary's article).

In "Writing Stories for Boys" (The Writer, vol. 9 [1896], pp. 36-37, see

SO YOUR HAWAIIAN VACATION
WAS DULLSVILLE?—



THEN THIS YEAR, BE SMART—
COME TO THE CONVENTION:
"BOOKED IN BOSTON"

June-July, 1976, Newsboy, p. 13), Horatio Alger noted that when he "began to write for publication it was far from my expectation that I should devote my life to writing stories for boys." Rather, as he explained, he spent his literary apprenticeship contributing to magazines for adults, including a "variety of literary weeklies." Notable among these weeklies was Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, the format of which was modeled upon the prestigious

Illustrated London News's layout, and which in only its fourth year of publication, in 1858, had a circulation of about 140,000 copies per issue (Budd Leslie Gambee, Jr., Frank Leslie and His Illustrated Newspaper [Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1964], p. 72). It was generally considered to be a strong competitor to Harper's Weekly, although it published more sensational stories than Harper's.

Alger's five contributions, all fiction, to Leslie's Weekly, as it was popularly called, have, with one exception, gone unrecognized, although three of the remaining four stories appeared at other times in Frank Leslie's Ten Cent Monthly, and thus are included in the bibliography of Alger "shorts" published in the December, 1974, issue of Newsboy. Moreover, the first three of these contributions appeared under Alger's pen name Charles F. Preston; only the final two appeared with his own name above them. Finally, it should be noted that all five of these stories appeared within the span of a single twelve month period, and they represent among them all material to be published by the Leslie stable of magazines which was written by Alger, and probably represent some of the author's last writing for adults before he turned to juvenile fiction. Bibliographical information on each of these stories follows.

1. Charles F. Preston. "What Came of a Valentine," Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, February 20, 1864, p. 343. This story apparently did not appear at any other time in another periodical, and is not listed on any other bibliography of Alger's short stories.
2. Charles F. Preston. "Jane Benson's Trials," Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, August 27, 1864, pp. 357-359. This story was reprinted in Frank Leslie's Ten Cent Monthly in November, 1864.
3. Charles F. Preston. "Laura Thurston's Charge," Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, September

24, 1864, pp. 5-6. This story was reprinted in Leslie's Ten Cent Monthly in December, 1864.

4. Horatio Alger, Jr. "Miss Huldah's Thanksgiving," Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, December 3, 1864, p. 171. This story was reprinted in the November, 1975, issue of Newsboy.
5. Horatio Alger, Jr. "The Heiress of Beach Cottage," Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, February 4, 1865, p. 309. This story was reprinted in Leslie's Ten Cent Monthly in May, 1865, and most recently in Newsboy, August, 1974.

The two contributions which were never reprinted (with the exception of Newsboy), as can be readily determined from the above list, were stories related to a specific holiday, and thus their suitability for republication was diminished.

* * *

WHAT CAME OF A VALENTINE

by Charles F. Preston
[pseudonym of Horatio
Alger, Jr.]

On the evening of the 13th of February, 1850, two young men sat in a comfortably furnished room in a large New York boarding-house. A bright fire glowed in the grate, well-chosen engravings adorned the walls, and a bright light was diffused about the room from an Argand burner.

Let me introduce the occupants of the apartment as Tom Stacy and John Wilbur, young men of twenty-five or thereabouts, who were known in business circles as Stacy & Wilbur, retail drygoods dealers, No. — Broadway. They had not been in business long, but were already doing unusually well. They had taken apartments together, one of which is now presented to the reader.

"Has it occurred to you, Wilbur," asked his partner, removing his cigar and knocking away the ashes, "that to-morrow is St. Valentine's day?"

"Yes, I thought of it this afternoon, as I was walking up from the store."

"So did I, and to some purpose, too, as I will show you."

Tom Stacy went to a drawer and drew out a gorgeous valentine, an elaborate combination of hearts, doves, etc.

