

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

# Newsboy



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

*Horatio Alger, Jr.*

1832 - 1899

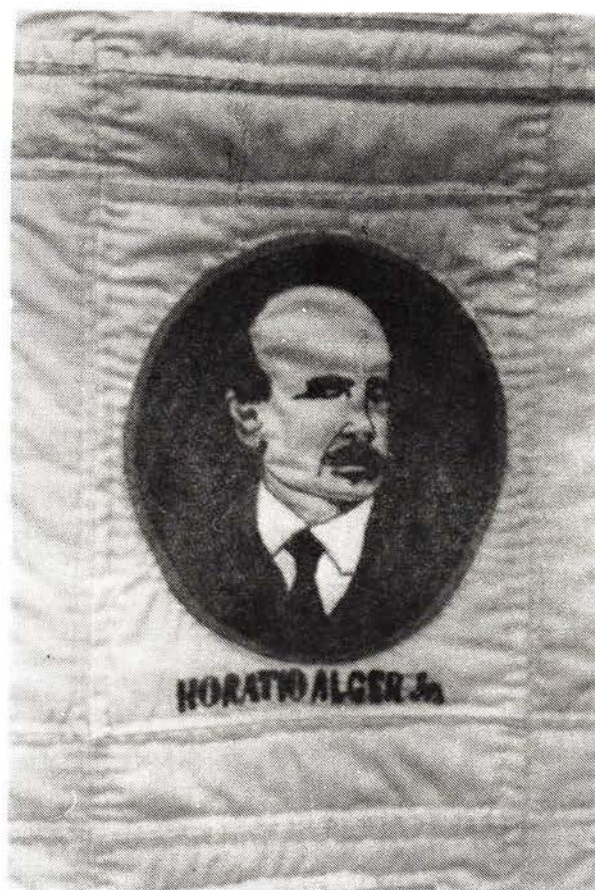


Founded 1961 by Forrest Campbell & Kenneth B. Butler

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Number 9



These two pictures are of an "Alger quilt" designed by Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Keeney. Ralph writes: "I drew the designs of Alger's books on the quilt blocks and my wife transferred them to the cloth, then embroidered them and quilted the quilt. There are 49 blocks, 8 x 10 inches, and the overall size of the quilt is 86 inches by 71 inches. We are scheduled to display the quilt and some other Alger material here at the Wasco County Library later this month."



## HORATIO ALGER SOCIETY

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

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

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

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

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

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

\* \* \*

## NEW MEMBERS REPORTED

PF-578 Rob Lockhart  
1609 South Davis Drive  
Arlington, Texas 76013

Rob works at "Six Flags Over Texas," and he learned of HAS from a friend who sells Grit (a newspaper). Besides Algers, he collects Rover Boys, the original Tom Swift volumes, and post cards. He is currently looking for Fame and Fortune, Rough and Ready, and Ben the Luggage Boy, and Rufus and Rose.

\* \* \*

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

Offered by William Russell, 240 E. County Line Road, Hatboro, Pa. 19041.  
Tel.: 215-672-9285 (after 6:00 P.M.)

Bound to Rise, Sink or Swim, Strong and Steady, Try and Trust, Donohue editions in excellent condition. \$22.00 for the lot.

Offered by Rohima Walter, 1307 Greenbush St., LaFayette, Ind. 47904

Andy Grant's Pluck	Dono.	F	\$4.00
Bob Burton	Dono.	G	6.00
Bob Burton	Gold.	G	6.00
Cast Upon the Breakers,			
(first edition, 1974, signed by Ralph Gardner, Doubleday)			25.00
C. Codman's Cruise	Dono.	G	4.00
Chester Rand	Dono.	P	4.00
Driven from Home	Hurst	G	6.00
Driven from Home	Mershon	G	7.00
Erie Train Boy	Hurst	G	8.00
Errand Boy	Burt	G	8.00
Fame and Fortune	Winston	Ex	25.00
Helen Ford	HTC	G	25.00
Helping Himself	Dono.	F	4.00
Helping Himself	Gold.	G	6.00
In a New World	Dono.	F	4.00
Luke Walton	Hurst	G	8.00
Paul the Peddler	Dono.	F	4.00
Paul the Peddler	Burt	G	15.00
P. Prescott's Charge	Winston	G	25.00
Phil the Fiddler	Winston	F	8.00
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Sam's Chance	Dono.	F	\$4.00
Shifting for Himself	Burt	G	25.00
S. Snobden's Office Boy		Ex	15.00
(Doubleday, 1973, signed by R. Gardner)			
Sink or Swim	Dono.	G	4.00
Slow and Sure	Hurst	G	8.00
Slow and Sure	Winston	G	25.00
Struggling Upward	Burt	G	15.00
T. Thatcher's Fortune	Burt	G	15.00
The Train Boy	Burt	G	15.00
W. Sherwood's Probation			
	Winston	G	25.00
Young Explorer	Hurst	G	8.00
Young Musician	Dono.	G	4.00
Young Outlaw	Hurst	G	8.00
Young Outlaw	Burt	G	15.00
T. Thatcher's Fortune	Burt	G	15.00
Digging for Gold	Winston	G	25.00

The above is only a partial list of the books that Rohima has for sale. Write her for a complete list.

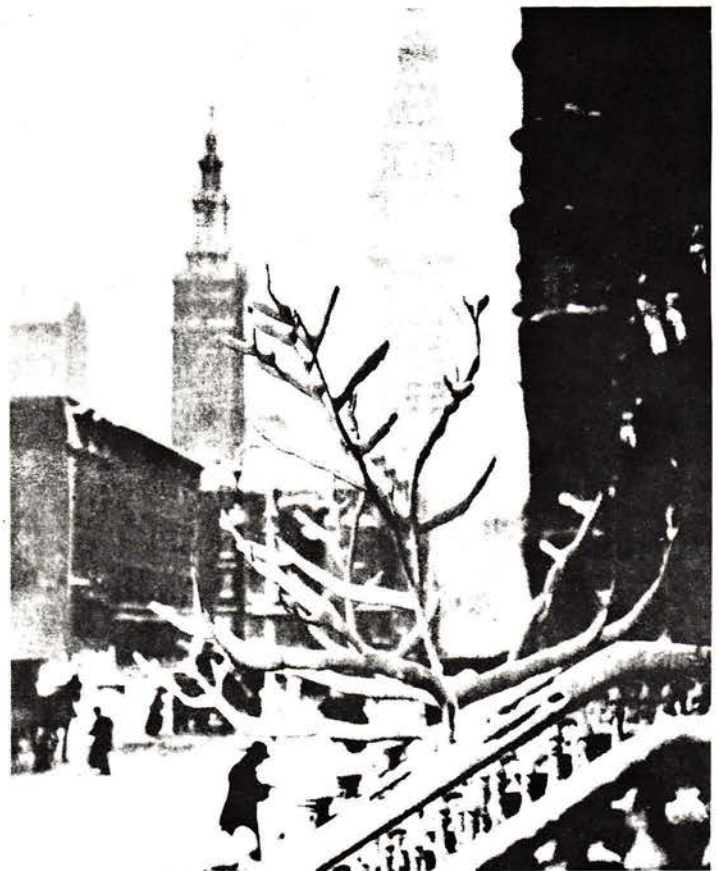
Abbreviations used in this month's BOOK MART: Dono. = Donohue, Gold. = Goldsmith, HTC = Henry T. Coates, F = Fair, G = Good, P = Poor, Ex = Excellent

