

"I believe Sir Hercules got it for the lad," continued he, "he had always a very high opinion of him."

"That is true," observed Miss de Horsingham, "I heard him one day—at luncheon—speaking of Mr. Darall to the commandant, and he said that he had never known good conduct and hard work combined so happily in any young man."

"I should think he was plodding," put in the commissary, with a sneer.

"That is the pace that tells," replied Miss de Horsingham; "I think I may say that much from my own experience in education."

"Gad, and it is the pace that kills, madam," observed the colonel, with the air of a man whose natural genius had been too great for his advancement in life.

"I am wholly of your opinion, Colonel Juxon," said the lady, and with a sweet smile of acknowledgment, in reply to her young hostess' signal for retiring, she sailed majestically from the room.

"Well, commissary, did you bring her to book?" inquired the colonel, as soon as they were alone together. "I saw you whispering soft nothings to your 'Juno' all dinner time; was there anything wrapped up in them?" The colonel's air was gay, and his manner good-natured; to do him justice, champagne had always a conciliatory, as well as an elevating effect upon him; which was not universally the case with gentlemen with "tempers."

"Why, no," replied the commissary, sulkily. "I was getting on well enough with her, till you began to talk of that young scoundrel Darall, and that distracted her attention. There's one thing, however, if she was not independent—if it was of material advantage to her that she should marry yours truly—she would not have ventured to take that line—I mean of cracking up the man, when she knows I hate him like poison."

"A very intelligent observation, commissary; and there's also another thing, which you seem to have overlooked, but which to my mind augurs better for you than anything—shows, in fact, that she has made up her mind to catch you."

"What's that?" inquired the commissary, nervously. He didn't quite like the notion of being "caught."

"Well, this very praise she indulged in of young Darall. She wants to recommend him to your daughter, don't you see?"

"I see that, of course; and I don't like it," added the commissary with irritation.

"Then you must be a bigger fool than I took you for. Is it possible that you don't perceive her object? She doesn't care a farthing for Darall, but she wants to get Gracie off your hands. A widower with