

Newsboy

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22401



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.

Horatio Alger, Jr.

1832 - 1899

ALGER SESQUICENTENNIAL



Founded 1961 by Forrest Campbell & Kenneth B. Butler

Volume XX

June-July 1982

Numbers 11 & 12

NOTHING TO WEAR:

An Episode of City Life.

(FROM HARPER'S WEEKLY.)

Illustrated by Hopkin.

NEW YORK:
RUDD & CARLETON, 310 BROADWAY.

MDCCCLVII.



Original title page of the book which inspired
Horatio Alger, Jr. to write NOTHING TO DO.

WILLIAM ALLEN BUTLER
From a Carte de visite, 1857.

HORATIO ALGER SOCIETY

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

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Newsboy, the official organ of the Horatio Alger Society, is published bimonthly (six issues per year) and is distributed to HAS members. Membership 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.

Newsboy recognizes Bob Bennett's Horatio Alger, Jr.: A Comprehensive Bibliography, as the leading authority on the works of Alger.

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NEW MEMBERS REPORTED

PF-646 Martha Cutler
% McFarland and Co.
Jefferson, N.C. 28640

Martha learned of HAS through my review of Jack Dizer's book that appeared in a recent Newsboy. HAS member Jack Dizer is the author of Tom Swift & Company.

PF-647 Herbert Sohn
4640 N. Marine Drive
Chicago, Illinois 60640

Herbert, a physician, learned of the Society through the Skokie, Illinois Public Library. He is also interested in photography.

PF-648 Robert S. Vore
705 Mackenzie Drive
Lima, Ohio 45805

Robert owns 85 Algers, and is a collector of St. Nicholas Magazine, Volland books, Eugene Field, and Godey's Ladies Books. He is particularly interested in statistical data relating to Alger's books--how many of each title were sold, the number of books still available, etc. He heard of HAS through an article in the March 20, 1982 Tri-State Trader, and is a retired school teacher and newspaper editor.

PF-649 Joe Schell
1997 Baker Dr.
Allentown, Penn. 18103

PF-650 Patricia N. Goss
9928 Browns Mill Rd.
Vienna, Virginia 22180

George Owens of HAS told Patricia about the Society.

PF-651 Roger Williams Dudley
6647 Kerns Road
Falls Church, Virginia 22042

PF-652 Marie Fetrow
1777 W. Market St.
York, Pennsylvania 17404

Marie wrote to HAS member Dale Thomas about Ralph Gardner's book and Dale told her about HAS. She says that "my life almost reads like an Alger story." Now retired, she formerly owned a large bookstore in Center City for 45 years. She is interested in first edition Algers, plus stamps, cup plates and children's books.

* * *

CHANGES OF ADDRESS

- PF-554 Robert A. Reynolds
1124 Country Club Drive
Prescott, Arizona 86301
- PF-584 Hank Gravbelle
503 Avenue G., Apt. D
Redondo Beach, Calif. 90277
- PF-592 Troy Wagner
1426 West Rosemont
Chicago, Illinois 60660
- PF-596 Deidre Johnson
2329 S. 9th St. B401
Minneapolis, Minn. 55406

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ODDS AND ENDS

by Brad Chase

The days of getting an Alger first for a dollar are not over. I've just proven that even in this day and age of Alger book collecting sophistication, bargains are still to be had for the doggedly persistent. In fact, my prize was multiple: I found three Alger firsts for a two dollar total!! That was two for fifty cents each and one for a full George Washington!!!! I found these in a pile of books that appeared to have been dumped on the floor in a little bookstore I stumbled upon in the middle of nowhere here in Connecticut. I also found three Burts for my collection and a Coates and two Winston Library editions which I'll hold until the booksale at the next convention.

Yes, nice copies of Bernard Brooks' Adventures, A Debt of Honor, and Jerry the Backwoods Boy now sit proudly on my bookshelf. They are no great shakes to most of you as firsts I suppose, but they made my collecting year so far. On top

of these finds, a few weeks ago I found a first of Wait and Win. Now as many of you may know, I'm not a big "first" collector but rather concentrate on collecting Algers of the Burt series. Getting that Wait and Win was really a biggie for me. I negotiated with the seller for several Algers at the same time and we agreed on a lump sum total. The average cost was \$1.11 each. Would you believe that?? So here I've found four firsts (by Bennett) for just over three dollars.

I hate to crow about these kinds of things but it does show that bargains in Alger books are still to be had for the persistent. I suspect, however, that it will be a long, long time until I find four firsts again for a total of \$3.11! Now I shouldn't give anyone the impression that Algers are dirt cheap here in the East or in Connecticut because they certainly are not. I do concede that they are generally lower here than one has to pay on the West coast, for example, according to my brother and fellow collector, Rolfe. In talking about this recently, he and I agreed that in the past couple of years the price of Alger books has generally gone up.....but then so has the price of everything else, too. When one thinks about it, paying four or five dollars for a book in reasonably good shape that is a reprint and over seventy years old and a key part of one's collection, really is a bargain. I have trouble paying that much for Algers and fortunately can still find books I need at prices I feel comfortable with.

I do feel, however, that as Alger becomes collected by more people and his books become more scarce, the general price for reprints (never mind firsts) will slowly and consistently rise. But be on the lookout as you roam from shelf to shelf for as I've just proven, bargains in Algers are still to be had. [Editor's note: Brad's research has turned out to be a volume numbering hundreds of pages, for which he hopes will eventually become a book. We hope so too, Brad!]

The wizard of reading

The cynical will accept the critics' conventional wisdom about Nancy Drew, the Bobbsey Twins and the Hardy Boys. They look down their noses at these books because they are not real literature.

But the critics push aside one overarching fact: Millions of young Americans got hooked on the joys of reading by following the adventures of Nancy, her girlfriends George and Bess and her boyfriend Ned as they unraveled the mystery of the haunted showboat or the secret of the old clock.

Harriet Stratemeyer Adams, who spent 52 years at the head of the book factory founded by her father and who is known to children as Carolyn Keene, Laura Lee Hope and other pen names, will never be ranked with Mark Twain. Her books present a romanticized, antiseptic, old-fashioned view of life. They are filled with passages like this:

"Beneath the board was another board, old and rotted, and below this, a metal chest. Nancy and Ned,

after a few tugs, lifted the lid, revealing a mass of gold coins.

" 'We found it! We found it!' Ned cried out."

There may be little depth to that kind of prose, but it holds a charm and a magic, nonetheless. Anyone who has watched a nine-year-old stay awake long past bedtime, unable to put down a volume of Nancy Drew or the Hardy Boys, understands the special magic Harriet Adams worked. Through her books, she introduced children to the idea that reading is fun. And once enticed into the world of the written word, these children go on to more substantial works.

Mrs. Adams died Saturday evening of a heart attack while watching a TV rerun of "The Wizard of Oz." As the head of the Stratemeyer Syndicate that cranked out children's books according to a remarkably successful formula, she left a legacy that transcends the literary merit of her books. For American children, she made reading habit-forming.

News and Observer

Raleigh, N.C., April 1, 1982

(sent in by Jack Dizer)

LETTERS

University of Texas at
Dallas
Box 688
Richardson, Texas 75080
March 21, 1982

Dear Jack,

Readers of Newsboy over the past few years know that I often report in these pages on heretofore unknown and uncollected works by Alger. I daresay I have unearthed quite a bit of new material. I have published it because I believe I am obligated to share what I have with other researchers and interested people. Other members of the Society observe the same rule: Irene Gurman, for example, has allowed Newsboy to publish dozens of Alger stories in her collection. I am writing this open letter now to suggest that other members begin to observe this rule as well.

Around the turn of the century, Alger's sister Augusta gave to the Marlborough, Massachusetts Public Library a few items relating to the life and work of her brother. Some may have been destroyed in a fire in 1903. However, a few copies of the Marlborough Mirror and Shenstone Laurel, newspapers to which Alger occasionally had contributed, were saved. Twenty years ago, these issues were given to Ralph Gardner by John A. Bigelow, a library trustee. As Ralph indicates in the notes to his book, "Mr. Bigelow's personal files include well-preserved issues of The Marlborough Mirror and The Shenstone Laurel, in which some of Alger's early writing appeared" (p. 499). Unfortunately, there are no other extant copies of these papers. Not even the Marlborough Library or the Library of Congress carry them. Ralph has the only copies. To my knowledge, no other member of the Society has ever seen them. I ask in this forum merely that he preserve the following items in the public record for the rest of us by sending copies of the texts to Newsboy:

Shenstone Laurel Who Will Miss Me?
31 March 1861 (poem); A Report from

Dublin, Ireland, 18 October 1860; The Cousins, 18 April 1861; My Visit to Sorrento, 20 June 1861.

