

SPECIAL EXTRA LONG SCHOOL TALE!

PLUCK

The Misadventures of Marmaduke.
By CHARLES HAMILTON.
ON A STRANGE ERRAND.
A Tale of FRANK FERRETT, Detective.

1st



"I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU ARE TALKING ABOUT," SAID MARMADUKE. "I HAVE ASKED YOU BEFORE NOT TO ADDRESS ME. I DO NOT DESIRE YOUR ACQUAINTANCE, OR THAT OF ANY OTHER LOW FELLOW." (See page 7.)

NO. 125. VOL. 5. NEW SERIES.

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ONE
PENNY.

EVERY
SATURDAY.

PLUCK

[VOL. 5, No. 125, NEW SERIES.]

The First Long,

Complete School Tale.



THE MISADVENTURES OF MARMADUKE

A Tale of
Jack Blake, Augustus,
and Figgins & Co.

By CHAS. HAMILTON.

CHAPTER I.

The Arrival of Marmaduke Smythe.

JACK BLAKE sat upon the table in Study No. 6, in the School House at St. Jim's, with a thoughtful expression upon his face. Herries sat on the window-sill, his hands in his trousers-pockets, staring at him.

"The question is," Blake remarked reflectively, "what are we going to do with the afternoon? The ground's not fit for anything like practice. Figgins & Co. have gone off somewhere, so we can't get up a row with the New House fellows. What are we going to do, Herries?"

"Don't know," said Herries.

Blake drummed with his heels on the leg of the table.

"There's poor old Arthur Augustus still in the sanatorium, with the cold he caught in that beastly old castle," he said, "and Dick's gone off to see a sick relation. I don't know what his relations want to fall sick on a half-holiday for. I feel quite lonely without 'em. Hallo, Kildare!"

Kildare, captain of St. Jim's, put in his head at the door of Study No. 6. He nodded pleasantly to the two juniors.

"I see you're not busy," he remarked. "Will you do me a favour?"

"Rather!" said Blake promptly. "A million, if you like."

"One will be enough," laughed Kildare. "I want you to go down to the railway-station at Rylcombe and meet a new boy who is coming to St. Jim's. Will you go?"

"Like a bird!"

"The train will be in at three. The Head asked me to send someone, as the new kid is coming into our house. You youngsters could meet him all right, and bring him up to the school. You don't mind?"

"Not a little bit," said Blake. "What's the new chap's name?"

"Smythe—Marmaduke Smythe."

"What a stunning name! And he's coming into the School House?"

"Yes; and I expect he'll be put into this study at first—at least, till D'Arcy's well. Some of the studies are being

papered out now, and there's nowhere else to put him at present. Now, you'd better cut off, as it's a long walk to Rylcombe. You'll see to him all right, Blake? I can trust you?"

Blake looked hurt.

"I say, Kildare, you ought to know——"

"Come, Blake," laughed the captain; "you know what I mean. You are as full of tricks as a monkey. You'll bring the new boy straight to St. Jim's?"

"Straight as a string!" said Blake seriously. "You can rely on me. Now, Herries, if the train's coming in at three, the sooner we buzz off the better."

He slid off the table. The captain of St. Jim's was looking at him rather dubiously. He knew Blake of old.

"Mind, no larks, Blake," he said. "You're to bring the new boy straight to the school."

"Honour bright!" said Blake.

Kildare was satisfied.

"Very well. Now you'd better be off."

And the captain, with a nod, left the study.

"Seems sorter uneasy in his mind, doesn't he?" Blake remarked. "Just as if we would play any giddy game—serious and solemn chaps like us. Come on, Herries. I wonder what the new chap will be like? If he's anything like his name, he must be a ripper!"

The juniors took their caps and sallied out. They sauntered across the quadrangle and passed out at the big bronze gates of St. Jim's. It was a good walk to the village, so they set off at a good pace.

"Lots of time," Blake remarked, glancing up at the clock as they entered the railway-station. "Ten minutes to three. Let's go on the platform, and wait for the train to come in."

They went on the platform. The train was late, as it usually was at Rylcombe; but it came puffing and snorting in at last. Blake and Herries watched the passengers alighting. They were curious to see the new boy who was coming into their house at St. Jim's, and who was to share their study for an undefined period.

Half a dozen persons alighted from the train. Most of

them were country people, and only one was youthful in years, so the chums were forced to the conclusion that this was the new boy for St. Jim's. We say forced to that conclusion. They did not come to it willingly or cheerfully, for they were not charmed with the stranger.

He was a youth of a lanky and somewhat ungainly form, very expensively dressed, with a thick gold watch-chain and diamond studs. His face was pasty in colour, and not especially good-looking; but there was an expression of lofty haughtiness upon it which showed that Marmaduke Smythe's opinion of himself and of his own importance was an exceedingly good one.

"Porter—porter!" His voice was not musical, and he was evidently accustomed to speaking in the imperative mood. He stared about him as if amazed at not being instantly attended to. "Porter! Fellow, where are you?"

Blake and Herries looked at each other and at the stranger, and then at each other again, and breathed hard.

"And that's coming into the School House!" gasped Blake. "And into our study!" murmured Herries.

"If it gets to St. Jim's," said Blake, "and if it gets into the School House, the New House chaps will chip us until our hair turns grey. We can't have it."

"What can we do with it?"

"I'll take it somewhere and lose it!" said Blake wildly.

"Can't be did. Remember, you promised Kildare."

"The horrid boaster! Did he know what it was like, I wonder? Oh dear! We can't kill it, I suppose; and I've promised to take it to the school. Here goes!"

Blake walked up to the stranger. The latter was looking annoyed. The sleepy Kylcombe porter was in no hurry to come at his call. He stared at Blake.

"Hallo!" said Blake. "Marmaduke Smythe, I suppose?"

"That is my name," said the youth; "but I don't know you."

"My name is Blake. I belong to the School House at St. Jim's. Kildare asked me to come down here and meet you."

"Oh—ah! Who is Kildare?"

"Captain of the school."

"Oh! I don't know much about public schools. I have been educated by a tutor!" said the new boy loftily. "I should have thought Dr. Holmes would have sent a carriage—or, at least, a trap—for me! This is very negligent of him, and I shall speak plainly on the subject when I reach the school."

Blake stared at Herries. Herries leaned against an automatic sweet-machine and gasped.

"Mad," murmured Blake—"mad as a giddy hatter!"

"Are you alluding to me?" said Master Smythe, frowning. "I warn you that I require none of your impertinence, Blake, or Shake, or whatever your name is! Where is that porter? Ah, here is the fellow at last! How dare you keep me waiting like this!"

The porter stared and grinned.

"Beg your pardon, sir!" he said. "I didn't know it was a blooming hemperor who was a-calling me! If I'd ha' known it was a fcar who wanted me I'd—"

"Don't be insolent! I intended to give you a shilling, but now I shall give you nothing! You may not be aware whom I am. I am Marmaduke Smythe; and my father is Smythe, the millionaire. I am accustomed to being treated with respect. Shake, or Blake, or whatever you are, you say you were sent to meet me? Very good. You can help the porter place my trunks upon some vehicle!"

And the new boy walked haughtily away.

"I am dreaming!" said Blake feebly. "I shall wake up presently. It can't be real. That thing can't really be coming into our study!"

"Where can he come from?" gasped Herries. "He says he doesn't know much about public schools, and I think he's right there. I can foresee a high old time for that merchant in the School House."

"If he puts on any side there," said Blake darkly, "he's doomed! He'll be slain, as sure as his name's Marmaduke! I mean Marmaduke! Where's he getting to now? Come on. I've promised Kildare to take the thing to St. Jim's, and I'll do it or die in the attempt!"

The chums hurried out of the station after Marmaduke. He stood outside, surveying the shabby old station hack, with a decidedly disapproving expression upon his pasty face.

"Really, this is most inconsiderate of Dr. Holmes!" he exclaimed. "I cannot ride in that absurd and antiquated vehicle. Blake, here's half-a-crown for you. Go and find me a cab!"

Blake looked at the half-crown extended towards him, and then at Marmaduke. It says much for his self-command that he did not exterminate the new boy upon the spot.

"Do you hear me?" said Smythe irritably.

"Ye-es," said Blake slowly. "I hear you. I won't say what I think about you, Marmaduke, because it would take

too long, and I should have to use shocking language. Get into that hack!"

"I certainly shall do nothing of the kind!"

"Get into that hack!"

"How dare you address me in that manner! You are insolent! I have half a mind to chastise you!"

"I don't believe you have half a mind, or a quarter of one," said Blake. "Look here; I can see you're a funny merchant, and I don't want to hurt you. I suppose you've been in the habit of bossing people about at home in Shore-ditch."

"Fellow, my father's mansion is in Park Lane!"

"Petticoat Lane would be nearer your mark, I should think! I suppose you're rolling in money, and it's got into your head. For your own sake, I warn you that that sort of thing won't go down at St. Jim's. I've promised our captain to take you straight to the school. I'd rather take you out and drop you in a ditch, but a promise is a promise. Get into that hack!"

"I refuse! I—"

Marmaduke was interrupted. Blake had exhausted his whole stock of patience, and he wasted no more time in words. He seized Marmaduke by the shoulders, and swung him round.

"Open the door, Herries!"

The grinning Herries opened the door of the hack. Marmaduke was struggling wildly, but he was as a child in the hands of the champion junior athlete of St. Jim's. Blake sent him into the despoiled vehicle like a bullet from a gun, and Marmaduke went down on his hands and knees there.

"Come on, Herries! Porter, shove that trunk on!"

Marmaduke scrambled to his feet. He was red with rage, and he turned on Blake like a wild cat and clawed at him. Blake got one scratch along the cheek that drew blood, and he gave a startled yell.

"Hallo! That chap's dangerous! Sit on him!"

Down went Marmaduke into the bottom of the vehicle again. Blake jammed his silk hat over his head, and put his feet on the prostrate youth's chest, pinning him down.

"Shove your trotters on him, Herries. He's going to stay there till we get to the school," said Blake. "That will be a little lesson in respectfulness to young gentlemen like us."

"Let me get up!" roared Marmaduke.

"Not just yet, ducky! I'm afraid you'll get a clump from my boot if you move. There, I told you so. Better keep still!"

Marmaduke, rumped and dusty and furious, lay still, but it was only to get his breath back. As Blake had guessed, the heir of millions had been cock-of-the-walk at home, and had "bossed" his tutor and everybody else, and he had come to St. Jim's with the idea of doing the same there. He was to be woefully undeceived.

The hack rolled away towards the school. The porter grinned after it, and the driver was chuckling on the box. All sorts and conditions of boys came to St. Jim's, but they had never seen a specimen exactly like Marmaduke before.

Blake's anger never lasted long, and in a few minutes he allowed Marmaduke to rise and sit down. The heir of millions looked far from grateful for this concession. He glowered at Blake like a demon, but he had already learned that it did not pay to come to close quarters with him.

"Feel better now?" asked Blake sympathetically. "If you stay at St. Jim's, we shall soon cure you of being such a howling anob. That may be considered the first lesson, and, as no charge is made, you ought to feel grateful. You don't look it, though."

Marmaduke scowled, and stared out of the window. He was not particularly brave, but he was very obstinate, and he was determined that he would not go to St. Jim's in that hack. He had had his own way ever since Smythe senior had made millions by lucky speculation, and he didn't intend to give it up now.

His whole thoughts were bent upon escape. As Blake was not anticipating such a move, it was not difficult. Blake had entered into conversation with Herries, and the hack was passing along the lane bordering the castle wood, when Marmaduke suddenly tore the door open and leaped out.

The vehicle was not going quickly, but Marmaduke was clumsy, and he fell. He went with a splash into a deep puddle. He gave a yell, and scrambled up, smothered with mud from head to foot, and his features nearly indistinguishable.

"Stop!" shouted Blake. "After him!"

He leaped out of the hack. His word was at stake. He had promised Kildare to bring the new boy straight to St. Jim's, and it had to be done somehow.

Marmaduke, with a howl of defiance, bolted into the foot-path through the wood. He did not know that this was a short cut to St. Jim's.

"Come on, Herries!"

Blake sprinted after the flying Marmaduke, with Herries

The umbrella whisked in the air, and Mr. Latham, who had made a motion to catch hold of Marmaduke, beat a hurried retreat. (See Page 16.)



at his heels. The driver of the hack stared after them in astonishment, and then, chuckling hoarsely, drove on to the school. Marmaduke was certainly not in good condition, but he ran very well, and he had a start. He was almost through the wood when Blake's outstretched hand dropped on his shoulder from behind.

"Got you!" gasped Blake.

But he had not quite got him. Marmaduke put on a spurt and broke away, and ran out into the road. Here the school was in sight. Blake was after him again like a flash, and Marmaduke dashed across the road and tried to leap the ditch on the other side. At the same moment Blake clutched at his jacket behind and caught it.

The result was that Marmaduke pitched head foremost into the ditch, which was a deep one and full nearly to the top, and Blake, jerked forward by his fall, followed him in. Herries halted and stared after them in dismay. Blake's head came out of the flowing, muddy ditch. He still had hold of Marmaduke, who was struggling wildly.

"Lend a hand!" roared Blake.

Herries lent a hand, and dragged Blake out, not without difficulty, and between them they landed Marmaduke, gasping like a newly-caught fish.

"Well, this is a go!" said Herries.

All the fight was taken out of Marmaduke. He was limp enough now. He was soaked to the skin, caked with mud, and ornamented with sundry festoons of green slime. Blake was not in much better condition; but he was triumphant. He had captured the runaway.

"Now, forward's the word!" he said, taking a tight grip on the new boy's arm. "I said I'd take him to the school, and I'm a chap of my word. Take his other arm, Herries."

"I'll keep an eye on him," said Herries.

"Take his arm, you duffer, in case he bolts again!"

"If you'll excuse me, Blake, I'd rather not. He's a bit too whiffy for me to touch, after that ditch. I'll watch him, if you like."

"Oh, all right! Come on! I think Kildare will be pleased. We'd better take the thing to his study, I suppose."

Herries chuckled.

"He won't be pleased if you do!" he exclaimed. "Better shove him under a pump or something first, and yourself, too, old chap."

"Stuff, I've got to report to Kildare, and he ought to know what I've been through for the sake of keeping my word."

And Blake marched the sullen and furious, but now subdued, Marmaduke, up to the school gates, and, still with an iron grip upon him, marched him in.

CHAPTER 2.

Marmaduke's First Lesson.

GREAT snakes!" ejaculated Figgins. "What's that?" Figgins & Co. had come in while Blake was gone to the village, and they were in the quad, and they immediately spotted the chief of the School House juniors as he marched his prisoner in.

"One of 'em's Blake," said Kerr, surveying the muddy

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IN "PLUCK." 1"

pair critically. "The other might be the wild man from Borneo."

"Let's go and inquire!" suggested Fatty Wynn.

And Figgins & Co. bore down on the School House juniors. "Hallo, Blake!" said Figgins genially. "You've been through it, haven't you? What's the game; and where did you pick that up?"

"It's a new kid," explained Blake. "I promised Kildare to bring it straight to St. Jim's, and it didn't want to come. Behold the result!"

"Ha, ha! You're in a nice state. Does that object belong to your house?"

"Yes; Kildare says so!" groaned Blake. "Its name is Marmaduke Smythe, and it's a millionaire from Petticoat Lane!"

"Fellow, how dare you!" exclaimed Marmaduke. "My father is Samuel Smythe, the millionaire, and I shall write to him about this outrage. You will all be severely punished!"

Figgins stared and gasped, and then chuckled.

"My hat!" he said. "I wish you joy of him, Blake. You've got some funny merchants in the School House, but this is about the funniest of the bunch. I should drown it if I were you. It's whiffy, too. You ought to teach it to be more particular about the ditches it falls into. Take it in and wash it—do!"

"Walk up, gents—walk up!" exclaimed Kerr, striking an attitude in imitation of a showman. "Come and see the latest addition to the School House menagerie!"

"Oh, clear off!" said Blake crossly. "Get out of the way, you New House cads! Clear the way, I tell you!"

"Walk up!" shouted Kerr.

