

ever had occurred to stop the boisterous mirth of the lads, they were completely subdued, and carried on their conversation in eager undertones. Laurie did not lower his voice as he spoke, and he commanded the attention of the boys for a moment or so. "Maynard was such a good fellow, too," he went on, throwing back his hair from his forehead, and wiping his hot face, for he had evidently been in the midst of an active game when the untoward interruption came. "If I thought any fellow did it out of spite to Maynard, I'd be the first to report him to Dr. Barton!"

"What business is it of yours?" asked a tall, heavy-looking lad, coming out towards where James Laurie stood, and looking at him angrily. "Why should you say he was struck out of spite?"

"I didn't say so; but if I know he was struck intentionally, I'd like to see the fellow that did it expelled from the school, and I would be the first to report him."

"You'd better shut up, Laurie," said Drewitt, as he gave the speaker a parting look of anger, and walked away gloomily.

James Laurie at once became the centre of the excited group of boys, and it was easy to see by his gestures that he felt very strongly on the subject under discussion. "I believe I could tell who struck him," he continued, looking after Drewitt's retreating figure.

Laurie was comparatively a small boy; but he was broad and stout, and very strong; so that he was able to hold his own in the school against boys much older and bigger than himself.

William Maynard was one of the younger boys. He was naturally and constitutionally timid, and had always been a delicate, studious lad, who had mixed very little with boys of his own age. There was something, too, in the peculiar circumstances of his entering the school