Marlborough Mirror: This Night Let Us Rest, 30 September 1874 (poem); Address to Graduates at Reunion of Gates Academy and Marlborough High School, 30 September 1874.

I am sending a carbon of this letter to Ralph so that he may read it and perhaps respond to its appeal in advance of its publication.

Sincerely,

Gary Scharnhorst

[Editor's note: No reply was received].

240 E. County Line Rd.
Hatboro, PA 19040
March 22, 1982

Dear Jack:

Came upon another Alger discovery, this time in a monthly magazine called "Merry's Museum." It has Horatio Alger's poem "John Maynard" in the March issue. The volume I have is for the year 1871. And Alger's name does not appear as the author, as a matter of fact no name does. But nevertheless it is his "John Maynard."

Just passing on some information, and give some of the members something to look for.. I came upon this publication by the way of Morris Olsen, so give Morris credit.

Best wishes,

Bill Russell

11636 E. 46th St.
Indianapolis, IN 46236
March 30, 1982

Dear Jack,

I have been putting off writing to tell you how much I enjoy the Newsboy. I

know something about how much work is involved and really appreciate your interest.

Since we just returned from New Zealand last week it isn't certain whether I can attend the convention, but haven't given up as yet. It should be a good one and the Alger stamp ceremony will be an extra bonus.

We read in our Indianapolis News that Harriet Adams had a heart attack and died on March 27th. She was such an interesting person and we will miss her.

Whether I get to the convention or not, say "hello" for me and have a good time.

Best wishes,

Amos Smith

* * *

CUP PLATE HONORING HORATIO ALGER, JR.

At the annual Horatio Alger Society Convention on April 29, 30, May 1 & 2, 1982, a lead crystal cup plate showing the Alger "newsboy" will be for sale. This cup plate has been hand produced by the prestigious Pairpoint Glass Company. It will be the first of a series honoring this prolific author. Collectors will find these very desirable. They are marked with the date, they are made of fine lead crystal by a famous company, they are gift boxed--they will serve many purposes. The **profits** from the sale will go toward the Society's "Strive and Succeed" Scholarship Fund given each year to the boy or girl which best meets the standards found in the author's books. This is a limited edition cup plate. The price is only \$10.00 post paid. \$7.50 at the Convention. Please send your orders to: The Horatio Alger Society, P.O. Box 24031, Lansing, Michigan 48909. Please allow three weeks for delivery.

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CONVENTION HIGHLIGHTS

Although this issue is dated June-July, much of the material in it is being typed in April. Due to the delay in writing convention copy and processing

photographs, the convention issue will not be published for several months. Persons who will be present at the convention are urged to send the editor any personal impressions, reminiscences, etc., for inclusion in the issue.

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SPECIAL NOTICE

All the material on pages 1 and 8-24 of this issue was typed and arranged by Gilbert K. Westgard II. Gil has been particularly interested in the "Nothing" series and has done extensive research in this area. Thanks go to him for providing this information.

□ Bennett, Bob. **Horatio Alger, Jr.: A Comprehensive Bibliography**. 4to., 200p. \$15.00. Flying Eagle Publishing Co. (P.O. Box 111, Mt. Pleasant, Mich. 48858). Illustrated with 23p. of reproductions, bindings, etc.

Written by a past president of the Horatio Alger Society and owner of one of the most remarkable collections of Alger titles, this new work easily replaces all previous attempts at an Alger bibliography and uses non-technical language to describe first edition points (both textual and binding). For example, looking up **Ragged Dick** (1868) we find the standard points mentioned in earlier references: preliminary advertisement must list "Fame and Fortune" as being ready "in December" and the pictorial title-page portrays our hero with his shoe-blackening box (later changed to an illustration of four boys), but for the first time we are cautioned that the correct binding should *not* have the decorative borders and central design found in most Loring editions. With books that have no date on the title-page nor provide reprint notices inside attesting to their popularity, it becomes an essential point that the binding as well as the text should conform to first edition specifications.

In addition, the book has a cumulative listing for each known title and subtitle variation (specifying different publishers, series imprints, etc.), an index of books issued by each publisher, and detailed sources for Alger's short stories, published articles, and poetry. Reprint title variations and serializations of original titles are listed in the notes following each main entry. All told, this is a descriptive bibliography assembled by a major collector for collectors and a useful reference for anyone interested in the publishing history of this prolific American author of boys adventure books.

[Justin G. Schiller]

from Antiquarian Bookman,
November 16, 1981.

June-July

This Lad's Been Hawking Papers On Maple Avenue For 86 Years

GREAT BARRINGTON — One of the more interesting monuments in this area is the 86-year-old Newsboy Statue at the corner of Silver Street and Maple Avenue here.

Col. William Lee Brown, a prominent New York senator and strong supporter of Grover Cleveland's presidential bid, was a longtime newspaperman. He founded the Youngstown, Ohio, *Vindicator* and owned an interest in the New York *Daily News*. When he served as the latter paper's editor, Col. Brown turned it into the country's first illustrated tabloid.

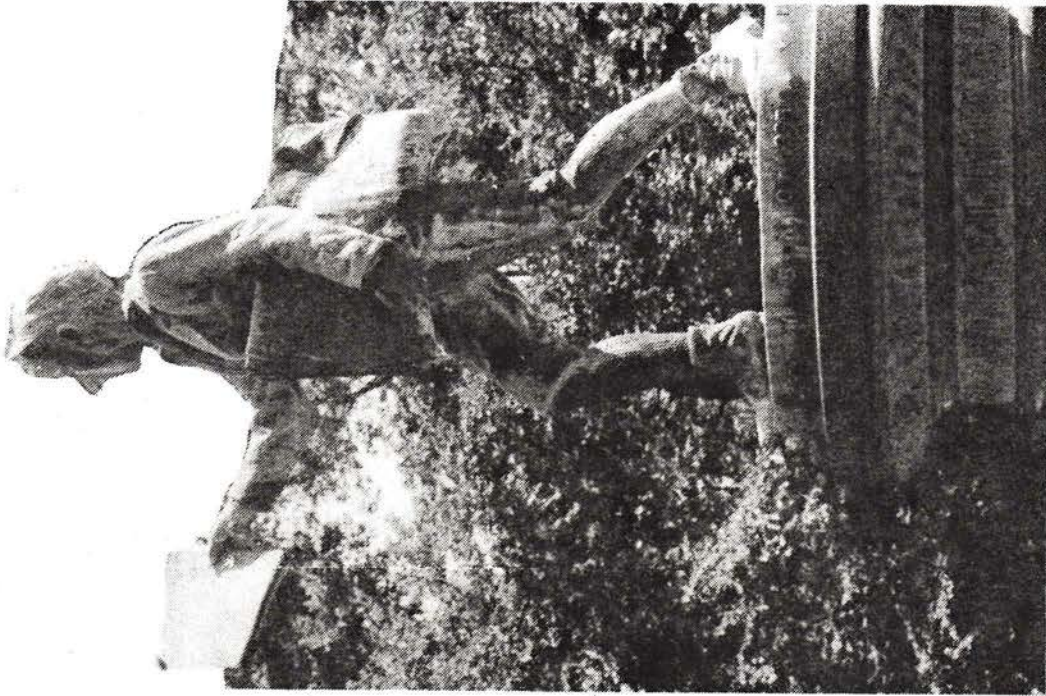
Col. Brown attributed the publication's success to the vigor and devotion of its newsboys. Following the purchase of land on Maple Avenue in 1893, he had the newsboy statue erected near his home.

HAS member Bill McCord sent in this clipping from the Great Barrington, Mass. *Berkshire Courier*. Barrie Hughes, mentioned at the end, is also in HAS.

Guests at the October 1895 unveiling included Austin Corbin, president of the Long Island Railroad; Charles A. Dana, editor of the New York *Sun*; and Benjamin F. Tracy, ex-Secretary of the Navy.

The statue and fountain stand 14 feet high. The base is solid native dolomite, as the block containing the main basin. A column of highly polished Quincy granite bears a bronze lion's head which once spouted water for horses. On the opposite side, an elaborately carved drinking pocket for pedestrians at one time offered water gushing from the lips of a devil's face. And a huge bronze dog and cat's head supplied water for smaller animals.

Atop the column is sculptor David Richards' life-size figure of a typical New York newsboy hawking



The Newsboy Statue

Bernard Drew

his copies of the *Daily News*. At the dedication ceremonies, the Great Barrington band entertained the gathering until Col. Brown made a speech.