"What do you think I gave for that?" he asked.

"I don't know, I'm sure. It appears to be very elegant."

"It cost me ten dollars."

"Whew!" whistled Wilbur. "It strikes me you are either very extravagant or very devoted. May I know what fair damsel is to be made glad by the receipt of this elegant missive?"

"That's my secret," said Tom, laughing. "I don't mind telling you, however. It's to go to Edith Castleton."

"I presume you feel particularly interested in the young lady?"

"Not at all. But I told her I would send her valentine, et la voila! Shan't you conform to the custom of the day?"

"I had not thought of it," said John, thoughtfully, "but I believe I will."

"And what fair lady will you select as the recipient?"

"You remember the poor seamstress who occupies an attic in the house."

"Yes, I have met her on the stairs two or three times."

"She looks as if times were hard with her. I think I'll send her a valentine."

"And what good do you think it will do her?" asked Stacy, in surprise.

"Wait till you see the kind of valentine I will send."

Wilbur went to his desk, and taking out a sheet of notepaper, drew from his portemonnaie a ten dollar bill, wrapped it in the paper, on which he had previously written, "From St. Valentine," and placed the whole in an envelope.

"There," said he, "my valentine has cost as much as yours, and I venture to say it will be as welcome."

"You are right. I wish now I had not bought this costly trifle. However, as it is purchased, I will send it."

The next day dawned clear and frosty. It was lively enough for those who sat by comfortable fires and dined at luxurious tables, but for the poor who shared none of these advantages it was indeed a bitter day.

In an attic room, meanly furnished, sat a young girl, pale and thin. She was cowering over a scanty fire, the best she could afford, which heated the room very insufficiently. She was sewing steadily, shivering from time to time as the cold blast shook the windows and found its way through crevices.

Poor child! Life had a very black aspect for her on that winter day. She was alone in the world. There was absolutely no one on whom she could call for assistance, though she needed it sorely enough. The thought came to her more than once in her discomfort, "Is it worth while living any longer?" But she recoiled from the sin of suicide. She might starve to death, but she would not take the life which God had given her.

Plunged in gloomy thought, she continued her work. All at once a step was heard ascending the narrow staircase which led to her room. Then there was a knock at the door. She arose in some surprise and opened it, thinking it must be the landlady or one of the servants.

She was right. It was a servant.

"Here's a letter for you that the postboy just brought, Miss Morris."

"A letter for me!" repeated Helen Morris, in surprise, taking it from the servant's hand. "Who can have written to me?"

"Maybe it's a valentine, miss," said the girl, laughing. "You know this is Valentine's day. More by token, I've got two myself this morning. One's a karakter (caricature?), so mistress calls it. Just look at it."

Bridgett displayed a highly embellished pictorial representation of a female hard at work at the washtub, the cast of beauty being decidedly Hibernian.

Helen Morris laughed absently, but did not open her letter while Bridget remained—a little to the disappointment of that curious damsel.

Helen slowly opened the envelope. A banknote for ten dollars dropped from it to the floor.

She eagerly read the few words on the paper—"From St. Valentine."

"Heaven be praised!" she said, folding her hands gratefully. "This sum will enable me to carry out the plan which I had in view."

Eight years passed away. Eight years with their lights and shadows, their joys and sorrows. They brought with them the merry voices of children—they brought with them new-made graves—happiness to some and grief to others.

Towards the last they brought the great commercial crisis of '57, when houses that seemed built upon a rock tottered all at once to their fall. Do not many remember that time all too well when merchants, with anxious faces, ran frantically from one to another to solicit help, and met only averted faces and distrustful looks?

And how was it in that time of universal famine with our friends—Stacy and Wilbur?

Up to 1857 they had been doing an excellent business. They had gradually enlarged the sphere of their operations and were rapidly growing rich, when this crash came.

They immediately took in sail. Both were prudent, and both felt that this was the time when this quality was urgently needed.

