

# Newsboy

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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



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## Rags-to-riches gala

*Chicago Tribune*, May 24, 1978

# Add 14 chapters to Horatio Alger's story

By Jon Anderson

**N**EW YORK—Lives of great men all remind us of something or other, and in author Horatio Alger's view — strongly supported by 800 people at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel the other night — it was that "any spunky lad can whip the town bully and rise from newsboy to banker."

As a 19th-Century chronicler of the upwardly mobile, Alger's favorite characters were those who started with what card players would call a weak hand. At the Waldorf, the crowd gave huge ovations to 14 such modern-day persons, the 1978 winners of the Horatio Alger Awards for people who "rise from humble beginnings to positions of leadership and/or success in their chosen fields of endeavor."

Those honored included Henry Aaron, Willie Shoemaker, and George Shearing, who overcame poverty, smallness, and blindness to become, respectively, a home run king, a jockey, and a pianist.

And Wallace Rasmussen, who walked barefoot to school to save shoe leather, leaving home at 16 as a food-saving measure when the Depression and dust-bowl winds savaged the family's Nebraska farm, and working the hay fields near the Mojave Desert for steady meals of black-eyed peas and \$10 a month.

And Mary Crowley, who suffered abuse from a stepmother later found unfit by a juvenile court, got married right after high school, got divorced, and, backed by a \$100 loan from a Rotary Club, moved her two kids from rural Texas into Dallas and started accounting.



Tribune photo by Sally Good

Hank Aaron shares the head table with Helen F. Boehm, a director of the dinner.

And Joseph Solomon, who shared a four-room, coldwater tenement on Manhattan's lower East Side with his parents and seven brothers and sisters, in danger of gas asphyxiation at home and neighborhood gangs outside, and, while still in elementary school, struggled with a fruit-and-vegetable stand for 16 hours every Saturday in the hopes of earning \$1.

And Clarence Finley, who paid for his education by cutting lawns, cleaning basements, and delivering The Chicago Tribune, turning down scholarships because his income was needed to help support his five brothers and sisters, all of whom had been

abandoned by his father when Finley was 11.

And Gilbert Ellis, who pumped gas, scrubbed floors, and waited tables to get through high school. And six others, whose early days were filled with such pursuits as picking cotton and collecting discarded shingles for firewood.

**ANYWAY, THIS was a night for last chapters — a celebration not of how life began but of how it turned out.**

It was a time for finding out two things: whether life could imitate art and whether

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## HORATIO ALGER SOCIETY

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

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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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The fourteenth annual convention of the Horatio Alger Society was a big success. Many thanks to all who attended the Jacksonville Jamboree. See you next year!!

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## THE "JACKSONVILLE JAMBOREE"

The May convention of the Horatio Alger Society was well attended with almost forty members. As convention copy is now in the process of being written and pictures are being developed, I will wait until the next issue to give you all the convention coverage. Also, that issue (August) may be a little late. From May 27th to July 26th I'll be on vacation — far away from my electric typewriter. Please address all Newsboy letters to your editor, Jack Bales, 440 Palace St., Aurora, Illinois 60506.

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THE STORY OF HORATIO ALGER  
by Medford Evans

(Editor's note: The following article, "The Story of Horatio Alger" by Medford Evans, first appeared in the November, 1977 issue of American Opinion (Belmont, Massachusetts 02178) and is reprinted by permission of the publisher. This is one of the best Alger articles that I have read in many years).

I cannot explain the mystery. I can only observe that there is one. The Encyclopaedia Britannica has called Horatio Alger, Jr. "the most influential author of his generation"—a generation that included Louisa May Alcott, Bret Harte, Henry James, Herman Melville, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and Mark Twain. The list could be made even more impressive if we did not assume, as I think we must, that the Britannica's comparison was meant to include only American authors. We note also that "most influential" does not mean greatest; yet a judgment that any writer in America of the Nineteenth Century had more influence than the author of Uncle Tom's Cabin is sufficiently arresting. And, some of us would say, gratifying.

Horatio Alger, Jr. was born in 1832, the year of Andrew Jackson's reelection to the Presidency. Alger's first completely typical work, Ragged Dick; Or, Street Life in New York, was

published in 1868, the year of U. S. Grant's first election. From then till the end of the century — Alger died in 1899, near the end of William McKinley's first, and only complete term — the slow-starting but incredibly prolific author turned out more than a hundred boys' books on the constant theme of what might today be called upward mobility.