#### OUT AMONG THE NEWSBOYS

And a Little Conversation  
With the Bootblacks

(The following article is from the collection of Newsboy editor Jack Bales. It originally appeared in the August 17, 1879 issue of the New York Times).

Any one who, walking down Chatham-street, is thin enough to squeeze through the very small opening loft between the useless elevated railroad steps and the brick wall, finds, at the corner of Frankfort-street, a collection of bootblacks large enough, certainly, to blacken anything short of the character of a travelling showman, and eager enough for business to satisfy the most exacting employer, if they had one. Bootblacks to-day, and newsboys to-morrow, just as it happens, these boys—there are seven of them—haunt the lamp-post and the corner steps from early in the morning till late in the evening, dressed in all the finery that Chatham street and back doors will give up to them, but all of them grand and glorious



Madison Ave., New York City, 1890's

in bright blue flannel caps, as flat on the top as some of their little heads are. These blue caps were for some time a mystery to the common public, but the mystery, instead of deepening, soon explained itself. A Times reporter who has a large number of acquaintances among the newsboys and bootblacks, (and some not altogether unpleasant ones,) the result of attending several newsboys' picnics, made some inquiries of one of the blue tops.

"Well, you see," said blue-top, "Steve Brodie"—

That was enough. There was no need of any further explanation. Steve Brodie, the Napoleon of newsboys, the G. Washington of bootblacks, wore a blue cap when he walked in Gilmore's Garden, against some of the professional pedestrians; so every newsboy or bootblack who could afford it, must buy one, if he would be in the fashion.



"Steve Brodie," the boy continued, "wears one, and they's cheap; so we all wears 'em."

"And where is Brodie now? Has he gone back to selling papers?"

"Oh, Lordy, no; I sh'd say not. Why he's got piles of cash. He didn't make nothing much in that last walk, because he didn't win. They say a lady give him \$400 because he beat Hughes' time, but he says that's not so, and I guess it ain't. But they took up a collection for him, and he's rich. He's walking in Philadelphia now."

"All live down in the Newsboy's Lodging-house?" the shiner continued, in reply to a question; "yes, most all of us. There's only seven of us belongs reg'lar on this corner. We's always been here. Then there's three of four more hangs around, but they've no business here, and we've just begun to drive them away. We'd just as lief they'd stay and make a little, the poor chicks; but you see if we gets too many here, the Police kicks and the hotel people kicks, and they drive us all away; so we don't allow no more than us seven."

"How do you keep away any other boot-blacks that want to come here?"

"Oh, that's easy enough. I'll tell you how. On Saturday there was a great big fellow, as big as you, came on here from Boston. He said he couldn't make a livin' there, because there the boys has to pay half they make to the boss blacker as has charge of 'em, so he was goin' to black in New-York. He settled down on our corner, and made a big day of it, and we didn't at all. We talked it over, and yesterday I went to him, and I says: 'Look a here, young feller, you'd better move on. You can't black no more boots on this here corner.' He jest laughed at me, and says he, 'You better keep yer eyes peeled, all you fellers. I paralyzed a gang jest like yous afore I left Boston, and I'll paralyze you if you don't mind yourselves.' So we all come over at

him, and took him in hand. He was pretty big, but we fixed him. After he was well licked, he went and got a policeman, but when the policeman come we wasn't here. Lordy, I wonder where we was about that time. It was so funny we wasn't here. I met the Boston chap this morning in the City Hall Park. He said it was all right; that was fair enough, and he was doing very well."

"Smoke? Oh, yes, I smoke; I'll have to trouble you for a light. No, we don't make a great deal of money; there's too many of us. Eyetalian cheap labor gives us a hard pull. There ain't no boys blackin' up town, now, hardly; they're all Eyetalians, big grown up men. We can average about \$1 a day, if we try, here on this corner. But there's some of the boys has to whack up. You see, a boy gets a job workin' at something, and then his box ain't doin' nothin', and he lends it to some boy what ain't got any box, and the boy has to give him half. So them boys only make 50 cents, and sometimes not that much. Go hungry? No, not often. Sometimes we have to skip a meal, just for the sake of our stomachs, you know."

The newsboys and bootblacks are not always the dirty little imps they are represented to be. The Newsboys' Home, in Duane-street, has done a world of good for them, and the founders of it can see every day, if they look for them, evidences of their good work that are worth many times more than the interest on their money. There are plenty of ragged and dirty little specimens who come out of the tenement-houses to turn an honest or dishonest penny with newspaper or brush, but the real professionals, the "regulars," in both branches of the business, are in much better condition than they were a few years ago. Considering the natural antipathy of the hearty boy to cold water—the Murray Hill boy, sometimes, as well as the Five Points boy—these boys are usually clean, particularly those who live in the Newsboys' Lodging-house. The writer had occasion a few



days ago to take one of these boys on the river to pull the rudder-strings of a boat, and, in the interval before the starting time, the boy washed his face, blacked his shoes, and brushed his clothes, making himself as respectable-looking a boy as any one could want. In the course of several hours' companionship he proved as polite and respectful as most boys. His continual chewing of tobacco was nothing more than he had learned from his betters.

"Yes, I live in the Newsboys' Home," the blue cap continued, putting away his brushes. "Supper is 6 cents, and breakfast is 6; and lodging the same, if we get in before 9 o'clock. After 9 it costs us 7 cents, and if we don't get in till after 10 it costs 11 cents. Dinner is 20 cents, but we generally eat somewheres outside. A man can get a very good dinner now outside for 15 or 20 cents." Have some money left? Yes, when we make a dollar a day we has some left. It's hard to keep, though, there's so many things to spend it on. There's a bank in the lodging-house, and for every dollar we put in they pay us 5 cents interest every month. There's places there to wash, and plenty of towels. A feller can't be dirty there unless he's lazy."