"Walk up!" yelled Figgins. "Come and see the latest—ow, yah, ow—ooch!"

Blake, losing patience, had collared the New House chief. Blake was redolent of the deep, slimy ditch, and gracefully festooned with fungus like the new boy. He wasn't pleasant at close quarters, as Figgins soon found.

"Yah—ow!" gasped Figgins. "Get away! Lemme go! Chuck it!"

Blake grinned, and hugged his old enemy as if he loved him. A considerable portion of his mud and slime was transferred to the person of Figgins. Figgins struggled to escape, but Blake wasn't inclined to let him go.

"You've asked for it!" he said. "Now you've got it! How do you like it?"

"You—you beast—lemme go!"

Figgins, with a desperate wrench, tore himself away. He was half smothered, and Blake was less muddy than he had been. Figgins was wild.

"I'll scalp you for this, you School House cad!" he yelled furiously.

"Come on, then!" said Blake, darting at him again.

But Figgins had had enough of him. He scuttled away, and the Co., equally desirous of avoiding Blake's embraces, followed their leader. Blake, laughing, returned to Marmaduke, and marched him on to the School House.

"Come on, Marmay," he said. "I'm going to show you to Kildare, to prove that I've kept my word, and then you can go and clean yourself. This way!"

"I refuse to come with you! I—"

"Oh, come along, fathead!" said Blake. And, seizing Marmaduke by the collar, he ran him up the steps of the School House, and along to Kildare's study.

He knocked at the door. The captain of St. Jim's was at home, and his cheery voice bade Blake enter. The junior pushed open the door, and propelled the squirming Marmaduke into the room. Herries hung behind, grinning.

Kildare was seated at his table, working out a mathematical problem. He forgot all about mathematics at the sight of the strange object propelled into his study, and jumped up in staring amazement.

"Blake! I suppose it is you, Blake, though I can hardly recognise you in that state! What have you been doing?"

"Falling into a ditch!"

"I—you—that cannot be the new boy!"

"It's the very identical article."

"What has happened? Did the hack upset?"

"No; I believe the hack's all right. You told me to bring this merchant straight to St. Jim's, didn't you?"

"Yes; but—"

"That's what I've done. He didn't want to come in the hack. Wasn't good enough for him. Wanted to go around searching for something else. I remembered your instructions, and bundled him in head first!"

"I never instructed you to do anything of the kind!" gasped Kildare, not knowing whether to laugh or to be angry.

"You told me to bring him straight to St. Jim's," said Blake obstinately. "It's the same thing, ain't it?"

"But how did he get into this state?"

"Oh, he bolted from the hack. I chased him, and we both took a tumble in the ditch along the Rylcombe road. Look nice, don't we? But I've brought him safe to St. Jim's. Straight as a string, Kildare. Thought I'd please you."

"I—I—I suppose you meant well, Blake, but I didn't foresee this," said Kildare. He burst into a laugh. He hadn't decided whether he ought to be angry or amused, but the laugh came out involuntarily. "Now you have brought him safely here, take him to a bath-room, and get him a change of clothes, and clean him."

"Right you are!"

"Stop!" yelled Marmaduke, as Blake would have dragged him away. "Let me speak!"

"Let him speak, Blake. What is it, Smythe?"

"I have been treated outrageously. I am the son of Smythe, the millionaire. I understand you are the captain, or something in this school, and have some authority."

"Yes; that's about right."

"Then I insist that you immediately punish that insolent boy!"

Kildare stared at him.

"Do you hear?" snapped Marmaduke. "He has been most insolent. I am accustomed to being treated with respect. Punish him at once!"

Kildare sat down.

"Take him away and clean him, Blake," said Kildare. "When I have time, presently, I will try to explain things to him a little."

"I insist—" spluttered Marmaduke.

But Blake's strong grip on his collar cut him short. Blake propelled him out of the study as he had propelled him into it, and the door closed. Kildare returned to his problem, and Blake marched Marmaduke off to a bath-room.

"This is a nice job to give me!" he growled. "I thought I should be able to turn the object over to Kildare and have done with it. Get me some clean clothes, Herries, old man, there's a good kid, and get something to shove on Marmaduke, too. His box hasn't come."

"Right-ho!" said Herries.

Blake bundled Marmaduke into a bath-room. He turned on a tap, and a bath was soon filling with steaming water.

"Get those filthy things off and tumble into that!" he directed.

"Shan't!"

"You'll go in clothes and all, then!"

Marmaduke looked at Blake and caught the gleam in his eye. He thought he had better obey, and he sulkily began to strip.

Herries came along with the change of clothes. Blake was glad enough to bath and change, and even the sullen Marmaduke felt better for his wash. As his own box had not yet arrived, he had to dress in the odd garments Herries had found for him, and they did not meet with his approval. A very old pair of Norfolk knickers, much too short for him, with stockings too large, looked rather odd in conjunction with canvas tennis shoes, and a light-striped cricketer's shirt. But, as Herries remarked, he had to take what he could get, and ought to be thankful for it.

"I won't wear those things!" he declared flatly.

"All right!" said Blake sternly. "You can put on your wet clothes, or stay in the giddy bath till your box arrives, for all I care. Only that hack may be an hour yet, and I don't see who's going to unpack for you and bring you the clothes. I jolly well shan't!"

"Get me some better clothes!"

"Can't be did! We don't keep a secondhand clothes department here."

"Your Sunday clothes would suit me very well!"

"Marmay, you're too condescending. You are really. It's a waste of breath to talk to you; so you can dress yourself or not as you like. I've carried out instructions, which were to clean you and get you a change of toga. Now you're your own blessed master, and you can do as you like!"

And Blake finished dressing and walked away with Herries. "I say, did you ever hear of anything more howlingly rotten?" he exclaimed indignantly. "Fancy shoving that no-class bounder into the School House! The New House would just have suited him. Figgins & Co. will chip us to death!"

"It's rotten!" agreed Herries. "But the worst is to have him in our study. Still, if he doesn't change a bit, we can make No. 6 too hot to hold him."

Blake grinned.

"Yes, and we will, too. Hallo! He's decided to clothe himself, after all."

Marmaduke came along the corridor arrayed in his odd-ends of raiment. He was looking savage, and his appearance was decidedly odd. He went into the hall, and, as luck would have it, met Mr. Kidd, the master of the School House, coming in.

The housemaster stared at the queer figure in amazement. Then his brow darkened.

"Who are you, boy?" he demanded.

Marmaduke stared at him. "Who are you?" he retorted. "You should not question me in that hectoring tone. I dislike it, and I decline to answer your impertinent question!"

It took Mr. Kidd some moments to grasp this. Marmaduke turned to walk haughtily away. The housemaster stepped after him, took a grip on his ear, and twisted him round.

"Do you know who I am, boy?" he thundered.

"No. I don't, and I don't want to," snarled Marmaduke.

"Leggo my ear!"

"I am your housemaster. Are you a new boy?"

"Yes. I wish I had never come here."

"Indeed! What is your name?"

"Find out!"

"Ah, I see there has been some neglect in respect to your education," said Mr. Kidd. "I presume you are the boy whom I remember now, Dr. Holmes mentioned to me. Your name is Marmaduke Smythe, I think."

"Yes, it is. Let me go, you low fellow!"

"Foul! Yes, your education has been neglected. Come into my study, please!"

"Shan't!"

Marmaduke said "shan't," but he went, all the same, for Mr. Kidd marched off, still gripping his ear, and Marmaduke either had to go or to part with his auricular appendage. So he went. The study door closed. A few moments later the swish of a cane was heard, and howls of anguish proceeded from behind the closed door. Marmaduke Smythe was receiving his first lesson.

CHAPTER 3.

Interviewing the Head.

MARMADUKE SMYTHE came out of the housemaster's study with his hands tucked under his arms, and looking as if he were trying to fold himself up like a pocket-knife.

"Poor brute!" murmured Blake. "He's only got what he was asking for, but it's more his people's fault than his. I fancy. Let's go and speak to him."

Blake was very tender-hearted. He was sensible, too, and he could see that a large part of Marmaduke's snobbishness was due to want of training at home. The heir of millions had undoubtedly been surrounded by sycophants in the Smythe mansion, and his tutor had probably never dared to correct or contradict him. A public school was just the place to take the nonsense out of him, but he was likely to find it a very rough experience at first.

"Better let the cad alone!" said Herries.

"Oh, rats! A civil word doesn't cost anything."

Marmaduke glared at Blake as he came up. He was in a very bad temper, and suffering considerably. He had tried to kick Mr. Kidd when he was caned, and the housemaster had laid on the strokes well in consequence.

"I say, old chap—" began Blake.

"Don't speak to me," said Marmaduke. "You are a low beast! I hate you! I hate this school, and I shall not stay here! Get out of my way!"

Herries chuckled.

"I told you so, Blake. Let the cad alone."

Blake drew a long, deep breath.

"Look here, Smythe—"

"Get out of the way!"

And Marmaduke, who was in a towering passion, smote Blake across the face with his open hand—a sounding smack.

Blake staggered back, more surprised than hurt. His eyes blazed, and Herries expected him to hurl himself upon the new boy and wipe up the floor with Marmaduke. For a moment he looked as if he would do it; then he stopped, and his hands fell to his sides. It was the knowledge that Marmaduke would be helpless in his hands that made him patient and forbearing.

"You silly ass!" he said, rubbing his cheek. "You don't know where you are, or what you're doing, and you'll get a bad time enough without a licking from me. Come on, Herries!"

"I say," exclaimed his chum, in amazement, "you ain't going to let him off after he thumped you on the dial, are you?"

"He's not worth touching."

"But—"

"Oh, come along!" said Blake.

"He'll think you're afraid of him."

"Let the silly ass think so, then."

And Blake walked away. Marmaduke, who had never been forbearing in his life, did indeed think as Herries suggested, having not the faintest conception of Blake's motives in letting him off. He felt more satisfied in his mind as he proceeded in search of the headmaster. He intended to lay a

complaint before Dr. Holmes, never doubting for an instant that it would be listened to and accorded prompt attention.

But as he was new to St. Jim's, and had driven away the one who would have helped him, he wandered about without finding what he sought. His appearance was so extremely odd in his strange garments that he was greeted with laughter wherever he appeared. He came upon Taggles, the porter, at last, and demanded information.

"Where can I find the headmaster, my good man?"

Taggles stared at him.

"Escaped from some blooming lunatic asylum!" murmured the porter.

"Where is the headmaster?" repeated Marmaduke angrily.

"If you take me to him, my man, I will give you half-a-crown."

Taggles looked at the half-crown, and decided that, lunatic or not, he might as well earn it, so he promptly guided the new boy to Dr. Holmes's study.

Marmaduke went in without the formality of knocking. Dr. Holmes was writing by the window, and he looked up, naturally surprised by this intrusion. When his glance fell upon Marmaduke, he dropped his pen in amazement.

"Who—what are you?" he exclaimed.

"I am Marmaduke Smythe."

"Ah, the new boy! Surely you have not come to the school in that absurd attire!"

Marmaduke burst into an account of his wrongs. Dr. Holmes listened attentively, eyeing the heir of millions curiously the while.

"Well, and why have you come here to me?" he asked sharply, when Marmaduke had reached the conclusion of his tale of woe.

Marmaduke stared at him.

"I have come to complain of my disgraceful treatment, of course," he replied. "I should think you might have guessed that."

Dr. Holmes half rose from his chair. He had never been spoken to like that by a boy before in his life.

"Smythe, is that the way you address your schoolmaster?"

Marmaduke looked at him sullenly.

"If you had not already been caned, I should cane you now for your insolence," said the doctor. "It is clear that your training has been sadly neglected. When you speak to me you will address me as sir. Do you hear?"

"Yes."

"Yes, what?"

"Yes, sir."

"And you will in future knock at a door before entering a room. I mention that for your general guidance, as you will have no occasion to come to this room again, unless it is to be flogged. Understand that I receive no complaints of your housemaster's conduct. My confidence in Mr. Kidd is complete."

Marmaduke glowered. His complaint was not panning out as he had anticipated. It seemed that nobody at St. Jim's was inclined to admit his claims to respect as the son and heir of a man of millions.

"You had better return to Mr. Kidd and apologise for your rudeness," continued the doctor. "That will be the best way to make your peace. And you will do well to cease assuming insolent airs towards your schoolmates."

"Apologise!" gasped Marmaduke. "Unless he apologises to me, Dr. Holmes, I shall not remain in the school."

The doctor looked hard at him. He knew something about Marmaduke, and he knew how bad the results of an injudicious training may be, but he had not quite expected the heir of the house of Smythe to be such an "out-and-out." At that moment he felt a little regret that he had consented to receive him at the school. Still, for the boy's sake, it was certainly best that he should remain. It would be a painful process, but in the course of time he would doubtless improve.

"You do not know what you are saying, Smythe," said Dr. Holmes. "For that reason I do not wish to be severe with you. It is rather from the boys than from the masters that I expect you to learn what it is most necessary for you to know. You may go."

Marmaduke did not budge.

"You may go," repeated the doctor, raising his voice a little.

"Then I am to understand that the boy who assaulted me is not to be punished?"

"Leave the room!" thundered the doctor.

"I want to know—"

What Marmaduke wanted to know he never had a chance to state, for the doctor jumped up and seized a cane, and the heir of millions, without stopping to finish, bolted from the room.

"Dear me!" murmured the doctor. "If I did not know the unfortunate circumstances in which that youth had been

brought up, I should think that he was mentally afflicted. Ah, Mr. Kidd, is that you? Come in. I have just seen the new boy in your house."

The master of the School House smiled slightly.

"I had come to speak about him, sir. You gave me some idea of what to expect, but I did not look for quite such a—such a—"

"Exactly," agreed the doctor. "Such a—such a— There is really no word to adequately describe that peculiar boy."

"He appears to have been pampered and indulged in every way," said Mr. Kidd. "Boy as he is, he has undoubtedly had his own way in everything, and I fancied he has bullied his tutor at home. He wishes to do the same here."

Dr. Holmes laughed.

"Yes, he will find the change a violent one, but it will undoubtedly be beneficial. The most sensible thing his father ever did, I think, was to send him to a public school. It is a pity he did not go at an earlier age. You will do your best with him, Mr. Kidd?"

"If you wish me to do so, sir, certainly. But he speaks of writing to his father to take him away."

The doctor shook his head.

"He must not be allowed to do anything of the kind. He has come to St. Jim's, and he must stay for a term, at least, for his own sake. Unpromising as he looks at present, a term here may work wonders. Mr. Smythe seemed to be aware that he would give trouble, and asked me to do my best with him. I shall do so."

"I think it quite possible that he will attempt to run away, sir."

"Dear me! So bad as that?" The doctor pursed his lips. "Of course, that must be prevented. I leave him in your hands with every confidence, Mr. Kidd."

"I will do my best, sir," said the housemaster.

He had rather hoped that the Head would let Marmaduke go. But, as it had been decided otherwise, Mr. Kidd was not the man to shrink from an unpleasant duty. He meant to educate Marmaduke.

CHAPTER 4.

A New House Raid.

BLAKE and Herries were away at the gym, when Marmaduke came into Study No. 6, some time after his interview with the Head. Marmaduke's luggage had arrived, and he had been enabled to change his clothes, so his appearance was much improved. His temper, however, was in a very bad state.

The Fourth Form at St. Jim's was to be honoured with his presence, and a share of Study No. 6 had been assigned to him. He had been told to take his books and personal belongings there, and as he was beginning to learn already not to dispute orders which might be backed up by a cane, he obeyed sullenly.

He entered Study No. 6 and found it unoccupied. The fire was burning brightly in the grate, and the room, though small enough for its usual four occupants, looked very cosy and cheerful. Marmaduke was tired by his experience of that afternoon, and he swung the only easy-chair up to the fire and sat down, and soon went off to sleep with his feet on the fender. He slept soundly, an occasional unmusical snore breaking from him, and he did not awake at the sound of whispering voices in the room. As the chair was close to the fender, and he was lying back in it, the high back concealed him from view, and the intruders evidently did not know that there was anybody in the study.