"My fellow citizens," said the benefactor, "it gives me great pleasure to present to the good people of Great Barrington this fountain, with good will and my best wishes for their long life, continued prosperity and happiness."

As the band struck up the "Star-Spangled Banner," Minnetta Brown drew the veil aside and water gushed from the lips of the lion, the dog and Satan.

In gradual decline in recent years, the fountain and statue were refurbished through an effort headed up by Barrie Hughes, circulation director of the Watertown, N.Y., *Daily Times*, in 1973.

Today the newsboy still offers his papers to passerbys.

From the collection of Gilbert K. Westgard II, we are pleased to present a full version of William Allen Butler's popular satire, *NOTHING TO WEAR: An Episode of City Life*. This poem inspired Horatio Alger, Jr., and several others to try their hands at verses in a similar vein, of which only Alger's *NOTHING TO DO* even approached the original in flavor and polished wit.

Ralph D. Gardner's *HORATIO ALGER, or The American Hero Era*, gives a concise view of what was known about the six "nothing" books, supposed authors, and their popularity, so far as was known in 1964, when his book was first published. Since that time additional information has been uncovered, as have added items in the "nothing" series.

A great deal of information comes from *A RETROSPECTIVE OF FORTY YEARS, 1825 - 1865*, by William Allen Butler, edited by his daughter, Harriet Allen Butler, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1909, from which the following generous portion is taken.



WILLIAM ALLEN BUTLER

I find among my father's papers a draft of a letter, dated March 28, 1857, to Henry D. Gilpin, his warm personal friend and his successor in the office of Attorney-General in the Cabinet of Mr. Van Buren, in which he writes:

"I enclose a slip from Harper's Weekly containing a hit at the times which my son Will lately threw off, which may amuse Mrs. Gilpin." This "hit at the times" was "Nothing to Wear," a poem sufficiently well-known at the present time to require no special introduction to my grandchildren or to any other readers of this page. I confess that I have sometimes felt a pang, or at least a thrill, of mortification that, after many years of toil to attain a desired place in my profession, my chief, if not only, claim to public recognition has been the writing of a few pages of society verse. But a lawyer's reputé is among the most evanescent of unstable things; and unless he has the good fortune to connect himself with something outside of his calling which attracts the popular gaze, his "name is writ in water." During the two score and more years since the first appearance of the poem I have been asked, I do not know how many times, why I happened to write it, and what gave me the idea and motive.

The genesis of "Nothing to Wear" was in this wise. Both in my father's family and that of my wife the male sex were in the minority. Of my father's children, two were sons and five were daughters, while Captain Marshall's [Butler's father-in-law] included only one son and four daughters. It was natural, therefore, that in our reunions personal topics, near and dear to the feminine heart, should have been frequently prominent. Thus in the course of time the phrase "nothing to wear" in connection with proposed entertainments or social festivities became familiar to my ear; and the idea occurred to me that it might be used effectively as the text of a good-natured satire against the foible of the gentler sex of which it was so often the expression.

At first, the plan of treatment which I projected was to present a series of pen

pictures of unfortunates, in various situations, under disabilities produced by the fancied inadequacy of their wardrobes, but I soon abandoned this idea and cast the poem in the mould in which it finally appeared in print. A little judicious observation, supplemented by information gathered in the home circle, gave me the names and descriptions of the fashionable articles of apparel needed in depicting the plight of "Flora M'Flimsey," while the catalogue of cases of destitution was modeled after the manner of the reports of charitable institutions devoted to the relief of poverty. The idea of giving a moral turn to the subject did not occur to me until I had made considerable progress in my work on the poem, which occupied odd moments of leisure in a very busy winter. I was living with my wife and two children in Fourteenth Street, occupying the house of my father-in-law during his absence on a Southern tour, and I remember that it was while I was walking one evening in a neighboring street that the thought expressed in the closing lines of "Nothing to Wear" came to me, a sudden, and, I must believe, a genuine inspiration.

Having finished the poem, and after reading it to my wife, I took it one evening to my friend Evert A. Duyckinck, whom



EVERT A. DUYCKINCK.

I found in his accustomed place in the basement of his house No. 20 Clinton Pl., surrounded by the books which afterwards, under his will, went to the Lenox Library. [Duyckinck was a descendent of an old Dutch family who were among the founders of New Amsterdam. He was born in New York City on November 23, 1816, and inherited a love of books and learning from his father, an old-time publisher who gave J. & J. Harper their first order for book publishing. After graduation from Columbia College, he traveled for a year in Europe in 1838-39. He devoted himself to literary work, and in Arcturus (1840-42), Literary World (1847), and his Cyclopedia of American Literature (1855), displayed the highest intellectuality and judgment, great critical powers, and a remarkably felicitous style. Some of Thackeray's first American editions were edited by him, and eminent men of letters, such as Washington Irving, James Fenimore Cooper, Fitz-Greene Halleck, William Cullen Bryant, and Charles King, were attracted to his home in Clinton Place. His last work was the preparation, with William Cullen Bryant, of an edition of Shakespeare that only appeared years after Duyckinck's death, which occurred in New York City, August 13, 1878.] I read him the poem, to which he listened with lively interest; but, much to my disappointment, he did not appreciate as keenly as I had hoped, what I believed and what afterwards proved to be, the elements of its popularity. While Duyckinck was the most genial of companions, and the most impartial of critics, he was too much of a recluse, buried in his books, almost solitary in his life, and entirely removed from the circle of worldly and fashionable life, to judge of my work as a possible palpable hit. However, he immediately possessed himself of it for publication in Harper's Weekly, then recently started, and I at once acquiesced, making the single condition that they should publish it in columns wide enough to prevent breaking of the lines. No thought of securing the copy-right or of retaining any control in reference to the publication of it occurred to me, and the check for fifty dollars which in due course I received from the Harpers, represented the entire pecuniary benefit that ever came to me from "Nothing to Wear."

The poem as it went to the Harpers contained 305 lines. When I received the proof sheets they were accompanied by a note stating that the addition of 24 lines would fill out the last page, and I wrote the required number, inserting them in the body of the poem, which appeared very handsomely printed in the number of Harper's Weekly for February 7, 1857. I very soon found that in venturing to shoot folly as it flies I had hit the mark. "Nothing to Wear" was taken up by the press, and, without objection on the part of the Harpers, was reprinted in newspapers all over the country. In England it was quite as popular as in this country. It was published in book form in London by Sampson, Low & Co., who, in their preface, say that it had achieved in America a popularity as great as that achieved in England by Hood's "Song of the Shirt." It appeared also in various English magazines and newspapers. Harriet Martineau, in an article on "Female Dress" in the Westminster Review [October, 1857], then, more than now, a foremost organ of English public opinion, quoted it entire, and it thus found a place in a leading English quarterly, a compliment never before, I believe, accorded to an American author. Charles Sumner, who was in Europe at the time, sent me a copy of the French prose translation, which contained a curious note in reference to the "Mrs. Harris" spoken of in the opening lines as "famous in history." In utter ignorance, apparently, of Dickens's immortal creation [Mrs. Harris, the imaginary friend of Mrs. Gamp, in the novel "Martin Chuzzlewit"], the translator stated that the reference was to a lady who had lost her life by an accident at Niagara Falls. A German translation in verse, with illustrations, appeared in the Almanach de Gotha.

On the basis of this widespread popularity I asked Fletcher Harper, who was my particular friend in the publishing firm, to bring out the poem in a volume, but he was unwilling to take the risk, saying that he had sold 80,000 copies of the Weekly which contained it and that there would be no demand for the book. So sincere was he in this belief that when the firm of Rudd & Carleton, composed of two young men who were just embarking in business as publish-

ers, asked leave of the Harpers to publish "Nothing to Wear," their request was granted without any consultation with me. Rudd & Carleton published "Nothing to Wear" in a rather attractive form with [eight] illustrations by Augustus Hoppin, a well-known artist. They afterwards claimed, I believe, to have sold twenty thousand copies [at 50¢ each], and it was understood that the success of the book materially aided the building up of the business of the new firm. No benefit, however, accrued to me.

I made a mistake in publishing "Nothing to Wear" without giving my name to the world as its author. It appeared anonymously, as was very generally the custom at that time in respect to articles in magazines and periodicals, except in the cases of writers whose names were exceptionally well known. I feared that if I were known to be a writer of verses, it might injure my standing as a lawyer. Members of my profession were permitted to make politics an adjunct of their practice at the bar, but dalliance with the Muse and dabbling in verses were apt to come under the ban of a commercial clientage. Public opinion has undergone a change in this regard in the later years of the century, and I think that I may not unjustly claim some share in so modifying it that a lawyer may now make excursions into the fields of literature without forfeiting the confidence of the public in his ability to deal with the weightier questions of the law. The penalty which I paid for this overcaution was that the authorship which I did not avow was open to adverse claims, and an absurd story was started that a girl of fifteen had reported to her family in their suburban home that she had written the first nine lines and thirty out of the concluding portion, and that the whole body of the poem (290 lines) had been interpolated by another hand; that while on a visit to New York she had dropped the manuscript, and shortly after discovered the missing lines as published in "Nothing to Wear."

