

"He wouldn't come to Officers' Quarters, letter Z, twice," observed the commissary, fingering his grizzled moustache.

"Very likely not; indeed, I should say certainly not," replied the colonel, dryly. "But he would come to Hawthorne Lodge as often as you please, and oftener."

"Not unless you gave him victuals," observed the other gravely.

"That is taking a professional view of the affair indeed, commissary," said the colonel, laughing.

"Nay, it is only in accordance with common sense; the young beggar would probably not have sixpence to bless himself. A cadet is not a self-supporting institution, you must remember, colonel."

"That is true in a general way; but I am not certain about it in this case. You make it your business to know everybody's affairs, Sandy, from the commandant's down to the last-joined cadet's—it's all nonsense to deny it, you *do*—and that is why I am come to ask your opinion. You keep your ears open for everything, and quite right too, if it is worth your while. Tut, tut, man, why shouldn't you? Nobody ever heard me say a word against it. Now, do you know anything of a young fellow up yonder"—and the colonel jerked his thumb in the direction of the Royal Military Academy—"called Landon?"

"Well, yes, I do. He is the one that keeps the beagles. An uncommon well-to-do young fellow. He is either independent, or has a fool for a father who is very rich. I never took the trouble to inquire which."

"Just so; matters had not come so near to you as to suggest that. Well, they have come very near to me. Now, put yourself in my place. If this young Landon, being his own master—or who could become so by a little persuasion—and presumably rich, were to come to you and ask for your Gracie, what course should you adopt?"

"Well, I should not put myself in a passion, my good sir; that's not the way at all in arranging preliminaries. I should say, 'Sit down, young gentleman,' or words to that effect, and endeavour to bring him to reason. I should say, 'How much money have you, or will you have when you come of age?' or, 'How much is your father prepared to give you?' as the case may be. Then if he mentioned a proper sum, I should bring out a bottle of wine and treat him, as one gentleman should treat another."

"A deal he'd understand of that," snorted the colonel, "he'd get dashed drunk, that's all."

"I should take care he did not do that till he had replied to my questions," continued the commissary calmly. 'Wine warmeth man's heart,' says the Scripture; the word 'man' is comprehensive, and includes the cadet; besides, I should take care that Gracie poured it out