

The Brilliant Career of Algernon Allbone

A Great Baseball Serial

SYNOPSIS

(Our Hero is born. He hits the teacher with an apple on his bald coco bolo.)

CHAPTER II. (Cont.)

THE teacher said, "Great Jumping Henry! Who threw that stone?" Then he grabbed his thirteen-year-old hat and executed a Marathon in the direction of the back yard.

It was at this critical moment that Algernon Allbone displayed the mettle of which heroes are made. He did not falter. He did not budge. No he did not. He was too scared to do that. Like the manly little hero that he was he stood his ground, making only a feeble and ineffectual attempt to crawl under the pump.

"Who threw that stone? Which one of you little devils threw that stone?" came in clarion notes from the outraged vocal chords of the teacher.

There was no response. In other words, there was a silence, broken only by the giggles of two little girls in pig-tails, who were hiding behind the fence.

"That wan't a stone, teacher," piped up one of the little girls, "it was a app-u-l-l."

The teacher frowned. He looked at the assembled company. He could detect no signs of guilt in any face. No person with faith in human nature could have looked at those faces and suspected for a moment that any one present threw the missile. But the teacher had no faith in human nature. No, he did not. There was a lump on his bald head and his brutal instincts cried out for justice.

In a crisis of this kind it is natural for children to look innocent. Childhood is commonly spoken of as the age of innocence. This is shown in the face of the average child when he has done wrong and knows it. The look of innocence varies directly as the wrong committed. The greater the wrong the more innocent the expression. The teacher looked about him. All the children looked in-

expressibly good. A pious person looking at them would never have connected them in any way with deeds of rapine and violence. But the teacher was not pious. No, he felt much otherwise.

By far the most innocent looking of all was Algernon Allbone. Unutterable peace, tranquility and blackberry jam overspread his soulful countenance. A painter in search of a model of childish innocence would have chosen him on sight. That look, however, was his undoing. The teacher, keen, subtle philosopher that he was, knew that no child in full possession of his normal faculties could honestly appear as innocent as did our hero and still live. His suspicions were justly roused and he advanced with threatening mien, carefully concealing the birch stick behind the ample folds of his coat.

"Did you throw that a-p-p-pel?" he demanded sternly.

There was a world of menace in his voice and his eyes were narrowed to mere pinpoints in his head.

It was a moment of supreme stress calculated to weaken the stoutest heart, but did Algernon Allbone quail? No, he did not. He would not have known the meaning of the word had you spoken it to him.

His mind stored with historic information and the remembrance of sundry birch sticks worn out in acquiring the same instantly reverted to the inspiring episode of the Father of His Country under somewhat similar circumstances. But unfortunately he got the narrative slightly twisted.

Drawing himself to his full height he indicated with a commanding air the freckled face of his co-partner in iniquity, "Bug" McGinnis, and said in words alone sufficient to immortalize his name, "Teacher, I cannot tell a lie. He

done it."

Could anything be more touching than this straightforward denial? But like the speeches of Demosthenes it fell on unheeding ears.

A large brawny hand grasped his coat collar firmly. He felt himself dragged in the general direction of the woodshed. The door slammed behind the ample folds of the teacher's coat.

"Gee," said the delighted McGinnis, "he's going to git it. The noive of him layin' it off onto me." Had "Bug" been older he would have been taught that it is not well to rejoice at the downfall of an enemy. But "Bug," in heathen darkness as he was, continued peacefully to rejoice. There was a look of perfect contentment on his face when two forms emerged from the woodshed some time later. The teacher looked much relieved. Algernon Allbone did not. Still there was nothing in his countenance to indicate that he wished to prolong his stay in the woodshed.

Our hero had already begun at this tender age to learn the hard knocks in the baseball world. Many a time in later years he was to be knocked off the rubber but he was never destined to get again quite the knocks his first curve had called forth. At least not in the same place. He had performed a notable achievement. And how had the world received that achievement? Could greatness have a baser reward? Alas, no it could not.

Algernon Allbone walked slowly and

pensively. He appeared in no undue haste. Ever and anon he passed his hands over portions of his person in a downward lateral motion with caressing care. It was remarked by several of the children that the birch stick in the hand of the teacher was several inches shorter than it had been. Their education had advanced to a point where they were capable of putting two and two together. They did. It is in this way that practical education demonstrates itself. The patience of the teacher is at last rewarded by signs of almost human intelligence on the part of his pupils.

The teacher smiled benignantly. He was conscious of a work well done.

He looked at our hero graciously. "Now, arn't you sorry you threw that apple?" he questioned.

"Yessur," said Algernon Allbone quaveringly. Oddly enough he was. Yes, indeed. A stone would have travelled faster and hit so much harder. Yes, he was heartily sorry it had been an apple.

It is thus that repentance first works in the human heart. It was now working in the internal anatomy of Algernon Allbone. It was working somewhat as follows: "Yep, you big stiff. When I git so big as Mickey O'Hoolihan's big brother, I'll come around and knock yer block off."

Did he live to achieve his ambition? Alas, time and the "Baseball Bazoo" alone can tell you.

(To be Continued)