Another of the blue-caps had a serious charge to make against the Newsboys' Home. "Don't you see how thin and pale the boys is all lookin'?" said he. "Some of 'em is just about dead, and it's all because they don't get enough to eat. Down at the lodgin' house they don't give them nothing but bread and molasses, and that ain't enough for nobody to live on. Why, there was one feller went to a doctor, he was so sick, and the doctor said he had consumption, all from eating bread and molasses. It kills the boys off. It ain't right. Live down there? No, I don't live there. I used to; but somebody throwed stones at the Superintendent, and they said it was me and turned me out. It wasn't me. So now I live over in the Brooklyn Lodgin'-house. That's not so big as this one, but we don't have to eat bread and molasses."

Inquiry proved that the base suspicion against this young man in the matter of throwing stones had rather prejudiced his mind against the institution; for the other boys were unanimous in saying that the fare is good at the lodging-house, and the treatment excellent. The worst complaint that any of them could make against it was that a ferocious person with a strap goes around in the morning among the boys, who are not inclined to get up at a reasonable hour, and plays a reveille upon such bare legs as he can find. The seven blue-capped boys who congregate on the corner mentioned, are only seven drops in the sea of boot-blacks and newsboys in the down-town streets. Within a circle of half a mile diameter, with the City Hall for the centre, there are at least 250 boot-blacks, and newsboys innumerable, the numbers of the latter changing with the hours of the day. The iron gratings on the margin of Printing-house Square, with warm air coming up from the engines beneath, and sometimes steam, that are favorite lodging-places for the youngsters in Winter, are deserted at this time of the year, when the boys can make themselves comfortable on any convenient step, or on the sidewalk, if no step offers.

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#### NEWSBOY BOOK REVIEW

by Jack Bales

Fifth Avenue: A VERY Social History.  
By Kate Simon. New York: Harcourt  
Brace Jovanovich, 1978. Bibliography.  
372 pages. Hardbound: \$12.95.

Some histories of cities, boulevards, or events can be boring tomes of miscellaneous facts, all strung together on a common theme but with little regard for continuity or readability. Happily, this is not the case with perennial traveler Kate Simon's Fifth Avenue: A VERY Social History. All Alger readers who have savored the juvenile author's palatable descriptions of the teeming metropolis of New York will revel in this volume. Like Alger, Simon discusses the infamous "Five Points," the "deepest pit of pestilence [and] of



depravity, dissolution, vice and drunkenness." She speaks irreverently of the richest people of the day, noting that on a New York association to clean up the city's slums was "the giant slumlord, Astor," and that Andrew Carnegie "was devious and ruthless and given to moral homilies while he broke men to splinters."

But what I found more engaging than these stories of the robber barons were the tales of New York high society life. The balls and parties receive abundant attention in the book, as well they should, for in the nineteenth century an invitation by Mrs. Astor to one of her parties was the highest accolade paid an aspiring social climber. Simon spares no details, and prices paid for food, drink, and costumes are liberally given. Illustrations also abound.

"To say that Mrs. William Kissam Vanderbilt, nee Alva Smith of Mobile, was socially ambitious is merely to say that she was very rich and fierce in a driving time, a time that gave an energetic, unhappily married and intelligent woman of means no other large outlet. Alva's first triumph was hooking a Vanderbilt. Victory number two was the most fanciful and expensive house on Fifth Avenue. Victory number three was an invitation to the annual Patriarchs' Ball. Victory number four and the knockout blow occurred during the preparations for the first ball held in the new house in 1883. Its advent trumpeted long before, like a coronation, it pricked society into forming a swarming hive around a new queen bee. Troops of seamstresses were put to work on miles of brocades and lace, jewelers searched their design books for adaptations from Cellini, carriages were burnished to high glitter. . . . Young Carrie Astor, Caroline's daughter, . . . was dis-invited by Alva because, as she explained, Carrie's mother had never called on her so how could she, in all justice and in keeping with accepted social procedure, invite Carrie or her mother? Bowing to Carrie's importunities and the exigencies that beset a

mother with daughters to ease into important circles, Mrs. Astor reluctantly unbent and had her footman deliver a card at the chateau portal. The Vanderbilts had made it."

Besides these glorious pictures, Simon talks of the unhappy marriages made only for "social" reasons and of the abundant mistresses that New York millionaires cared for. In emergencies, the men would send for Madame Restell, the "high society abortionist," who after being arrested by do-gooder Anthony Comstock [see Newsboy, January-February, 1976, & April, 1977], cut her throat in her bathtub. "Consternation to terror shook a fair segment of the married male population of the city; the police had found explicit records and Bennett of the Herald was champing to publish them."

A final chapter - "The Scene 1975-1977" - rapidly eyes New York life as it exists today, with the young musicians begging for money side by side with the teenage girl extolling the Word of God. There are the ubiquitous vendors of hot dogs, pretzels, and chestnuts, all creating an almost nostalgic yearning to be in this social and financial capital of the United States.

Fifth Avenue: A VERY Social History is an excellent and fast moving volume and I recommend it highly. I only wish that there were an index and a chapter by chapter bibliography with perhaps a few footnotes. They are regrettable omissions.

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REMEMBER THE HAS AUCTION

In order to raise much needed money for the Alger Society, each year at the convention we hold an auction of donated items. Please keep HAS in the black. Mail donations - they don't have to be Alger books - to Convention Chairman Dale Thomas at 5397 E. 132nd St., Garfield Heights, Ohio 44125. Your generosity is greatly appreciated. Help us to go over last year's mark of \$1400 raised!!!



# HORATIO ALGER SOCIETY 15<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MEETING



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





# A CHANCE — FOR — Every Reader of The Argosy

**\$2,625 in prizes, the first of what we design to be a regular Monthly Contest for our readers.**

*I hereby certify that I have written for THE ARGOSY a Prize Story, of over two thousand words and under two thousand five hundred. The exact number of words I do not know myself, but am certain that it is somewhere between two thousand and two thousand five hundred.*

HORATIO ALGER, JR.

New York, September 7th, 1892.

The foregoing letter by Mr. Alger refers to a PRIZE STORY that he has written especially for THE ARGOSY, which will be published in THE ARGOSY Number 523. The following prizes will be given to those guessing nearest to the exact number of words.



## 1st Prize

## \$135 Safety Bicycle

of the best grade (either Columbia or Victor) as the winner may prefer. This machine will have all the latest improvements and will represent in every respect the highest grade of workmanship.