It seems worth observing that as Mrs. Stowe's delirious call to arms helped to produce the Civil War, so Horatio Alger's hundredfold celebration of opportunity unlimited for industrious, honest, quick-witted, and predictably lucky American boys (native or immigrant) supplied much of the inspiration for the businessmen's reconstruction of the Union which so progressively succeeded where the politician's "Reconstruction" had so wretchedly failed. It appears significant that Henry W. Grady's healing and stimulating address, "The New South," was delivered in New York in 1886, at the peak — or should we say the middle of the plateau — of Alger's enormous popularity. A New Englander himself, Alger appealed across the board, as no other New Englander has ever done, to Americans of every section in the empire-building, transcontinental railroad-building, Panama Canal-building era of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Recognition of Alger's sociological importance did not have to wait upon posterity. Boston publisher A. K. Loring, one of many publishers for whom Horatio Alger made profits, is quoted by Edwin P. Hoyt as having said: "Alger is the dominating figure of the new era. In his books he has captured the spirit of reborn America ["reborn" after the Civil War, of course]. The turmoil of the city streets is in them. You can hear the rattle of pails on the farms. Above all you can hear the cry of triumph of the oppressed over the oppressor."

The judgment that Alger's books were a shaping force in U. S. history is not the view of prejudice—at least not of any one set of prejudices. "Liberals," Conservatives, and nothing-thank-you's

agree that the man who wrote these books made men of the boys who read them. William Henderson writing in Publishers Weekly (April 23, 1973) summarizes illustrative cases. "Benjamin Fairless, who rose from part-time school teacher to the head of United States Steel, said that he devoured Alger's books as a boy. Carl Sandburg [I told you it is not a matter of ideology] sought Alger's novels in the public library of his hometown of Galesburg, Illinois. New York Governor Alfred E. Smith struggled upward from newsboy on Manhattan's Lower East Side with the help of Alger [this is straight from a milieu that could be cornily called Algeria], as did Governor Herbert Lehman, who knew the author personally and 'eagerly awaited publication of every book Alger wrote.' Even Ernest Hemingway said he was an Alger fan, as did Christy Mathewson of the New York Giants and Notre Dame's Knute Rockne."

Henderson evidently got this list from Ralph D. Gardner's Horatio Alger, Or The American Hero Era (Wayside Press, 1964), a biographical and bibliographical work which I have not seen, but which was reviewed in (among other places) The Nation of July 13, 1964. The writer of that review, one Harvey Swados, adds from the same apparent source as Henderson the names of Alger-marked notables Michael V. DiSalle, Francis Cardinal Spellman, James A. Farley, and Joyce Kilmer.

Swados, though by no means ready to accord Alger a place as a serious literary artist, testifies to the reality of the Alger world—the mise-enscene of his novels. (Pardon my halting French; Alger himself was quite fluent in the language). Indeed this Nation reviewer begins his lucubrations with a veritable Alger tale of his own about a young Moslem from Rhodes who came to New York in the early 1960's, "determined to make something of himself." He studied electronics in trade school, and English, of which he spoke "no more than hello and goodbye" on arrival. "Now," writes Swados, "he is service manager of a metropolitan store. . . ."

He has an American wife, a house in the suburbs, a new car." Swados quotes the Mediterranean Rhodesian (nothing like the African Rhodesian's): "In Greece I could have dreamed about this, sure. But I would have been dreaming about it all my life. Here in this country you can do it. If you want it bad enough, you can do it."

Comments Swados of The Nation: "The young man had never heard of Horatio Alger but he was a personification of the American Dream, a tribute to its persistence." That is a comment from the intellectual Left in the year of the filthy speech riots at Berkeley. Not 1904 but 1964.

Swados aptly takes to task another author of a book on Alger—a book to which we shall return in a moment with a matter of rather startling interest—a book entitled From Rags to Riches: Horatio Alger, Jr. And The American Dream (Macmillan, 1964), written by John Tebbel, a kind of scholar-cum-journalist, with just a touch of the Babbitry he ridicules. (We all find our best subject for satire in the mirror, n'est-ce pas)? Swados quotes Tebbel: "In the twentieth century, the dream as expounded by Alger was no longer the belief of millions but the transmuted property of a conservative bloc in Big Business, with an auxiliary in the advertising industry." Then Swados swats him: "But what of my friend from the island of Rhodes? The mystical belief that America is different does persist, through depression and war, and it is nourished not only by capitalist propaganda in the mass media, but by the letters the old folks in Greece are not doubt receiving from their son."

