

ALGERNON BEAUCLERC MAKES THINGS HUM AT CEDAR CREEK!

The Chums of Cedar Creek are beginning to get used to Algy, the Dandy. He has showed the school that there is more in him than appears on the surface—much more. But this week he makes an even greater sensation.



Another Roaring Tale of **FRANK RICHARDS & Co.**, the boys of the **SCHOOL** in the **BACKWOODS**.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.
Algy on the Ice!

I'M comin', dear boys!"
"Ahem!"
"Looks rippin', doesn't it?" said Algernon of Cedar Creek.

The creek did look ripping, as Algy expressed it; the waters, that bubbled and sang past the backwoods school in the summer, were frozen hard now, and the creek was covered with gleaming ice.

Morning lessons were over at Cedar Creek, and a crowd of boys and girls had come down to skate on the frozen stream. And with Frank Richards & Co. came Algernon Beauclerc. Algernon turned his eyeglass upon the creek with satisfaction in his glance. Apparently he was looking forward to the skating.

Bob Lawless grinned, Frank Richards coughed, and Vere Beauclerc looked at his cousin from the old country very dubiously. The elegant Algernon did not impress Cedar Creek as a fellow who could do things. He had shown that he could ride, and ride remarkably well; but the chums of Cedar Creek had not seen him on the ice yet, and they were exceedingly doubtful as to whether he could maintain his perpendicular there.

"Looks simply toppin'!" continued Algernon. "I've been lookin' forward to some skatin'."

"You skate at home?" asked Vere Beauclerc.

"Yaas, a little bit, you know."

"Well?" asked Frank.

"Well, I can keep up if I'm held, you know!" said Algernon confidentially. "I'm sure you fellows won't mind holdin' me."

"Oh!"

"Two of you could do it," said Algernon. "I suppose the ice is thick enough to stand it if we come a mucker."

"The fact is, old scout, we haven't come along to fall down and roll," explained Bob Lawless. "We're going to skate."

"I dare say I could give you some tips in skatin'."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'll help you, Algy," said Vere

Beauclerc, smiling. "Put your skates on!"

Algernon glanced round.

"What am I to sit on?" he asked.

"The bank!"

"Oh, my hat! That will soil my bags, you know!"

"Awful!" said Bob Lawless. "Would you like me to ride over to Thompson town and tote along an easy-chair?"

"Yaas!"

"Fathead!" exclaimed Beauclerc. "Sit down and put your skates on, and don't be an ass, Algy!"

"And look sry!" grinned Chunky Todgers. "We want to see you at it, Algernon. It will be funny!"

"Make a knee for me, then, some of you!" said Algernon.

"Here you are!" said Bob.

Bob Lawless made a knee for the dandy of Cedar Creek, and Algernon sat on it, to put on his skates. As soon as he was comfortably seated, Bob jerked his knee away.

Bump!

"Oh gad! Wha-a-at—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Algernon sprawled on the bank, roaring. There was a howl of laughter from the Cedar Creek fellows.

"You silly ass!" shouted Algernon, sitting up. "What are you playing the goat for? Yow-ow-ow!"

"You can sit on the bank now, old scout!" chuckled Bob Lawless. "You won't gather up more dust than you've gathered already."

And Frank Richards & Co. sat down to don their skates; and the Honourable Algernon, with a frown, followed their example. Most of the fellows were on the ice now, but they were not skating away. They kept near at hand to watch the performances of the "tenderfoot." There was a general expectation that the dandy of Cedar Creek would cut an extraordinary figure on the ice.

"Ready?" asked Bob Lawless.

"Yaas!"

"Why don't you get up, then?"

"I've got my skates on!"

"Well, come on!"

"How can I get up without help?"

"Oh, Jerusalem! Take his other ear, Franky!"

"Yaroooooh!"

Frank Richards, laughing, grasped Algernon by his arm, not by his ear, as the playful Bob suggested. The new fellow was helped on to the ice.

"Now look out for fireworks!" chuckled Tom Lawrence.

"Go it, tenderfoot!"

"Let him slide, Lawless! Give him a start!"

But now that Algernon was on the ice, Bob Lawless loyally supported him on one side, with Frank Richards on the other. Vere Beauclerc hovered near, looking rather anxious.