The tale, substantially as told by the child's father, was as follows: "My daughter, about a year ago, in a ramble

through the woods near the house where I reside, accidentally tore the skirt of her dress. This incident caused her to exclaim, perhaps with some vexation, 'There, now I have nothing to wear!' and this exclamation was succeeded by the reflection, 'How many are in the habit of declaring that they have nothing to wear, who really have no just reason for the complaint, while, on the other hand, multitudes might make the same complaint with truth, as well as sorrow!'" He goes on to say that "three fragments, the first consisting of nine, the second of twenty-four, and the third of six lines were written by her on the same sheet of paper and subsequently brought by her on a visit to this city (New York). She had the manuscript in her hand on leaving the cars near Twenty-sixth Street, and passing through the crowd it was lost."

The claim thus put forth in behalf of this juvenile aspirant, compelled me to disclose my authorship, which I did by the publication of a card stating in the most explicit and unmistakable terms that every line and word in "Nothing to Wear" were original with me and branding the claim as utterly false. My neighbor, Horace Greeley, in a Tribune editorial, exposed the absurdity, telling me after its publication that he knew enough of the plagiarisms of school girls to account for it. Harper's Weekly also exposed it as a manifest fraud, pointing out that although the poem was published in February, the spurious claim was not put forth until July. Messrs. Rudd & Carleton lost no time in availing of the ripple of excitement caused by this incident as a means of floating their edition of "Nothing to Wear" into increased popularity, and they rang the charges upon the pretensions put forward in behalf of the supposed girl author in sensational advertisements, and by thus fanning the flame gave to her a transient notoriety.

The power of the poem is, as I have always thought, in the moral it pointed, which, coming after the light treatment of the subject preceding the closing lines, was invested with something of the element of unexpectedness. This view was very generally expressed by critics and

reviewers. I find a single exception, in a notice of the poem by a French reviewer, M. Étienne, who, while regarding it as a genuine example of American humor, proceeds to make known his dissent from its moral tone as follows: "When I read these words I still admire; I recognize a noble and high-toned accent of satire; but the human has taken wings. I am brought back against my will to the memory of those old Puritans who founded the American nation. The idea of damnation dissipates all my gayety, and I look to see if I have really before me a humorist or a son of Calvin."

The Harpers, finding that the publishing of "Nothing to Wear" by Rudd & Carleton had not exhausted the public interest in it, reprinted it in the November number of their [monthly] magazine with [two new] illustrations by Hoppin, and also shortly afterwards published it in a handsomely printed book, edited by Evert A. Duyckinck and entitled "English and American Poets." They were very anxious for me to connect myself permanently with their house as one of its literary staff, and I was induced, for a short time during the temporary withdrawal of Francis Tomes, to write for Harper's Weekly the column headed "Chat."



GEORGE WILLIAM CURTIS.

In the summer of 1857 I was confronted with a much more formidable project of their devising. My friend George William Curtis, who had written "The Easy Chair" for Harper's Monthly with great acceptance to the publishers and the public, was drawn away from the

Harpers to take the editorship of Putnam's Monthly. Fletcher Harper immediately proposed that I should occupy the vacant chair, and would not take "No" for an answer. The permanent connection with the Harpers that would have followed a compliance with their invitation was out of the question. It

occurred to me, however, that in all probability Putnam's Magazine would prove a financial failure, and in that event Curtis would not only lose his place as editor, but would be unable to resume "The Easy Chair" if it were filled by a literary man dependent, to a greater or less degree, on its retention. It would, therefore, be an act of friendship to him if I should keep the chair warm for his benefit pending the result of the enterprise in which he had embarked. Accordingly I told Fletcher Harper that I would assume the editorship of "The Easy Chair" temporarily, with the intent of vacating it in Curtis's behalf should the forebodings of my prophetic soul touching his new relations be verified. He hesitated to commit himself to reinstating an editor who, as he thought, had forfeited his right of return, but I insisted and the publishers yielded. For several months I acted at the locum tenens in the editorship of "The Easy Chair." As I had anticipated, the publication of Putnam's Magazine was suspended, and Curtis was delighted to find that I was not only willing to retire in his favor, but that my motive in assuming his post was, in fact, for his own benefit.

It is, perhaps, the pleasantest recollection of that part of my life which threw me into relations with publishers and authors that I was able to reunite the Harpers to the most gifted and accomplished writer that ever wielded his pen in their service. Their close relations with Mr. Curtis, thus resumed, continued till his death in 1892.

Here is the note in which, with characteristic grace of feeling and expression, he acknowledged the service I had rendered:

New York, 12 Oct., 1857.

My Dear Sir:

Mr. Fletcher Harper showed me long ago a courteous and considerate note you had written him offering to relinquish the Easy Chair to the battered hulk that had preceded you in it, and that, dismantled in the storm, was glad to slide back into so soft a haven. Ever since then I have been meditating a note that I was to

write you and the meditation has kept the memory so fresh and pleasant that I have been in no hurry to write the note.

Yet you see here it is. It merely makes a bow and thanks you; and for my own part, I feel very sure the meditation will not end now that the note is written.

Faithfully yours,

George William Curtis.



GEORGE W. CURTIS

[In a notice of my father's collected poems, as published by the Harpers in

1899, Mr. William Dean Howells gives a retrospective review of "Nothing to Wear" and presents its claims to a permanent place in literature, together with some personal reminiscences as to its early popularity. It is appended here



WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS.

as a wholly impartial estimate of the value of the work by that most competent man of letters.—Ed. (Harriet Allen Butler)]

"In the year 1857 prairie fires were still punctual with the falling year on the plains which farms and cities now hold against them; and when one said that this thing or that was sweeping the country like a prairie fire, everyone else knew what one meant, and visualized the fact with quick intelligence. But if I say now that in 1857 a new poem, flashing from a novel impulse in our literature, and gay with lights and tints unknown before, swept the country like a prairie fire, how many, I wonder, will conceive of the astonishing success of 'Nothing to Wear.' A misgiving akin to this doubt has haunted me throughout the volume in which Mr. William Allen Butler has grouped all he chooses to give the public of his verse, and it remains with me

still. Whether for good or for ill, the pieces are largely expressive of moods that are past, in terms which seem dimmer now because they were once so brilliantly actual. They have the quality of improvisation, and sometimes achieve their happiest effects with the facility which is the half-sister of slight; even if one did not know the fact one would easily imagine them the amusement of a mind more seriously employed with other things; and it scarcely needs Mr. Butler's frank acknowledgment to make us feel that but for the professional devotion of the able lawyer we might have counted in him the cleverest of our society poets.

"I do not know but we may do this in spite of the able lawyer, for when I come to think of it I can recall no poem of ours having so much the character of light, graceful, amiable satire, with that touch of heart in it which reclaims it from mere satire, as 'Nothing to Wear.' It is quite ours, and it was the first thing of the kind to be quite ours. For this reason, as any observer of life will understand, it was the more universally appreciable; and because it was so true to its own time, perhaps, it is destined to continue true to other times. In it the prairie fire crossed the Atlantic and relumed its flames in various countries of Europe, while it has remained to us a light of other days, in which the present time may easily recognize itself if it cares for self-study. All the civilizations are contemporaneous, and the fashionable life of 1857 which we find mirrored in 'Nothing to Wear' is at least no further from us than that which appeals to our sense of modernity in the Tangara figures. But, after all, one must have lived in the year 1857, and been, say, in one's twenty-first year, to have felt the full significance of its message and shared the joyful surprise of its amazing success. If to the enviable conditions suggested one joined the advantage of being at that period a newspaperman in a growing city of the Middle West, one had almost unequalled privileges as a spectator and participator of the notable event. Upon the whole, I am inclined to

think that prairie fire suggests a feeble image of the swift spread of Mr. Butler's poem under the eye of such a witness; and I begin to prefer a train of gunpowder. I do not know where the piece first appeared, but I remember that with the simple predacity of these days we instantly lifted the whole of it out of a New York paper, hot from the mail, and transferred it to our own columns about midnight, as if it were some precious piece of telegraphic intelligence. I am not sure but that it was for us something in the nature of a scoop or beat. At any rate, no other paper in town had it so early; and I think it appeared on our editorial page, and certainly with subheads supplied by our own eager invention, and with the prefatory and concurrent comment which it so little needed.

