

lish was thrown in as a necessary evil, and the boy's Christian education was limited to a compulsory attendance at church, where they were supposed to listen to didactic discourses on theoretical Christianity.

Orchard robbing was a favorite exploit in autumn, and though the neighboring farmers kept good watch-dogs it was now and then accomplished to the satisfaction of the young gentlemen. A poor boy caught in the act of committing such a depredation would have been sent to jail for it. How the difference of rank altered the character of the action has not been shown, but it was, nevertheless, a fact that orchards were robbed by the boys of Montem College, that none of them were ever sent to jail for it, and that the utmost penalty was a caning when a very serious case occurred, and the offenders could be identified. One farmer had threatened a civil action, but he was advised not to press the matter by his landlord, a gentleman of considerable property, whose son was being educated at the College, and took kindly to apple stealing as a general course. Love of mischief and a desire of adventure were, undoubtedly, the prime motives. It was to be regretted that these qualities were not given a different bent.

There had been a grand orchard robbing expedition the night before the quarrel took place which has been recorded at the opening of this chapter. Freddy Elmsdale had been partly teased and partly laughed into joining it. The attempt was one of considerable danger, and if he had "funked" he knew he would be called coward for the rest of his school life, and there are few boys who would bear such an imputation quietly. The difficulty all came from his having got mixed up with a wild set, but that was an accomplished fact and could not be remedied.

The robbery had been effected with tolerable success, but the farmer had come up to the College that morning to complain of it, and swore vengeance if he caught one of the boys in the act again. He thought he knew some of the young gentlemen who did it, and he placed an unpleasant emphasis on the words "young gentlemen." He could

swear to it, but he was as sure that one of them, young Master Elmsdale, was at the top and the tail of it. The Master had promised to see into the matter. He really intended to do so, and it was time.

The boys engaged in the robbery know nothing about this visit, and were enjoying the the stolen fruits of their night's expedition as only boys can enjoy sour apples and a spice of danger.

"Elmsdale junior," shouted one of the Masters, who had come into the playground just in time to witness Elmsdale junior in the act of thrashing another boy. It did not predispose him to judge his cause favorably.

"Here, sir!" trying to shake off the appearance of disorder which had resulted from the fray.

The Master took him to the private room of the Head master. Elmsdale knew there was "something up," as the boys called it. Unfortunately, they were seldom summoned to that apartment except for the purposes of short investigation and summary punishment of evil deeds. Perhaps if they had been invited to come there now and then, and encouraged to tell their boyish troubles, and even their boyish pleasures, there would have been less necessity of a formidable number of canes which lay in the left hand corner.

The Head Master addressed him abruptly: "You've been robbing an orchard last night, Elmsdale junior."

"I ——" He was about to utter an indignant denial, when he suddenly remembered that he had probably been mistaken for Fred. He was silent. The Master very naturally took silence for guilt.

"I thought so, sir, and I shall make of you a public example, though you are one of the elder boys—or, rather, because you are—and I hear you have been fighting with another boy. Now you may go, sir."

What was there in this to help the boy, if he were guilty? What was there to save him from future wrong-doing, or to encourage him to amend?

A public castigation, and the intimation that it was for robbing Farmer Robert's orchard the night before, was the first notice that Freddy received of his brother's accusation of and acceptance