Algernon proved even more helpless on the smooth ice than the chums of Cedar Creek had anticipated. His feet persisted in travelling in different directions, and he clung frantically to his helpers.

"D-d-don't l-l-leggo!" he gasped.

"Hold to me!" said Frank encouragingly. "We'll soon get you going. Oh, my hat! Don't throttle me, you ass!"

Algy flung his left arm round Frank Richards' neck, and held on as if for his life. It seemed to be his object to get Frank's head in chancery.

"Here, give a grip, and don't quite kill Franky!" exclaimed Bob Lawless.

"Oh! Ah! Yaas! Oh!"

Algy's right arm wound round Bob's neck. The rancher's son was dragged nearly over, and he roared.

"Yah! Go easy! Stoppit! Hold on!"

"I'm holdin' on, ain't I?" gasped Algy.

"I mean, leggo!"

"Can't! I'm slippin'!"

Algernon certainly was slipping. His skates were beating a sort of tattoo on the ice. The Cedar Creek fellows crowded round and yelled with merriment. Algernon was providing great entertainment for his schoolfellows.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Frank Richards. "If I'd known this was coming—oh dear! Let me breathe, you howling ass!"

"Can't!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go easy!" shrieked Bob Lawless.

"Can't!"

"Oh crumbs!" howled Chunky

Todgers. "Ain't he a sight for sore eyes? Go it, tenderfoot! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Keep on your skates, you idiot!" gurgled Bob Lawless. "Don't put your silly feet in the air and hang on me! I'm not a derrick!"

"Oh begad! The—the—the ice seems slippery!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Get him going somehow!" spluttered Frank Richards. "Oh dear!"

Frank was bent half-double with Algy's arm round his neck, and Algy's weight on him, and he tried in vain to get his head up. It was with difficulty that he kept his balance. Algy's feet were going like lightning, as if he intended to act as a human ice-breaker.

Crash, clatter, crash!

All of a sudden he started. He shot across the ice, and Frank and Bob were fairly dragged after him by their necks. Naturally enough, they pitched forward and sprawled on the ice, with loud and furious yells. Algy shot away from them, fairly across the creek.

"Oh, my hat!"

"Yah! Oh! Ah! Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Frank Richards and his Canadian cousin were sprawling and gasping; but all eyes were fixed upon Algernon. He was shooting across the creek like an arrow, and everyone expected to see him crash into the opposite bank with a terrific concussion.

But he didn't!

Within a yard of the steeply rising bank Algy whirled round on his skates, just escaping a collision, and came whizzing back. And there was a yell.

"Look out!"

And the skaters scattered to avoid the charge.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Algy's Little Joke!

"LOOK out!"

"Stand clear!"

"Oh Jerusalem!"

Whiz! Algy's arms were waving wildly in the air; his brows were corrugated over his eyeglass. His expression was fixed. At any moment he was expected to go sprawling and spinning—but he did not. His skates were apparently running away with him, but he kept on them.

"Look out!"

With yells of laughter, the skaters scattered.

"There he goes into the bank!" roared Eben Hacke. "Serve him right! I guess he's going to get smashed!"

The bully of Cedar Creek would not have been sorry to see Algernon smashed, as he expressed it; he had had trouble with Algernon, and had not forgotten it. But Algy's luck held good. He seemed booked for a crash on the bank—but he swerved again at the last moment, and came whizzing directly at Eben Hacke.

"Look out, Hacke!" yelled Beauclerc. "Oh, great gophers!"

Eben Hacke fairly took to his heels—rather, to his skates. He fled away down the frozen creek at top speed. A crashing collision would have been painful. Hacke was a good skater, and he put on speed and vanished round a bend of the creek. And he did not come back.

Algy whizzed after him almost as far as the bend, and then he whirled again. Again the skaters scattered as the figure, with wildly waving arms, came whizzing back. Frank and Bob were on their feet now in great dismay.

"I guess we've got to stop him somehow!" gasped Bob Lawless. "He'll do some damage at this rate!"

"He will, to himself, if he hits the bank, going at that rate!" said Frank Richards. "Come on!"

"Help!" yelled Algy.

Vere Beauclerc started after his chums; but he paused, a slight smile breaking out on his face. If the Honourable Algernon was really as helpless on the skates as he appeared to be, it was marvellous that he had kept his footing so long. It was, in fact, a little too marvellous—and it dawned upon Beauclerc that Algernon was not quite so helpless as he was supposed to be.