By great efforts they had succeeded in keeping up till the 14th of February, 1858. On that morning a note of two thousand dollars came due. This was their last peril. That surmounted they would be able to go on in assured confidence.

But, alas! this was the rock of which they had most apprehension. They had taxed their resources to the utmost. They had called upon their friends, but their friends were employed in taking care of themselves, and the selfish policy was the one required then.

"Look out for number one," superseded the golden rule for the time being.

As I have said, two thousand dollars were due on the 1st of February.

"How much have you got towards it?" asked Wilbur, as Stacy came in at half-past eleven.

"Three hundred and seventy five dollars," was the dispirited reply.

"Was that all you could raise?" inquired his partner, turning pale.

"All."

"Are you sure you thought of everybody?"

"I have been everywhere. I'm fagged to death," was the weary reply of Stacy, as he sank exhausted into a chair.

"Then the crash must come," said Wilbur, with gloomy resignation.

"I suppose it must."

There was a silence. Neither felt inclined to say anything. For six months they had been struggling with the tide. They could see shore, but in sight of it they must go down.

At this moment a note was brought in by a boy. There was no postmark. Evidently he was a special messenger.

It was opened at once by Mr. Wilbur, to whom it was directed. It contained these few words only:

"If Mr. John Wilbur will call immediately at No. — Fifth Avenue, he will learn something to his great advantage."

There was no signature.

John Wilbur read it with surprise, and passed it to his partner. "What does it mean, do you think?"

"I don't know," was the reply, "but I advise you to go at once."

"It seems to be in a feminine handwriting," said Wilbur, thoughtfully.

"Yes. Don't you know any lady on Fifth Avenue?"

"None."

"Well, it is worth noticing. We have met with so little to our advantage lately that it will be a refreshing variety."

In five minutes John Wilbur jumped into a horsecar, and was on his way to No. — Fifth Avenue.

He walked up to the door of a magnificent brown stone house, and rang the bell. He was instantly admitted and shown into the drawing-room, superbly furnished.

He did not have to wait long. An elegantly dressed lady, scarcely thirty, entered, and bowing, said, "You do not remember me, Mr. Wilbur?"

"No, madam," said he, in perplexity.

"We will waive that, then, and proceed to business. How has your house borne the crisis, in which so many of our large firms have gone down?"

John Wilbur smiled bitterly.

"We have struggled successfully till to-day," he answered. "But the end has come. Unless we can raise a certain sum of money by two, we are ruined."

"What sum will save you?" was the lady's question.

"The note due is two thousand dollars. Towards this we have but three hundred and seventy-five."

"Excuse me a moment," said his hostess. She left the room, but quickly returned.

"There," said she, handing a small strip of paper to John Wilbur, "is my cheque for two thousand dollars. You can repay it at your convenience. If you should require more, come to me again."

"Madam, you have saved us," exclaimed Wilbur, springing to his feet in delight. "What can have inspired in you such a benevolent interest in our prosperity?"

"Do you remember, Mr. Wilbur," said the lady, "a certain valentine, containing a ten dollar note, which you sent to a young girl occupying an attic room in your lodging-house, eight years since?"

"I do distinctly. I have often wondered what became of the young girl. I think her name was Helen Morris."

"She stands before you," was the quiet response.

"You, Helen Morris?" exclaimed Wilbur, starting back in amazement. "You, surrounded with luxury!"

"No wonder you are surprised. Life
(continued on page twelve)

Boys series books:

Horatio Alger never had it so good



WALL OF WORDS: Owen Cobb, of Cherry Hill, is shown among part of his collection of boys series books that date back as far as 1897. (Photo by Harvey Spector)

by Harvey Spector

You won't find "Jerry Todd and the Flying Flap-doodle" in the New York Times book review section. Nor will "Jerry Todd and the Waltzing Hen" grace the pages of the publication. Where you will find such books however are on the shelves of avid collectors of "boys series books."

