

"Whose orders?" inquired the other, drily; "those of the officer in command, or of the old cadets?"

Of the old cadets, of course," answered the Lobster. He had not only come out of his shell by this time, and was all softness, but was, in addition, as it were, oiled, as if for a mayonnaise; "no one cares about the officers, I should hope."

"Why, I expect to be an officer myself, you young scoundrel, or at least to go down to the Arsenal, within the next six months."

"Oh, then of course that will be different," answered the other, unblushingly. If all the others were like you, nobody would wish to disobey them. It's only the governor and the captain of the company, and those two distinguished lieutenants——"

"One of them is my first cousin, sir," interrupted Darall, sternly.

"Nay, I like that one; we all like that one," observed Whympier; obsequiously; it is the other that is such a beast."

"Which of the two lieutenants of the Cadet Company do you call a beast, Mr. Whympier?"

Mr. Whympier was to the last degree disconcerted. The chances were exactly even that he should get himself into a hole by picking out the wrong lieutenant. But fortunately for him, Darall was a good-natured fellow, slow to anger, and with a touch of humour which—except in the case of great villains, when it takes a grim and cruel form—has always a softening influence upon character. He was called by the younger cadets, or "snookers"—the poor creatures had many a derogatory alias—"Gentleman Darall," and by his contemporaries, we are afraid somewhat in derision, "the Snooker's Friend." It was not, however, his friendliness that protected Mr. Whympier on this occasion so much as his indifference. He seemed to have forgotten that he had put that crucial question about his first cousin at all, and was gazing earnestly out of the window, through which came the abrupt sounds of command from the drill ground, as though the familiar words had some new interest for him.

"There will be a precious lot of extra drill, I expect, after to-day's business?" observed Whympier interrogatively.

For a neux, to ask frivolous questions of an old cadet, was in general a dangerous impertinence—something like playing with a tiger's tail; but there was a certain fascination about it to Mr. Whympier, who belonged to that large order of persons who had rather the king said to them, "Go to the devil," than receive no notice from majesty whatever; and, moreover this tiger was a tame tiger.

"I suppose so," answered Darall, abstractedly.

"And are we to remain at the fair till night, or return for evening