But that fact had not yet dawned upon his comrades, and they rushed to the rescue.

"Now, then, Algy—"

"Help!"

"Collar him, Franky!"

It was not easy to collar a skater going at full whiz; but the chums essayed the task. One of Algy's wildly waving arms smote Bob Lawless across the chest, and Bob sat down with a bump. Frank Richards just dodged the other arm, and then Algernon was past him. But, to Frank's amazement, he found his hat jammed back on his head as Algy passed. Algernon had replaced it there while he was going in full career.

"Mum - mum - my hat!" stuttered Frank. "Why, the rotter, he's spoofing us all the time! He can skate!"

"I—I—I guess he can skate!" gasped Bob Lawless. "Pulling our leg, the cheeky jay! Why, I'll skin him!"

It was pretty evident now that Algernon could skate. He had ceased waving his arms and yelling for help. And he was cutting figures of eight on the ice with a good deal of grace.

"Why, he — he — he's skating!" ejaculated Chunky Todgers. "Here, I say, look out! Keep off!"

Algernon circled round the fat Chunky, and picked off his hat. He circled round again, and replaced it backwards. Chunky's expression was extraordinary during that performance.

"Collar him!" roared Bob Lawless. "He's been fooling us! We'll give him fooling! Collar him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Algernon kissed his hand gracefully to the incensed Bob, and whizzed away down the creek in the direction Eben Hacke had taken ten minutes before. In a twinkling, almost, he was out of sight round the bend.

"After him!" roared Bob.

"Hold on!" exclaimed Beauclerc, wiping his eyes. "Hold on, Bob! Ha, ha! We really asked for this, you know. We took it for granted that he couldn't skate!"

"The cheeky jay! I guess I'll—I'll—"

"Go easy!" said Frank Richards, laughing. "After all, we did ask for it, in a way. Let him rip! Come on, Bob; Molly's waiting for us."

And Bob Lawless turned back. Meanwhile, Algernon was speeding down the creek, enjoying his rapid run on the smooth ice, with a contented smile on his face.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

In Deadly Peril!

"BY gum, here he is!"

Eben Hacke started, and his eyes glittered under his bushy brows.

He had had a run down the creek as far as the ice was safe. As the stream approached the rapids the ice was thinner and broken in places, and at that point Hacke turned back. And as he came gliding up the creek he

caught sight of the Honourable Algernon.

Algernon was coming down the centre of the stream at a good pace, his eyeglass glinting in his eye.

"I guess this is my chance!" muttered the bully of the lumber school, setting his teeth.

There had been trouble between the bully of the backwoods school and the new boy; and only the intervention of Miss Meadows had prevented Hacke from "hammering" the elegant Algy. Eben was debarred from that method of wreaking his vengeance. He thought he saw another way now.

He placed himself directly in Algy's path as the new boy came skating merrily along. Algernon looked at him. "Stand clear!" he called out.

"I guess not!" grinned Hacke.

He intended to avoid the rush as Algy came closer, and to clutch at him and drag him over as he passed. But it did not "pan out" quite like that. Algy came closer and closer; but at the last moment he swerved, and went round the burly Hacke. As he passed he jerked off the bully's hat and went on his way waving it in the air.

"Oh Jerusalem!" spluttered Hacke, whirling round after him in amazement and rage. "Give me my hat, you jay!"

"Come and fetch it!" called back Algy.

"I guess I'll smash you!" roared Hacke.

He sped after the new boy, not doubting for a moment that he would run him down with ease. But it did not prove to be easy. Algy looked back over his shoulder and smiled at the exasperated Eben as he kept easily ahead. But the cracks in the ice warned him to go no farther at last, and he circled back, and Hacke rushed at him as he came.

Algernon smiled cheerily, and dodged the rush of the lumber-school bully, eluding him with ease. He glided on, and Hacke, unable to stop himself, went whizzing past the spot where he had stood.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Algernon looked back again, laughing. But the laugh died on his lips the next moment. Hacke had rushed right on, and as he whirled round there was a loud and threatening crack of the ice under his feet. In his rage and excitement he had not observed how close he was to the thin ice, and now he was in danger.

The rage died out of Hacke's face suddenly as he realised his peril. Algy turned back in alarm.

"Look out!" he shouted.

