

I mean them, and of course you'd be very silly if you didn't."

A bright, laughing face was turned to the tall, dark girl, who at sixteen years of age looked two years older than she was. Grace Farleigh was a handsome girl already, and would be a beauty by and by. Now what Beatrix was going to be no one could guess yet. What was she at present? A plump, round-faced, cheery-looking little creature of fourteen, with glad grey eyes of the most wide-awake description, red-gold hair that curled at its own sweet will, a smile that made friends for its possessor, and a clear, rosy complexion. Grace said that Trixy always looked as if she had just been washing her face. This was not a bad description. Both girls were dressed well and becomingly, in pretty light frocks and hats suitable to the hot summer day.

They were travelling from Southsea to a little place in Hampshire called Cloverfield. For a year past they had been living with Mrs. Pelham, widow of a general in the army, at Southsea. This was because their parents were in India.