This review in The Nation has a murky ending which leaves me unsure whether Harvey Swados is for the American Dream or against it, but he sees—correctly—that it is still being dreamed, and realized.

Allow me one more quotation from The

Nation's reviewer of Algeriana, and then I must expound a bit on my own. Swados speaks with admirable precision of "the specifically American belief that success can be won by the individual acting as an individual, and not as a member of a clan, a class or a nation." Yes, that's it. To be sure, we join things, and follow fashions, and act herdlike on occasion, but the essence of Americanism is the independence of the individual man.

What I wanted to add about Alger and the American dream, or hero age, or whatever Alger stemmed from himself and notably inspired in others, is that the upward mobility for which America offered (and offers) unlimited opportunity is or becomes inevitably an end in itself. Strive and Succeed, yes, but the striving is more important than the succeeding. Strive and Succeed. Through Luck and Pluck, resolved to Sink or Swim, if you Try and Trust, you are Bound to Rise; and when, Brave and Bold, you have Risen from the Ranks, you will have demonstrated how one Seeking his Fortune and Shifting for Himself, willing to Wait and Hope as well as to Do and Dare, can overcome The Odds Against Him, and Struggling Upward, Facing the World at all times Frank and Fearless, may emulate Abraham Lincoln, the Backwoods Boy. . . a Young Rail-Splitter" [who] Became President.

That little chrestomathy of Alger titles summarizes the Alger philosophy. It may be observed that inclusion of Abraham Lincoln in the roster of success shows that Alger (and conceivably those inspired by him) could hardly be crass materialists since Lincoln never got rich, and was assassinated. Alger lived in an age of striving—an age when a great poet, Robert Browning, was writing, "Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp, Or what's a heaven for?" Shortly before his own death, and just ten years before Alger's, Browning wrote again that he was "One who never turned his back but marched breast forward/ Never doubted clouds would break,/"

(continued from page 1)



Chicagoan Arthur Rubloff (second from right), a 1955 Horatio Alger Award winner, gathers with other previous winners before the procession into the 1978 awards ceremony in the Waldorf Astoria Hotel.

Horatio Alger, whose 100-odd books, including "Ragged Dick," "Tattered Tom," and "Luck and Pluck," have sold an estimated 30 million copies, was right.

On the evidence presented at the Waldorf, the least that could be said is that he had a point.

The black-tie crowd offered warm applause for Rasmussen, now chairman and chief executive officer of Beatrice Foods Co.; Crowley, whose Home Interiors and Gifts, Inc. has 23,000 sales representatives in 49 states; Solomon, a senior partner in the New York law firm of Lehman, Rohrlich & Solomon; Finley, corporate group vice president of Burlington Industries, Inc.; and Ellis, board chairman of Household Finance Corp.

**PRESENTING THE bust replicas of Horatio Alger** was Dr. Norman Vincent Peale, no mean shakes himself as a success story. His 24 self-help books, notably "The Power of Positive Thinking," are available in 33 languages and his pamphlets are now moving briskly at the rate of 30 million a year.

Chicago realtor Arthur Rubloff, dinner chairman and himself a 1955 award recipient, described the Horatio Alger recognition as "one of the most prestigious awards in the U.S."

The awards were founded 31 years ago by Dr. Kenneth Beebe of the American Schools and

Colleges Association, who was concerned with "the mind-poisoning belief" among young people that equal opportunity was a thing of the past.

Previous winners have ranged from nature expert Roger Tory Peterson, whose early interest in feeding birds caused schoolmates to deride him as "professor Nuts," to poet-singer Rod McKuen, who was born in a California Salvation Army hospital to a dance-hall hostess.

**THOSE WHO** bought tables at the dinner included Robert Abplanalp, close friend of former President Richard Nixon and inventor of the valve on which modern aerosol spray dispensers are based; and W. Clement Stone, whose "Success Unlimited" magazine will move this summer into unoccupied space in the Chicago Sun-Times building.

Many of the award winners credited their success to a positive mental attitude toward their early vicissitudes. Mrs. Crowley said her current motto is "Think Mink," which, she explained, means "Think the best. Don't think fox or rabbit or squirrel."