But the warning was useless. Eben Hacke saw his danger, but it was too late to escape it. He came tearing desperately back, with the ice cracking under his feet. The catastrophe came suddenly. A spurt of dark water came through the cracking ice as Eben Hacke's skates went through, and in the twinkling of an eye the burly schoolboy was waist-deep. His hands clutched at the ice about him, but it cracked in his grasp, and he went down.

Algernon stared at the black, widening, pool in the ice in horror.

Hacke's head reappeared in a moment, his face deadly white. His hands, already half-frozen through his thick gloves, clutched at the ice.

"Help!" he shouted hoarsely.

"Oh gad!"

Algernon tore at his skates. They came off quickly enough, and he left them on the ice, and ran towards the hole. Under his feet came ominous cracks from the ice.

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"A SCORE FOR ALGY!"

(Continued from page 13.)

"Help!"

"I'm comin'!"

The current under the ice was tugging at Hacke as he clung on desperately, the thin edges crumbling in his grasp. His face was white and despairing. Already the bitter cold of the water had penetrated to his very bones, and he was chilled to the marrow. His teeth were chattering.

Algeron dropped softly on his knees and crept to the edge of the black, swirling pool.

Hacke's eyes were fixed on him wildly. He was almost fainting with the bitter cold and the fear that was in his heart. But he knew that in venturing thus on the thin ice Algeron was taking the risk of sharing his fate. And there was no help in sight. The Cedar Creek crowd were more than a mile away, out of sight, and the nearest building was the Hopkins' homestead, hidden from sight by the timber along the bank.

But Algy did not seem to be thinking of his danger.

"Give me your fist!" he said.

"Help!"

"Give me your fist, you ass!"

Algeron grasped Hacke's hand firmly. It was only in time, for the frozen fingers were losing their grip on the broken, crumbling ice.

Algy's grasp pulled Eben Hacke up, and his shoulders came well out of the swirling water.

Under Algy the ice creaked ominously.

"Oh, I'm done!" moaned Eben Hacke.

"You're not done yet, old top!" said Algy, between his teeth. "I'm goin' to get you out somehow."

He cast an almost wild glance round.

He could support Hacke so long as his strength lasted; but he could not drag him on the already cracking ice. And at any moment his frail support might give way and plunge him headlong in. And then it was death—death for both of them in the black depths of the stream. Over the timber on the bank rose the smoke from the chimney of the Hopkins' farmhouse. But there was no one to be seen on the bank or in the leafless timber.

"Help!" shouted Algeron, with all the strength of his lungs. "Help!"

Hacke was past shouting now. He was numbed and blue with cold, and but for Algy's grasp he would have gone down like a stone. He was fast losing his consciousness.

"Help! Help!"

Algy's voice rang through the frozen timber.

"Help!"

"Hallo!"

A voice answered from the bank at last. The frenzied shouts had reached Mr. Hopkins, at work on his clearing near the creek. There were heavy footsteps in the timber, and the farmer came out on the bank, staring round him. He started as his eyes fell on the kneeling figure by the gap in the ice, holding up the unconscious Hacke.

"Old on!" shouted the Cockney emigrant. "I'm comin'!"

He ran back, and reappeared again in a few moments with a hurdle in his grasp. A few moments more and the hurdle was laid on the ice, and Mr.

Hopkins and Algy between them dragged Hacke upon it. Eben Hacke sank into insensibility as he was pulled from the water.

"Thank you, sir!" gasped Algy.

"Only just in time!"

Hacke was lifted in the farmer's strong arms and carried to the bank, and straight on to the Hopkins' homestead. He was laid, still unconscious, in the bed that belonged to Harold Hopkins of Cedar Creek, and the farmer and his wife attended to him kindly enough. Algy warmed himself by the kitchen fire till Mr. Hopkins rejoined him.

"How is he, sir?" asked Algy.

"Oh, he'll pull round all right!" said Mr. Hopkins, with a rather curious glance at Algeron's eyeglass. "I'm going into Thompson, and I'll ask Doc Jones to call and see him. But he'll be all right—only a chill. I guess he won't get out of Arold's bed to-day, though. You belong to Cedar Creek?"

"Oh, yaas!"

"Then you'd better tell Miss Meadows wot's appened, and tell her the boy is safe and sound 'ere," said Mr. Hopkins.

"Right-ho!" said Algeron.

