

out into the street, and was brought up with dislocating suddenness in the arms of the Major himself.

"Hullo, young man!" cried his uncle, "where away in such haste?" and Cuthbert experienced a wave of relief so deep

the story in brief, hysterical ejaculations from Mrs Franklin and the boys.

"Great Scott!" he cried angrily. "It's *not* poisoned! What nonsense. Mrs Franklin, you'll make the boy tipsy. A doctor! A fiddlestick! What made you think it was poisoned? Who dared to touch my cabinet?"

Roderick gave a gasp of relief, and buried his aching head in the cushions; the fatal symptoms began to diminish at once, and he was fervently glad to know that he was not to die of a horrible Eastern poisoning trick.

Mrs Franklin swept the brandy bottle off the table and vanished with the housemaid. The change from tragedy to comedy was rather sudden, and a little difficult to carry off with dignity, however welcome it might be.

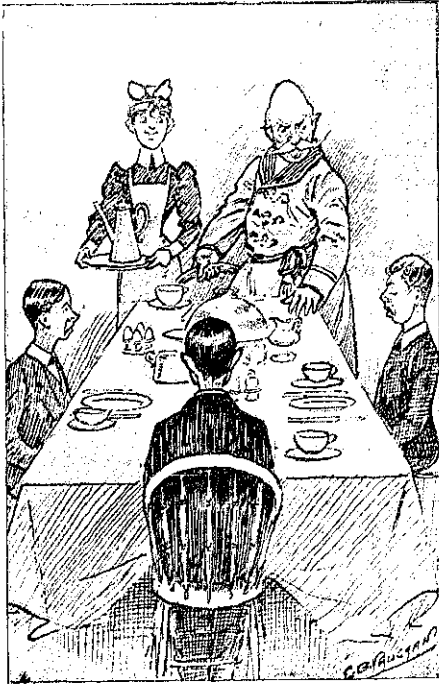
But though the great fear was removed, there still was for Jack and Cuthbert an element of tragedy in the affair. There was the thing in the box on the table accusing them of disobedience, and ingratitude, and various discreditable actions, and there was the Major looking upon them with an angry over-aweing gaze, which brought the paternal wrath all too vividly to mind.

Then Cuthbert began to explain. It was he who did it; it was his idea, and—and—

"Go to bed," said the Major, "and tomorrow you go home!"

But they did not. The Iron Duke himself could not have carried out that overwhelming sentence had he seen the condemned at breakfast next morning.

And Uncle James found that he could not; but the words in which he conveyed his altered decision were of such a nature that they lingered long in the memory of his nephews, and left serious wounds in their naturally abundant self-esteem, which perhaps was not a regrettable matter.



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that there was no room left for personal apprehension.

"Uncle James," he cried, almost tearfully. "Rod's hurt! Oh, come and see him! Mrs Franklin sent me for a doctor. Come and see him!"

In another moment Major Elliot was in the midst of his frantic household, and heard