"We had the proud satisfaction of seeing it copied in the evening press with unmistakable evidence, in the subheads, of having been shamelessly pilfered from our columns. We might have made out a very pretty case of plagiarism against our esteemed contemporaries, if the mail had not brought us from every quarter the proof of a taste in poetry as promptly predacious as our own. All the newspapers published 'Nothing to Wear,' more or less fully, and the common intelligence was enriched with a conception, and the common parlance with a phrase, destined to remain to at least the present period of aftertime. How far they will carry it over into the next century is still a question, but in the meantime a social situation continues embodied in the poem without the rivalry of any other.

"For the student of our literature 'Nothing to Wear' has the interest and value of satire in which our society life came to its full consciousness for the first time. To be sure there had been the studies of New York called 'The Potiphar Papers,' in which [George W.] Curtis had painted the foolish and unlovely face of our fashionable life, but with always an eye on other methods and other models; and 'Nothing to Wear' came with the authority and the appeal

of something quite indigenous in matter and manner. It came winged, and equipped to fly wide and to fly far, as only verse can, with a message for the grandchildren of 'Flora McFlimsey [M'Flimsey],' which it delivers today in perfectly intelligible terms.

"It does not indeed find her posterity in Madison Square. That quarter has long been delivered over to hotels and shops and offices, and the fashion that once abode there has fled to upper Fifth Avenue, to the discordant variety of handsome residences which overlook the Park. But there it finds her descendants quite one with her in spirit, and as little clothed to their lasting satisfaction. Still they shop in Paris, still they arrive in all the steamers with their spoil, still it shrinks and withers to nothing in their keeping. Probably there are no longer lovers so simple-hearted as to fancy any of them going to a function in a street costume, or in a dress which has already been worn three times, but, if there were, their fate would be as swift and dire. In such things the world does not change, and the plutocrats of imperial New York spell their qualities with the same characters as the plutocrats of imperial Rome.

"It is this fact which gives me reason to believe that Mr. Butler's good-humored satire will find itself as applicable to conditions at the end of the next century as at the end of this; and makes me wish that he had cast more of his thought in such lightly enduring form. In several other places of his volume an obsolete New York makes a pleasant apparition; for instance, a whole order of faded things revisits us in the rhyme of 'The Sexton and the Thermometer,' but the fable of the old parishioner of Grace Church, who finds himself warm enough because the sexton has heated the mercury in his glass, is no such external type as Miss Flora McFlimsey [M'Flimsey].

"Some hint of what this poet might have been but for his jealous mistress [the legal profession] appears here and there in the more serious poems."

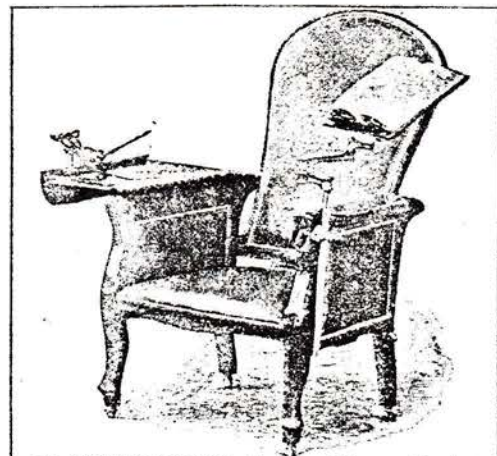
From PUNCH

April 3, 1858



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January, 1900

June-July



NOTHING TO WEAR.
AN EPISODE OF CITY LIFE.
BY WILLIAM ALLEN BUTLER

Miss Flora M'Flimsey, of Madison Square,
Has made three separate journeys to Paris,
And her father assures me, each time she was there,
That she and her friend, Mrs. Harris
(Not the lady whose name is so famous in history,
But plain Mrs. H., without romance or mystery),
Spent six consecutive weeks, without stopping,
In one continuous round of shopping—
Shopping alone, and shopping together,
At all hours of the day, and in all sorts of weather,
For all manner of things that a woman can put
On the crown of her head, or the sole of her foot,
Or wrap round her shoulders, or fit round her waist,
Or that can be sewed on, or pinned on, or laced,
Or tied on with a string, or stitched on with a bow
In front or behind, above or below;
For bonnets, mantillas, capes, collars and shawls;
Dresses for breakfast, and dinners, and balls;
Dresses to sit in, and stand in, and walk in;
Dresses to dance in, and flirt in, and talk in;

Dresses in which to do nothing at all;
Dresses for winter, spring, summer and fall;
All of them different in color and shape,
Silk, muslin and lace, velvet, satin and crape,
Brocade and broadcloth, and other material,
Quite as expensive and much more ethereal;
In short, for all things that could ever be thought of,
Or milliner, *modiste* or tradesman be bought of,
From ten-thousand-franc robes to twenty-sous frills;
In all quarters of Paris, and to every store,
While M'Flimsey in vain stormed, scolded and swore,
They footed the streets, and he footed the bills!



The last trip, their goods shipped by the steamer *Arago*,
Formed, M'Flimsey declares, the bulk of her cargo,
Not to mention a quantity kept from the rest,
Sufficient to fill the largest-sized chest,
Which did not appear on the ship's manifest,
But for which the ladies themselves manifested
Such particular interest, that they invested
Their own proper persons in layers and rows
Of muslin, embroideries, worked underclothes,
Gloves, handkerchiefs, scarfs, and such trifles as those;
Then, wrapped in great shawls, like Circassian beauties,
Gave *good-by* to the ship, and *go by* to the duties.
Her relations at home all marveled, no doubt,
Miss Flora had grown so enormously stout
For an actual belle and a possible bride;
But the miracle ceased when she turned inside out,
And the truth came to light, and the dry-goods besides,

Which, in spite of Collector and Custom-House sentry,
Had entered the port without any entry.
And yet, though scarce three months have passed since
the day

This merchandise went, on twelve carts, up Broadway,
This same Miss M'Flimsey of Madison Square,
The last time we met was in utter despair,
Because she had nothing whatever to wear!

Nothing to wear! Now, as this is a true ditty,
I do not assert—this, you know, is between us—
That she's in a state of absolute nudity,
Like Powers's Greek Slave or the Medici Venus;
But I do mean to say, I have heard her declare,
When at the same moment she had on a dress
Which cost five hundred dollars, and not a cent less,
And jewelry worth ten times more, I should guess,
That she had not a thing in the wide world to wear!
I should mention just here, that out of Miss Flora's
Two hundred and fifty or sixty adorers,
I had just been selected as he who should throw all
The rest in the shade, by the gracious bestowal
On myself, after twenty or thirty rejections,
Of those fossil remains which she called her "affections,"
And that rather decayed but well-known work of art
Which Miss Flora persisted in styling her "heart."
So we were engaged. Our troth had been plighted,
Not by moonbeam or starbeam, by fountain or grove,
But in a front parlor, most brilliantly lighted,
Beneath the gas-fixtures, we whispered our love.



Without any romance, or raptures, or sighs,
Without any tears in Miss Flora's blue eyes,
Or blushes, or transports, or such silly actions,
It was one of the quietest business transactions,
With a very small sprinkling of sentiment, if any,
And a very large diamond imported by Tiffany.
On her virginal lips, while I printed a kiss,
She exclaims, as a sort of parenthesis,
And by way of putting me quite at my ease,
"You know I'm to polka as much as I please,
And flirt when I like—now, stop, don't you speak—
And you must not come here more than twice in the week,
Or talk to me either at party or ball,
But always be ready to come when I call;
So don't prose to me about duty and stuff,
If we don't break this off, there will be time enough
For that sort of thing; but the bargain must be
That, as long as I choose, I am perfectly free—
For this is a kind of engagement, you see,
Which is binding on you, but not binding on me."

Well, having thus wooed Miss M'Flimsey and gained her,
With the silks, crinolines, and hoops that contained her,
I had, as I thought, a contingent remainder
At least in the property, and the best right
To appear as its escort by day and by night;
And it being the week of the Stuckups' grand ball—
Their cards had been out a fortnight or so,
And set all the Avenue on the tiptoe—
I considered it only my duty to call,
And see if Miss Flora intended to go.
I found her—as ladies are apt to be found,
When the time intervening between the first sound
Of the bell and the visitor's entry is shorter
Than usual—I found; I won't say—I caught her,
Intent on the pier-glass, undoubtedly meaning
To see if perhaps it didn't need cleaning.
She turned as I entered—"Why, Harry, you sinner,
I thought that you went to the Flashers' to dinner!"
"So I did," I replied; "the dinner is swallowed,
And digested, I trust, for 'tis now nine and more,
So, being relieved from that duty, I followed
Inclination, which led me, you see, to your door;
And now will your ladyship so condescend
As just to inform me if you intend
Your beauty, and graces, and presence to lend
(All of which, when I own, I hope no one will borrow)
To the Stuckups' whose party, you know, is to-morrow?
The fair Flora looked up, with a pitiful air,



And answered quite promptly, "Why, Harry, *mon cher*, I should like above all things to go with you there, But really and truly—I've nothing to wear."