And the dandy of Cedar Creek returned to the ice, where he put on his skates, and glided away cheerfully to the school.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Condemned!

FRANK RICHARDS & CO. had gone off the ice, and were returning to the lumber school for dinner, when Algeron came speeding up. Algy removed his skates, and followed them to Cedar Creek School, where he immediately proceeded to Miss Meadows' sitting-room to take her the message from Mr. Hopkins. When he came away, after delivering his information to the Canadian schoolmistress, he was joined in the passage by Frank Richards & Co.

Algy adjusted his eyeglass, which he had removed before entering Miss Meadows' presence, and glanced at the three chums with a sweet smile.

"Enjoyed your skatin', dear boys?" he asked.

"Oh, yes!" said Frank, laughing. "I've a jolly good mind to punch your head, you spoofing ass, though!"

"You spoofed yourself, old top! What made you suppose I couldn't skate?" demanded the Honourable Algeron. "Naturally, I pulled your leg. The fact is, dear boys, you go around askin' to have your legs pulled!"

Algeron strolled into the dining-room before the Co. could think of any reply to that statement. They looked at one another. The tenderfoot of Cedar Creek was surprising his schoolfellows in a good many ways of late.

"My word!" said Bob, at last. "Of all the cheeky jays—Cherub, old man, I took your cousin at first for the biggest jay that ever moseyed out of Jaysville. I'm beginning to think he's the cheekiest monkey—"

Beaulerc laughed.

"There is more in Algy than meets the eye!" he remarked.

"I guess there is," assented Bob.

The Cedar Creek fellows went in to dinner, and Miss Meadows came in to take the head of the table. Eben Hacke's absence was not remarked upon. Hacke did not always have his midday meal at the school. Miss Meadows, of course, knew where he was, Algy having told her that Hacke had fallen through the ice, and had been taken in by Mr. Hopkins, and sent to bed for the Thompson doctor to see him.

Of the fact that Algy had saved Hacke from going to the bottom Miss Meadows knew nothing. It had not occurred to the Honourable Algeron to give her that detail.

But after dinner, when the school-bell rang for afternoon classes, Chunky Todgers remarked that Hacke was not in the crowd that headed for the lumber schoolhouse.

"Hacke's late!" Chunky remarked. "Gone home, I guess, and started back late. He will get a chinwag from Miss Meadows."

Algy glanced at Todgers.

"Hacke isn't comin' this afternoon," he said.

"Why not?" asked Frank Richards.

"He can't, you know."

"Nothing happened to him, is there?" asked Bob Lawless.

"Yaas."

"What's happened to Hacke?" asked a dozen voices.

"Ice busted, you know. Hacke was rather too heavy for it," said Algeron. "I say, the bell's stopped. We'd better be gettin' in."

"Hold on!" exclaimed Bob Lawless, catching Algeron by the arm. "Tell us what's happened, you goat!"

"But I've told you, dear boy."

"I remember you went up the river after Hacke," said Bob. "Did you have a row along with him there?"

"Yaas."

"And what happened, Algy?" exclaimed Beaulerc anxiously.

"Don't I keep on tellin' you?" said Algeron, in surprise. "Hacke chased me for some reason, an' ran on thin ice and went through. That's all."

"He fell in the water?"

"Yaas."

"You saw him?" exclaimed Frank Richards, aghast.

"Oh, yaas!"

"And what did you do?" roared Bob Lawless.

"What could I do, dear boy?" answered Algeron, raising his eyebrows.

The Cedar Creek fellows stared at Algy blankly. They had forgotten for the moment that it was time for afternoon lessons. Miss Meadows had taken out her horse to ride over to the Hopkins' homestead, being a little anxious about Hacke's condition, leaving class to Mr. Slimmey for the afternoon. Mr. Slimmey looked out of the doorway, wondering why the pupils did not come in, now that the bell had ceased to ring. But the Cedar Creek fellows were too excited even to see Mr. Slimmey.

Bob Lawless compressed his grasp on Algy's arm and shook him in his excitement. His eyes were gleaming.

"You didn't do anything, then?" he exclaimed.

"My dear chap—"

"Do you mean to say that you stood by and saw a fellow drown, without lending him a hand?" shouted Bob.

Algy jammed his eyeglass a little more tightly into his eye.

"I don't mean to say anythin'," he answered.