Not all award winners have lived happily ever after. Chicago industrialist J. Patrick Lannan was honored in 1962. The next day, his wife sued him for divorce.

Chicago Tribune Press Service

Never dreamed though right were worsted,  
 wrong would triumph, / Held we fall to  
 rise, are baffled to fight better, /  
 Sleep to wake." At about the same time  
 Browning wrote that, and Alger was  
 writing Struggling Upward and The  
 Odds Against Him, William Ernest Hen-  
 ley was writing, "I am the captain of  
 my soul." A vain boast unless it  
 means—as it plainly did—I can deter-  
 mine how I shall meet whatever happens.

Horatio Alger was not an apostle of  
 get-ahead-at-all-costs. He was a  
 moralist, and the moralizing in his  
 books is not excrescent but essential.  
 Surely, then, the millions of American  
 boys whose incipient manhood responded  
 to Alger's books were not simply out to  
 make a bundle, but aspired, in the  
 spirit of Kipling's If, "to meet with  
 Triumph and Disaster / And treat those  
 two imposters just the same"—aspired,  
 indeed, to possess if possible "the  
 Earth and everything that's in it," but  
 more profoundly to earn the accolade im-  
 plicit in the apodosis of If: "And—  
 which is more—you'll be a Man, my son!"  
 Kipling wrote that about ten years after  
 Alger's death. It was another decade  
 before Grantland Rice wrote, in the same  
 Alger-Browning-Henley-Kipling tradition  
 (the hyphenated list could be made long-  
 er), that "When the One Great Scorer  
 comes to write against your name, / He  
 marks—not that you won or lost—but  
 how you played the game."

Now that spirit, which is bread and  
 meat to the men who made America, is  
 poison to those who long to tear America  
 down. The late Heywood Broun said Joyce  
 Kilmer's Trees was "one of the most an-  
 noying pieces of verse" of which he had  
 knowledge. "The other," he added, "is  
 Kipling's If, with third place reserved  
 for Henley's Invictus." The Left, des-  
 pite ceremonial invocations to "Freedom"  
 and "Liberty," does not love individual  
 independence—without much liberty and  
freedom are dishonest cant. (Of Broun  
 himself, Edmund Wilson—a fellow Leftist  
 but more fastidious—writes: "Heywood  
 Broun was a big soft lazy man who fig-  
 ured as very advanced since he called  
 himself a socialist and had allowed his

wife to retain her maiden name").

The crux of the difference between  
 Left and Right (in the American sense of  
 both terms) is in the matter of indi-  
 vidual responsibility. The American  
 Right, which was overwhelmingly predom-  
 inant until the Wilson Administration,  
 has always supported what Harvey Swados  
 calls (as we saw above) "the specific-  
 ally American belief that success can be  
 won by the individual acting as an in-  
 dividual, and not as a member of a clan,  
 a class or a nation." That belief is  
 still all but instinctive in the Ameri-  
 can population at large, but it is all  
 but extinguished in academic and gov-  
 ernmental circles. The ongoing crisis  
 over forced "Bussing," for example, is  
 due to the unspoken and irreconcilable  
 conflict between on the one hand the  
 popular belief (which Alger so signif-  
 icantly represented) that equality of  
 opportunity—with unequal scores at the  
 end of the game—is the American way,  
 and on the other hand the behavioristic  
 assumption of the Coleman Report (basis  
 of bussing) that inequality of results  
 automatically proves inequality of  
 original opportunity. (1)

Competitive free enterprise—which is  
 the assumed system of the Alger hero's  
curriculum vitae—owes its immense  
 appeal to the hopelessness of a socialist  
 system which promises spontaneous coop-  
 eration without individual profit, and  
 ends with totalitarian dictatorship en-  
 forced through terror. In the welfare  
 state, appetites continually increase,  
 while willingness to work progressively  
 decreases; but unless someone works,  
 nobody will eat; so the knout is brought  
 in by the more alert, in order that the  
 rest may overcome their reluctance to  
 labor. In the Soviet Union there is  
 no unemployment, because it is illegal  
 not to have a job, and if you don't have  
 one you will be sent to the Gulag and  
 put to work at slave labor. No unem-  
 ployment Q. E. D. All incentives for  
 human effort may be classified under  
 the headings of hope or fear. Capital  
 ism prefers the incentive of hope of  
 profit (including wages); socialism  
 prefers the incentive of fear of the

open and secret police.

