

your plumping feet all over my tunnel? I put up a notice to keep off, big enough for anybody but a blind owl to see. You only put your beastly old washing up to-day so as to get a chance to go clumping about where you'd no business."

"I've got my work to do, and it's for your ma to say whether I've to leave it or not," answered the indignant damsel; "and I wasn't born to be called a gawk, so I'd have you know *that*, Master Jack."

The boy turned wrathfully away, and promptly sought out his friend of next door but one, into whose sympathetic ears he poured his tale of woes.

"That ass of a girl's been and walked all over the top of our tunnel, Jim," he said.

An anxious look came into Jim's eyes.

"Crumbs!" he exclaimed. "Is it damaged?"

"Is it damaged?" was the retort. "What do *you* think—and that lump plumping on top of it. Why, man, it's fairly squashed in like piecrust!"

"She ought to be hung!" said his chum, and he found no difficulty in agreeing with this verdict.

The two lads, however, were not of the giving-up or "sha'n't play" type. Difficulties and sets back acted rather as spurs to their activity, as they are usually meant to do for all of us. The next favourable opportunity saw them together at the hoton of the long garden planning ways and means for a second, and more satisfactory excavation.

"It'll be just the stunningest cave you ever saw," said Jack, beaming in anticipation. "Won't it be larks when it's done?"

"Rather!" answered Jim. "Your father must be a good sort to let you scoop up the place like we're going to."

"He is; but to tell you the honest truth," was the startling reply. "I haven't thought to let him know about it yet. I'm going to surprise him, when it's done."

"Like you surprised that porpoise of a Jane?" suggested his friend.

If any boy thinks the two youngsters had set themselves an easy task in purposing to excavate a tunnel and a cave, he might try the plan for himself. The backs of the two lads ached considerably long before any appreciable impression had been made, but as Jack Thompson pluckily remarked, "Never say die till you're dead; and you can please yourself about it then."

Together they laboured during every available spare moment, with the result that in about a week they had scooped out a very respectable burrow, and a god sized cave at the end, the roof of which, by dint of much hard labour, they made fairly secure with the help of some short planks of wood which Jim had "borrowed" from his own father's territory, and smuggled into his friend's garden by the field which ran along the end of the terrace plots, and which was divided from the gardens themselves by a low hank and a hedge.

It so happened that, the site of their amateur engineering works being at the far end of the grounds, the excavation had not caught the eye of the elder Thompson up to now, his interest in the garden being mainly centred in the portion nearest the house; and the inquisitiveness of the "porpoise of a Jane" had been subdued by threats on the part of both lads that they would give her "what for" if she didn't keep off their enclosure.

It was a threat for which she had some respect, for she knew a little of Master Jack's ingenuity in the way of tormenting. The job was therefore finished without further mishap, and Jack's ingenuous intention of doing the deed first and asking for leave afterwards was only fulfilled in part. He certainly did the deed but he forgot altogether about asking for leave.

The consequence was, that Mr. Thompson, strolling leisurely down the garden with a pipe in his mouth one evening, and thinking of nothing in particular, unless it might be the unusual absence of boys from the place—for there were generally Jack and a friend or two about—was somewhat