## List of Prizes for First Monthly Contest,

	Value
One Bicycle	\$135
One Row Boat	75
One Solid Gold Watch, Man's	50
One Solid Gold Watch, Lady's	40
One Photograph Camera	35
One Sewing Machine	30
One Repeating Rifle	25
One Silver Watch	15
One Hundred Copies "The Wooing" 20x24, framed in white and gold \$5 each	500
Twenty Photograph Cameras \$5 each	100
One Hundred Yearly Subscriptions to Munsey's Magazine \$3 each	300
One Hundred Bound Volumes Munsey's Magazine \$2 each	200
One Hundred Yearly Subscriptions to The Argosy \$2 each	200
One Hundred Bound Volumes of The Argosy \$1.50 each	150

## Conditions.

Every one is free to enter this contest. All guesses must be written on the regular coupon which will be found on page two of THE ARGOSY. No guess will be allowed if written on anything but this printed coupon. It requires a set of coupons, 515, 516, 517, and 518, to entitle one to enter this contest. But each set of coupons gives one four guesses. Any one can send as many sets of coupons as he likes and each set will count him four guesses. For instance, if one sends one set of coupons he is credited with four guesses—two sets of coupons, eight guesses—three sets, twelve guesses, and so on. One set of coupons gives one one chance in a trifle over 124 of hitting the exact number of words in Mr. Alger's story, since there are only 49 numbers between 2000 and 2500.

2 sets of Coupons gives one chance in a fraction over .62	7 sets one chance in a fraction over 17
3 sets one chance in a fraction over 41	8 " " " " " 15
4 " " " " " 31	9 " " " " " 13
5 " " " " " 24	10 " " " " " 12
6 " " " " " 20	11 " " " " " 11
	12 " " " " " 10

Extra copies of The Argosy can be had from Newsdealers or direct from the Publishers.

The one who guesses nearest to the exact number of words in the story, will receive the Bicycle, the one making the next nearest guess will get the Boat, and so on. In case, however, that more than one person should guess the exact number of words in Mr. Alger's prize story the Bicycle will be awarded to the one whose correct guess is received first at the office of THE ARGOSY. For this reason it is advisable that each coupon be filled out and forwarded to the publishers of THE ARGOSY without delay. The date and time of day will be marked on each coupon as it is received. The one whose correct guess is the second received will get the second prize. The one whose correct guess is the third received will get the third prize, and so on.

All guesses must be received at this office on or before November 10th.

## OUR PRIZE CONTEST.

THE contest that began in last week's ARGOSY is one that, we believe, will interest every reader. There is a generous list of prizes, and when it is considered that there are only 499 numbers between 2000 and 2500 it will be plain that the task of guessing close to the correct number of words in Mr. Alger's story is not very difficult. The story will not be published until all guesses are in—will not even leave Mr. Alger's hands. This makes it certain that no one connected with THE ARGOSY in any way will have the remotest advantage over all other contestants. If this contest meets with the approval that we believe it will receive, we shall run a regular monthly contest—starting a new one every four weeks.

Coupon No. 515.

Publishers THE ARGOSY, New York.

Dear Sirs:—I guess that the Prize Story by HORATIO ALGER, JR., which will appear in THE ARGOSY in Number 520, will contain \_\_\_\_\_ words.

Name, \_\_\_\_\_

Town, \_\_\_\_\_

State, \_\_\_\_\_

Date, \_\_\_\_\_

HAS member Paul Miller sent the material on this page. "Tom Parker's Strange Visitor" appeared in the December 17, 1892 issue of The Argosy.



## AUNT CLARE'S ADVICE,

BY O. AUGUSTA CHENEY.

"I CANNOT tell you how disturbed I am Ella, but I do feel really pained by your behavior."

"There is no need of your telling me so; I am sure you look glum enough."

"I really feel grieved to know that you care so little for my wishes."

"I'm sure I didn't know that you intended bringing company home to dinner."

"I told you this morning, before I left the house that I should bring home my friend, Fred Lincoln, who has just returned from Europe after three years absence."

"I must have been either asleep or reading."

"You were reading, returned he, "but as you answered me, I suppose you understood what I said."

"Well," returned she, petulantly, "I didn't marry to become a slave or to be treated like a child. It seems to me you are always complaining about something that I have done which doesn't suit you. It is a pity that you married one who is constantly disturbing you."

"You are a very different person from what you were when we married, Ella, replied, he, sadly, "Then you considered it a pleasure to contribute to my happiness; but now you seem to care very little about it."

"I don't see as I have changed any. I didn't suppose you expected me to go into the kitchen to work."

"You know very well that I wish nothing of the kind. I do not doubt that Katy is capable of doing all there is to be done there. If not I will get some one to assist her. But she needs some one to see that she does what she ought to do, and also does it in a proper manner."

Mrs. Morrison remained silent.

"This morning," continued he, "I sent home a brace of ducks, but when I returned, bringing my friend with me, I found the dinner consisted of a few scraps of cold meat—I must say I felt quite mortified."

"I don't see but you are wasting words talking about it; I'm sure I'm sorry, but that won't help the matter any."

If this were the last time the thing were likely to happen, I should not say more. As it is, I feel very much disturbed, and if anything of the kind occurs again, I shall try to find some way to remedy it."

Saying this, Robert Morrison left the room, while his wife sank back into the arm chair from which she had risen at her husband's entrance, and continued reading.

Robert and Ella Morrison had been married five years; but their married life had not been productive of happiness.

At first Ella had taken pains to please her husband, and had studied to please him in every particular. But as time passed on, she gave up more and more of the management of the household affairs to Katy the servant, and spent most of her time in reading. Before her marriage Ella had

been a beauty and a belle. Her mother had never allowed her to do anything in the kitchen. She was usually engaged, either with fancy work or in reading the last novel.

On the contrary. Robert's mother was one of those domestic women who seem, without any apparent effort, to make every one around her comfortable and happy. Everything was done in the right time and the right place. If anything in her domestic affairs went wrong, none of her family could see any difference in her appearance as they gathered in the dining-room after tea.

How well Robert remembered the pleasant evenings passed at home! There was a large family of them—five brothers and four sisters. The last winter that the children had all been at home, each of the boys had worked himself a pair of slippers with worsted on canvas, while one of the sisters either read from some book in which they were all interested, or played some familiar tune in which they all joined.

When Robert married Ella Wallace he had hoped that his home might be bright and cheerful, like the one he had left. But he had yet to learn that the little faults which in a lover's eyes seemed trifling defects which time would modify, grew alarmingly when there was no need of concealment.