But the Algerian scenario has its own problems. One of them is this: If the striving is more important than the succeeding, if upward mobility is its own chief reward, then those at the top have nowhere to go. This is not a verbal problem, but a real one. The New York street boys and Midwestern farm boys of Alger's America, even the poor whites of Grady's South (they were all poor then) had a clearcut challenge to rise in the material world, and the bottom rungs of the ladder were there for them to grasp. But what of the minority that were born with the silver spoon in their mouths? To what should they aspire? The question was not easy in the Gilded Age, and is not easy now.

The most obvious outlet which rich men have for striving and succeeding is philanthropy. You will find in Alger, as you will occasionally in real life, rich men who are motivated unselfishly. They are concerned not to make more for themselves, which they do not need; they are concerned to spend or give away what they've got with as much benefit as possible to the most worthy recipients they can find. This would include their own families, but not exclude others. (2) Alger's heroes were continually encountering just such benevolent captains of industry and business at critical points in the struggle upward. Luck goes with pluck. It is not fair to Alger to say that he believed luck was the automatic reward of pluck and other moral virtues. If he had believed, rather, that luck comes to many, but that the industrious, the plucky and the alert are the ones who can profit by it.

Yet philanthropy is not an adequate or always appealing outlet for all the rich men we have in America, especially since we have so many who either made it themselves before they had run out of psychic energy, or inherited from fathers whom they wished to emulate, but obviously could not exactly, since they were born at the level to which their fathers had struggled. What to do? In

a politically free country, the answer was often inevitable: Go into politics. Not initially, not primarily, into a race for elective office, but into the ranks of Cabinet-level advisors, and other satrapies of the bureaucracy. Cyrus Vance's family was rich before Jimmy Carter's was. (Bert Lance's wealth was too recent for a Cabinet-level job). Yet wealth is not an absolute bar to elective office—not to the Senate, certainly, and not to the Presidency. Abraham Lincoln proved that a Rail-Splitter could become President; Franklin D. Roosevelt proved that a Wall Streeter could become one.

An ominous thought occurs. When men have no incentive to get even richer than they are, and are thus led to go into government, what happens when they have so thoroughly captured government—national government—that there is no longer much kick in managing it? Do they not naturally, perhaps, turn their thoughts to World government? Consider the progress of the Rockefellers: money through business and banking; philanthropy; state and national government; then the Council on Foreign Relations and Trilateral Commission. If, as some contend, Horatio Alger was depressed before he died, having anticipated how striving for success might often affect those who were already successful, small wonder. Our own cue must be to show such persons that they do not control this country so well as they have recently thought they did. We can, for instance, beat them on the Panama Canal giveaway. One of the subtlest lessons of the Alger cycle is that capitalism survives only if you expose and prune out certain "capitalists" at the top who would by attacking our system destroy all opportunity for others.

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(Editor's note: Part II of this article will be printed in the September, 1978 issue of Newsboy).

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Watch for the next issue of Newsboy!! Full convention coverage of the "Jacksonville Jamboree" will be featured, and many pictures will be included.

## THE ROYAL GAME

by Horatio Alger, Jr.

(Editor's note: The following Alger short story is from the collection of Gil Westgard. It originally appeared in Gleason's Pictorial, the March 3, 1860 issue. Thanks go to Gil for sending me this).

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At the close of the fourteenth century the kingdom of Naples and Hungary were temporarily united. The union was not effected peaceably. Charles of Duzarro, a Hungarian monarch, had been crowned king of Naples through the influence of Pope Urban VI. He signalized his reign by causing Queen Joanna whom he superseded to be suffocated, but only four years later he was himself called upon to pay a retributive penalty, being assassinated in Hungary. His son Ladislaus, before he found himself seated securely on his father's throne, was compelled to contest it with Louis of Anjou, the adopted son of Joanna. In this contest, however, he proved successful, and reigned for nearly thirty years afterwards, and, what was unusual at that time, was permitted to die without violence.

It is in the reign of King Ladislaus that our story commences:

On the termination of the struggle, the king proceeded to deal with the adherents of his rival, Louis of Anjou. Some were put to death, others whose connection had been less decided were deprived for a time, but with the certainty of ultimately paying by the penalty of their lives, for the part which they had taken.