"We've caught those School House bounders on the hop," said the voice of Figgins. The long-limbed chief of the New House juniors looked round the study with much satisfaction. "Do you remember the time Blake raided our study and messed things up for us? This is our first chance to get a bit of our own back."

"Right-ho!" said Kerr. "He made a muck of our room in the New House, but I think we can go one better if we try hard."

Fatty Wynn was looking into the cupboard. His eyes glistened at what he saw there.

"I say, there's some tarts and a pie here!" he exclaimed. "It's a jolly good idea to spoil the Egyptians—eh, what?"

"Always thinking of grub," growled Figgins. "We've no time for gorging now. That looks a prime pie, though. Hand it out."

"You've no time for gorging," grinned Fatty. "You get on with the work, Figgy, and I'll attend to the pie."

"Do you want a thick ear, my son? Hand over the pie!"

The three juniors of the New House were quickly discussing the pie. They left a beautifully clean dish when they finished, in about three minutes' time.

"That wasn't bad," said Figgins. "We'll shove the

tarts in our pockets and eat 'em over in the New House. No time to waste here, in case Blake returns. We haven't come for a row, but a giddy raid. Now set to work."

Fatty Wynn's eye lingered on the tarts. Fatty was a gourmand, and he couldn't resist them. He started on them, while Figgins and Kerr started on the study.

Figgins was determined to repay Blake in kind for a similar visit the School House junior had paid to his quarters some time before. But just as he commenced he gave a sudden start, and held up his finger for silence.

"Hallo!" he whispered. "Did you hear that?"

It was a snore from the armchair before the fire.

"Somebody there," murmured Kerr.

"Let's see who it is. Stand ready to collar him if he wakes up."

"Right you are, Figgy!"

They stole towards the armchair, and looked into it. There lay Marmaduke, sleeping the sleep of the fatigued, and evidently not in the least likely to wake. Figgins and Kerr grinned at each other over the unconscious Marmaduke.

"It's the new kid," murmured Figgins; "that funny merchant Blake picked up somewhere to-day. Looks a sleeping beauty, don't he? Not half!"

Kerr grinned hugely as an idea came into his head.

"I say, let's turn him into a sleeping beauty," he whispered. "He looks as if he wouldn't wake for anything short of an earthquake. There's Blake's box of paints all handy, and it wouldn't take a couple of minutes."

"Good enough!" chuckled Figgins. "You can do it while I get on with the study."

Kerr speedily wetted Blake's brush and moistened some of the colours. Then, with a light, artistic hand, he decorated the countenance of Marmaduke Smythe. Marmaduke's complexion was a good deal like tallow in hue, but Kerr gave him a very rich colour, and he blushed under a coat of crimson lake.

His appearance, with a crimson face, was sufficiently startling, but Kerr was not yet satisfied. Like a true artist, he was not satisfied with good enough when he might attain better. He drew a circle of white and a larger one of black round each of Marmaduke's eyes, and imparted to him a strangely owl-like expression thereby. Then he added a black spot to the nose, and a green one in the centre of either cheek, and added some really artistic, dark wrinkles to the forehead.

"My hat!" said Figgins, nearly exploding as he looked at the result of Kerr's handiwork. "I'll guarantee that that'll startle Blake a bit when he comes in. Good for you, kid!"

While Kerr was painting, Figgy had not been idle. He had mixed up books and papers and bread-and-butter and chestnuts and sausages in a handsome heap in the centre of the floor, and had emptied a bottle of liquid glue with an impartial hand into the seat of every chair, and poured the contents of an ink-bottle into Blake's clock.

"I think that will do," he said, glancing round. "We don't want to do any damage, you know. This is where we do the vanishing trick."

The New House juniors, laughing softly, stole out of Study No. 6. Kerr lingered a moment to fasten a string across the floor from the leg of a chair to Blake's bookcase. Then he closed the door and followed his friends.

The raiders escaped undetected from the School House. In the dusky quad they watched the chums of Study No. 6 returning from the gym. Digby was still absent from the school. Blake and Herries went into the house, and Figgins & Co. chuckled gleefully at the thought of the surprise that awaited them in their study.

Marmaduke was still sleeping soundly. He did not hear the door open, but he heard what followed the opening of it. Blake came in first. The study was dusky, and he had a matchbox in his hand ready to light the gas. His foot caught in the string left there by the thoughtful Kerr, and he went sprawling with a startled yell.

"Oh! Ow! Hellup! Wooroo!"

He had reason to yell, for the cord was attached to the upper part of the bookcase, and the jerk on it as Blake fell brought that article of furniture over with a crash. As Blake sat up a shower of books descended upon him, and then the bookcase itself, which was fortunately a light article. It flattened him down, however, and Herries sprang in and dragged it off him and allowed him to rise. Blake got up rubbing his limbs ruefully.

"I wish I knew the funny chap who put that string there," he growled; "I'd give him the thickest ear any body ever had presented to him! Hallo! Hallo! What's all this giddy mess? Who's been here?"

He lighted the gas, and stared in dismay at the heap of various properties piled in the middle of the floor. Then he gave a shriek. Marmaduke, as we have said, was

awakened by the crash. He had started up, and was staring at the chains over the top of the armchair. Now, to be suddenly stared at by a crimson face, with black-and-white circles round the eyes, is bound to be startling.

Blake took a single look at the dreadful apparition and staggered back, treading on Herries' toes. Herries was equally startled, and he collapsed, and Blake sat down on top of him.

"Wh-wh-what is it?" gasped Blake.

"Gerroff me neck!" gasped Herries.

Blake picked himself up. He eyed the horrible object warily. As it made no movement of offence he did not retreat.

"It's—it's a face!" he said. "It's a face, or something of the sort. Yes, it's Marmaduke. Marmaduke, what's the giddy game?"

Marmaduke stared at him loftily. He did not know what had been done to his face, and had not the remotest suspicion that his aspect was anything out of the ordinary.

"I don't know what you are talking about, or why you are acting in so absurd a manner," he said. "I have asked you before not to address me. I do not desire your acquaintance, or that of any other low fellow."

Blake burst into a roar. Now that he had got over the shock, Marmaduke's aspect dawned upon him as screamingly funny.

"Oh, oh, oh!" he gasped. "That kid'll be the death of me, I know he will!"

"I'll be the death of him!" growled Herries. "He must have put our study into this fearful mess."

"I don't think so. Looks more like a New House raid."

"Somebody's wolfed our pie!" howled Herries. "Look here, here's the dish as clean as a whistle. It's that new pig, I tell you."

"I have not touched your pie," said Marmaduke, as Herries brandished the empty dish over his head. "I assure you—"

"Then, who has? Speak before I brain you!"

"I don't know."

"Who's been here?"

"Nobody that I know of. I think I must have been asleep."

"I think you must," muttered Blake; "and somebody has been attending to you while you've snoozed. Let him alone, Herries. It's plain enough that Figgins & Co. have been here. This is a return for our raid some time back. Grin and bear it, my son. It's all in the day's work."

"That's all very well," growled Herries. "It seems to me that Figgins & Co. have been scoring all along the line for some time past. What sort of a blessed leader do you call yourself, anyhow?"

Blake coloured. It could not be denied that the New House had scored a great many times of late, and that the School House had not had a look-in.

"Oh, rats!" said Blake. "Don't growl. We'll get our own back in time. Let's get this giddy mess cleaned up. You can lend a hand, Marmaduke."

"I refuse to do anything of the kind. I am not here to do the work of a menial."

"You're here to get a black eye, I fancy, if you don't mind your P's and Q's," said Blake darkly. "I don't want to hurt you, Marmaduke—I mean, Marmaduke. But I'm getting fed up with your funny ways, I warn you."

"If you're not going to lend a hand," said Herries, "you can clear while we get to work. Off with you!"

"I shall not stir."

"I fancy you're in error there," said Herries; and he caught hold of the back of the easy-chair and tilted Marmaduke into the fender. "How's that for high?"

Marmaduke went down with a thump, and jumped up very hurt and very wild. He ran at Herries like a bull, and, before the junior could get on his guard, smote him upon the nose with terrific force. Herries spluttered and staggered back, and sat down on the nearest chair.

"There, let that teach you—" began Marmaduke.

"I'll do some teaching!" roared Herries furiously; and he sprang up and rushed at Smythe.

But he had sat down in a pool of liquid glue, left on the chair by Figgins, and he was stuck fast. As he rose the chair rose, too, and it followed him across the study as he went for Marmaduke. Herries felt the weight behind and turned his head in amazement, and when he saw the chair sticking to him his expression of bewilderment was so ludicrous that Blake collapsed into a seat and howled with laughter.

"Why, what the—how the—!" panted Herries.

He tore the chair off with a desperate wrench.

"Ha, ha, ha!" howled Blake.

"Do you think it's funny?" growled Herries. "I hope the boundaries have served that chair you're sitting in the same."

Blake left off laughing. Herries's remark showed him the serious side of the matter. He tried hastily to rise, and lifted the chair from the floor in doing so. It was Herries's turn to laugh, and he simply roared.

"Ha, ha, ha! It doesn't seem so awfully funny now, does it, Blake?"

"Nunno!" growled Jack. "Fancy that silly monkey snoozing here and letting Figgins & Co. mix our quarters up like this. He wants drowning!"

"He wants a hiding," said Herries, "and he's going to get it!"

And he rushed at Marmaduke. The youthful scion of the house of Smythe did not like the look in his eye, and he turned to bolt.

Herries took a running kick, and Marmaduke went out of the study on the end of his boot. He landed in the corridor in a heap, and seeing Herries coming after him, he picked himself up and fled.

He fled wildly, not seeing whither he was going, and the corridors were dusky. Percy Mellish was coming out of his study, and he gave a yell at the sight of the crimson face, with the owl-like eyes, bolting down the corridor.

"Help!" he gasped, and darted back into his room, and closed the door with a terrific slam, and began to pile things against it.

Marmaduke ran on. Finding, however, that he was not pursued, he slackened down a little. He wondered what was the cause of Mellish's alarm, and he soon had some more cause for wonder.

Taggles, the porter, had come to light the gas in the corridor, and he had just done so, when Marmaduke dawned upon him.

Taggles stared for a moment in helpless, dazed amazement, and then bolted with a yell of horror. Marmaduke stared after him in bewilderment.

"The man is mad!" he muttered. "They are all mad!"

His next encounter was with a maidservant. The maid gave him a horrified look, and fled screaming. She burst into Mr. Kidd's study, and collapsed into a chair, still screaming with affright.

The housemaster was there, and he jumped up, naturally startled at the sight of an hysterical girl bursting into his room.

"What is the matter?" exclaimed Mr. Kidd sharply.

"How dare you? The girl is mad! Are you ill? What on earth is the matter, Mary?"

"Oh—oh!" shrieked the maid. "The ghost! The spectre! The dreadful sight!"

"Mary, I am more shocked than I can say to find that you have been drinking—"

"It was in the passage! It is following me!"

"What is following you?"

"The—ghost—the gh-gh-ghost!"

"Mary, I shall speak to the housekeeper about this. You should—"

"There it is!" shrieked Mary.

She pointed to the door, which she had left open, and then, still shrieking, she rushed behind the housemaster for protection. Mr. Kidd looked quickly at the door. He was considerably startled, in spite of his nerve, by the sight of the awful-looking face that stared in from the dusky corridor.

A crimson countenance, with black and white circles round the eyes, was not a spectacle often met with, and if Mr. Kidd had met it in the dusky corridor he might have been alarmed. In the light of the study, however, he recognised the face as human, but in strange guise; and after the first shock he felt angry instead of alarmed.

"Keep it off!" screamed Mary.

"Pshaw! Mary, cannot you see that it is only a boy playing a silly trick?" exclaimed Mr. Kidd impatiently. "Boy, who are you? How dare you?"

Marmaduke was as angry as Mr. Kidd. He hadn't the least idea that there was anything wrong with his face, and the fright of the maid astounded him.

"I don't know what you're talking about!" he said crossly.

"How dare you go about the house like that?"

"Like what?"

"With that face, boy."

"My face! How dare you pass remarks on my face?" exclaimed Marmaduke. He had been born with that face, and he was rather proud of it. "You're no beauty yourself!"

Mr. Kidd reached for a cane, and then reached for Marmaduke. The new boy did not wait. He had learned how the housemaster could lay it on when he was angry, and he fled.

"Come back, Smythe!" roared Mr. Kidd.

But Marmaduke turned a deaf ear.

"Come back! Do you hear?"

But the new boy was gone. He was still continuing his victorious career. Everyone he met shrieked and fled.

Marmaduke was bewildered and enraged. Boots and other articles were hurled at him, and he was hurt. He did not know in the least where he was going, and he found himself soon at the door of the house-dame's room.

Mr. Taggles was there, explaining to Mrs. Tuffy the awful apparition he had met in the corridor, and the dame was listening with sniffs of disbelief.

"A norful sight!" said Taggles. "Believe me or not, ma'am, but it was hawful! Fancy a object six feet 'igh, with a face like a corpus, and flaming eyes, and breathing fire!"

"Nonsense!" said Mrs. Tuffy.

"Believe me or not, ma'am, I saw it, and it give me a turn."

"You have been drinking, Taggles!"

"I hain't touched a blessed drop for more'n an hour, Mrs. Tuffy! I tell you I saw it, and it give me a turn. There was fire a-coming out of its mouth and nostrils, and—"

"Nonsense!"

"Flaming fire!" said Taggles obstinately. "And it was shrieking and yelling like—like one o'clock. It— Oh—ow! Hellup! There it is!"

Mrs. Tuffy turned a startled glance to the door. There was Marmaduke, and the house-dame gave one look at him and fell in a faint. Taggles tried to squeeze himself into a cupboard.

"Mercy!" he moaned. "Hellup—hellup! Don't come near me! Mercy!"

"You silly idiots!" yelled Marmaduke, wondering whether he was on his head or his heels. "What's the matter with you? I—"

"There he is!"

It was a shout in the passage. Marmaduke turned his head and saw pursuers, and he fled again. He ran and dodged, extremely alarmed, and suddenly he ran into a strong pair of arms, which closed upon him and held him fast. He struggled and kicked wildly.

"Quiet, you young ass!" said the voice of Kildare. "What are you playing this silly game for, frightening the maids out of their wits?"

"Let me go!"

"If you don't keep still I shall hurt you!"

Marmaduke did not keep still. He fought like a wild-cat. Kildare pulled his ears, and reduced him to reason.

Mr. Kidd had started some of the senior boys hunting Marmaduke. The captain of St. Jim's had captured him. He was dragged into the light, and a considerable crowd collected round him. His appearance excited yells of laughter.

"What is it?" gasped Darrel.

"It's that new kid," Kildare said, shaking Marmaduke violently. "Smythe, how dare you play this silly trick! Answer me at once!"

"I don't know what you're talking about!" yelled Marmaduke. "I believe everybody in this silly school is gone mad. I won't stay here to be insulted. I've never been treated so in my life. Let me go, you cad!"

"How did you get into this state?"

"What state?"

"Don't you know the state your face is in?"

"You let my face alone. It's nothing to do with you."

Kildare's expression changed.

"I fancy he doesn't know what's the matter," he said. "Somebody must have fixed him up like this, though I don't see how it could be done without his knowing it."

"It's all right, Kildare," said Blake, who had just arrived on the spot. "He's been asleep in our study, and somebody painted him while he was snoozing."

The captain looked at him sternly.

"Your handiwork, Blake, I suppose?"

"No, Kildare, honour bright. It gave me an awful shock when I came in and found him looking at me over the top of a chair. I thought it was a giddy goblin."

Marmaduke was beginning to feel alarmed. Many personal remarks had been passed upon his face, and he wondered what was the matter with it. He twisted himself loose from Kildare's grip and rushed to the nearest glass. He staggered back in affright at what he saw reflected therein.

"I—I—I— Oh—oh—oh!"

"Cheer up, Marmy!" said Blake. "It's only somebody been painting you while you were asleep. Don't mind me smiling. This is where the laugh comes in."

"This is an outrage!" gasped Marmaduke. "I—I will have justice! I will complain! I will not stay in the school!"

"Eat! Go and get yourself clean!"

"You are a lot of beasts!" howled Marmaduke.