"Algy—" exclaimed Beaulerc.

"Time we were goin' in, I think," remarked Algeron. "There's dear old Slimmey blinkin' at us. Comin', sir!"

"Answer me, you fool!" shouted Bob. "Is Hacke drowned?"

"My dear fellow—"

"Oh, you awful rotter!" exclaimed Chunky Todgers. "You stood by and let a fellow drown!"

"Algy!"

"Funk!"

"You mean coyote!"

"Bagad, you seem awfully excited about somethin'," said Algernon calmly. "Hacke was goin' for me, you know—"

"That's no reason why you should let him drown!" roared Lawrence.

"Isn't it?"

"No, you rotter, it isn't!"

"Algy!" exclaimed Beauclerc, in great distress. "You didn't do that—you couldn't! You went in for him, at least—"

"His clothes ain't wet," said Chunky Todgers. "He's not been in the water!"

Beauclerc was stricken silent. It was evident enough that his cousin had not been in the water.

"Praps the poor rotter can't swim, though!" said Dawson.

"Are you alludin' to me, dear boy?"

"Yep. Can you swim?"

"Oh, yaas—toppin'!"

"You can swim, and you never went in for Hacke after he'd gone through the ice?" exclaimed Frank incredulously.

"Just so."

"Algy, is this some idiotic joke?" exclaimed Beauclerc.

"Not at all."

"Well, my hat!" said Frank Richards.

"I—I— Words failed Frank.

"It's not a joke!" said Chunky Todgers. "Hacke hasn't come back, has he? And I noticed the dude went in to speak to Miss Meadows as soon as he came in. Miss Meadows has gone out now. She's gone to see poor old Hacke, of course—to see if the body's got out of the creek!"

"Did you tell Miss Meadows what had happened, Algy?"

"Yaas!"

Mr. Slimmey came out to the excited crowd.

"My boys!" he said mildly. "It is past school-time. Go into the school-room at once, please!"

"Certainly, sir!" said Algernon cheerfully.

The dandy of Cedar Creek walked into the school-room.

He was quite calm and cheerful.

Bob Lawless drew farther away from him than usual, on one side, and Frank Richards on the other.

Algernon glanced at them alternately.

"Anythin' up with you fellows?" murmured Algy. "What's bitin' you, Lawless?"

"Don't speak to me!" growled Bob, in angry disgust.

"Why not?"

"Oh, shut up!"

"Richards, old scout—"

"Dry up!"

"You got your back up, too, dear boy?"

"I'd rather you didn't speak to me," muttered Frank.

"Coward!" came in a fierce whisper from several desks.

"Well, my hat!" said Algy. "I wonder what they are callin' me names for? Do you know, Lawless?"

"Silence in class, please!" said Mr. Slimmey. "Boys, you must give your attention to your lessons. This whispering must cease."

And there was silence in class. But the look of the Cedar Creek fellows were eloquent, though their tongues were silent; and it was amazing that Algy bore them with so much equanimity. But he did.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER. Light at Last!

HERE was a good deal of restlessness in the school-room that afternoon. Mr. Slimmey found it no easy task to keep Miss Meadows' class at work. Mr. Shepherd



BREAKING THE SILENCE! The decorum of the schoolroom was suddenly broken by the Honourable Algernon Beauclerc. He gave a sudden, fiendish yell, and leaped up in his place. "Ow, ow! Somebody stuck a pin in me!" he moaned. (See chapter 5.)

was taking the other two classes together, and he found them whispering and buzzing almost as much as the senior class. The two masters were aware that there was something unusual "on," though they could not guess what it was.

The decorum of the school-room was suddenly broken by the Honourable Algernon Beauclerc. He gave a sudden fiendish yell and leaped up in his place.

"Yoooooop!"

Mr. Slimmey spun round.

"What—what is that, boy? What do you mean by—"

"Ow, ow! Sorry, sir! Somebody ran a pin into me!" moaned Algy.

"Bless my soul! Who did that?" exclaimed Mr. Slimmey.

Silence.

"I demand to know at once who did this!" he exclaimed sharply. "Otherwise, I will request Miss Meadows to punish the whole class!"

"I guess I did it, sir," said Dick Dawson, standing up.

"How dare you play such a trick, Dawson—such a cruel trick, too—"

"Serve him right, sir!" came from Harold Hopkins.