Ella was vain of her beauty, and usually took pains with her dress, but if she happened to sit down to read before dressing herself for the day, her husband invariably found her with uncombed hair and soiled wrapper, when he came home to dinner.

Matters continued to grow worse. One day Robert proposed hiring a housekeeper, but Ella would not listen to it.

"I am not willing to have a housekeeper," said she, "the first thing I shall know she will be dictating to me. I prefer to be mistress in my own house."

"But what am I to do?" said he. "I never dare to bring a friend home to dine with me for fear I may find no dinner prepared. I always mean to provide everything that you wish, but that is all I can do. The cooking depends on the orders you give Katy."

"I'm sure, Robert, you needn't be so unreasonable. I always mean to have everything in nice order when I know you are expecting company."

"But I wish to feel that I may bring home a friend without giving notice beforehand. My mother was always prepared for an extra person at every meal."

"I don't pretend to be such a paragon as your mother. You are always telling me how superior she was."

"I seldom speak of it, but it is none the less true. However, I don't expect it will make any difference with you. But I cannot stop longer. As there is no dinner prepared for me I must dine at a restaurant. I shall not be at home till late this evening, so you needn't sit up for me." And without waiting for a reply, he left the house.

Ella did not continue reading. She had just finished the novel as her husband entered. Instead of considering whether she might not be to blame,



she, like many weak-minded people, fancied herself abused, and began to cry.

Just then her Aunt Clara came in.

"What's the matter now, Ella? You are the last one I should expect to find in tears."

"It's because I'm miserable, Aunt Clara."

"Well, there's one thing about it, if one must be miserable, it's a good thing to have such pleasant surroundings—that is it would be pleasant here if things were in order. But what is the special cause of the misery to-day?"

"Why, dinner wasn't quite ready when Robert came home, and he wouldn't wait; and he isn't coming home till late to-night. I hardly see him at all now. Oh, Aunt Clara, you don't know how much unhappiness you are saved by never having married."

"That may be or may not," said her aunt. "But I think there is reason enough why your husband should not like to stay at home more. He has always been accustomed to a neat, well-ordered house before marriage—"

"Yes, he is always throwing that at me. His mother did thus and so, and I don't. But of course, no two have ways alike."

"That is very true. But before you married, you never considered it too much trouble to make yourself look attractive in his eyes. Now, I seldom come here without finding you, as I do to-day, in a soiled wrapper and with uncombed hair."

"I didn't suppose he expected me to dress up whenever he came into the house."

"Neither does he, but he wishes to see you looking neat. Do you ever play for him in the evening?"

"No—in fact, he is seldom at home evenings."

"And yet I know of few who think more of home than he does. I daresay he almost always finds you reading a novel when he comes home."

"Well, I have a taste for reading and I don't see why I shouldn't gratify it."

"But haven't you time enough when he is not at home? Or, what would be better still, why don't you invite him to read in the evening, while you are sewing?"

"He doesn't like the same kind of books that I do."

"It would do you good to hear a little solid reading now and then. And I daresay he would enjoy reading a good story occasionally. You may depend upon it, Ella, if you do not try to make home attractive to your husband, he will soon seek pleasure elsewhere. There are many miserable and neglected wives who bring their misery upon themselves."

"It's all very well for you to say this, but you never have been married, and you don't understand about it. Of course Robert takes it for granted that I love him. He doesn't expect me to keep telling him of it."

"As to my not understanding about it, that may or may not be. I've a notion that human nature's about the same the world over. If you do love your husband, he may not expect to hear you tell him of it in so many words, but he will not suppose that you would treat him

with more indifference than you would a stranger."

"I'm sure I always mean to treat him well," said Ella, in surprise.

"You certainly do not study his wishes much or you would have dinner more punctually."

"One can't always be punctual. It takes just about so long to get dinner; I always allow time enough, but something almost always happens that one don't expect."

"Then let Katy begin half an hour earlier. It is better to have dinner ready a few minutes too early than too late."

Aunt Clara soon departed, and Ella was left alone. "Could it be," she asked herself, "that Robert was becoming estranged from her?" The idea startled her, and she resolved to make an effort to prevent it.

The next morning Ella rose early. She superintended the preparations for breakfast herself. Everything came on to the table in complete order. The coffee was delicious, the biscuit light and feathery and the steak was done to a turn.

Robert was astonished at the change. Ella was seldom up in season to breakfast with him, but here she was, neatly dressed and ready to pour the coffee.

They chatted together during breakfast, and Robert found Ella so agreeable that he hardly wished to leave the house, fearing that on his return he might find her transformed back again to the untidy wife of yesterday.

Just after her husband had gone to the store, a poor woman who had been burnt out the week before, called to see if Mrs. Morrison had any partly worn clothing that she could spare her.

"Yes," said Ella, a sudden thought occurring to her, "I have some things that I can spare, but they are not picked up. Call here this afternoon, and I will have a package ready for you."

As soon as the woman had left, Ella went up to her chamber. Confusion seemed to reign there. Every chair was filled with piles of clothing. Dresses were hung over the foot of the bed, and the dressing-table and bureau were each covered with small articles.

"I'm sure," said she, "I hardly know where to begin. I really didn't know my chamber was in such a state. Aunt Clara was right. I have something else to do beside reading novels. Here is my work-basket fairly overwhelmed with a pile of mending that had accumulated. I bought a pair of slippers yesterday, thinking I had none, but here are three quite good pairs. That reminds me that I had a case made of cashmere, made specially to contain boots and shoes, given me on Christmas. I will get a hammer and tacks, and fasten it on the inside of the closet door, and arrange the slippers and boots in it."

Ella gathered up the old letters, and put them into a box. She made a bundle of three half-worn wrappers, with other clothing, for the poor woman, and afterwards made up her bed. Then she called Katy to sweep the chamber, while she put the rooms to rights.

Never before had Ella gone to work so earnestly. Chambers, closets, sitting-room and kitchen, all



were put to rights. Then she went round and dusted them all.

As soon as it drew near evening, Ella brought out Robert's dressing-gown and slippers, and placed them near the fire. Then she arranged the tea-table with as tempting a repast as the house afforded. Katy was sent out for a bouquet.

"Sure, ma'am," said Katy, in astonishment, "is it company your expecting to-night?"

"No," said Ella, "but it is New Year's night, and I thought I would celebrate a little."

Katy soon returned with a small bunch of violets.

"Sure, ma'am, that's all I could get. There's hardly a flower to be got for love or money."

"That'll do very well, Katy. Put it in the low vase on the table."

Just then the poor woman came, and was made happy by a large bundle of clothing.