"Don't be a fool!" said Kildare sternly. "Go and get that paint cleaned off your face. It is a practical joke, that is all."

And the captain walked away. He went to the house-master's room and explained that Marmaduke had been a victim, and Mr. Kidd, who had carefully selected a nice, strong cane, put it away again.

It took Marmaduke some time to get all Kerr's handiwork off his features. He scrubbed at it in a fury, vowing vengeance the while. He had got an idea into his head that it was Blake who had painted him, and it was upon the leader of Study No. 6 that he vowed vengeance.

CHAPTER 5.

Marmaduke Bolts.

THE next day Marmaduke made his appearance in the Fourth Form. He was not in a good temper yet. He had refused to get out of bed when the rising-bell went, and had declared when Blake gave him a good-natured hint to get up that he was accustomed to rising at whatever hour he pleased, and did not intend to change his habits in that respect. He had suddenly decided to change them, however, when a sharp-tempered prefect came in with a cane and began to lash him through the bedclothes.

He had come downstairs sore and savage. The breakfast of the juniors was not much to his fastidious taste, and afterwards, having still a cavity to fill, he had gone to sample some of the eatables packed in his box.

He was munching contentedly while the rest of the Fourth marched into the Form-room, and a couple of boys were sent to hunt for him. They had some difficulty in persuading him to come with them, and finally marched him into the Form-room, holding him tight by the arms.

Mr. Lathom, the master of the Fourth Form, looked at him sternly as he came in between Mellish and Herries, a helpless prisoner.

"Where have you been, Smythe?"

"In the dormitory," growled Marmaduke.

"What have you been doing?"

"Eating."

"Eating, when you should have been in Form! What do you mean by this conduct?"

Mr. Lathom stared at Marmaduke through his spectacles as if he had been some strange animal. He didn't quite know what to make of the new boy. Marmaduke growled sullenly, but made no other reply.

"Do you not know when to appear in Form?" asked Mr. Lathom mildly. "Were you not told?"

"Yes."

"You should call me sir!"

"Sir!" snarled Marmaduke surlily.

"Then why did you not come when you should have done so?"

"I wanted something to eat. The grub here is beastly! Nothing like what I have been used to!" growled Marmaduke.

"Sir!" snapped Mr. Lathom, his eyes beginning to gleam behind his spectacles. He was a good-tempered little man, but Marmaduke was trying.

"Sir!" growled Marmaduke.

"I will excuse you, Smythe, as you are a new boy, and apparently unaccustomed to discipline and proper order," said Mr. Lathom; "but do not let it occur again. Take your place."

Marmaduke sat down on a form with a sullen brow. He listened as the lesson went on in mingled ill-temper and uncasiness. The Head had been unwilling to put a boy of his age in the Third, and he knew just enough to scrape into the Fourth. Dr. Holmes had explained things to Mr. Lathom, who was prepared to take a great deal of trouble for Marmaduke's sake. The difficulty was that Marmaduke himself wasn't prepared to take any.

He betrayed a hopeless ignorance when Mr. Lathom asked him the easiest questions. Mr. Lathom was trying to drive English history into the heads of the Fourth, never an easy task. He found Marmaduke the hardest subject of all. Marmaduke did not know the date of the Conquest, and had a very hazy idea as to whom William the Conqueror was, and he didn't want to know.

"I do not think you are paying attention, Smythe," said mild little Mr. Lathom, looking at Marmaduke through his spectacles. "In what year, please, did William the Conqueror land in England?"

"I don't know," said Marmaduke.

"I told you not five minutes ago."

"I've forgotten."

"What did I tell you to call me?"

"Sir, I believe."

"Then why didn't you do it?"

"DAILY MAIL."

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The British

"Forgot, sir!"

"You had better not forget again, or this pointer and the palm of your hand, Smythe, will make closer acquaintance. You are a most extraordinary boy, but I wish to be patient with you. Kindly tell me the date of the Conquest?"

"I don't know."

"You don't know—what?"

"The date of the Conquest," said Marmaduke, misunderstanding.

"You should say, 'I don't know, sir.'"

"I don't know, sir," said Marmaduke sullenly.

"It is clear that you have not been paying attention. You will write out fifty times, after preparation this evening, the following sentence, 'William the Conqueror landed in England in 1066.'"

"I shan't do anything of the kind!"

Mr. Lathom gasped for breath.

"Do I hear you aright?" he exclaimed. "What did you say, Smythe?"

"I said I shouldn't do anything of the kind!" said Marmaduke obstinately. "I'm not going to be ordered about. My father is Smythe, the millionaire. I didn't come here to write out lines. I think this history is all silly rot!"

"Most extraordinary!" gasped Mr. Lathom. "Extraordinary indeed!"

The whole Form were grinning.

"If we had that thing in our house we'd kill it!" Figgins whispered to Blake. "Showed extraordinary judgment of the doctor to stick it in the School House—extraordinary indeed, Blake!"

Blake grunted.

"I only wish I could kick it out into the New House," he muttered. "It was a shame to stick it with us. We don't own it."

"Silence, Blake! You must not whisper in class. Smythe, are you aware that you are guilty of the most unheard-of impudence to your master?"

Smythe made no reply but a grunt.

"Dear me!" said Mr. Lathom, taking off his spectacles and wiping them and putting them on again. "I hardly know how to deal with this boy. I have no alternative but to punish him. Step out here, Smythe."

Mr. Lathom took a business-like grip on his pointer. Marmaduke looked at Lathom, and looked at the pointer, and did not budge.

"Step out here, Smythe!" said the master of the Fourth, raising his voice.

"What for?"

"I am going to punish you."

"I'm not going to be punished! I—"

Mr. Lathom had a lot of patience, but it was exhausted now. He stepped over to Marmaduke, seized him by the collar, and jerked him out before the class.

"Hold out your hand!" he panted.

"Shan't!" said Marmaduke.

"You—you will really provoke me," said Mr. Lathom. "I have never had to deal with such an extraordinary boy before."

"Let me alone!" growled Marmaduke. "I'm not going to be bullied!"

"Hold out your hand!"

Marmaduke tucked both hands behind him. Mr. Lathom breathed hard. He really did not quite know how to deal with the new boy.

"Smythe, I do not obey me instantly I shall send you in to the Headmaster! I warn you that in that case your punishment will be doubly severe."

"I won't go!"

"Very well, Smythe. You have yourself to thank for this. I strongly object to punishing a boy if it can be helped; but you leave me no other method of dealing with you."

Mr. Lathom stepped to his desk, and hastily scribbled a note to the headmaster.

"Take that to the Head, Smythe. Blake, go with him, and show him the way."

Blake stepped out from his place. Marmaduke took the note, and seemed for a moment about to tear it up. He refrained, however, and followed Blake quietly from the room. Mr. Lathom wiped his fevered brow, and resumed the lesson in a very disturbed state of mind. Marmaduke was too much for the little man. Marmaduke followed Blake as far as the hall, and then suddenly darted out into the quadrangle through the open door. Blake was after him like a shot, and he gripped him by the shoulder and stopped him.

"Are you off your rocker, Smythe?" he exclaimed. "That isn't the way."

"Let me alone!"

"You've got to go to the Head."

"I am not going there!"

"But you must," said Blake patiently. "Mr. Lathom told you so."

"I shall not go! I refuse to obey Mr. Lathom or anybody else unless I like. I am not going to stay in this school. I intend to leave immediately. I have reason to believe that the letter I wrote to my father last night was intercepted here. I am going away. Take your hand from my shoulder, or I shall strike you!"

"Do you mean that you are going to run away?"

"Certainly! I do not desire to argue with you. Let me go!"

"Look here, Smythe," said Blake, striving to be patient, "don't be such a silly ass! You can't run away. If you did, you'd be caught and flogged. You can't even get out of the grounds, as the gates are closed now. Come along, and don't rot!"

"I refuse to come with you! Let me go!"

"Smythe, you're enough to tire out a giddy saint. Look here, Lathom isn't half a bad sort if you don't cheek him. If you went back to the Form-room now, and apologised, he would let you off going to the Head, I'm certain."

"I shall certainly not apologise. For the last time, will you release me, or shall I have to use violence?"

"Oh, I've stood enough of your rot!" exclaimed Blake, getting angry. "Mr. Lathom told me to take you to the Head, and you're going there. Come on!"

He took a strong grip on the back of Marmaduke's collar, and propelled him along. Marmaduke struggled fiercely, but he was helpless in Blake's hands. He kicked out backwards, and Blake caught a fearful whack on the shin. He hopped with pain, and then the new boy tore himself away. He ran swiftly towards the gates.

Blake hopped, clasping his injured shin. For a couple of minutes he was in intense pain, and forgot all about Marmaduke; but as the agony abated he looked after the runaway. The fugitive had found the gates closed, and was trying to climb them. He had just reached the top when Blake ran after him and gripped him by the legs.

"No, you don't!" said Blake.

It was for Marmaduke's own sake, more than anything else, that he wanted to stop him. He knew the kind of flogging that would follow an attempt to run away from school; and, of course, the runaway would have been soon captured. He hung on to Marmaduke, who kicked and wriggled in vain to get loose.

"Let me go!" he shouted. "You beastly coward, let me go!"

Blake pulled him down unceremoniously, caught him as he lost his hold, and twisted him round, and got a grip on his collar again. Taking care to keep out of the reach this time of his lashing heels, he ran him rapidly across the quad. Marmaduke was powerless to resist, and Blake ran him in right up to the door of the doctor's study. He knocked with his disengaged hand, and opened the door. The room was empty—the Head was taking the Sixth—so Blake twisted Marmaduke out of the room again, and propelled him towards the Sixth Form-room.

"Now, kid," he said persuasively, "as you're such a funny animal, I don't want to be hard on you. Will you go quietly?"

"No, I won't!" roared Marmaduke.

"If I have to run you in like this it may make it worse for you."

"I don't care! I won't go! I—I—"

"Oh, shut up! You've got to go!"

Blake knew where he would find the doctor. He ran Marmaduke along to the Sixth Form-room. The door was open, and he ran him right in.

Dr. Holmes was guiding the Sixth upon an interesting excursion among Greek roots, but he forgot all about Greek roots at the sight of Blake and his prisoner.

The Sixth turned as one man to stare at the juniors, and the doctor adjusted his gold-rimmed pince-nez, and fixed an awful glare upon them.

"Wh-wh-what does this mean?" he spluttered.

"If you please, sir, Mr. Lathom asked me to show Smythe the way to come to you, sir," said Blake meekly.

"Indeed! And what do you mean by bringing him in in this absurd manner?"

"He—he didn't trust to my guidance, sir," said Blake, who didn't wish to get Smythe into more trouble if he could help it. "He—he thought he knew best, sir."

"H'm! Very well; you may go, Blake."

Blake went out, heartily relieved to be rid of his charge. Most of the Sixth were grinning, for they saw more than the doctor about the state of the case.

"Now, my boy, what is it?" asked the doctor quietly.

"Why did Mr. Lathom send you to me?"

Marmaduke was inclined to follow Blake from the room. He wanted to bolt; but there was something in the doctor's face that stopped him.

"He told me to bring you this note, sir," he said sullenly. The doctor took the note and read it. His brow darkened ominously.

"H'm! Unparalleled impertinence! Quite unmanageable! Leave him in stronger hands. Extraordinary boy!" So much the Sixth heard the doctor mutter aloud as he read the note. "Smythe, this is a serious matter. Go to your room now, and come to my study after morning school."

The doctor turned to the Sixth again. Marmaduke sullenly left the room.

"By Jove," murmured Monteith, the head prefect of the New House, "the School House have a handful in that kid, and no mistake! If he was in my house I'd teach him something. I congratulate you on your latest acquisition, Kildare!"

Kildare smiled.

"We will now resume," said the doctor. And the Sixth started again on their hunt among Greek roots, and forgot the existence of Marmaduke.

Meanwhile, Marmaduke was busy. He had gone to his room, as the doctor bade him, but he had no intention of obeying further. He knew what to expect if he kept that appointment with the Head in his study; so he only stopped to put on a cap and a coat, and then left the building.

There was no one to stop him now. He went straight to the gates and climbed over. Just as he put his leg over the top, there was a shout in the quadrangle.

"Hi, there! Come down, you young hump!"

It was Taggles, the porter; but Marmaduke took no notice. He scrambled over the gate, and in a minute more he was running down the road towards Rylcombe.

CHAPTER 6.

A Hot Chase.

M R. LATHOM glanced at the clock, and gave the welcome signal to dismiss—welcome to the Form, and welcome to himself. The Fourth were always troublesome, and Marmaduke had tired the little man out. Gladly enough the juniors poured out into the quadrangle, bright with the spring sunshine.

"I wonder where that queer merchant is!" Blake remarked. "He must have caught a hot and strong from the Head. It served him right, but I feel sorry for him if Doctor Holmes put his beef into it. He can hit. The silly ass wanted to run away, but I stopped him for his own good."

"Run away!" ejaculated Herries. "That's a bit thick, isn't it? It would have meant a flogging at the least."

"Yes, and Marmy has cause to thank me; though I fancy he doesn't feel very grateful," said Blake, with a laugh. "But he didn't come back to the class-room. He may have done a bolt, after all."

Marmaduke did not appear at dinner. The boys wondered what had become of him. Percy Mellish opined that the doctor had had him shut up in a dark room by way of punishment. Blake scouted the idea, but had no explanation to offer.

A little later Kildare came up to the chums with a serious expression on his face.

"Have any of you seen the new boy, Smythe?"

"No," said Blake; "we were just wondering what had become of the bouncer."

"He was told to go to the Head's study after morning school, but he has not appeared. Dr. Holmes has asked me to send him, but I can't find him anywhere."

Blake whistled.

"By Jove, he's done a bunk, and no mistake!"

Kildare stared at the junior.

"Do you mean that he has run away from school, Blake?"

"I believe so. He wanted to this morning, when I was taking him to the Head. He wanted a lot of persuading before he'd come."

Kildare looked worried, and went off in search of further information. When Taggles, the porter, learned what was the matter, he volunteered the information that he had seen a boy climbing over the gate. Further inquiry placed it beyond doubt that the boy in question was Marmaduke Smythe. There could be no doubt that Marmaduke had run away from school, and the captain went to the Head to report his discovery.

Dr. Holmes's brows contracted with anger as he listened. "Run away!" he exclaimed. "Bless my soul! Then he must have climbed over the gates. Really, I should have had a watch set upon him. Call Mr. Kidd, please."

The housemaster soon came, looking very disturbed.

"The boy really seems to be gone," he exclaimed. "I have looked for him everywhere. I should never have dreamed that he would have such hardihood. He uttered a threat to the effect that he would run away, I remember, when I cabled him yesterday."

"He evidently fled to escape the punishment for his insolence to Mr. Lathom," said the Head, frowning. "Of

course, he must be found and brought back. I suppose he is certain to make for Rylcombe to take the train to London."

"Undoubtedly," said the housemaster. "Fortunately, there is only one train after nine in the morning, and it does not go till four o'clock." He looked at his watch. "It is now nearly half-past one. If Smythe has been waiting, he has still two and a half hours to wait, so we have ample time to find him and bring him back."

"That is very fortunate," said the doctor. "Will you go down to the station, Mr. Kidd, and see to bringing the runaway back?"

"Certainly; I will take a couple of boys with me, in case the foolish lad should bolt when he sees me. It is very likely to happen, and I could hardly chase a runaway boy at top speed through the streets of Rylcombe."

The doctor smiled.

"No; that would hardly be dignified. Take Kildare and Blake."

"Yes; I was thinking of them."

Blake whistled expressively when he learned what was wanted of him. He would rather have chased a runaway any day than gone in to afternoon school; but he had so often broken the rules himself that he was doubtful whether he ought to take a hand in recapturing the new boy.

"It's for his own sake, Blake," said Kildare, who easily read the junior's thoughts. "He will be caught anyway, and the sooner the better for him. The more trouble he gives, the more he will suffer for it when he is brought back to St. Jim's."

"Right-ho!" said Blake. "I'm on!"

