

"Thank you, sir," Maynard replied, cheerfully. "I'll not forget what you tell me."

The result of that conversation was that the lad did violence to his inclinations, and joined frequently in all school games with an apparent relish that surprised most of his companions. With the boys of his own age he could even have enjoyed such recreation; but there was invariably a rough element introduced into the play whenever the Drewitt set were present; and, unfortunately for Maynard's peace of mind, that was very frequently the case.

At last, on the day our story opens, in the midst of a game in which Maynard was taking a part, he was struck in the eye by a cricket ball, and fell senseless to the ground. When they raised him up he was still unconscious, and his eye was bleeding. They carried him to the doctor's room, and medical aid was at once sent for; but it was a long time before the lad regained consciousness, and when he did he almost fainted again from the pain in his eye. The physician said that he had sustained very serious injury.

It was only natural, then, that, as the boys congregated in the play-ground, all traces of their boisterous mirth should have disappeared; and that they should have gathered into groups, as we found them, when James Laurie broke in upon their deliberations.

"Dr. Barton has given orders that we are all to assemble in the school-room in half an hour," continued Laurie. "He wants to find out who threw the ball."

"He won't find that an easy matter," said one of the big boys.

"Did any of you fellows see it thrown?" demanded Laurie; and although there was a perfect Babel of sound in answer to the inquiry, no one could throw the least light upon the origin of the accident. Most of the boys