It was nearly time for Robert to be home. Ella sat down to the piano, and commenced playing a familiar tune.

In the morning Robert had gone to the store, feeling quite encouraged that Ella had got up in season to breakfast with him. He hoped it might be typical of a change for the better.

All day long had he thought of the change, and wondered what caused it. It was a very busy day with him, and he had told Ella that he could not come till evening.

As he approached the house, he heard the sound of music, but he could not distinguish whence it came.

"If it were only Ella playing, how pleased I should be!" thought he.

As he came nearer, he found that the music proceeded from his own house. He mounted the steps, opened the door, and entered. Yes, it was indeed Ella, and she was playing one of his favorite pieces.

Through the open door he saw the tea-table neatly laid, and everything ready for the evening meal. The bunch of violets did not escape his attention.

"Are you expecting company, Ella?" asked he, in surprise.

"Yes," said she, "that is I have been expecting company, but it has come now," said she, with a smile.

"In that case," returned he, "I must go up and brush my hair in order to make myself presentable."

"Do tell me," said he, as he came down stairs, "what has taken place. I find there has been a revolution up stairs, as well as down stairs. Everything is in the nicest order, and a happy-faced little wife waiting to greet me. What does it all mean?"

"It means that to-day is New Year's day, and in reviewing the past, I find that it is not satisfactory to me, and I fear that it has not been to you. So I have turned over a new leaf, and hope to make our lives, during the coming year, brighter than they have been in the year just past. But you have no engagement to take you away from home this evening, Robert, have you?"

"No, indeed. Do not fear any engagements to

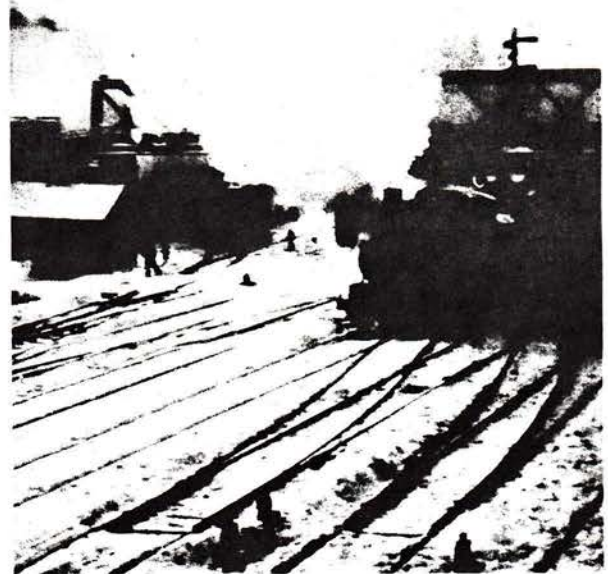
take me away from home, evenings, so long as I have a pleasant home to enjoy. Just sing 'Sweet Home' for me, Ella, and then we will have our supper."

Ella sat down to the piano, and Robert joined her in singing. As they finished the song, one could see, by the expression of their faces, that they fully appreciated the closing words—

"Home, home! Sweet, sweet home!

Be it ever so humble there's no place like home!"

The story on the last three pages is by Horatio Alger's sister, Olive Augusta Cheney. It is from the collection of HAS member Morris Olsen and it originally appeared in the December, 1884 issue of Gleason's Monthly Companion. Thanks go to Morris for sending it to me.



'In the New York Central Yards' 1890's



# ITALIAN CHILD SLAVERY AND THE PADRONE SYSTEM

by  
Douglas Tarr

(Editor's preface: I intend to serialize this paper in Newsboy. It was one of a half dozen submitted in 1976 to Professor Clyde C. Gelbach (a HAS member) of Indiana University of Pennsylvania as part of a class requirement. (Ralph Gardner was a lecturer on Alger at the university. See December, 1976 Newsboy, page 20). Douglas Tarr presents an informative and smooth flowing history of the padrone system, and I think Newsboy readers will enjoy his work as much as I do.

Perhaps this preface of mine should be titled, "Shattering the Myths Surrounding Horatio Alger." Tarr reaches the same conclusion that I did when I researched the padrone system - that Alger's book Phil, the Fiddler could not have been the "exposé" that people have made it out to be, simply because the padrone system existed for years after the book was published!! It probably awakened public interest in the plight of the Italian street children, but it just cannot be termed the significant factor which brought about the padrone system's eventual demise.

The immediate question that comes to mind is, "How did this theory start?" Perhaps it was due to story paper writers with overactive imaginations. Perhaps Alger himself may have had a hand in furthering the myth, even if merely for reasons of vanity. An important piece of biographical material is the Alger sketch in the October 17, 1885 issue of The Golden Argosy. One paragraph reads:

"To show the power wielded by a writer with the genius of Mr. Alger, it may be said that his story of 'Phil, the Fiddler,' who was an Italian musician, was the cause of the almost immediate stoppage of the nefarious traffic of the Italian padrones, who leased the boys of their parents in

Southern Italy and subjected them to the severest treatment in order to gratify their greed for gain. This story was written at the suggestion of Mr. Casale, editor of L'Eco d'Italia, the organ of the Italians of New York. From him Mr. Alger received valuable information respecting the 'white slaves' of the metropolis. Within six months from the appearance of the book, the leading newspapers of New York, having vigorously co-operated in exposing the cruelties practiced by the padrones, the system was effectually broken up, not only in New York but in all the large cities of America."

This is simply not true. I examined many of the "leading newspapers of New York," and though much was printed about the Italian musicians, nothing was said of Alger. And as I already stated, efforts to dissolve the padrone system lasted a great deal longer than six months.

This romantic tale of Phil, the Fiddler persisted long past 1885. It appears in many of Alger's obituaries, and Herbert R. Mayes recounted it in his Alger: A Biography Without a Hero. Obviously, Mayes was not the only one involved in an Alger hoax)!!!

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Among the many social ills attacked by late nineteenth century reformers was a form of child slavery practiced among Italian Americans from 1850 to 1885. The master was a padrone\*; the slaves were children of poor Italian peasants. This system of forced labor under a padrone existed primarily in New York City, but flourished in other urban areas.