"Nothing to wear! Go just as you are; Wear the dress you have on, and you'll be by far, I engage, the most bright and particular star On the Stuckup horizon—" I stopped, for her eye, Notwithstanding this delicate onset of flattery, Opened on me at once a most terrible battery Of scorn and amazement. She made no reply, But gave a slight turn to the end of her nose (That pure Grecian feature), as much as to say, "How absurd that any sane man should suppose That a lady would go to a ball in the clothes, No matter how fine, that she wears every day!" So I ventured again: "Wear your crimson brocade;" (Second turn up of nose)—"That's too dark by a shade." "Your blue silk"—"That's too heavy." "Your pink"— "That's too light."

"Wear tulle over satin"—"I can't endure white." "Your rose-colored, then, the best of the batch"— "I haven't a thread of point-lace to match." "Your brown *moire antique*"—"Yes, and look like a Quaker."

"The pearl-colored"—"I would, but that plaguy dress-maker Has had it a week." "Then that exquisite lilac, In which you would melt the heart of a Shylock;" (Here the nose took again the same elevation)— "I wouldn't wear that for the whole of creation."

"Why not? It's my fancy, there's nothing could strike it As more *comme il faut*"—"Yes, but, dear me, that lean Sophronia Stuckup has got one just like it, And I won't appear dressed like a chit of sixteen." "Then that splendid purple, the sweet Mazarine; That superb *point d'aiguille*, that imperial green, That zephyr-like tarletan, that rich *grenadine*"—"Not one of all which is fit to be seen," Said the lady, becoming excited and flushed. "Then wear," I exclaimed, in a tone which quite crushed Opposition, "that gorgeous *toilette* which you sported In Paris last spring, at the grand presentation, When you quite turned the head of the head of the nation,



And by all the grand court were so very much courted." The end of the nose was portentously tipped up And both the bright eyes shot forth indignation, As she burst upon me with the fierce exclamation, "I have worn it three times, at the least calculation, And that and most of my dresses are ripped up!" Here I *ripped out* something, perhaps rather rash, Quite innocent, though; but to use an expression More striking than classic, it "settled my hash," And proved very soon the last act of our session. "Fiddlesticks, is it, sir? I wonder the ceiling Doesn't fall down and crush you—you men have no feeling;

You selfish, unnatural, illiberal creatures, Who set yourselves up as patterns and preachers, Your silly pretense—why, what a mere guess it is! Pray, what do you know of a woman's necessities?

I have told you and shown you I've nothing to wear,
And it's perfectly plain you not only don't care,
But you do not believe me" (here the nose went still
higher).

"I suppose, if you dared, you would call me a liar.
Our engagement is ended, sir—yes, on the spot;
You're a brute, and a monster, and—I don't know what."
I mildly suggested the words Hottentot,
Pickpocket, and cannibal, Tartar, and thief,
As gentle expletives which might give relief;
But this only proved as a spark to the powder,
And the storm I had raised came faster and louder:
It blew and it rained, thundered, lightened and hailed
Interjections, verbs, pronouns, till language quite failed
To express the abusive, and then its arrears
Were brought up all at once by a torrent of tears,
And my last faint, despairing attempt at an ob-
servation was lost in a tempest of sobs.



Well, I felt for the lady, and felt for my hat, too,
Improvised on the crown of the latter a tattoo,
In lieu of expressing the feelings which lay
Quite too deep for words, as Wordsworth would say;
Then, without going through the form of a bow,
Found myself in the entry—I hardly know how,
On doorstep and sidewalk, past lamp-post and square,
At home and upstairs, in my own easy-chair;
Poked my feet into slippers, my fire into blaze,
And said to myself, as I lit my cigar,



"Supposing a man had the wealth of the Czar
Of the Russias to boot, for the rest of his days,
On the whole, do you think he would have much to spare,
If he married a woman with nothing to wear?"
Since that night, taking pains that it should not be
bruited

Abroad in society, I've instituted
A course of inquiry, extensive and thorough,
On this vital subject, and find, to my horror,
That the fair Flora's case is by no means surprising,
But that there exists the greatest distress
In our female community, solely arising
From this unsupplied destitution of dress,
Whose unfortunate victims are filling the air
With the pitiful wail of "Nothing to wear."

Researches in some of the "Upper Ten" districts
Reveal the most painful and startling statistics,
Of which let me mention only a few:
In one single house on the Fifth Avenue,
Three young ladies were found, all below twenty-two,
Who have been three whole weeks without anything new
In the way of flounced silks, and thus left in the lurch,
Are unable to go to ball, concert or church.
In another large mansion near the same place
Was found a deplorable, heartrending case
Of entire destitution of Brussels point-lace.
In a neighboring block there was found, in three calls,
Total want, long continued, of camel's-hair shawls;

And a suffering family, whose case exhibits
The most pressing need of real ermine tippets;
One deserving young lady almost unable
To survive for the want of a new Russian sable;
Still another, whose tortures have been most terrific
Ever since the sad loss of the steamer *Pacific*,
In which were engulfed, not friend or relation
(For whose fate she, perhaps, might have found consolation,
Or borne it, at least, with serene resignation),
But the choicest assortment of French sleeves and collars
Ever sent out from Paris, worth thousands of dollars,
And all as to style most *recherché* and rare,
The want of which leaves her with nothing to wear,
And renders her life so drear and dyspeptic
That she's quite a recluse, and almost a skeptic,
For she touchingly says that this sort of grief
Can not find in Religion the slightest relief,
And Philosophy has not a maxim to spare
For the victims of such overwhelming despair.
But the saddest, by far, of all these sad features,
Is the cruelty practised upon the poor creatures
By husbands and fathers, real Bluebeards and Timons,
Who resist the most touching appeals made for diamonds



By their wives and their daughters, and leave them for
days
Unsupplied with new jewelry, fans or bouquets,
Even laugh at their miseries whenever they have a chance,
And deride their demands as useless extravagance.
One case of a bride was brought to my view,

Too sad for belief, but alas! 'twas too true,
Whose husband refused, as savage as Charon,
To permit her to take more than ten trunks to Sharon.
The consequence was, that when she got there,
At the end of three weeks she had nothing to wear;
And when she proposed to finish the season
At Newport, the monster refused, out and out,
For his infamous conduct alleging no reason,
Except that the waters were good for his gout;
Such treatment as this was too shocking, of course,
And proceedings are now going on for divorce.

But why harrow the feelings by lifting the curtain
From these scenes of woe? Enough, it is certain,
Has here been disclosed to stir up the pity
Of every benevolent heart in the city,
And spur up humanity into a canter
To rush and relieve these sad cases instant.
Won't somebody, moved by this touching description,
Come forward to-morrow and head a subscription?
Won't some kind philanthropist, seeing that aid is
So needed at once by these indigent ladies,
Take charge of the matter? Or won't Peter Cooper
The corner-stone lay of some new splendid super-
Structure, like that which to-day links his name
In the Union unending of Honor and Fame,
And found a new charity just for the care
Of these unhappy women with nothing to wear,
Which, in view of the cash which would daily be claimed,
The *Laying-out* Hospital well might be named?
Won't Stewart, or some of our dry-goods importers,
Take a contract for clothing our wives and our daughters?

Or, to furnish the cash to supply these distresses,
And life's pathway strew with shawls, collars and dresses,
Ere the want of them makes it much rougher and
thornier,
Won't some one discover a new California?

O! ladies, dear ladies, the next sunny day,
Please trundle your hoops just out of Broadway,
From its swirl and its bustle, its fashion and pride
And the temples of Trade which tower on each side,
To the alleys and lanes, where Misfortune and Guilt
Their children have gathered, their city have built;
Where Hunger and Vice, like twin beasts of prey,
Have hunted their victims to gloom and despair;
Raise the rich, dainty dress, and the fine brodered skirt,
Pick your delicate way through the dampness and dirt.

