

BORROWING STRANLEIGH'S NAME. 13

"Oh, I'm sorry to hear you are feeling seedy! What did the specialist say?"

"He said I must instantly cease work, and this command comes at a most inconvenient time. It seems I need to undergo a complete rest for an indefinite period, so I wondered whether you would take charge of my business, *pro tem.*"

"Certainly," said Stranleigh, the half-bantering, humorous expression disappearing from his face, giving way to a look of deep concern. "What did the doctor say was the trouble?"

"My heart has gone all wrong."

"Ah! the heart is a most important organ, which must be taken care of. It slumbers not, nor sleeps."

"The specialist tells me," replied the matter-of-fact Mackeller, "that the heart sleeps in that fraction of a second which occurs between beats."

"Really! I am profoundly ignorant about these things, but I keep a walking cyclopædia in the person of my friend Ponderby. What course of treatment does the doctor recommend?"

"We did not get that far. Probably I shall retire to my place in the country, where I can secure rest and quiet. He suggested that I should bring you with me a week from to-day, at nine-thirty."