Among these latter was the Count Gonsalvo. He was now imprisoned, but it was generally understood that in three months' time he would be led forth to execution. This seemed peculiarly hard, for if any one had cause to live, it seemed to be he. He was descended from a noble line of ancestry, he was young, accomplished, personally prepossessing, and moreover, he had been

but one year since united to a beautiful girl, to whom he was still devotedly attached. However, hard as it seemed, there appeared little prospect of the king's relenting. Hope departed from the count, but not from his wife, the Countess Maria.

The latter, instead of passively waiting the action of the king, determined to exert herself.

With this object in view, she sought Father Anselino, the king's confessor, and was admitted to a private audience.

"What can I do for you, my daughter?" inquired the ecclesiastic, not unmoved by the beauty of his visitor, dimmed though it were with tears.

"You are the king's confessor, is it not so?" asked the countess, eagerly.

"I enjoy that high privilege," said Father Anselino.

"And are intimately acquainted with the king's disposition and taste," continued the countess.

"Pardon me, lady," said Father Anselino,—betraying some surprise—"admitting such to be the case, it appears to me to be rather a singular question to propound to me."

"Perhaps it is," returned the countess, "and in fact, my father, I must in order to make you comprehend my purpose, make a confidant of you."

"Your communication shall be held in strict confidence, my daughter," said the priest.

"Thank you, Father Anselino, and now, in the first place, do you know who I am?"

The ecclesiastic looked at her intently, and then shook his head.

"I can readily see," he said, "that you are a lady of rank and condition. I think even that I have seen your face



before, but I cannot remember where, or under what circumstances."

"Then I will enlighten you. You have seen me at court during the reign of Queen Joanna, whom may the saints have in their holy keeping. Then I was unmarried. Now I am the wife of the Count Gonsalvo."

"The unhappy man who is now in prison, awaiting death when the king in his good pleasure, shall see fit to decree?"

"The same."

"Then I sincerely pity you, my daughter," said the ecclesiastic kindly.

"But, my father, is the king relentless? Is there no way of inducing him to extend a pardon to my husband?"

The countess looked earnestly in the face of Father Anselino.

The priest shook his head, saying, "My daughter, you are aware that there is no fault to which kings are less disposed to be lenient, than that which seeks to undermine their own authority. King Ladislaus is not—I will do him that justice—of a nature which delights in cruelty, for the sake of cruelty, but as I know he feels a large share of resentment against those who espoused the cause of Louis of Anjou, in opposition to his own. You know best whether your husband was one of these."

"He was, but it was less from a dislike to King Ladislaus than from certain obligations, under which he felt himself to Louis—think you, would the knowledge of this fact contribute to abate the king's anger?"

"It would abate it, but not sufficiently so to induce a pardon or even change of sentence."

The countess seemed for a time to be plunged in deep thought. Finally, she raised her head and said, "I have been told that every man has a weak side—some point in which he is especially

vulnerable. Can you tell me how it is with the king?"

"I should be the last," said the ecclesiastic warily, "to charge my royal master with weakness."

"Call it another name then. Has he no strong passion?—no decided proclivity?"

"I know not, unless I mention the strong liking he has for the game of chess. For that he is remarkable."

"Is he an accomplished player?" inquired the countess.

"I am told—for I know nought of the game myself—I am told by them, upon whose judgment I rely, that there are few who are able to encounter him at this pastime."

"And no doubt he vaunts himself upon his superiority."

"It is no doubt a source of satisfaction to him."

"You said, Father Anselino, that there were but few who were able to encounter him. Could you mention some one of these?"

"There is a professor—a learned man—who lives just out of the city—who is reported to be the king's match."

"His name, Father Anselino?" demanded the countess, eagerly.

"Is Giovanni—Signor Giovanni—I know him by no other."

After inquiring particularly on what road, leading from the city, Signor Giovanni lived, the countess left the ecclesiastic, who could not comprehend her purpose or plans.

Three hours after, a knock was heard at the door of Giovanni's cottage. The occupant was a scholar, and lived quite plainly, having but one servant, who chanced to be absent. Giovanni himself

therefore answered the summons.

"Is this the Signor Giovanni?" asked the countess.

"I am he, fair lady," said the scholar in surprise.

"Pardon my abruptness," said she, "but I am told you are an excellent chess-player."

"I am indifferently skillful at the game," was the modest reply.

"And I know nothing of it. I came to inquire whether you would have any objections to teaching me?"

"This is an unwonted request," said the scholar, hesitating, "and I am just now employed in writing a treatise."

