

of these resources would have sufficed him if he had been fined every time he was committed for the offence known as "profane swearing."

Even now the colonel was solacing himself for his extorted civility to his visitor by a volley of expletives against gentlemen-cadets in general, and gentleman-cadet Landon in particular; and for the very purpose of discharging it, he had left the hall, and entered his little drawing-room—a striking example of the ill effects of "temper," for thereby he had given the young people an opportunity—which he would willingly have denied them—of speaking together alone.

"You must not mind what my uncle says," whispered Ella, hastily, "you will not be deterred by his rough ways from—from—letting me know how matters fare with you, and with your friend, of course. We shall be so anxious—Gracie and I—to hear about it; so apprehensive lest harm should happen to either of you through our misfortune."

"Don't think of that, Miss Mayne. But Darall, I am sure, would wish to pay his respects. Would ten o'clock to-morrow morning—?"

Ella nodded in acquiescence, at the same time lifting a warning finger, as her uncle hurried back into the hall.

"What in the name of all the devils is he waiting for?" inquired he, in what might have been meant, perhaps, as a confidential whisper to his niece, but which was distinctly audible to the subject of his inquiry. "Hi, sir! would you like a glass of wine? champagne, or anything you please? Only you had better look sharp and be off home; Sir Hercules is not in a state of mind to be trifled with, I promise you."

Landon declined the wine, and took his leave, with a clinging grasp of his young hostess's shapely hand, which she frankly held out to him.

The decision which Sir Hercules might come to as to his delinquencies, and their punishment—always a very secondary consideration with him—had by this time sunk into total insignificance beside the smile of Ella Mayne.

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## CHAPTER VI.

### A SPARRING MATCH.

COLONEL GERALD JUXON and his niece both remained in the porch of their pretty cottage, while Landon walked down the drive and out of the gate; the colonel because he deemed it expedient to see "that fellow" off the premises with his own eyes; the lady because she wished to see the last of that gallant and very good-looking young knight, who had fought, and might have fallen, or at least come to very serious grief, for her sake. He turned at the moment and raised his cap; the colonel