"Wha-a-at?"

"He's a rotten coward, and we're all down on him," said Dawson undauntedly. "If he stays at Cedar Creek after this, he will be lynched!"

"Hear, hear!" murmured several voices.

"Hacke's been drowned, sir," said Chunky Todgers. "That sneaking gopher saw him in the creek, and never went in for him, though he says he can swim."

"Bless my soul! What absurd mistake is this?" exclaimed Mr. Slimmey. "Hacke is not drowned."

"Not drowned?" ejaculated Bob Lawless,

"Certainly not! Miss Meadows has gone to see him now. He had fallen into the creek, and lies now at the Hopkins' farmhouse."

"At my 'ome!" exclaimed Harold Hopkins.

"Mr. Hopkins, I understand, took him from the creek," said Mr. Slimmey. "He is in no danger. What has Algernon Beauclerc to do with the matter?"

"It wasn't his fault Hacke wasn't drowned," said Dawson. "He's told us himself that he saw Hacke in the water, and never went in for him."

"Is that the case, Beauclerc?"

"Yaas, sir."

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Slimmey. "I—I was not aware of this. However, that is no excuse for disorder in the class. If there is any further disturbance I shall punish the offender severely."

And lessons were resumed and not interrupted again till hoofbeats were heard outside, announcing the return of Miss Meadows. The Canadian schoolmistress came in, and Mr. Slimmey willingly relinquished the class to her.

But Miss Meadows did not proceed to business at once.

"Algernon Beauclerc!" she said quietly.

"Yaas, madam?"

"When you informed me, Beauclerc, that Hacke had fallen into the creek, and had been taken to Mr. Hopkins' cabin, you did not acquaint me with all that had happened."

"Not likely to, I guess!" growled Dawson, in disgust.

"Silence in the class, please! Beauclerc, you should have told me!"

"There was nothin' to tell you, Miss Meadows," murmured Algernon.

"Nonsense! Hacke has told me that he was trying to run you down on the

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was gathering to watch the game. Bagshot had just arrived, and Jimmy Silver was greeting Pankley and Poole.

Erroll gazed at them for a minute or two, and then returned quietly to his desk. As he sat down, he became aware that the Form-room door was half-open, and that Mornington was standing there, regarding him with an amused grin.

"Been lookin' at the cricket—like cheery old Moses on the mountain, lookin' at the Promised Land!" grinned Mornington.

"Feelin' pretty down—what?"

"A little," said Erroll.

"All my fault—what?"

"Yes."

"Why don't you row with me?"

Erroll smiled.

"I don't want to row, Morny. Clear off, there's a good fellow, and let me get to work. I've got a certain amount to grind through."

"Best wishes for a happy afternoon!" grinned Mornington, and he strolled out of the Form-room whistling.

Erroll set patiently to work.

He had always borne with his chum with a patience the other fellows found a little difficult to understand; and, perhaps, at this moment, Erroll wondered whether he was a little too patient with Mornington.

Friendship, even such deep and sincere friendship as his own, had its limits. Mornington was not likely to keep another friend. But that reflection was enough to determine Erroll to be loyal to his trying chum.

With a crowded brow he worked at Latin, but his thoughts were with the fellows on the cricket-field.

"Erroll!"

Erroll started to his feet, as Mr. Bootles came hastily into the Form-room.

"Yes, sir?"

"You foolish boy!" exclaimed Mr. Bootles, in a moved voice. "Why did not you tell me the facts yesterday? I could not guess that you were shielding another!"

"Oh, sir!" gasped Erroll. "You—you know—"

Mr. Bootles gave him a very kind smile.

"Mornington has just come to my study and confessed," he replied. "It seems that it was Mornington who chalked that disrespectful picture on the door, and you were only trying to save him from his foolishness, when I came in, and supposed— You should have told me, Erroll!"

"I—I—"

"However, I understand your motives," said Mr. Bootles kindly. "You may go, Erroll. Your detention is, of course, cancelled."

"Thank you, sir!" stammered Erroll.

His face was very bright now.

It was not only that he was free to join the cricketers, but his chum had done the right thing; that was what made Erroll's face flush with pleasure.

Mornington followed the Form master into the room. Erroll's sentence had been transferred to him; he had expected that. He grinned at his chum as Erroll came from his desk.