So the housemaster drove down to the village in the doctor's trap, with Kildare and Blake. Mr. Kidd and Kildare were both grave, but Blake was cheerful enough. It was a pleasant excursion to him, and a drive in the sunny spring afternoon beat lessons in the class-room hollow, in his opinion.

The trap stopped at the station, and Mr. Kidd alighted and inquired if a boy had taken a ticket for London that morning. The booking-office was closed, but the porters roused from a nap on his trolley, was able to give the required information. He grinned as he gave it; evidently he knew Marmaduke again, and found him amusing.

"Yes," he said; "the young gent took a ticket, and didn't he carry on when he found there wasn't a train till four o'clock! Wanted a special, he did! Fact, sir, wanted a blooming special put on for him! He's still on the platform, waiting."

"Thank you!" said Mr. Kidd. "The boy has left the school without permission, and I am here to take him back."

He spoke a word to Kildare, and went on the platform. Rylcombe was a country station, and the platform was bordered by a bank of flowers, with a slight fence at the top, on the other side of which was the country road. Kildare and Blake waited in the road in case Marmaduke should bolt over the fence. The housemaster could scarcely follow him if he did, dignity being a consideration.

Mr. Kidd glanced up and down the platform. Yes; there was Marmaduke, with a black expression of face, munching chocolates he had extracted from an automatic machine. He looked up and saw Mr. Kidd, and dropped the chocolates.

He was prepared. He knew that the long wait for the train would give time for his flight to be discovered and for pursuit to be made. He was ready to bolt, and, as Mr. Kidd strode towards him, he scrambled up the bank beside the platform.

"Come back!" cried Mr. Kidd.

"Shan't!" retorted the polite Marmaduke.

"You shall be severely flogged!"

"Yah! I'm not going back to that rotten school!"

"Come here, instantly!"

Marmaduke did not deign to reply further. He had reached the fence, and was clambering over it into the road. Mr. Kidd did not follow him. He turned and walked out of the station, having no doubt that Kildare would stop the fugitive in the road.

Kildare and Blake were watching the fence. As Marmaduke jumped down into the road they ran towards him. Marmaduke gave a gasp of alarm and turned to flee. Kildare reached him and gripped the collar of his jacket.

"Stop, you little fool!" he exclaimed sternly.

"Shan't!" panted Marmaduke.

With really remarkable agility he slipped out of the jacket and fled, Blake's tackle just missing. Kildare was left with an Eton jacket in his hand. Marmaduke sprinted down the road and into the village street like a hunted deer.

"After him, Blake!" cried Kildare.

"Trust me," said Blake cheerfully. And he was on Marmaduke's track like lightning. Mr. Kidd came out of the station and joined Kildare.

"What! You have not caught him?"

"He cannot get away from Blake, sir."
"No; that is not likely to happen. But it is very unfortunate. This is creating quite a disturbance," said the housemaster, frowning.

It was indeed. Nothing ever happened at Rylcombe. The inhabitants were unaccustomed to anything happening. Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife, they kept the noiseless tenor of their way, to quote the poet's words. Therefore, the sight of a boy in his shirt-sleeves, red with wrath and gasping with terror, hotly pursued by another lad, awoke the interest of the whole village. The inhabitants evinced a deep interest in the chase, and, a plausible explanation of the phenomenon having dawned upon their slow minds, they began to lustily shout:

"Stop thief!"
Right through the village went the chase.
"Stop thief!"
"Stop thief!"

Marmaduke ran as if fear had given him wings. Several of the Rylcombe people, with a laudable desire to see justice done upon the supposed thief, joined in the chase. There was soon an excited mob at the heels of Marmaduke. Blake kept well ahead of them. He could not run so fast as usual, because he could not stop laughing; but he kept pace with the fugitive, and gained upon him.

"Stop thief!"
The yell behind him added to Marmaduke's terror. He ran like one possessed. Suddenly a rural youth came bolting out of the Green Man, and planted himself in Marmaduke's path.

"O've got 'un!" he shouted triumphantly.
Marmaduke lowered his head, eluded the rural youth's tackle, and butted him in the stomach. The youth gave a gasp and rolled over. Marmaduke rushed on, but the concussion had made his head reel, and he had lost his stride. Blake reached him and gripped him by the collar.
"Stop, you giddy lunatic!"

Marmaduke sprang at him like a wild cat, and Blake, breathless, staggered back from the savage onslaught. Marmaduke tore himself loose and sprang away; but he had escaped from the frying-pan into the fire—for the villagers were now upon him, and, firmly convinced that he was a thief, they did not handle him gently.

"Got him!"
"Hold him! He's bolting me!"
"Duck him in the horse-pond!"
"Here, I say!" gasped Blake. "Hold on! I—"
They took no notice of him. Marmaduke was struggling and kicking and biting. The chase had ended close to the horse-pond. They dragged Marmaduke to it and hurled him headlong in. With a mighty splash he disappeared into the none too clean water.

He came up gasping, and stood in the middle of the pond, which came to about his waist, drenched, dirty, and shivering. Hoots and yells of laughter greeted him.

"How do 'ee like your bath?"
"Yah-thief!"
"Here, I say," said Blake, pushing forward. "Let him alone, people. He ain't a thief."

"Not a thief!"
"No!"
"Then wot was you roonin' after 'un for?"
"He's run away from school, and I've got to take him back."

"I won't go back!" yelled Marmaduke.
The sympathy of the crowd veered round as soon as they knew the facts. Their anger found a new object, and that object was Blake. Hands helped the soaked Marmaduke from the pond, and several voices suggested flinging Blake in his place. Fortunately, Mr. Kidd and Kildare arrived upon the scene just then.

"Dear me!" panted the housemaster. "I am glad you have caught him. What a dreadful state he is in!"
Hoots from the villagers greeted the housemaster.
"Let the youngster alone!"
"Yah! Haven't you been feeding the pore boy?"
"He's bin a-using him cruel, Garge; I can see it in his eye."

"Let the boy alone!"
"Don't let him take 'un away!"
Mr. Kidd took no notice of the free comments of the Rylcombe folk; but, with a heightened colour, gripped Marmaduke by the arm and led him away. Some of the villagers looked inclined to interfere and effect a rescue, but neither the athletic housemaster nor the stalwart captain of St. Jim's looked an easy customer to tackle, so they thought better of it. They followed the procession of captors and captive back to the station with hoots and derisive howls.

Glad was Mr. Kidd when he reached the trap and bundled Marmaduke into it. The prisoner was not tamed yet, and

Kildare had to hold him while the housemaster took the reins and drove off. A yell followed the trap, and two or three stones.

"My hat!" said Blake. "That has been rather exciting."
"I won't go back!" roared Marmaduke.
"Your mistake," said Blake serenely. "You're going. If you don't keep still I shall sit on you."
And as Marmaduke did not keep still, Blake kept his word, and he sat on the captive until the trap rolled in at the gates of St. Jim's.

CHAPTER 7.

Marmaduke's Revenge!

WHEN Marmaduke reappeared in Study No. 6 after his recapture—and what followed it—he was looking as if he found life not worth living. Dr. Holmes was not a severe man, and he never punished a boy if it could be helped. But there was no other way of dealing with Marmaduke. And the runaway had received a flogging which had opened his eyes in many ways.

He had never had a real punishment in his life before, and this, his first experience, was an extremely painful one to him. After the Head had finished, he crawled away to the dormitory, and lay there on his bed for a long time wriggling with pain and muttering vengeance. He reappeared in Study No. 6 while the chums were at prep., and he was very subdued.

He gave Blake a look of hatred, which the chief of Study No. 6 affected not to notice. He did not despair yet of getting on better terms with Marmaduke, for he was very patient. He offered to help the new boy with his preparation, and was met with a snarl; so he gave up the attempt, and left Marmaduke to his own devices. His opinion of the new boy was that he was a fool and an ill-tempered one, but he had no suspicion of the deep rancour that was harboured in the breast of the spoiled son of the millionaire.

Marmaduke regarded Blake as the cause of his recapture and other of his misfortunes, and he had grown to hate him bitterly. His muttered threats of vengeance Blake regarded as so much wind; but Marmaduke meant them, every word. His misadventures at St. Jim's roused him to a fury of passionate spite of which the healthy, sensible Blake had no conception.

Marmaduke was still very silent and savage when the juniors went to bed. Blake tumbled into bed in the Fourth Form dormitory, and forgot all about Marmaduke in baby slumber. But Marmaduke did not forget. He lay awake, his eyes glinting in the darkness like those of a rat, and savage thoughts of revenge in his mind, savage feelings in his untrained heart.

When all was still and silent he crept out of bed. His eyes were glittering; the lapse of hours had made no difference to his rancour, and he was not given to reflecting upon the consequences of his actions. He was determined to be revenged upon Blake, and he had learned that he was a child in Blake's hands in a fair struggle. And so he had resorted naturally to the cunning of a weak and cowardly nature for his vengeance.

He had smuggled a thick, flexible cane into the dormitory, and hidden it in his bed. He drew it out now, and stole towards Blake's bed, a savage determination in his face. He stopped beside the bed, and lifted the walking-cane with both hands high in the air. Blake was sleeping calmly, unconscious of danger.

Crack! Down came the cane, with all Marmaduke's strength behind it, across the sleeper's shoulders. Blake started up with a yell. And as he did so down came the weapon again with a spiteful slash, and this time it caught him on the left shoulder, almost paralysing his arm.

Blake's yell had roused the dormitory. The juniors were sitting up in bed, calling out to know what was the matter. Marmaduke was by no means finished yet; but Blake, quick to recover his presence of mind, utterly startled as he was, twisted out of bed with the agility of an eel, and Marmaduke's third blow fell on the bedclothes.

"What is it, there?" shouted Herries.
"Hanged if I know!" said Blake, groaning slightly as he rubbed his injured shoulder. "Some chap gone off his rocker, I fancy."

Boys were bundling out of bed now. Candle-ends were lighted, and Marmaduke was revealed, still grasping the heavy walking-cane, and glowering savagely at Blake across the bed.

"It's Smythe!"
"The new kid!"
"What has he done?"
"Never mind," said Jack, striving to suppress the groan of pain that rose to his lips. "I fancy he's wrong in the head. Let him alone."

Herries was at his chum's side in a moment. He looked at the mark of the blow on Blake's shoulder, and his brow became black with rage.

"He struck you like that when you were asleep? The beast! The cowardly cad! Get hold of him, chaps!"

There was a rush of the indignant juniors at Marmaduke. He brandished the cane.

"Keep off, or I'll brain you—"

They were not likely to keep off. Two or three of them got fearful slashes from the cane, and hopped with agony. Then Marmaduke went down on the floor with a heap of angry humanity on top of him.

"Got him!" panted Herries. "Got the beast! Hold him tight, chaps! Get out of the way, Blake! He's going to answer for what he's done."

Marmaduke was dragged up in the grip of many hands. He was a good deal frightened now, as well as furious.

"Let me go, you beast!" he panted.

"Yes, we'll let you go when we've finished with you," said Herries grimly. "What kind of a cur do you call yourself, to hit a chap when he's asleep? You're not going to sleep in this dormitory again. Chaps, he isn't safe. Bring him along, and we'll shove him into the box-room for the rest of the night."

"I won't go!"

"I give you one minute to get into your clothes."

Marmaduke thought he had better obey that order. The night was a cold one, and the box-room was likely to be chilly, and the juniors were evidently in earnest. He dressed rapidly.

"It's no good hitting him," said Herries. "He's been flogged to-day, and it hasn't done the brute any good. The box-room will suit him all."

"I say—" began Blake.

"Shut up!" said Herries. "You're dead in this act. Do you think we're going to have such a dangerous bouncer in here with us?"

"He'll rouse the house."

"Let him! Then he can explain what he's turned out for."

"Look here, he'd get expelled if the Head knew, and—" "All the better. Bring him along, kids. Show a light, Mellish."

Percy Mellish led the way with a candle. After him went Herries and several fellows, with Marmaduke tight in their grip. Marmaduke struggled once, but only once. For Herries carried the cane used on Blake. And he used it on Marmaduke with vigour to keep him quiet, so the captive soon gave it up. Dark and chilly was the box-room.

"I won't go in there!" whimpered Marmaduke.

"Won't you? You'll see, you pig!"

Mellish stood aside and held up the light. The juniors gave Marmaduke a swing, and sent him flying into the box-room. He landed there on his hands and knees, and Herries quickly closed the door and locked it on the outside.

"There, that's settled him!" he said, with a great deal of satisfaction. "When he's found in the morning he can explain."

Marmaduke started hammering on the door from within. Taking no notice of the noise, the Fourth Formers returned to their dormitory, and to bed. Herries looked at Blake's injuries anxiously. There was a deep mark across his back, and a terrible bruise on his shoulder.

"You ought to have that seen to," said Herries uneasily.

"Rats!" said Blake. "It hurts, but that's all. I've bathed it in cold water. I shall have a stiff arm to-morrow, I expect."

"I expect you will, and for a week to come. That brute ought to be expelled!"

"I think he would be if the Head got to know the facts," remarked Blake. "I never dreamed that he was such a spiteful beast. I hope he'll have sense enough to keep quiet and not wake up any of the masters, or it's all bound to come out. You can let him out of the box-room when the rising-bell goes."

"Yes, I suppose we mustn't give the brute away," said Herries reluctantly; "it wouldn't be cricket. But I'd like to get rid of him."

Blake had little more sleep that night. He was in severe pain, though he had said little about it. He was awake, and looking somewhat white and worn, when the rising-bell went. He tumbled out of bed. He gave a gasp as he did so; his arm was very painful, and the movement sent a twinge right through him.

"Up with you, Herries, old man! Go and get that kid out of the box-room."

Herries grumbled as he turned out of bed.

"All right! Lucky for him he had sense enough to keep quiet," he growled. "I hoped he'd wake the house and get found there."

Blake laughed.

"Neyer mind. Go and let him out."

Herries hurried down the corridor to the box-room. He uttered a sharp exclamation as he saw that the door stood open. He gave a quick glance within; it was unnecessary, for Marmaduke was not there. He hastened back to the dormitory with the news. Blake looked very serious.

"He couldn't have got out," he said. "Somebody must have gone to the box-room early, and then he was found there. There'll be a row."

"He may have held his tongue," said Mellish.

"He'd have to give some explanation. I wonder where he is now? Well, it's his own fault; he's only got himself to thank, whatever happens," said Blake philosophically.

When the juniors went down they soon saw that there was thunder in the air. Nothing was said till after breakfast, though Mr. Kidd's face was very sombre, and he gave the Fourth a peculiar look when they came in.

When they went into the class-room for first lesson, the housemaster entered, and then the Fourth knew that it was coming. The School House juniors were prepared for it; but the New House boys, who knew nothing of the happenings of the night, wondered what was the matter.

"Before commencing the work of the day," said Mr. Kidd, "there is a matter that must be seen into. A most unparalleled outrage occurred in the School House last night. A boy was expelled forcibly from the Fourth dormitory, and locked up to pass the night in the box-room. There he was found by Taggles, who had occasion to go to the room at an early hour."

Figgins gave a low whistle.

"Hallo! Some of your little games, Blake?" he whispered.

Blake grunted.

"Smythe"—Marmaduke had followed the housemaster in—"point out the boys who were concerned in that outrage."

"Blake, and Herries, and Mellish," said Marmaduke, "and that boy, and that!" He pointed them out. "I can't remember the others, but they were nearly all in it."

"Great pip!" murmured Figgins. "The howling sneak!"

"Blake, Herries, Mellish, stand out here!"

The three boys named came out before the class.

"Do you admit the truth of Smythe's statement?"

"Yes, sir!"

Blake and Herries replied together; Mellish was silent.

Mr. Kidd's eyes flashed with anger.

"You locked this boy up in the box-room, to pass the night in that cold, dark place?"

"I did, sir!" said Herries. "Shut up Blake! Blake was against it, sir."

"Indeed!" said Mr. Kidd. "And you and Mellish—"

"Mellish only held the light. I did it. It was my idea entirely."

"You may go back to your seat, Mellish."

Gladly enough Percy obeyed. He was not of the stuff that heroes are made of, and he never could stand a caning.

"And now, Herries, explain why you committed this inexcusable outrage."