Owen Cobb, of Cherry Hill, has been collecting these books for more than 20 years. His collection of "boys books" now hovers near the 900 mark with the total increasing at regular intervals.

It perhaps should be explained a bit more what "boys series books" are. Cobb said they got their start back in the 1850's via the prolific pen of Horatio Alger. Alger's work was

characterized by the stories of poor boys who rose from rags to riches. His 119 works dominated the years up to his death in 1899. His ideals and thoughts lived on however, as the years between 1920 and 1930 produced the largest segment of "boys series" writing.

An example of these types of books is the Tom Swift series—Tom Swift and whatever the marvel of the day was, such as the airplane, the electric auto, the electric rifle...also, the Rover Boys.

A spin-off series produced many years later was the Tom Swift, Jr. and the atomic whatchamacallit or solar thingamabob. The Hardy Boys mystery novels also were successors to the boys series of the 20's and 30's.

Cobb, a foreman for Grinnell Fire Protection Co. and a 35-year man with the firm, said although he has been collecting books for almost 20 years, he has pursued the hobby actively for only the past six or seven. "The hobby, he noted, is not his alone as formal collector organizations exist that meet regularly at conventions; trade books with one another and correspond through newsletters and bulletins.

"The hobby's been here for years," he said, "but it's growing." "A lot of young kids are getting into it."

"The collectors are very serious about the hobby," he said. A full fledged Horatio Alger organization exists which deals solely with Alger books and his life, he

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Boys series books

(Continued from Page 1)

added. "Tattered Tom" is the rarest Alger book to be found said Cobb, its value increasing daily.

Personally, Cobb said he has paid as much as \$25 for a hardcover copy of an Alger book. On the average however, he said most of his books are not quite so costly and have come to him through a variety of ways. Like many other devoted collectors, he has journeyed near and far to add to his collection. A trip to Maine every so often usually produces a few good finds that have been cached away in the dark recesses of someone's attic for many years.

On the appraised value of his collection, Cobb said the monetary value is not that great but the value is in completing a set or latching onto a well-preserved, rare volume. "The value of books is unending," he said. "They're not like coins or stamps which just sit there...you can read a book

over and over again and still get something out of it." Taking pride in his attractively displayed collection, Cobb discusses the variety and quality of the writing contained between the covers of the volumes. He tells of the adventure, mystery, humor and bravery portrayed in the thousands of pages of copy. Their message is the same now as then he noted.

The titles of many a novel lend themselves to incredulous speculation as to what lies ahead for the reader looking at the collection on Cobb's shelves.

"Jerry Todd and the Talking Frog," "Poppy Ott's Pedigreed Pickles," the Oliver Optic series: The Blue and the Gray on land and at sea; Invasion of the U.S. and a myriad of others.

Sort of an historian with regard to his collection, Cobb tells of the flap created back in 1916 when H. Irving Hancock wrote the "Invasion" stories. The series of four books came out

prior to the United States' entry into the first World War. They dealt with the invasion of the U.S. by Germany and chronicled the attempts by the Germans to wage war on the continental shores. Along came the war and all of a sudden printed copies of the volumes became very scarce, following the successful conclusion of the war, the books, classified somewhat as science fiction, were once again printed but copies of this day are very scarce; except on Owen Cobb's shelves where he proudly displays the four 60-year old volumes, all in excellent condition.

When asked if he has read all of the 900 books in his collection, Cobb admitted that he had read only 300-400 of the books. "My wife probably has read more of them than I have," he conceded.

The collecting aspect, as mentioned before, is a thorough procedure that requires diligence and

perseverance. "I usually go bookhunting on weekends," he said, "but nowadays you have to go out of town because Philadelphia has practically nothing any more."

The Dime Novel Roundup, started in 1924, and the Newsboy, the newsletter of the Horatio Alger organization, keep fellow members in touch with one another and aware of what's going on in the world of boys books. To further organize the hobby, Harry Hudson, another collector, has put together a "Bibliography of Hard Cover Boys Books" that is considered by many book collectors as the "Bible of book collectors" according to Cobb.