"Cut off!" he whispered. "They're just goin' to begin!"

"Morny, old chap, I'm awfully glad you—"

"Glad you're goin' to play cricket? Cut off, then!"

"Glad you've done the right thing, Morny. I was wrong to doubt you for a moment!"

Morny's face softened.

"I was only keepin' it up to show I didn't care for their silly raggin'. You should have known that—"

"I did know it, Morny—"

"Mornington!"

It was Mr. Bootles' voice.

"Yes, sir."

Erroll hurried from the Form-room, with a last grateful glance at his chum. As he went, he heard Mr. Bootles' voice instructing Mornington in the task that was to occupy him till five o'clock. With a light heart, Erroll ran down to the cricket-field.

Jimmy Silver and Kit Erroll were at the wickets in Rookwood's second innings when Mornington strolled down to the cricket-field a few minutes after five.

"How's it goin', Newcome?" drawled Morny, joining that youth by the ropes.

Newcome nodded to him. Erroll's presence in the team was a sufficient indication that Morny had done the right thing, and Newcome only wondered why he had not done it earlier.

"Sixty all in the first innings; second, Bagshot forty, Rookwood thirty-seven, and three wickets to fall!" said Newcome.

"Good eggs! We're goin' to win!" said Mornington cheerfully. "Oh, well hit, Erroll! Well hit, old man!"

And Valentine Mornington joined loudly in the ringing cheer that greeted the winning hit.

THE END.

(There will be another long complete story of Jimmy Silver & Co., the Chums of Rookwood, entitled: "Tubby's Treasure!" by Owen Conquest, in next week's grand issue. Do not miss it!)

A SCORE FOR ALGY!

(Continued from page 17.)

ice, and he has expressed his regret for doing so," said Miss Meadows. "He has also told me that you saved his life."

"Oh gad!"

"Mr. Hopkins has told me the same."

"Oh dear!"

"S-s-s-s-saved his life!" murmured Bob Lawless.

The whole class blinked at Miss Meadows. That was about the last statement they had expected to hear from the schoolmistress.

"Saved his life!" stuttered Dawson.

"Silence, please!" said Miss Meadows. "I wish the whole class to know what Algeron Beauclerc has done. He has acted very generously and courageously."

"Oh crumbs!"

"After Hacke had fallen through the ice, and was unable to climb out, Algeron Beauclerc ventured upon the thin ice and held him up till help came," said Miss Meadows. "He ran the greatest

possible risk of going through the ice, and, in fact, was exposed to the most terrible peril all the time he was supporting Hacke, till Mr. Hopkins was able to come to their assistance. My dear boy, you have acted very bravely and nobly, and your schoolfellows should be proud of you!"

"Oh, my hat!" stuttered Algeron.

He sat down with crimson cheeks.

Vere Beauclerc squeezed his arm.

"Algy, you awful ass!" he whispered.

"You thumping idiot!" said Frank Richards. "Why didn't you tell us?"

"Silence, please!" said Miss Meadows.

"We will now resume lessons."

And lessons went on. But when Cedar Creek was dismissed that afternoon, a swarming crowd gathered round Algeron as he emerged from the School House. A dozen fellows wanted to shake his hand all at once, while a dozen others thumped him heartily on the back—much to Algy's discomfort.

"You silly gopher!" Bob Lawless roared in his ear. "Why didn't you tell us? Why couldn't you—"

"My dear ass, I told you what you asked me," answered Algeron.

"You let us think—"

"I'm not responsible for what you

think, old top. My idea is that you shouldn't start thinkin'," said Algeron calmly. "You're not used to it, and you—"

"I've a jolly good mind to punch your silly head!" said Bob Lawless. "You were pulling our leg again—"

Algy chuckled. Undoubtedly he had scored.

"Lettin' you pull it yourself, old scout," he answered. "That's all. Hallo! What are you fellows at? Oh gad!"

The Honourable Algeron was seized by half a dozen fellows and hoisted shoulder high, and paraded round the playground, amid thundering cheers.

"Oh crumbs! Mind my bags! You're rumpling my bags!" wailed Algeron.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hurrah!"

And the Honourable Algeron, in spite of his fears for his elegant "bags," enjoyed his triumph.

THE END.

(Don't forget—another roaring story of the Boys of the School in the Backwoods will appear next Tuesday! Keep your eyes open for it!)



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