Herries was silent. Marmaduke had "sneaked" without the slightest compunction, but Herries was a different kind of boy. If the facts were told, Marmaduke could hardly escape expulsion from the school, and that was serious.

"You do not speak, Herries. Am I to understand that you had no reason for this action, and that it was simply a wicked, practical joke on a new boy?"

"No, sir; it wasn't that."

"Then you had some other reason?"

"Yes, sir," said Herries slowly.

"Well, I am waiting for you to tell me what it is."

Herries looked at Blake, and then at the floor, and remained silent.

"Herries"—Mr. Kidd's tone was dangerous—"have you nothing to say?"

"The fellow was such a howling, rotten cad, sir!" said Herries at last.

"I am aware," said the housemaster, "that Smythe is in some respects a peculiar boy, and has given his Form-fellows reason to resent his conduct, but that cannot excuse such a barbarous action as shutting him up in the box-room for a whole night. Have you nothing to say in extenuation of your action, Herries?"

The whole Form was breathless. Herries's lips moved for a moment, but he did not speak.

"Very well," said Mr. Kidd coldly; "you say nothing, so I can only conclude that you have nothing to say. I shall take you before the doctor. If you escape with a flogging, you may consider yourself fortunate. You may be expelled."

Herries gave a start. A sort of shudder ran through the whole Form at that terrible word. Jack Blake's face flushed. He felt that he must speak.

"Herries had a jolly good reason, sir," he exclaimed; "and we were all in it as much as he was! That chap is a



"Good-bye, dearest Tommy!" said Miss Priscilla. "Mind and not forget the hot-water bottle on cold nights." An amusing incident in "TOM MERRY'S SCHOOL DAYS," the Long, Complete School and Adventure Tale in No. 3 of "THE BEM" Library, Price One Halfpenny.

dangerous beast, and that's why we shut him up in the box-room!"

Mr. Kidd was keen enough to see that the juniors were keeping something back from a sense of schoolboy honour. He turned to the grinning Marmaduke, who was in high good-humour at the prospect of a severe punishment falling upon those he regarded as his persecutors.

"Smythe, you have told me that you were dragged to the box-room and shut up there by the boys of the Fourth. Had you done anything to provoke them?"

Marmaduke's grin vanished, and he looked uneasy.

"Tell me the whole truth!" exclaimed the housemaster sternly. "We are wasting time. What happened before you were taken to the box-room?"

It was of no use telling a lie when half the Form knew the facts, and were ready to contradict one. Marmaduke tried to brazen it out.

"I had punished that boy for his insolence!" he exclaimed, pointing to Blake. "He has made himself very disagreeable to me, and—"

"You punished him? Do you mean that you fought with him?" demanded Mr. Kidd incredulously. "I cannot imagine you hurting him much."

And the Form grinned at the idea of the pasty-faced heir of millions hurting the champion athlete of the School House in a fight.

"N-no," mumbled Marmaduke; "I did not fight him. Fighting is—er—low!"

"Oh! And what did you do, then? Come, out with it!"

"I chastised him with a cane."

Mr. Kidd looked angrily incredulous.

"Don't be a fool, boy! Do you ask me to believe that Blake allowed you to chastise him with a cane? Tell me the truth!"

"I have told you the truth!" said Marmaduke sulkily.

The bewildered housemaster turned to Blake.

"What does this mean, Blake? Did he beat you with a cane, as he says?"

"Yes, sir!"

"There is something here I cannot understand. How did you come to allow him to do it? I do not believe you are the kind of boy to take a thrashing, and then revenge yourself in such a cowardly way as by shutting your enemy up in a dark, cold room for a whole night."

"I—I was asleep when he went for me, sir!" said Blake reluctantly.

It was out now. Mr. Kidd's face changed. He understood, and his face was like thunder.

"So that is the truth, Smythe? You attacked Blake with a cane while he was asleep?"

Marmaduke was sulkily silent.

"Was that why you shut him up in the box-room, Herries?"

"Yes, sir. The brute isn't safe!"

"This is a serious matter," cried Mr. Kidd, "more serious than you seem to understand! I am very glad I have got to the bottom of it. I have never heard of such a cowardly, un-English piece of brutality! You have provoked me in many ways, Smythe, but I have tried to overlook it on account of your peculiar upbringing. This cannot be overlooked. I am afraid you must leave the school. Come with me."

He marched Marmaduke off with a grip on his collar.

"Resume your places, my boys," said Mr. Lathom. "We have lost some time, and we must make the most of what is left."

The belated lesson commenced, but less attention than usual was given to it. The boys were wondering what was to happen to Marmaduke. Was he, indeed, to be expelled?

"Jolly nice thing if he is!" muttered Figgins. "He'd be a disgrace to any school. You get a nice lot of wasters in your house; don't you, Blake?"

"I wish you had him!" snapped Blake.

Figgins grinned.

"Oh, we never get anything like that in the New House, kid! The Head knows where they ought to be, and he shoves all the funny animals like that into the School House. Quite right and proper, too."

"I should think so," said Kerr. "It's no good grumbling, Blake. You've got such a lot of funny specimens in the School House that one more won't make much difference."

Blake breathed hard. It was, indeed, hard lines that the School House should have been burdened with the most howling cad that had ever come to St. Jim's. If only he could have been shifted into the New House! What a crushing blow for the rival juniors! What a come-down for Figgins & Co.! As the thought came into Blake's mind his eyes flashed. What if it could be done!

CHAPTER 8.

A Change for Marmaduke.

"YOU are wanted in the headmaster's study, Blake."

Blake rose from the form. He made his way to the study of Dr. Holmes still with that peculiar gleam in his eyes which indicated that an idea was working in his brain. He found the doctor alone. Marmaduke had been locked up in a room, after Mr. Kidd had explained matters to the Head, while his fate was deliberated upon.

"You sent for me, sir?" said Blake.

"Yes, Blake. I have heard a most astounding story. I could never have believed that a boy could be guilty of such a brutal and cowardly action. I wish you to tell me exactly what occurred last night in the dormitory. There is no use in keeping anything back now," he added kindly, "as I know the whole story."

Blake understood that, and so he explained concisely what had happened.

"Let me see your shoulder, please."

Blake hesitated, and turned red.

"It's nothing, sir; only a mark, and—"

"Let me see it at once, Blake!"

There was no help for it. Dr. Holmes's brow darkened ominously at the sight of the terrible black bruise.

"That will do, Blake. It was manly and kind of you to wish to say nothing about it, but a matter like this cannot be passed over."

Blake replaced his jacket, and then stood hesitating.

"You may go," said the doctor.

"May I say—say a word, sir?" stammered Blake.

"Certainly! What do you wish to say to me?"

"I hope you won't expel Smythe, sir."

"That is a very peculiar wish for you, of all boys here, to express," said the doctor. "Why do you wish him not to be expelled, Blake?"

"Because he doesn't understand what it means to him, sir. He didn't know what he was doing, really; and didn't know how serious it was. I know he's a beast, but it's partly because—because he can't help it!"

Dr. Holmes smiled faintly.

"I see. Then you desire him to remain?"

"No, that I don't!" said Blake promptly. "I mean, it isn't a question of what I want. He may never have had a chance to grow up anything but a howling cad, sir; and I would stick to him all his life if he were expelled, though he can't understand that now."

"I am glad to hear you speak like this, Blake. It shows a thoughtfulness very commendable in one so young," Blake blushed scarlet. "I will consider. But have you forgotten that, this boy having taken so violent a dislike to you, you will hardly be safe in his presence when off your guard?"

"No, sir; but that could be arranged, sir. He could be shifted into the other house, and then I shouldn't have anything to do with him."

The doctor's expression brightened a little. He had a keen desire not to fail with Marmaduke; not to send him home as big a cad and snob as when he first came to St. Jim's.

Blake's suggestion was a way out of the difficulty he had not thought of. A sound thrashing and a good talking to might have some effect even upon the dull, obstinate heir of millions; and then he might make a fresh start in the New

House, and have a chance of turning over a new leaf amid new associations.

Blake's heart thumped a little as he waited for the doctor to speak. His concern for Marmaduke was really genuine, but he had not been able to refrain from using this chance of getting his own back on Figgins & Co. Would the doctor adopt the suggestion? What a surprise for Figgins to have Marmaduke, with his charming ways, sent into the New House!

"That is a very sensible suggestion, Blake," said the doctor. "Thank you! I will think over it. You may go."

Blake left the study and went back to the Form-room. A good many curious glances were thrown towards him. He sat down near Figgins, who whispered to him, as soon as Mr. Lathom's back was turned:

"What's the verdict, Blake? Is the rotter to be fired out?"

"I think not, Figgy."

"You don't mean to say they're going to let him stay after that? Well, my word, it's hard lines, even on that rotten menagerie of yours they call a house."

"Oh, that's all right!" said Blake serenely. "He's not going to stay in the School House."

Figgins stared at him.

"What do you mean? Are they going to build a special hutch for him?"

"No. I fancy he's going to be transferred to the New House."

"He's going to be whatted? Don't talk rot?"

"All right, my son, wait and see; and don't get excited."

"Look here, Blake, are you rotting? Tell the truth, now, like a good chap."

"I always do, honour bright," said Blake solemnly. "I believe he's going to be put into the New House to make a fresh start."

"I—I won't stand it!" said Figgins wildly. "That bounder, that utter mongrel, in the New House! I won't have it! I—"

"Figgins"—Mr. Lathom was glaring at the excited junior through his spectacles—"how dare you talk in class? Take fifty lines!"

Figgins subsided into silence; but presently he turned to Blake again, with a fierce whisper:

"This is your doing, you beast!"

Blake grinned gleefully.

"Well, I had a hand in it," he admitted cheerfully. "You see, we've no use for such a rank outsider in the School House; and, as Kerr remarked, among a lot of horrid bouncers one more won't be noticed much. You're welcome to him!"

"Blake, you are talking now. Take fifty lines."

"Certainly, sir," said Blake, cheerful as ever. "I'd take fifty thousand, if it was necessary, to get Marmaduke shifted into the New House."

He said that to himself, of course, not to Mr. Lathom.

When the Form was dismissed, Blake went out in high spirits; but Figgins was furious and alarmed. He confided the threatening peril to the Co., and Kerr and Wynn were equally furious; but they realised that they were helpless.

Wynn, indeed, suggested that somebody should go to the Head and protest against Smythe being transferred; but when he was asked if he would be that somebody he modestly declined. The juniors were powerless. They could only wait in terrible suspense.

The whole house was soon aware of the danger. It became known that Mr. Ratcliff, the master of the New House, had gone to see the Head. That increased the general uneasiness.

"He's gone to arrange about taking in that outsider," groaned Figgins.

"He oughtn't to do it!" exclaimed Fatty Wynn.

"Oh, he doesn't care," said Figgins savagely. "He'd have the brute in all the more if he knew how we hated the idea. He doesn't like us."

"Queer taste that of his," murmured Kerr. "When we're such nice chaps, too."

"Oh, don't you try to be funny, now!" snapped Figgins.

"We've crowded over the School House for all we're worth ever since they had that thing on their side, and now to have it planked down on us—well, it's simply sickening!"

"And we can't kill it," said Wynn. "If they'd let us kill it and bury it quietly somewhere, I wouldn't mind. But it can't be true."

"It is true. I could see it in Blake's eye."

"Well, we're not going to stand it."

It was easy to say that, but they knew they could do nothing. When Mr. Ratcliff returned to his own house, the juniors watched for him eagerly. A pasty-faced, sullen youth was at his heels, and a general groan announced that Marmaduke had arrived.

"Ah, Monticeth!" said Mr. Ratcliff, meeting the head prefect of the New House in the hall. "This boy, Marmaduke

CHAPTER 9.

More Misadventures for Marmaduke.

Smythe is coming into our house. The doctor has asked me to take charge of him. You will see that he is assigned a place in one of the Fourth Form studies."

"Certainly sir," said Monteith. Mr. Ratcliff walked away, and left the sullen Marmaduke in the prefect's hands.

Monteith looked thoughtful. His gaze fell upon Figgins, who was positively trembling. He knew how Monteith disliked him, and he feared the worst. It was bad enough to have Smythe in the house. But suppose Monteith were to put him into Figgins's own study! And he was quite capable of doing it, from mere spite.

Monteith smiled grimly as his glance met Figgins's. "Let me see, Figgins," he said, with an air of reflection, "I think there are only three of you in your study, aren't there?"

"It's a small study, Monteith," said Figgins eagerly. "So small that—"

"Most of the Fourth go four in a study. You are only three, are you not?"

"Yes; but, you see, Monteith, we—that is, I—"

"Smythe will go into your study, Figgins. Show him where it is, and help him carry his things from the School House."

"I'll be blown if I do!" muttered Figgins, bursting with wrath.

"What did you say, Figgins?"

"I—I said it's a jolly fine time of year for this sort of weather, ain't it?" stammered Figgins.

Monteith walked away. Figgins & Co. looked at each other with feelings too deep for words. Marmaduke scowled at them.

"Well, are you going to show me where that room is, Wiggins, or Higgins, or whatever you are?" he exclaimed impatiently.

"Hold me back!" murmured Figgins. "If I start on him I shan't leave a spot of grease to tell the tale."

"I am waiting," said Marmaduke.

"We mustn't keep him waiting, the cherub," said Kerr.

"Let us show the dear boy to his quarters, kind school-mates."

Figgins & Co. were wild. They would gladly have impaled Mr. Ratcliff and scalped Monteith. Unfortunately, house-master and prefect were beyond their vengeance. But Marmaduke wasn't. They seized him and lifted him, taking him by the arms and legs, and carried him thus upstairs. When he wriggled they bumped his head on the banisters, which induced him to keep still. They marched him into their study and dropped him on the floor.

"Now," said Figgins, as Marmaduke rose to his feet, considerably ruffled, "listen to me."

"I won't, I'll—"

"Pin him, chaps!" said Figgins savagely.

Kerr and Wynn pinned the glowering Marmaduke, one on each side.

"Now listen to me," said Figgins, shaking a threatening forefinger at him. "You've got to learn some sense. You've been kicked out of the School House, and they've had the cheek to shove you into the New House. You'll disgrace us if we let you. Mind, you've got to turn over a new leaf."

Marmaduke scowled savagely, but did not speak.

"You've got to drop your silly airs," continued Figgins, "and stop talking about your father's money. You've got to behave as if you were a decent human being, and not a silly, conceited monkey! Do you understand?"

"I'll make you smart for this, you beasts!"

"It's no good talking to him," said Kerr, in disgust.

"We'll pass the word round to the chaps, and we'll all take a hand in educating him. Whenever he plays the giddy ox, the nearest chap is to knock him down. Is that a good idea?"

"Jolly good!" said Figgins, with prompt approval. "You do say sensible things at times, Kerr, though one wouldn't guess it by your looks. That's the ticket. You understand, Smythe? Every time you start your funny ways you get flogged!"

Marmaduke growled, and the chums let him go. They were angry and disgusted, but fully determined to carry out Kerr's brilliant suggestion. Blake had prophesied a high old time for Marmaduke when he got into the New House. It really looked as if that prophecy would be fulfilled.

Over in the School House Blake and Herries were executing a war-dance expressive of the most unbounded satisfaction. Their delight was shared by all the School House juniors.

"Figgins wasn't up to that," grinned Blake. "We caught him napping that time; and I think the present we've made him is a full payment for the little favours he's done us lately. What?"

"What ho!" said Herries. "This is where we smile. Hear us smile!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the whole School House heard them smile.

MARMADUKE had met with nothing but misadventures in the School House. He had found life hardly worth living there. But he soon found that, uncomfortable as his late quarters had been, they were far preferable to the New House.

The New House juniors did not mean to stand any nonsense. Blake had been patient, very patient. Patience is a shining virtue, but it did not shine very much in the study occupied by Figgins & Co.

They would have resented any intruder's coming to that room. But if the new-comer had been a decent fellow it was possible to chum with them; they would have tried to put up with it. But to have that hopeless outsider planted upon them was too much. It wasn't as if Marmaduke would try to be agreeable. He seemed to be bent upon making himself more disagreeable than ever.