The origins of the padrone system date back before the Napoleonic Wars. In the eighteenth century peasants from the northern part of Italy frequently left their homes and fanned out across Europe seeking temporary work in less crowded

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\*Singular = padrone; plural = padroni. Probably the best translation of padrone in the context of this paper is simply "master."



and more prosperous areas. Often they worked abroad for years before returning home. Some exhibited animals while others made images, swept chimneys, or became bootblacks. Musicians or aspiring musicians earned a living with harp or violin, taking considerable pride in their work which required training and talent. (1)

The tumult and conflict of 1789-1815 both increased the number of migrants and altered their habits. Dislocated persons, lacking musical or other talent, turned to a fifteenth century Dutch invention, the barrel organ, which required no skill save that of turning a crank. At first organ-grinding was a seasonal occupation to supplement income from farming, but many soon found more profit in becoming an organ-grinder full time. (2)

As the organ-grinder traveled through Europe he was accompanied by one or two children who sang, danced or played a tambourine. Sometimes the organ-grinder was their real parent, but often the children were apprenticed by their parents who remained in Italy. Owing their master obedience by the terms of the indenture contract, the children were often mistreated, poorly fed, poorly clothed, and compelled to work long hours. (3)

Until 1850 the United States remained almost untouched by the wandering organ-grinders or by large-scale immigration of Italians of any kind. The 1850 census listed just 3,645 Italians in all of the United States. (4) However, the European revolutions of 1848-49 spurred a wave of Italian immigrants to the United States. (5) By 1860 about 10,000 Italians were living in America. By 1880 they numbered 44,320 of whom some 20,000 lived in New York City. (6)

The Italians arriving in New York City in the early 1850's were somewhat better off than those who followed. About two-fifths were professional men, mainly musicians and artists who settled in the Fourth and Sixth Wards. Those who arrived later crowded into the tenements

of the adjoining Eighth Ward and Five Points District. (7)

Without friends, speaking no English, afraid to settle in the country as farmers, these later arrivals found work selling fruit, flowers, or religious statuettes. Others turned to bootblacking or organ-grinding. To increase the family's earnings the children were sent out to peddle, or to play the organ. Few parents actually owned an organ and were therefore compelled to rent one, usually at very high rates. Sometimes children were hired out to others. Most of these guardians, and also many fathers, required the child to bring home a fixed amount each day. Failure to do so resulted in punishment. These early organ-grinders did well, so well that it created a class of men, the padroni, who made a regular business of importing children to serve as street musicians. (8) What began as necessity, became a lucrative slave trade in children.

In theory the padrone system was not harmful. To the contrary there were potential positive benefits. A typical padrone contract worked like this: The padrone would go to a family in one of the poor provinces of southern Italy, Campania or Basilicata, for example. He

(1) Robert H. Bremner, "The Children with the Organ Man," American Quarterly, VIII, No. 3 (1956), 277-8.

(2) Ibid., p. 278.

(3) Ibid.

(4) Luciano J. Iorizzo and Salvatore Mondello, The Italian-Americans (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1971), p. 25.

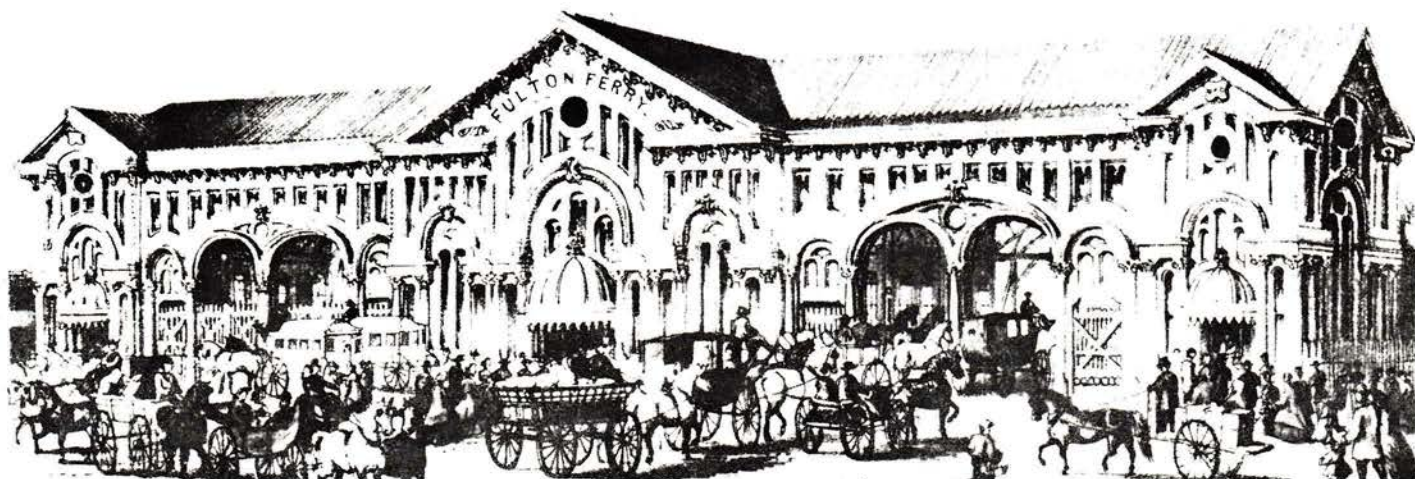
(5) Charles Loring Brace, The Dangerous Classes of New York and Twenty Years' Work Among Them (3rd ed.; New York: Wynkoop & Hallenbeck, 1880), p. 196; Robert Ernest, Immigrant Life in New York City: 1825-1863 (New York: King's Crown Press, 1949), p. 226.

(6) Iorizzo and Mondello, p. 25.

(7) Ibid.

(8) Brace, Dangerous Classes, pp. 196, 205; Ernst, pp. 85-86.





Manhattan's Fulton Ferry structure (above) at South and Fulton streets 1863;

"But where should he go? He must pass the night somewhere, and he already felt drowsy. Why should he not follow Ben Gibson's suggestions, and sleep on the Fulton ferry-boat? It would only cost two cents to get on board, and he might ride all night. Fortunately he had more than money enough for that, . . ." —Horatio Alger, Jr., Mark, the Match Boy, Chapter VIII.

would perhaps hire two of the sons for three years. The padrone would pay the father 114 ducats in monthly installments plus an extra cash bonus to the mother. The contract obligated the padrone to treat the boys like sons, feed and clothe them, provide them with a harp or violin, and at the end of three years return the boys with new clothes and instruments. In return the padrone was to receive all of the boys' earnings. If they tried to withhold any money, the padrone was authorized to deduct ten times the amount from the monthly payment to the father. The contract was duly notarized by the village mayor and then solemnized with prayers, candle-lighting, and a farewell blessing from the priest. The parents could now look forward to receiving a regular monthly income while having fewer mouths to feed. There was also the hope that their sons would be better provided for than they ever could be at home. (9)

Unhappily, few of the benefits ever materialized. Since the padrone's income depended entirely on what the children brought in, economics dictated that expenses be kept to a minimum. The children were usually kept in the worst quarters, fed the worst food (and as little of it as possible), and punished severely for failing to bring in the daily minimum fixed by the padrone. Various excuses were found not to send money to the parents. Some padroni specialized in reselling children to other padroni. (10)

The slave market aspect was as bad as anything in the pre-Civil War South. Boys were regularly sold for \$100-\$300. Girls went for \$100-\$500, or more, if they were attractive. In one instance two girls were allegedly sold for \$1600. Age mattered little; some children were

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(9) Bremner, p. 279.