"And this will occupy your time. I know it. But my good signor, I have a very especial reason for learning, and I will pay you liberally for the time employed."

"How long should you wish to receive instructions?"

"I should wish to spend four hours a day with you for twelve weeks. In return for this sacrifice on your part, I agree to pay you a thousand ducats."

"A thousand ducats!" said the scholar, his eye glistening with delight. "That will enable me to purchase two rare manuscripts which I have been longing to get, without any prospect of the means of doing so. I thank you for your liberality, fair lady, and I will agree to receive you on the terms you propose."

"Thank you," said the countess, with earnestness. "Can I begin this afternoon?"

"Assuredly, if you so choose. You seem to be very enthusiastic about the game, though in truth I hardly wonder at it, for it is a noble science, and the only game I know that is not

perilous."

"As I said before," said the countess, "I have an especial reason for learning the game, and I may add that the same reason makes me desirous of becoming as skillful as possible. If you could only make me as skillful, or nearly so, as yourself."

"I will not hold out false inducements to you, fair lady. The game of chess is one in which few are fitted to excel. Most can attain an average degree of skill, but to become prominent requires peculiar qualities of mind. If you have these, as I trust you have, I shall be able to give you that basis of knowledge which will fit you for the skill you seek. If not, you must rest content with less."

"I thank you, my friend, for warning me of the difficulties of the science. Your representation, however, does not daunt me. Rather it makes me only the more anxious speedily to commence my task."

"Then we will do without further delay," said Giovanni, taking from its place of security his chess board and men, which he held as one of the chief of his possessions.

Signor Giovanni soon found that he had no ordinary pupil. The countess was possessed of an natural acuteness which probably would have made her an apt scholar under any circumstances, but when to this was added the motive which actually impelled her, the reader will not be surprised to learn that her progress was unprecedentedly rapid—so much so as to fill her preceptor with profound astonishment.

"Do you really think I am making good progress?" the countess would often ask.

"Most astonishing," was the invariable reply.

The fair pupil would look gratified by this meed of praise, and bent her

attention with renewed diligence to the game. In the sixth week she gained the victory for the first time in a game in which the pupil had received no odds. I will not pause to detail the progress which the pupil continued to make. When the lessons were completed she received from her teacher an acknowledgment of her equality with himself in a game which he had made the study of years.

On the day before the execution of the Count Gonsalvo, a lady sought admission to the royal palace. Admitted by the chamberlain, she craved an audience of the king. The chamberlain shook his head. He was quite sure the application would be unsuccessful.

"But say it is a matter of life and death."

The chamberlain agreed to do the message.

"Let her be admitted," said the king, who chanced to be in a favorable mood.

"Fair lady," said he, on her entrance, "I am glad to welcome you to the presence of Ladislaus. How can I serve you?"

"Your Majesty is a chess-player, I am informed."

"I can play somewhat," said the king, proudly.

"Would you be willing to play with me?"

"Doubtless, my fair visitor. Is chess then a favorite game of yours?"

"It is the only one of which I know anything."

"Very well. Let the board be brought." This command was addressed to an attendant.

"In case I am successful in beating your Majesty," said the Countess, "I shall wish to crave a boon."

"It is already granted on the condition you name."

The king said this graciously, but without a thought that he would be called upon to fulfill his promise. His confidence in his own skill was great, and he felt sure that if his antagonist were celebrated as a chess champion he should have heard of her. He accordingly did not take the trouble to speculate as to the nature of the boon which she would crave.

The game commenced. It was soon evident to the king that he had found a "foeman worthy of his steel." He changed his easy and almost indifferent air for one of greater circumspection. Long pauses would elapse between the different moves. It was a closely contested game. But at length by an adroit play the scale turned—and the game was won by the countess.

"Now, your Majesty, the boon," she exclaimed.

"My word is pledged, lady. What seek you?"

"The life of Count Gonsalvo, doomed to die tomorrow."

The king started, and changed color.

"Who then are you?" he exclaimed, suddenly turning to his late antagonist.

"I am the count's wife," was the reply.

"Then he is a man to be envied," said Ladislaus, with sincere admiration. "Madame, I will instantly send orders to have him released, confident that with such a wife I may safely trust to his future loyalty."

"I will answer for him, your Majesty, that henceforth you shall have no more faithful subject."

Count Gonsalvo was liberated the same day, and he prized his freedom the more when he learned how it had been obtained.