Kerr's idea for the education of Marmaduke was adopted cheerfully by all the New House juniors. Not a lad there but was willing to knock Marmaduke flying in so good a cause.

The educating process started in the study. Figgins & Co. were doing their preparation. Marmaduke, having by this time learned what it was like to be flogged, did not dare to neglect his prep, much as he would have liked to do so. It had been a squeeze for three to work simultaneously in Figgins's study. Naturally, it was a harder squeeze still for four, and it could only be managed by mutual concession. Marmaduke had about as much idea of conceding anything to anybody as of flying.

"I want more room than this," he said, glaring round. "How can you expect me to work when you take up half the table. There ought to be a larger table here. I shall complain. Give me more room at once!"

"I'll give you a thick ear if you don't shut up!" growled Figgins, looking up irritably from a difficult passage in his Caesar. "Can't you see there's no more room?"

"You must give me more. One of you can do his work on a chair or a locker. I am not accustomed to such discomfort."

"Will you shut up?"

"No, certainly not. You are a set of low brutes—"

Marmaduke was interrupted. Figgins reached across the table and thumped him. Marmaduke jumped up in a rage. Kerr let out his left with promptness, and the hair of millions rolled on the floor of the study. He got up slowly, breathing vengeance. His eye wandered to the poker in the grate.

"Mind!" said Figgins warningly. "Any more rot, and out you go!"

Marmaduke made a clutch at the poker. Thereupon Figgins & Co. laid hands upon him and buried him forth from the study, and he went spinning down the corridor.

Figgins slammed the door. Marmaduke rushed back to it and began to kick at it fiercely. Pratt put his head out of his study.

"What's that thundering row about?"

"Mind your own business!" snapped Marmaduke.

Pratt gave him one look, then he came out of the study, and with a really scientific right-hander sent Marmaduke spinning.

"That's what you want, you bouncer! Want some more?"

Marmaduke did not want any more; and Pratt went back to his room feeling satisfied with himself, and that he had deserved well of his house.

Marmaduke picked himself up and wandered disconsolately away. He wasn't cured yet, by any means. A good deal more was required to cure Marmaduke.

"Hallo! Anything the matter?" asked Jones, meeting him in the passage.

Marmaduke stared at him haughtily.

"Don't talk to me," he said. "You're a low lot of—"

Oh!

Jones bit his lip, remembering his instruction from Figgins's study, and he walked on, leaving Marmaduke sitting down. He had disappeared before Marmaduke got on his feet again.

Marmaduke rushed after him, full of fury, and rushed right into Monteith, who was coming out of his study. Monteith staggered back, but only for a moment. Then he clutched hold of the new boy and shook him violently.

"What do you mean by running into me, you little whelp?"

"Let me go, confound you!" exclaimed Marmaduke.

"How dare you take hold of my collar!"

Monteith stared at him blankly for a moment; then a curious grin came upon his thin, sour face.

"Ah, I see, they haven't cured you in the School House!"

he remarked. "If you think you're going to carry on in the same way in this house, you're making a big mistake, my lad. Come into my study."

"Shan't!"

Monteith jerked him in and took out a cane, and gave him a thrashing on the spot. Then he kicked him out of the room. Marmaduke crawled away. Decidedly, the New House was a change for the worse. He went out into the quadrangle, miserable enough, but as obstinate as ever. A tradesman's boy was leaving the rear door of the New House. Marmaduke's eyes brightened at the sight of him; an idea had come into his mind. He hurried towards the youth.

"Stop a minute," he said, with unwonted civility. "Look here, here's half-a-crown for you. Will you take a telegram and send it off in the village for me?"

"Rather!" said the youth, eyeing the half-crown, and then Marmaduke, with surprise.

"Then wait here a minute while I write it."

Marmaduke scribbled on a leaf of his pocket-book and tore it out, and gave it to the youth, with another half-crown. Money was nothing to the heir of millions, and he badly wanted that telegram sent. The errand-boy whistled as he saw that the address was to Mrs. Smythe, Park Lane, London.

"I say, this 'ere ain't a joke, are it?" he asked.

"Of course it isn't," said Marmaduke haughtily. "I am not in the habit of joking with menials."

"Do you want your blooming 'ead punched, cocky?"

"I beg your pardon," said Marmaduke, frowning for the fate of his telegram, and swallowing his snobbishness for once. "I am sorry. Take this two-shilling piece. You will be sure and send the wire, won't you? It's important!"

"Right 'yar!" said the boy, and went off whistling.

Marmaduke went back into the New House satisfied with himself. Whether his father would have fetched him away at his demand he was not sure; but he had no doubts about his other parent. His doting mother would never allow her dear Marmaduke to remain anywhere where he was not happy. If only the errand-boy sent the wire! And surely he would not fail, after being so liberally rewarded for it beforehand. No, he would not fail.

Marmaduke's hours at St. Jim's were numbered. He carried his head higher than ever when he walked into the New House again.

"Hallo, chappy!" said a junior good-naturedly, as he noticed Marmaduke's air of satisfaction. "Have you lost twopence and found a giddy tanner?"

Marmaduke stared at him loftily, and turned away without speaking. He could afford to be as insolent as he liked now. But the New House junior had Figgy's instructions in mind; and a clenched fist laid Marmaduke neatly on the mat, there to consider himself.

"Want any more, you cad?" demanded the junior, dancing round with flourishing fists.

Marmaduke didn't want any more, and said so.

"Then don't you put on any more airs with me, my lad!"

Marmaduke mumbled vague threats and took himself off.

CHAPTER 10.

Exit Marmaduke!

BLAKE looked curiously at Marmaduke when he appeared in Form the next day. The new boy's features showed very plain signs that he had been "up against it" since his transference to the New House.

He returned Blake's look with a scowl, but there was an expression on his face that rather puzzled the chief of No. 6 Study. It was an expression of mingled anticipation and triumph, as though Marmaduke thought there was a good time coming for him.

"I wonder what the boulder's got in his head?" murmured Blake. "He seems to be jolly well satisfied about something."

"He's been saying that he's not going to stay at St. Jim's," said Figgy.

"Well, that's jolly good news!" Blake exclaimed. "But I fancy it's a bit too good to be quite true, Figgy, old son."

"Yes, I'm afraid so."

"How do you like him in your house?" asked Blake politely. "I hope you enjoy it."

"Oh, don't talk about it!" growled Figgy. "He'd disgrace any well-brought-up pigsty. I never met such an absolutely impossible snob as that fellow is. He simply takes the cake—the whole giddy cake!"

"Silence there!" said little Mr. Lathom.

The lesson proceeded. Marmaduke seemed to be listening for something, and frequently glanced towards the door. The sound of a distant ringing bell, and then of wheels, made him brighten up wonderfully.

"Hallo, what does that mean?" murmured Blake.

The Form-room door was open. A high-pitched feminine voice was heard outside.

"I insist upon seeing him at once!"

"But——"

"I have come down to take my dear boy away!"

"Madam——"

"I do not desire to see the doctor. Is this the room?"

Very good!"

A strange figure appeared at the door of the Fourth Form room. Little Mr. Lathom stared at it in astonishment, and the whole class stared, too. Marmaduke gave a chirrup of glee.

"Mamma!"

A stout lady, with a very red face, very over-dressed and wearing a small fortune in the shape of jewellery, stood in the doorway. Little Mr. Lathom, wondering who on earth she could be and what she could possibly want in the Fourth Form room, advanced towards her.

"My dear madam——"

"Who are you?" demanded the high-pitched voice.

"I—I am the master of this Form. May I inquire——"

"I have come to take Master Smythe away. I am his mother, sir!" exclaimed the stout lady, towering over little Mr. Lathom. "Where is my darling boy?"

"Mamma, here I am!" squeaked Marmaduke.

"My darling, persecuted boy, come to me!"

Marmaduke rose from the form. Mr. Lathom passed a hand over his heated brow.

"My dear madam——"

"Don't talk to me! My son has been shamefully treated. I dare say you are as bad as the rest!" Go away with you!"

The stout lady was armed with an umbrella, and she looked very much inclined to start upon Mr. Lathom with it. The little master jumped back in alarm.

"My dear madam——" he said feebly.

"Don't dear madam me! Come, Marmaduke, the cab is waiting."

The class had realised now what it all meant, and they were grinning gleefully. Marmaduke crossed over to his dear mamma.

"But, my dear madam," protested Mr. Lathom, "I cannot allow—it is really impossible for me to permit——"

He jumped back again as Marmaduke's mamma turned upon him.

"Marmaduke has been shamefully treated," she snapped. "I had a telegram from him last night to implore me to fetch him away. I came by the first train. You ought to be ashamed of yourself—yes, all of you!"

"Without his father's authority I cannot——"

The umbrella whisked in the air, and Mr. Lathom, who had made a motion to catch hold of Marmaduke, beat a hurried retreat. The class were yelling by this time. Marmaduke cast a haughty glance round.

"Mamma, let us leave this low place——"

"Go it!" said a voice from the class. "Go back to Petticoat Lane, Marmaduke, where you belong!"

It was Percy Mellish who said that, and, unfortunately, the eyes of Mrs. Smythe were upon him, and the next moment the umbrella was upon him.

Mr. Lathom did not try to stop them. He would just as soon have attempted to stop a wild elephant as Mrs. Smythe; but the stalwart form of Mr. Kidd, the housemaster, appeared in the doorway.

"My dear madam, what does this mean? Where are you taking that boy?"

"I am taking him home!"

"Ah, I see! You are his mother, I presume? I am sorry—extremely sorry—but without the authority of his father I cannot consent to——"

"Let me pass——"

"I repeat that without the——"

The umbrella went up for a telling stroke, and the housemaster dodged.

"My dear madam, pray calm yourself. I beg of you to calm yourself. Mr. Lathom, pray explain to this lady that——"

"If you will excuse me, Mr. Kidd, I'd rather you explained," said little Mr. Lathom. "You could do it so very much better!"

"Nonsense, Mr. Lathom! I must really—yes, madam. I will not detain you; but pray be calm—be calm, I beg of you. Thank goodness, here's the doctor!"

Even the awe-inspiring figure of the Head of St. Jim's, in gown and mortar-board, did not seem to terrify the terrible parent of Marmaduke.

"Dear me!" said the Head. "What is this disturbance?"

The class is very noisy. Yes, madam, what—what can I do for you? Mrs. Smythe—ah, yes, to be sure! I hope you find yourself well this fine morning? You wish to take Master Smythe for a little walk? Certainly; no objection in the——"



"I'm going to take Master Smythe home—"

"Without his father's—"

"Stuff!" said Mrs. Smythe. "Nonsense!"

"My dear madam, I beg of you to—to— Pray explain to her, Mr. Kidd! Mr. Lathom, pray attempt to make this good lady understand. Dear me! Bless my soul!"

The doctor jumped away as the umbrella came dangerously near his nose. Mrs. Smythe marched out, holding her dear Marmaduke by the hand, and the two of them disappeared from the view of the convulsed Fourth Form. The doctor, the housemaster, and Mr. Lathom looked at each other with an exceedingly sickly expression. There was a sound of wheels in the quadrangle. Marmaduke and his mamma were gone.

"Dear me!" said the doctor.

That was all he said. He felt a great deal; and probably what he felt most was relief that St. Jim's was rid of Marmaduke and his mamma. He retired from the scene with the housemaster; and Mr. Lathom in vain tried to reduce the class to order. The Fourth were shrieking with merriment, and all Mr. Lathom's efforts were unavailing, and finally he gave Figgins a slap on the back by way of congratulation which made Figgins stagger.

"Congratulations, old man!" cried Blake

"Hi, there! Come down, you young himp!" shouted Taggles, the school porter. (See page 10.)

"Well, you needn't break my back!" growled Figgins. "Still, I'm jolly glad. Marmaduke was a terror, but his mamma—oh, his mamma! Still, we ought to be grateful to her, considering that she's taken that horrid bounder away. Let's give her a cheer!"

And the juniors joined in a cheer for Marmaduke's mamma. A good many more misadventures awaited Marmaduke in the course of his career, for St. Jim's had not seen the last of him.

THE END.

(Next Saturday's two long, complete stories: "The Rise of Bowker's House," a school tale by Jack North, and "The Champion's Belt," by Lewis Hockley.)

NEW SCHOOL TALE.

YOU CAN START NOW.

THE RIVALS OF ST KIT'S

By Charles Hamilton

BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE FIRST CHAPTERS.

The day PAT NUGENT, a young Irish boy, arrives at ST. KIT'S, an election is taking place for the captaincy of the school—ELDRED LACY and ARTHUR TALBOT being the two candidates. PAT is soon spotted by a crowd of juniors, and to stop him from giving his vote he is thrown into a cupboard in LACY'S study. He goes to sleep, and on waking up he hears voices—the voices of ELDRED LACY and his brother, RUPERT LACY, the Squire of LYNWOOD: "You must ruin and disgrace ARTHUR TALBOT, and drive him from the school. He is a menace to me—to both of us. But ruined, disgraced, driven forth into poverty and obscurity, I shall no longer fear him!"

PAT is eventually released from the cupboard, and after the election, which is decided in favour of TALBOT, becomes great chums with BLAGDEN and GREENE. These three friends take an instinctive dislike to ELDRED LACY, and continually get bullied by him. One day a curious meeting of the two LACYS and a strange tramp, whose name is BLACK, takes place in a lane not far from the school. A serious trick is played on LACY, and as no one owns up to it, the headmaster punishes the whole of the Lower Fourth. PAT is suspected by the boys, and he is sent to Coventry. Now go on with the tale.

Pat's Name is Cleared.

"Take that and that and that!" gasped Trimble, bringing the stump down on the young blackmailer's shoulders.

Cleeve took them, and more also, and squirmed like an eel.

"Don't, Trimble! I'll promise not to say a word. I won't ask you for any more money, honour bright. Leave off! Oh, don't! If you hit me again I'll go straight to the doctor and tell him you played that trick on Lacy. Do you hear?"

"Stop that instantly, Trimble!"

Trimble gave a gasp of terror at the sound of Arthur Talbot's voice.

He had been too occupied with the punishment of Cleeve to observe that the study door had opened, and Cobb, who had his back to the door, had not observed it. And Cleeve was making too much noise for them to hear anything else.

Trimble dropped the stump and swung round in dismay. Cobb let Cleeve go.

The captain of St. Kit's stood in the open doorway.

His usually good-tempered face was dark with anger, and his eyes were flashing.

He came into the study, and Trimble shrank back.

"Get up, Cleeve," said Talbot, in an ominously quiet voice.

Cleeve got upon his feet.

"As I came in, I heard you speaking," continued the captain, his eyes fixed upon Cleeve. "I did not, of course, intend to listen to anything going on here. But I heard what you said, and I must have an explanation of it."

Trimble turned a sickly colour.

He knew that all must come out now, and the thought was terrifying.

"Cleeve, do you know who played that firework trick on Lacy?"

Under the captain's stern eye, and condemned as he was by words out of his own mouth, denial was not possible to Cleeve.

"Yes," he gasped.

"Who was it?"

"Trimble."

"And he has been giving you money to keep the secret, and allow the blame to fall upon Nugent?" demanded Talbot.

"Yes."

"It's a lie!" growled Trimble. "I didn't give it to him; he extorted it, like a leech. He's a beastly Shylock. He's worse than I am, anyway."

"You do not deny his statement, Trimble?"

Trimble would gladly have done so, but he knew it was useless.

"No," he said, in a low voice.

"You have deliberately allowed the blame of your action to fall upon Nugent, and not only that, but have taken the lead against him over the affair, knowing that he was innocent all the time!" exclaimed Talbot, with biting scorn.

Trimble shifted uneasily, but did not speak.

"Your own rascality has led to this discovery, you may as well know that," said Talbot. "I came here to tell you that if there was any more ragging of Pat Nugent, you would have to deal with me. Quite unexpectedly I have discovered the truth. All St. Kit's will know it in ten minutes. Trimble, I never had a high opinion of you, but I did not dream that you were such an utter cur as you have proved."

Trimble had nothing to say, and he looked sullen and savage.

"And you, Cobb—"

"I was against it," said Cobb—"against the trick on Lacy, and against the ragging. I don't expect Trimble to beat me out, but it's the truth."