This clipping was sent to me by Owen Cobb, PF-473, of Cherry Hill, New Jersey. He hastens to correct the reference (first line, this page) to Tattered Tom being the rarest Alger, affirming that this mistake was the reporter's fault, and not his. As he writes in a letter to me, "If you print the article in Newsboy, please be sure to make it clear that the reference to Tattered Tom was a misquote. I wouldn't want to be laughed out of the Society."

ing to Cobb.

"They don't write 'em like they used to" should be Owen Cobb's credo as he neatly tucks the volume of Jerry Todd and the Flying Flapdoodle back into its cubbyhole. The row upon row of books now bear mute testimony to the hours of pleasure afforded readers of a bygone day when Tom Swift zoomed through the countryside in his new fan-gled auto-mobile and boy heroes saved the country from the throes of defeat. They just don't write 'em like they used to.

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has strange contrasts. The money which you sent me seemed to come from God. I was on the brink of despair. With it I put my wardrobe in repair, and made application for the post of companion to a wealthy lady. I fortunately obtained it. I had been with her but two years when a gentleman in her circle, immensely wealthy, offered me his hand in marriage. I esteemed him. He was satisfied with that. I married him. A year since he died, leaving me this house and an immense fortune. I had never forgotten you, having accidentally learned that my timely succor came from you. I resolved, if fortune ever put it in my power, I would befriend you as you befriended me. That time has come. I have paid the first instalment of my debt. Helen Eustace remembers the obligations of Helen Morris."

John Wilbur advanced, and respectfully took her hand. "You have nobly repaid me," he said. "Will you also award me the privilege of occasionally calling upon you?"

"I shall be most happy," said Mrs. Eustace, cordially.

John took a hurried leave, and returned to his store as the clock struck one. He showed his delighted partner the cheque which he had just received. "I haven't time to explain," he said, "this must at once be cashed."

Two o'clock came and the firm were [sic] saved—saved from their last peril. Henceforth they met with nothing but prosperous gales.

What more?

Helen Eustace has again changed her name. She is now Helen Wilbur, and her husband now lives at No. — Fifth Avenue.

And all this came of a valentine.

* * *

Don't forget — "Booked in Boston,"
May 12-13-14-15, 1977.

* * *

RANDOM REPORTS FROM ALGERLAND

by Jack Bales

George May recently sent me a fundraising message from Bradley University in Peoria, Illinois. A quotation from Alger's famous poem, "John Maynard," is on the page, and Horatio is mentioned. One part of it reads: "Our contributions may never be as great as that of . . . John Maynard, but the little that we give entitles each of us . . ."

New HAS member Louis Bodnar has a few western magazines for sale, priced at \$0.45 each. The dates are from 1951 to 1955. Send him stamped, self-addressed envelope for list.

John Sullivan sent me a copy of the November, 1976, issue of Uphill Racer, the official publication of Friendship Facilities. An article in it tells of John's month long visit to Peru, South America.

Herb Risteen writes: I recently picked up a first edition (Lee and Shepard, 1899) of an Oliver Optic title—An Undivided Union—one of the "Blue and Gray on Land" Series. I am surprised to find that the title page credits the book to Oliver Optic, but underneath his name is the statement, 'Completed by Edward Stratemeyer.' It is news to me that Stratemeyer ever completed an Optic title. Perhaps some of the Society members have knowledge as to whether this is the only Optic title he completed, or if there were others."

Herb writes again: "Recently I made a discovery that shows there are still book treasures to be found. I learned of an elderly lady who was closing up her house and had found thirty-six Oliver Optic titles in a trunk in her attic. These books are real beauties, all Lee and Shepard titles (six complete series), in very good to fine condition, dating at the turn of the century and earlier."

Thanks, Herb, for writing. I hope that someone in the Society can answer the question you ask.