Grope through the dark dens, climb the rickety stair
To the garret, where wretches, the young and the old,



Half starved and half naked, lie crouched from the cold;



See those skeleton limbs, those frost-bitten feet,
All bleeding and bruised by the stones of the street;
Hear the sharp cry of childhood, the deep groans that
swell

From the poor dying creature who writhes on the floor;
Hear the curses that sound like the echoes of Hell,
As you sicken and shudder and fly from the door;
Then home to your wardrobes, and say, if you dare—
Spoiled children of fashion—you've nothing to wear!

And O! if perchance there should be a sphere
Where all is made right which so puzzles us here,
Where the glare and the glitter and tinsel of Time
Fade and die in the light of that region sublime,
Where the soul, disenchanted of flesh and of sense,
Unscreened by its trappings and shows and pretense,
Must be clothed for the life and the service above,
With purity, truth, faith, meekness and love,
O! daughters of Earth! foolish virgins, beware!
Lest in that upper realm you have nothing to wear!



Wm Allen Butler

SO MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING:

An Afterword

by

Gilbert K. Westgard II

Of the seven known replies to William Allen Butler's "Nothing to Wear," only Alger's anonymously done "Nothing to Do" managed to attain the style of the original. His reply was announced in the September 5, 1857 Harper's Weekly, in a one inch advertisement that stated, "This Poem is a companion and Sequel to the well-known NOTHING TO WEAR. The hero, Augustus Fitz-Herbert, encounters at the Potiphars' party, Miss Flora M'Flimsey, of Madison Square, and the result is 'A Marriage in High Life.'"

"Published by JAMES FRENCH & CO., Boston, by whom orders are respectfully solicited."

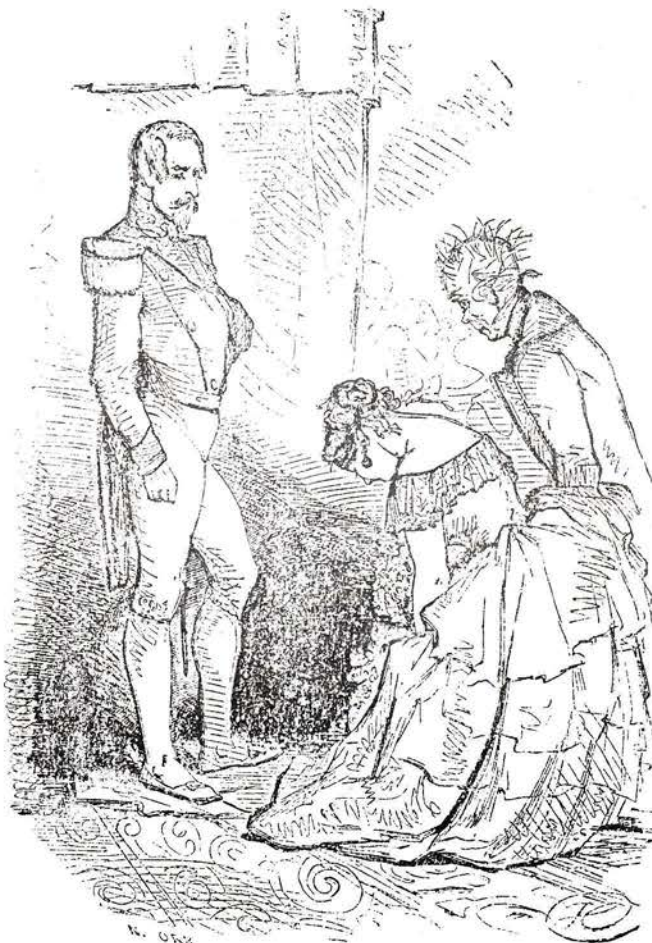
Alger dedicated his slim volume of verse to William Allen Butler, who was also his fraternity brother in the Psi Upsilon, and recognized the roots of Butler's satire as being "The Potiphar Papers," by George William Curtis, which had been serialized in Putnam's Monthly, in 1853, and subsequently published as a book in 1856, when he had his character Augustus Fitz-Herbert meet Miss Flora M'Flimsey at the Potiphars' party.

Other than in its original format, the Alger "Nothing to Do" is only available in ALGER STREET, The Poetry of Horatio Alger, Jr., and in my 1978 reprint, of which some copies are still available.

William Allen Butler was born in Albany, New York, February 20, 1825, the son of Benjamin Franklin Butler. His father held the post of Attorney-General in the Cabinet of President Andrew Jackson. He graduated from the University of the City of New York in 1843, read law in the office of his father, and was admitted to the bar in 1846. Though he had a brilliant legal career and many civic interests, he is best remembered as a satirical poet. Several serious books were written by him, though none achieved the tremendous popularity of "Nothing to Wear." He died on September 9, 1902.

Augustus Hoppin, 1828-96, was born in Providence, Rhode Island, educated at Brown University in the class of 1848, became a lawyer, but gave it up to go abroad to study art. In this latter field he achieved distinction. The great success of "The Potiphar Papers" made him the logical choice for illustrating Butler's "Nothing to Wear." For the book, published by Rudd & Carleton, he did eight illustrations, and two more, somewhat larger, to accompany the poem in Harper's Monthly, November, 1857. All ten of his drawings appear in this issue of Newsboy.

It is interesting to compare one of his illustrations from "The Potiphar Papers," showing Mrs. Potiphar being presented to Emperor Napoleon III, with that of Flora M'Flimsey in the same situation.



George William Curtis reviewed "Nothing to Wear" in Putnam's Monthly, August, 1857, and had more to say about the artist than the poem.

—In one of the earlier numbers of *Harper's Weekly*, a poem was printed called *Nothing to Wear*, which was remarkable for a mingled humor, and pathos, and good sense—so rarely mingled, indeed, that the result was a symmetrical poem—a sparkling satire upon fashionable female extravagance, treated with the easy skill of a master. Its popularity was immediate and unmistakable; and Messrs. Rudd & Carlton have issued it in handsome antique style, daintily printed and bound, and profusely illustrated by Hoppin. Upon reading it again in its permanent form, we are even more impressed with the spirited humor of the poem, rising at the end, by a natural crescendo, into a strain of seriousness and pathetic appeal which is yet strictly in the key of the whole performance. The name of the author has been already printed in the newspapers. It is that of a gentleman who has thus turned a moment from the dust of the law to practice a little music outside his profession. Mr. William Allen Butler will make all who love literature wish that he may be his own syren.

But the book is also remarkable for the singular felicity of its illustrations. Mr. Hoppin needs no introduction to the readers of *Putnam*. As the lovely Italian Countess introduced herself everywhere and with the warmest welcoming, by her beautiful face, so Mr. Hoppin has introduced himself to our readers by his racy, graceful, humorous, and thoughtful sketches—in "Frippery," "Miss Caley," "The Embroidered Handkerchief," and "My Hotel." It certainly is doing no one injustice to say that, in a department of social humor and poetic fancy, he is unsurpassed. He is not merely a comical designer, but an artist of true humor—a humor akin to that of our modern literature, which ends rather in a tear than a smile. In fact, this is the superlative characteristic of humor, that it is humane and sympathetic. No parent, no lover, no friend, who wished to hint to daughter or mistress, the deep tragic-comedy of her personal extravagance, could do it better than by the last cut in *Nothing to Wear*. The poem and the picture are worthy each other, and the dew of pity they distill into the heart is the triumph and the excellence of each. Mr. Hoppin has a rare union of imagination with his humor—a fine flavor of allegory in his best things, which gives them a peculiar completeness. He is destined, it seems to us, to great distinction in his career.

Hoppin's illustrations for "The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table," by Oliver Wendell Holmes, 1858, are also well-known. He died in 1896.

My own copy of "Nothing to Wear" is a particularly prized volume, having been inscribed by the artist.

Mrs. Blodgett
from
Chas. Hoppin.
June 20th 1857

Some additional information concerning one of the publishers, George W. Carleton, is given in the following newspaper clipping that was pasted in the front of yet another copy of "Nothing to Wear" in my collection.