"Possibly, but your conduct is little less dishonourable than his. You will certainly share his punishment, and so will Cleeve, whom, indeed, I consider the worst of the three."

"You're going to tell the doctor?" asked Trimble desperately.

Talbot stared at him.

"Can you ask?"

"You—you listened," said Trimble. "You know you oughtn't to repeat what you heard by accident. It wasn't intended for you to hear. If you show me up, I'll jolly well show you up to all the school as a listener—a beastly cave-dropper."

Talbot's eyes blazed.

"I would give you the licking of your life for that threat, Trimble, if you were not certain of a flogging anyway. The threat makes no difference to me, yet there is something in what you have said. Under ordinary circumstances, it would not be honourable to take notice of anything overheard by accident. But the fact that you have basely plotted against an innocent lad makes a great difference. However, I will make one concession. If you choose to go to the doctor and make a clean breast of it, keeping back nothing, and clearing Nugent entirely, I will allow you to do so, and will say nothing myself."

Trimble brightened a little.

He could not hope to escape punishment, but he knew that he could turn the captain's concession considerably to his advantage, and get off more lightly than would otherwise be the case.

"All right," he said, "I'll do it. Come on, Cobb."

And the precious pair left the study.

Cleeve remained shivering under the eye of Talbot.

For a few moments there was silence. Cleeve seemed to shrink under the captain's scornful glance, and he wished the floor would open and swallow him up.

"I don't exactly know how to deal with you, Cleeve," said the captain, at last. "Trimble has acted like a cur, but you have been far worse to trade upon his secret. How much money have you had from him?"

"Only—only about a pound altogether, Talbot," gasped Cleeve.

"You must return it, every penny."

"I—I—I've spent some of it."

"How much have you spent?" went on Talbot grimly.

"Half," muttered the wretched junior.

"Where is the remainder? Put it on the table there for Trimble."

The youthful Shylock, whose misdirected financial abilities had landed him in such a scrape, unwillingly produced ten shillings, and placed the money on the table.

"Now," said the merciless captain, "you owe Trimble ten shillings."

"Yes," mumbled Cleeve; "I suppose so."

"Your pocket-money will be stopped every week till it is paid. I shall explain to the doctor that you owe Trimble the money."

Cleeve's jaw dropped.

He had not expected this. His people were not rich, and he had an allowance of only a shilling a week for pocket-money. The prospect of being deprived of that for nearly a whole term was dismaying.

"Oh, I say, Talbot," he protested, "I—I—I—"

"You do not deny that you owe Trimble the money?"

"No-no; but—"

"Well, if you owe it, it must be paid. Now come to my study. As you will have to make restitution, I will let you off with a caning. If you choose, you can go to the doctor for punishment instead, but in that case you will get a flogging, if you are not expelled."

"I—I think I'll take the caning, Talbot, if you don't mind."

"Very well; come along."

In the captain's study Cleeve received six stingers on either hand, and he left the room fairly doubled up.

Talbot smiled grimly as he put away the cane.

"I think it will be a long time before that young rascal starts in business again as a blackmailer," he murmured. "That lesson may do him good for the rest of his life."

The captain paid a visit to the end study on the upper corridor after dealing with Cleeve. He knocked and went in, and found the three chums there.

"Hello, Talbot!" said Pat cheerfully. "Glad to see you! What is it this time?"

Talbot laughed.

"I haven't come to show you up," he said. "My errand is quite different. The truth is out about that affair in Lacy's study."

Pat gave a whoop.

"Arrah! Sure that's the best news I've heard for a long time, captain dear!"

"Who's the giddy culprit?" demanded Blagden.

"Trimble. He has confessed."

"Well, that's jolly decent of him," said Pat. "I shouldn't have expected it of him, especially after the way he's acted lately. I wonder what the Form will say now?"

"They'll have to own up to being silly asses," said Greene.

"I thought I'd come and tell you," said Talbot, smiling.

"You have been through a rough time lately, I know."

"Thanks, awfully, Talbot! It's good of you. I say, did Trimble confess, or was he found out?"

"Both," said Talbot. And with a nod he left the study.

The three chums jumped up and executed a waltz in their glee. They had stood it very well, but their sojourn in the cold shades of "Coventry" had not been pleasant. Talbot's news brought joy to the end study.

A Precious Pair.

It was a fine spring day. Trees and hedges were putting forth their early green as Arthur Talbot, captain of St. Kit's, left the school gates and strode down the lane. Handsome and cheerful Talbot looked; the brightness of the spring weather reflected in his face.

He stopped at a stile some little distance from the school, which gave admittance to a footpath, a short cut to the village. As he turned towards the stile his face darkened somewhat.

A man was lounging against the stile—a man with an unshaven, coppery face and a filthy fur cap. Talbot knew him well enough by sight. It was the disreputable ruffian who had spoken to him once by the gates of St. Kit's, and ventured to question him. Several times since then Arthur had seen the fellow, and once or twice Seth Black had tried to speak to him.

The man looked up as the captain of St. Kit's came by. He fixed his eyes upon Talbot with an evil look. The deep flush, showing through his coppered skin, indicated that he had been drinking. He was in a quarrelsome mood, having drunk sufficient to make him take offence at the slightest thing or at nothing at all.

"Good-day to yer!" he said thickly, as Talbot came up to the stile.

He was lounging against the steps, and did not offer to move.

Talbot made no reply.

He did not desire to enter into an altercation with a semi-intoxicated vagrant, so he put his hand on the top bar to vault over without troubling Black to move.

The ruffian scowled as no reply was made to him.

"I spoke to you, young gentleman," he said. "Ain't you got a word to say to a civil feller?"

Talbot looked at him sharply.

"I don't see what you want to speak to me for," he said. "I don't know you, and don't want to. You're not the kind of man I want to speak to. You've several times tried to force your presence on me. You had better keep your distance. Bear that in mind!"

The ruffian's eyes glinted, and he shoved himself in front of the captain of St. Kit's to prevent him from crossing the stile.

"Can't speak a civil word—hey?" he sneered. "And why shouldn't I speak to you if I want to, me lord duke? Ain't I good enough?"

"Please let me pass."

"Jest you answer me fust!" said Black, leering. "Ain't I good enough to speak to yer—eh?"

"I tell you I don't want any words with you!" cried Talbot. "Get out of my way!"

"Suppose I don't?"

"If you don't move I shall move you!"

"Will you?" The ruffian gave a snarl. "I'd like to see you do it, Mister Gutter-brat! Ah, you didn't think I knew that, did you?" he added, with a sneer, as Talbot started.

Talbot's eyes blazed with anger.

"Are you going to move?"

"No, I ain't! I—"

Talbot's patience was exhausted. Black had no time to finish. The stalwart young captain of St. Kit's laid his hands upon him, and with a single powerful twist sent him spinning across the lane.

Black staggered and reeled right across the lane, and pitched helplessly into the ditch on the other side. There was no water in it, but there was plenty of mud and rotten vegetation. Black was not in an enviable condition as he scrambled out.

His coppery face was red with fury. Talbot stood facing him, his fists clenched, his glance contemptuously disdainful.

"Now, if you want a lesson, come on!" he exclaimed. "I will willingly spare five minutes to give you the hiding you've wanted for a long time!"

Black made a couple of steps towards him, and then stopped.

The aspect of the young athlete was not inviting, and Black's courage oozed out as he met the flashing eyes.

He began to mutter curses, and Talbot, with a scornful smile, turned and stepped over the stile, and strode away across the field.

Seth Black shook his fist after the young captain of St. Kit's.

"Wait till my chance comes!" he muttered savagely. "I could make you sit up if I liked. I could—"

He broke off. A new-comer had appeared on the scene.

He scowled savagely at Eldred Lacy, who was looking at him with his hands in his pockets, and a smile of amusement upon his face.

"I saw it all," said Lacy, with a nod. "He handled you easily enough."

"Not so easily as he handled you the other day, Mister Lacy!" snarled Black.

Lacy turned red. He did not like the reminder.

"Still, I didn't stop to speak about that," he said hastily. "Look here, my man, you know something about Arthur Talbot."

"Do I?" said Black, eyeing Lacy dubiously.

"Yes, you do. I've been thinking over what you let drop the other day, too. You know something about Talbot—something we don't know at the school."

Black's look was very curious as Eldred Lacy made this statement.

"Maybe I do," he assented. "And what about it?"

"I want you to tell me what it is." Again that curious look on the ruffian's face. "We only know at the school," continued Lacy, "that he's a nameless nobody, whom the doctor took in out of charity. Some of the fellows say he's a beggar's brat, picked up out of the gutter. I shouldn't be surprised if his father came along to claim him some day. Do you know who his father is?"

"Maybe I might make a guess," said Black, with a grin.

"Then tell me," said Lacy eagerly. "Look here, I don't suppose you have any love for that fellow who just pitched you across the road, have you?"

"I hate him!" said Black, between his teeth.
 "Good! And you're not particularly flush with money."
 "I don't know that I am."
 "I'll make it worth your while to tell me anything you know about Talbot. Mind, I want proof with it. I want to settle him at the school. It stands to reason his origin was disreputable. Tell me what you know."
 The ruffian was silent, looking at Lacy out of the corners of his eyes, as if weighing something in his mind.
 Lacy watched him impatiently.
 "Out with it!" he exclaimed. "I tell you I'll make it worth your while. I'd give a good deal to show him up before the school. Do you know who his father is?"
 "Yes."

Lacy gave a sudden start.
 "You—don't mean to say that—that you—" he broke out. His look became eager, his face pale with excitement. "Look here, Black, tell me the truth. Is Talbot any relation of yours?"

Black looked at the prefect hard before replying.
 "What if he was?" he said at length slowly.
 Lacy burst into a chuckle.
 "Then he is?"

"I haven't said so."
 "Look here, I must know the truth." The prefect took a couple of sovereigns from his pocket. "Are these any good to you? Now tell me. Is Talbot any relation of yours? Are you his father?"

Black gave a peculiar chuckle.
 "Stranger things than that might be true," he said.
 "There's your tin. Have you got any proof? Would you have the nerve to claim him, and give him a showing up before the school?" demanded Lacy eagerly.

"Ha, ha! That would be a fine revenge!" grinned Black. "Yes, if you pay me for my trouble, I'll claim him before the whole school, and prove my claim up to the hilt, too!"

"I'm not rich," said Lacy, "but my brother would let me have a couple of fivers if I asked him specially. What price that?"

"I'll do it! It's a go!" said Black. "I don't know that I would if I didn't owe him one myself. I'll make him sorry he slung me about, the puppy! I'll teach him to be disrespectful to his daddy!" And he finished with a ghoulish chuckle.

Lacy's eyes were gleaming with excitement. Never before had such a chance come to him of dealing so terrible a blow at the rival he hated.

In his hatred of Talbot he was willing to believe anything against him, and certainly the ruffian did know something about Arthur. His tale might be true; at all events true or false, it would cause Talbot keen suffering, and degrade him in the eyes of the schoolfellows who now liked and admired him.

"You mean it, honest Injun? Lacy asked. "Mind, it's worth ten pounds to you if you can make out a good case."

"I mean it. I'll claim him, and see if I don't prove it! I'll do it before you if you like, and as soon as you like."

"I don't want to appear to have a hand in it," said the prefect quickly. "It would look bad if they knew I had raked this up against Talbot. But before I part with the money I want a bit of proof, of course. Talbot's just gone to the village to see about a new cricket-bat he's ordered. He won't be long before he's back this way. Would you have the nerve to tackle him on the subject, then? I'll get on the other side of that fence, so that I can hear without showing up. I want to keep out of it."

"I don't mind. I'll do as you say."
 The ruffian's manner was earnest. He evidently meant to keep his word. And Eldred Lacy, feeling that his vengeance was in sight at last, laughed aloud in his glee.

Father and Son?

Quite unconscious of what was in store for him, Arthur Talbot came along the footpath to the stile with his swift, springy stride. His eyes gleamed as he saw that the ruffian was still lounging there.

Seth Black was smoking a short, dirty pipe. He made a movement as the captain of St. Kai's stepped over into the lane.

"Stop a minute," he said, with an evil look, "I've got something to say to you. You wouldn't listen afore; and, nober, if you hadn't been so cocky, I wouldn't have spoke out. Now, I'll let you have it plain. Stop, I tell you! He planted himself directly in Talbot's path. "I'm going to speak to you!"

"Get out of my path!"
 Talbot clenched his hand. Seth Black did not stir.
 "You'll raise yer 'and agin your own father, will you?"

Talbot stared at him, doubting if he had heard aright. His clenched hand fell to his side again.

"What did you say?"
 "You heard what I said. You don't know me, my fine bird, but I know you. Yes; I'm your father, and you can make the most of it!"

Talbot's face was white as death.
 "You lie!" he said, between his teeth—"you lie!"
 "Do I? I can give proofs, if that's necessary!" sneered the ruffian. "If I ain't your father, who is? Answer me that!"

Talbot stared at him dumbly. He could certainly not answer that question, for he did not know who his father was. Did not even know whether the name he bore was his true one.

Seth Black grinned evilly.
 "You can't answer? Course you can't! Ashamed of your old father, ain't you, among all your blooming swell friends?"

"You lie! You are not—you cannot be my father!"
 "Do you want me to prove it?"

Talbot's teeth set hard.
 "Yes. Prove it, or I'll give you the thrashing of your life! Quick; prove your words—prove that you have not lied, or you shall repent it!"

Black shrank for a moment from his blazing eyes. But his bravado quickly returned.

"I'll prove it fast enough. I parted with you when you was a youngster, but I haven't forgotten nothing. You've got a mark, a birthmark on you, and I can describe it to a T."

Talbot reeled back against the stile, staring wildly at this scoundrel who spoke with mocking certainty. How could Seth Black know that if his claim was a false one?

Often had Talbot wondered to himself who was his father. He had thought sometimes that his father might have been a poor man; but anything like this had never crossed his mind.

He had hoped some day to find his father—to find him living; though all the time he knew that the chances were that he was long since dead. But to find him living, and to find him in the person of this brutal, disreputable ruffian!

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it was not—it could not be true! It was too terrible! Yet now, otherwise, did Seth Black know so much?

The ruffian grinned as he saw the agony of doubt and distress in the boy's face.

"Do you believe me now?" sneered. "Shall I describe the mark to you? A red mark in the form of a cross, on the right arm between the elbow and the shoulder."

Talbot groaned.

It was impossible that the ruffian should ever have seen that mark, unless he had, as he declared, seen it when the boy was an infant, too young to remember him.

Some of Talbot's intimate friends doubtless, knew that the mark was there, but it was impossible that Black could have received information from any of them.

How did he know?

"Shall I tell you more?" sneered Black. "Shall I tell you the name of the man who brought you to Dr. Kent?"

"You cannot?"

"His name was Norroys."

Talbot's face grew whiter. How could the ruffian know that unless his tale was true? The doubts were fading away in Talbot's mind. He had found his father at last—found him in this drunken, disreputable ruffian, the mere sight of whom filled him with loathing.

"It cannot be—it cannot be!" he almost moaned.

"It is true, and you know it," said Black coolly. "I was 'ard up in them days. Mr. Norroys, he took pity on you,

and he gave me a ten-pound note for you. That's the frozen truth. Now I'm going to claim you. You're my son, and I've got my rights as a parent. We'll see whether an affectionate parent is to be parted from his blooming son!"

Talbot started. It was not only that this scoundrel was his father; but there was worse to come. The wretch meant to claim him.

"You—you cannot mean that!" panted Talbot. "You will not dare!"

"Can't a father claim his own son, I'd like to know?" grinned Black. "I'll show you, my boy. I'm coming up to the school with you now. Where my boy is I can be, can't I? If the doctor don't like my company, he can 'and over my son, and we'll go together. You can be the prop of my declinin' years."

"You—you bound—"

"Nice language to your father, I must say!"

"I do not—I cannot believe it!"

"You do believe it, and you know you do," said Black coolly. "Anyway, I'm coming up to the school. We'll see if the doctor dares to dispute my claim!"

(Another long installment of this school tale next Saturday.)

Your Editor's Corner.

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