The following article is from the collection of Dave Kanarr. It originally appeared in the December, 1904 issue of The American Boy. Thanks, Dave!! (The ad is also from the same issue).



# Boys! Earn Money for CHRISTMAS

ANY BOY who begins now can earn money for Christmas during spare hours on Friday afternoons and Saturdays. The work is easy. No money required to begin. We provide the entire equipment, including our booklet, "How Boys Make Money," describing the successful methods of many bright boys. Write to-day and we will send ten copies of

## The Saturday Evening Post

These are to be sold for 5 cents each, which provides capital for larger supply the following week. Some boys are making \$15.00 a week. You can do the same — all depends on how hard you work.

**\$250.00** IN EXTRA CASH PRIZES  
EACH MONTH FOR BOYS  
WHO DO GOOD WORK

THE CURTIS PUBLISHING COMPANY  
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## To Country Boys Going to The City

The Reverend N. D. Hillis, pastor of Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, in a sermon printed in the New York World has the following to say of boys who are leaving the country to seek fame in great cities:

Many a boy who comes up to town strong, clean and sweet, with a life from which his friends could not hope too much, must when a year has passed be likened to some St. Pierre after the fiery flood has swept by, leaving only blackened towers in its track. Young man, believe in yourself, and remember that you carry treasures undeveloped rich enough to build a store, to found a factory, to organize a commercial institution, to enrich a city. Remember that every moment is precious, that every evening is a vast opportunity, that a single Sunday avails to form a new friendship with some of the good and great, that every week avails for reading a new book—and let these be of the wisest. Every week linger over one great page, see one noble and exalting play, hear one wise sermon, commit to memory one great poem, master one new secret in your business, make the week bright with one helpful deed to some younger stranger, and you will find that the gate of the city holds not misery and failure but happiness and success.

In explaining his success in the great city a wise man once summed his career up in one word, "I had a friend." To be loved and to love are great safeguards. The most terrible thing in the world is the thought that we are unloved and uncared for. That is the terrible punishment that overwhelms the criminal, "No man cares for my soul." Contrariwise, the outstanding man, the great writer, or mayor, or banker, or jurist, are in the centre of observation. A multitude of eyes are focalized upon them. A multitude of hearts love them. This is a moral tonic, a brace and a safeguard. For there never was a man who did not do better work because of public scrutiny. In these October days when you move through the streets you are in danger of feeling that you are unobserved. In your country home you were the centre of observation, and there you dwelt, as it were, in a glass house. Your habits, your friendships, your daily events and duties were all exposed to the scrutiny of your fellows, as the movements of the bees in a glass beehive. In the village, if you had been guilty of a

lapse from prudence, you would be beheld of all men, just as the actor who comes upon the stage is the centre of many opera glasses. And in your loneliness and homesickness and heart hunger you may be tempted to do things that would have been impossible at home, among friends, with the eyes of all fixed upon you. Do not think, therefore, that because you are in the city no man careth for your soul. Let him that wanteth friends show himself friendly. Go to some church, find out some club or society, and there you will discover that there are faces that will beam friendly welcome, hands stretched forth with cordial pressure, and homes that will offer you a haven of rest in the time of your temptation.

One of your perils will be the false estimate placed upon wealth, houses, equipages and exterior show. Money is not everything. Only a few can be rich. Happiness is in the quality of work we do. If your talent is humble you will find your happiness in doing humble work and modest. Are you discouraged and miserable? I will engage to make you perfectly happy, and within one week. Find out your strongest gift and then do the work that God hath appointed you in Christ's way. The safety of the state is in this: to organize the forces of the rich and strong for the service of the poor and ignorant. The beginning of all things, therefore, is the emphasis of manhood or the growth of your own womanhood. Therefore guard your ideals and your deeper convictions against all the fiery flames of passion that threaten you. Watch the hedge! Keep the moral fences in good repair, even as the man in Holland guards the dike against the perils of the sea. If the lights burn low feed the flame afresh. If you have closed the Bible, oft wet by your mother's tears and worn by the repeated readings of your revered father, then open the book again. Be on your guard, and drilling your body to health and enriching your intellect with books, drill your conscience also and cultivate your will. Beholding the drunkard, the tramp, with faces seared with sensuality, scarred with debauchery, disfigured with passion and sin, learn from these pitious tragedies nature's warnings against every form of transgression.