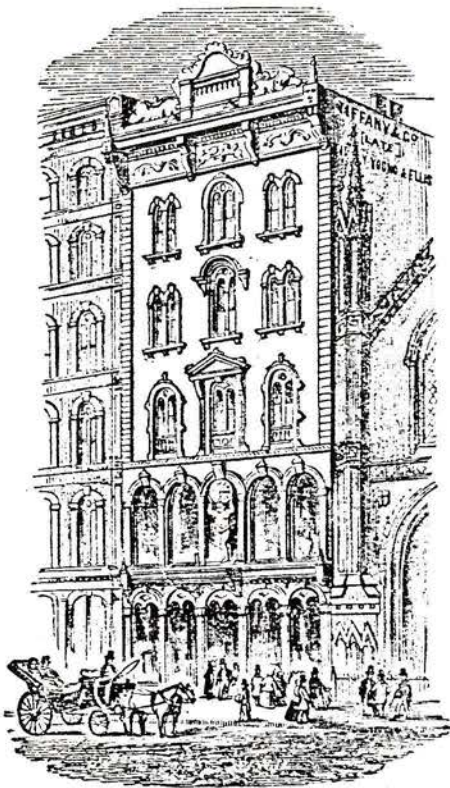
THE BALTIMORE NEWS
SATURDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 12, 1901.
GEORGE W. CARLETON DEAD.
As A Publisher He Gave "Flora McFilmsey" To The Public.
Saratoga, Oct. 12.—George W. Carleton of 27 West Thirty-seventh street, New York city, the well-known publisher and senior member of the firm of G. W. Carleton & Co., died yesterday at Putnam place, the residence of his son-in-law, Lieut. Israel Putnam. Mr. Carleton was in his 70th year.
Mr. Carleton was born in New York city. He started life as a clerk, but his talent for sketching soon brought him to the notice of publishers, and in time he embarked in the book publishing business for himself. For many years his place of business was in the Fifth Avenue Hotel Building, on the Twenty-third street side. The first book he published was William Allen Butler's "Nothing to Wear: The Chronicle of Miss Flora McFilmsey of Madison Square."
The funeral will take place from the Carleton residence in New York city on Monday morning. The Rev. Dr. Charles H. Parkhurst will officiate.

G. W. Carleton's Successor, G. W. Dillingham was the publisher of Alger's *The Disagreeable Woman*, and continued to make use of Carleton's Arabic symbol as a colophon in his books.

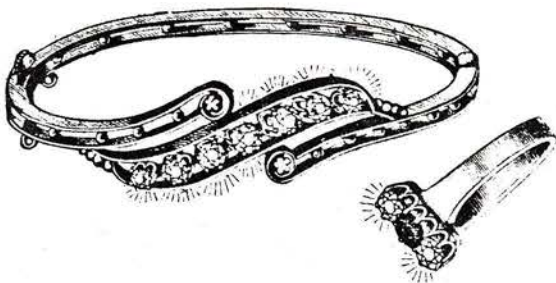
The two latest discoveries in the cycle of "Nothing" items are shown on the back cover of this issue of *Newsboy*. Though not known for certain, the author of the item in *Punch* appears to be Charles William Shirley Brooks, who was particularly noted for speed and rhyming ability.

Charles M. Walcott's "Nothing to Nurse" is not a poem, but a play. The title page is shown, together with two lines from the cover that state that it was performed at Laura Keane's Theatre, in September, 1857, the copyright notice, and the closing lines of the play.

Taken together with Ralph Gardner's 1964 comments in "Horatio Alger, or The American Hero Era," in the section where he gives the bibliographic data concerning Alger's "Nothing to Do," these recent discoveries may well be the final links in the fascinating "Nothing" saga.



And here is Tiffany's



TYPICAL AFTERNOON COSTUME FOR THE WELL-DRESSED MAN



RAIN COAT OF THE NINETIES

MARCH 12, 1859.]

PUNCH, OR THE LONDON CHARIVARI.

109

"NOTHING TO EAT!" OR THE LADY'S REVENGE.



A SATIRICAL creature has told the distress, Of a certain fair maid, in the matter of dress; How, although a new bonnet she'd daily bespeak, And buy at the least four new dresses a week, Yet when'er she went out she was heard to declare, That she really and truly had "Nothing to Wear!" Now another sad story I fain would reveal, Of the wants which rich people so bitterly feel; Not the ladies alone, if of truth there's location, But the gentlemen too are in dire destitution; A piteous complaint in all quarters we meet, That the lords of creation have "Nothing to Eat!" 'Tis now scarce a month since that sorrowful day, When SIR JULIAN DAIN-TYE, of Asterisk Street, Was heard by the wife of his bosom to say,

That, although he had dined, he'd had "Nothing to Eat!"
 "Nothing to Eat? why, there stood just before you, Of mutton a haunch, in the prime of cut:
 Had been hanging a fortnight—it had, I assure you, And cook took such pains"—but my mouth here was shut;
 JULIAN turned up his nose, as much as to say,
"Toujours mouton! One can't eat it every day!"
 So I ventured again: "There was boiled fowl by me"—
"Boiled fowl! ugh!" (a shudder afflicting to see:)
 "Well, at least the first course to your notice had claims,
 That clear soup"—"Was muddy and thick as the Thames!"
 "Noble cod's head and shoulders"—"Looked fishy and queer;"
 "And such smelts!"—"Out of season at this time of year."
 "Well, the side-dishes then: the sweet-breads"—"Weren't sweet:"
 "Oyster *pâté*, home made"—"That I never can eat!"
 "Stewed pigeon"—"A libel to call it a stew:"
 "Calf's head"—"Looked and tasted extremely like glue!"
 "On that jugged hare a prince might have dined, I declare"—
 "But one's not a chameleon: can't live upon *hare*!"
 "Then the cutlets"—"Too cold"—"And the curry"—"Too hot,"—
 "And the dainties which followed, the *soufflé*"—"The *what*?"
 "Call that mess a *soufflé*!"—"Well, the sweets were divine,
 Fit for gods!"—"But not men: may suit nectar: spoil wine:
 And as fellows who're mortal can't live without grub,
 And I've had no dinner, I'll—sup at the Club."
 Away went my half-starving husband with this,
 (And without going through e'en the *form* of a kiss!)
 —Left alone: all my wifely attentions rejected:
 On the Wrongs of poor Woman I sadly reflected.
 I had taken such pains to have everything nice,
 Had ordered such dainties, regardless of price,
 Yet our last guest has scarcely set foot in the street,
 When my JULIAN bursts out—"I've had Nothing to Eat!"
 Pursuing the theme, (on the fender my toes,
 And a tear trickling over the bridge of my nose,)
 I thought—If a wife in our "Upper Ten" sphere
 Were allowed (say) a trifling Five Thousand a Year
 For housekeeping, and spent every penny upon it,
 And ne'er put down as "*Poultry*" some "*duck*" of a bonnet,
 Don't you think she'd be troubled to make both ends meet,
 If her husband were one who finds "Nothing to Eat?"
 Well, since that fatal night, (I need scarcely relate
 When my JULIAN returned he was in such a state!
 Nor need I say here how those vile Clubs I hate,
 For they smell so of smoke, and they sit up so late!)
 Since that fatal night, the most saddening statistics
 I have gleaned of the Want in the well-to-do districts:
 And by patient enquiry of their wives I have found,
 That alas! starving husbands in London abound:
 That our homeless Poor suffer in quite a low pitch,
 Compared to the pangs of our Dinnerless Rich:

Those poor creatures who lately have filled the *Times*' sheet
 With their pitiful stories of "Nothing to Eat."

MORAL:

Now, Ladies! Wives! Sisters! for Vengeance prepare!
 To a woman, we all know, the last word is sweet:
 When they twit us for saying we've "Nothing to Wear,"
 We'll reply, "And, poor fellows! you've *NOTHING TO EAT!*"

THE MINOR DRAMA.

THE ACTING EDITION.

No. CXXXV.

NOTHING TO NURSE;

An Original Farce, in One Act,

BY CHARLES M. WALCOT.

Author of "A Good Fellow," "Hi-a-wa-tha," "One Coat for Two
 Suits," "The Custom of the Country," &c., &c.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED

A description of the Costume—Cast of the Characters—Entrances and Exits—
 Relative Positions of the Performers on the Stage, and the whole of the
 Stage Business.

NEW YORK:

SAMUEL FRENCH,

122 NASSAU STREET, (UP STAIRS.)

AS PERFORMED AT

LAURA KEENE'S THEATRE, N. Y., SEPTEMBER, 1857.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year One Thousand Eight Hundred and Fifty Seven,
 by C. M. WALCOT, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States, for the
 Southern District of New York.

Brads. You will? then by George you have my consent with all my heart. Better late than never—take her, you scamp, but mind, no more disappointments.

Muddle. My dear uncle, you make me the happiest, as I will prove the most grateful of men. You know "Tis not in nature to command success, but we'll do more, dear uncle, we'll deserve it." Mother-in-law, if I may call you so, you won't object now uncle gives consent?

Mrs. Fox. No my dear sir, for your uncle's kind forgiveness I'll give anything, even my dear child.

Muddle. Huzza! huzza! Muddle's a made man at last. [To Audience.] Grant us your kind indulgence, beyond that we've Nothing to ask, with it we shall have Nothing to fear, for then we don't care how often we publish the fact of, "NOTHING TO NURSE."