(10) Ibid., pp. 279-80.



brought over from Italy and sold at age two. In April, 1873, 317 padroni children were said to have landed in New York, all under the age of fourteen and the majority under eight. (11)

The slavery aspect was not merely monetary. Advertisements were freely placed to locate runaways.

"Information wanted of John Matist, a street musician, aged ten years; has been missing five days; wore grey pants, black jacket, black and white vest, white cap and had a round face; is an Italian. \$20 reward for his return to No. 45 Crosby-Street, New-York." (12)

This and two other ads appeared in a New York Times news story as typical samples of such notices. Not coincidentally, the other two ads also listed No. 45 Crosby Street as the address. No. 45 was a notorious padrone tenement containing several padroni and about one hundred children. (13)

To further identify and control their charges, a padrone sometimes "branded" his children. Boys were given a diagonal cut on the upper or lower lip. This was sewn up in a rough fashion to insure that a scar would be left. As there were many padroni, cuts were sometimes placed on other parts of the body, but mouth cuts were preferred since the cut could be explained as an accident or a harelip. (14)

Of course these practices took time to develop and even longer to expose and stop. From 1850, when the great Italian immigration began, to the anti-padrone agitation of the early 1870's, very little was done to aid Italian immigrant children of any kind, whether under a padrone or not.

Charles Loring Brace, founder and secretary of the Children's Aid Society, initiated the first organized effort to help Italian immigrant children. Every day in the Five Points area he saw children selling flowers, blacking boots, sweeping walks and playing organs

or harps. At one house, in one room, he found monkeys, children, men and women together with organs and plaster casts jumbled together in a "bedlam of sounds and a combination of odors from garlic, monkeys, and most dirty human persons." (15)

Because the parents depended on their children's earnings, the establishment of a day school seemed impossible. Therefore, Brace and an Italian-American named A. E. Cerqua in December, 1855, announced the opening of a night school in the Five Points district. Cerqua, who did the teaching and who later became superintendent, started with thirty students, none of whom could read English and only two of whom could read Italian. Within a few months, however, attendance fell off drastically. After some investigation, Brace discovered many parents feared their children would be converted to Protestantism. (Though Italian, Cerqua was a Protestant). To no avail, Brace offered shoes and clothes to students who attended three consecutive months. Brace then learned an Italian priest was villifying parents whose children went to the school. Attempts to reason with the priest failed. Opposition collapsed though, when the priest disappeared one day, taking with him money supposedly collected to begin a rival school. (16) Until the 1870's this Italian School was the sole organized effort to help Italian children. There were occasional arrests of a child for mendicancy or vagrancy, but no padrone was ever arrested. (17)

Part II of this serialization will be in the May, 1979 Newsboy. In this installment, Horatio Alger and Phil, the Fiddler will be discussed.

(11) New York Times, June 17, 1873, p. 1.

(12) Ibid., July 22, 1873, p. 5.

(13) Ibid.

(14) Ibid.

(15) Brace, Dangerous Classes, p. 194.

(16) Emma Brace, ed., The Life of Charles Loring Brace (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1894), pp. 207-8.

(17) Bremner, p. 17.





## FROM THE EDITOR'S SCRAP BOOK



Edwin Gross, 529 Carolina, Charleston, West Virginia 25311, is looking for a copy of Ben Logan's Triumph. He writes: "I have all the other Stratemeyer completions."

Norman Hanson, 529 Lincoln St., Winona, Minn 55987 collects adventure pulp magazines. These include Northwest Romance and Frontier Fiction House. Let him know if you have any for sale.

An article on education specialist Jim McFadden was in the July, 1978 issue of Notre Dame Magazine. It is titled, "Jim McFadden: Horatio Alger With a Twist."

A couple of rare Algers recently appeared on the list of an out-of-print book dealer. Bertha's Christmas Vision was offered for \$350, and a first edition of Ragged Dick was listed at \$750.

George May sent me a copy of an editorial in The Paducah Sun (Paducah, Kentucky). The December 5, 1978 clipping about a local resident was titled, "He Made Alger Stories Come True."

A review of Ralph Gardner's Alger biography (Horatio Alger; Or, The American Hero Era) appeared in the October 23, 1978 issue of The Christian Science Monitor. The same review was reprinted in the January 14, 1979 issue of the Des Moines Register.

The January, 1979 issue of Collector Editions Quarterly featured an interesting article. Ralph Gardner wrote of fellow HAS member and author of the Nancy Drew books, Harriet S. (Carolyn Keene) Adams in "Carolyn Keene, a.k.a. Harriet S. Adams." Illustrations from some of Mrs. Adams' books were included. The same issue of this

magazine included a favorable review of the reissue of Ralph's Alger book. Incidentally, the review was written by Jerry Bowles, a writer whose material I have frequently read. (For you nostalgia buffs, he wrote a superb history of the Mickey Mouse Club).

Newsboy cartoonist Louis Bodnar sent me the January 24, 1979 issue of the Whitesville Tribune (Berkley, West Virginia). It contained one of his original cartoons. Congratulations, Louis! Don't forget that you got your start in Newsboy!!

Rev. Robert David Eastlack, Box 71, Klingerstown, Penn. 17941, needs a number of the rarer Alger titles to complete his collection. Write him for his want list if you have Algers to sell.

HAS member Dave Soibelman, a retired newspaperman, sent me a lengthy article he wrote for the January 28, 1979 issue of the Los Angeles Times. It is called "Horatio Alger Goes Greeley: From Wretches to Riches." I have read a lot of Dave's material and he has an excellent writing style.

Gary Scharnhorst sent me the first page of an article about Alger printed in German. It was in volume 23, 1978, of Amerikastudien, pp. 213-229. Gary is presently studying in West Germany, and his biography of Alger (plus a critical analysis) is scheduled for publication soon.

Bea Fortner writes: "I can't tell you how much I've enjoyed all the Newsboys. I am learning so much more about Alger as well as about the club members. I feel I'm becoming acquainted with them already, so will enjoy meeting them all the more at the convention." See you all in Cleveland May 10-11-12, 1979!!