

Degree II (English Honours)  
Paper - IV

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She Stoops to Conquer

By Oliver Goldsmith

Character Sketch of Tony Lumpkin

(Lecture - 2)

and a somewhat similar claim might be made for Tony Lumpkin. We not only laugh at him, the uneducated young country squire who whoops like a speaking trumpet, and makes his first appearance halloing — "a very consumptive figure, truly — who puzzles his head over a letter, and stands crestfallen and sulky while young Marlow and Hastings abuse him as an "idiot," and contemptible "booby" but we also laugh with him as he fools his dotting mother, mocking her over the lost jewels, and frightened her in the dark garden with his "Do you see anything like a black hat moving behind the thicket? .... No it's only a cow. Don't be afraid mamma," and again it is his mischief that makes most of the fun for us, and for the other characters in the play. Nor should we forget the comedy of his pretend love-making to his cousin to throw dust in his mamma's eyes."

His Intelligence: Power of Invention

The trick which he plays upon Marlow and Hastings does not only show his love of fun

and practical jokes, but also his intelligence and his capacity of inventing at the spur of the moment. They lose their way and come to the Three Pigeons where Tony is making himself merry. Tony misdirects them to Mr. Hardcastle's house as to an inn. And by the way he gives a description of the innkeeper's character; he tells them that the old fellow poses as a gentleman and thrusts his company on his guests. Marlow and Hastings follow his directions and go to the house of Mr. Hardcastle, taking it for an inn. This is the starting point of the drama. Thus Tony's love of fun and mischief is the source of all the complications in the plot. The trick that he plays on Marlow is a great one; it is not merely misdirecting travellers; the subtlety of the trick consists in sending the travellers to the right place but under a wrong impression. Moreover, he gives such a description of his step-father that Marlow and Hastings take him for a pretentious uncommon innkeeper. This initial mistake leads to a series of other mistakes. His role in the play is crucial one. The action issues out of his intrigues, and it comes to a successful conclusion through his intrigue against his mother, which also shows a quick and inventive mind.

### Kind and Generous

Tony loves mischief for the fun of it; but he is neither selfish nor greedy. At heart he is generous and kind. This is clearly seen in the tricks he plays upon his mother. He does not want to be married off to Constance; he loves Bet Bouncer, and so he aids Constance and Hastings, taking their part and deceiving his mother.