

He saw it all in a moment. He knew that certain disgrace awaited him, whichever turn the matter took.

His first thought was to say he did steal the ten shillings, and throw himself on Prior's mercy.

No; he could not brand himself as a thief, even if only in the eyes of one boy. Besides, he had never yet told a deliberate lie. This reason, too, prevented him from saying his father had, after all, sent him half a sovereign, though the temptation was

strong upon him. He dared not own to the bet, for he knew Prior and the head master well enough to feel sure that then both he and Mortimer would be expelled.

Long as it takes to put these thoughts into words, yet they flashed through Tubbs' brain in an instant of time; and he made up his mind to try and bluster through it.

"How dare you call me a thief, you abominable cur? You know you wouldn't do it if I weren't on my back! I'd thrash the life out of you!"

"Don't be an ass. I shall be delighted to hear any explanation you can give!"

"I shan't explain, you cad!"

Prior had a habit of growing provokingly cool and deliberate whenever any one else lost his temper. He now replied quite calmly—

"Permit me to say that I think your judgment is wrong."

"Think what you like, owl, mule, booby, *saint*!"

This last word in a tone of supreme contempt.

By this time Tubbs was really angry. He began by trying to be, but his own knowledge of his perfect innocence soon fired up his passion in earnest.

"Glyde, tell me where the half-sov. came from; and I will kneel down here and apologise for calling you a thief!"

"Find out for yourself, cad!"

"I shall do nothing of the kind; but I give you this choice. Tell me before



"HE LEANT UP AGAINST A TREE."

Saturday where you got the half-sov., or else I lay the matter before the Doctor. Meanwhile, I shall say nothing to any one. You can chatter about it as much as you like. I shall lock up the half-sov. in my desk."

"Thief yourself, and sneak, too!" almost roared Tubbs, as he seized the tumbler at his bedside and threw it at Prior's head.

He missed his aim; so Prior quietly stooped down, picked up the broken pieces of glass, put them on the fire, said "Good-morning, Glyde," and went out.

Tubbs soon cooled down when he was left alone, and began to realise more fully still how serious his position was.

In any case, he must be disgraced, expelled, and probably have his prospects injured for life.

Over and over again the temptation came to him to say he had stolen the ten shillings; but a small voice seemed to whisper, "Tubbs, two wrongs don't make a right." The more he thought, the more clearly he saw that the only way out of it was to confess to the having made the bet. But then—oh, the shame of the thing! When did he make it? Sunday night, with the Doctor's words ringing in his ears, with Prior's advice fresh in his mind! With whom? With the head of the school; the very boy who ought to have been the strictest guardian of the morals of the school. Why did he make it? Because he was