

SALOME AND THE HEAD

CHAPTER I

SUNLIGHT

A YOUNG man on his way to South Africa (do not be alarmed—this tale has nothing to do with the Boer war), and not knowing whether he will have the luck to survive it or only to become, after a very little time, one of those names in parallel columns on the tablet in the church at home. In such a young man family feeling runs high ; the call of the blood is listened to with an attentive courtesy which it does not at all other times command. And relations in quite remote spots will, on occasions like this, receive farewell visits from young men of such families as *are* families—not in the county but in the patriarchal sense.

Therefore Edmund Templar went down into Hampshire to see his aunt and uncle. Edmund Templar, Corporal in the C.I.V.—I implore you to check your uneasy surmises: I give you my word of honour that there are no veldts or kopjes or Boers in my pages. Not an ox shall be outspanned, not a mealie baked.