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CHAPTER III.

Tom as a General - Triumph and Reward - Dismal Felicity - Commission and Omission



Theore Aunt Polly, who was sitting by an open window in a pleasant rearward apartment, which was bedroom, breakfast-room, ding-room, and library, combined. The balmy summer air, the restrial juiet, the door of the flowers, and the drowsing murmur of the bees had had their effect, and she was noting over her knitting—for she had no commany but the eat, and it

go and play now, aunt?"
"What, a'ready? How much have you done?"

"Tom, don't lie to me-I can't bear it."

Aunt Polly placed small trust in such evidence. She went out to see or herself; and she would have been content to find twenty per cent. of om's statement true. When she found the entire fence white-washed, and

not only whitewashed but elaborately coated and recoated, and even a streak added to the ground, her astonishment was almost unspeakable. She said:

"Well, I never! There's no getting round it, you can work when you're a mind to, Tom." And then she diluted the compliment by adding, "But it's powerful seldom you're a mind to, I'm bound to say. Well, go long and play; but mind you get back some time in a week, or I'll tan you."

She was so overcome by the splendor of his achievement that she took him into the closet and selected a choice apple and delivered it to him, along with an improving lecture upon the added value and flavor a treat rook to itself when it came without sin through virtuous effort. And while she closed with a happy Scriptural flourish, he 'hooked' a doughnut.

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Then he skipped out, and saw
Sid just starting up the outside stairway that led to the back rooms on
the second floor. Clods were handy
and the air was full of them in a
twinkling. They raged around Sid
like a hall-storm; and before Aunt
Polly could collect her surprised factuities and sally to the rescue, six or
seven clods had taken personal
effect, and Tom was over the fence
and gone. There was a gate, but as a
general thing he was too crowded for
time to make use of it. His soul was
at peace, now that he had settled
with Sid for calling attention to his black thread and getting him into
rrouble.

Tom skirted the block, and came round into a market all and the control of the cont



trouble.

Tom skirted the block, and came round into a muddy alley that led by the back of his aunt's cow-stable. He presently got safely beyond the reach of capture and punishment, and hastened toward the public square of the village, where two 'military' companies of boys had met for conflict, according to previous appointment. Tom was General of one of these armies, Joe Harper (a bosom friend) General of the other. These two great commanders did not condescend to fight in person—that being better suited to the still smaller fry—but sat together on an eminence and con-

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