

"You might have been sure I was," answered Ruth.

"You told me you hated it; but you've got some very jolly flowe. —I wonder if you would spare one a rose?"

Ruth laughed, and her laugh was sweet and low, like her voice.

"Hello!" This was suddenly addressed to a man in a groom's dress, who was seen approaching up the street at some distance. "Here's my servant, Miss Ruth. I say d'ye think that I might let him take my horse, and come in now instead of after? It's awfully jolly in the garden here, and we can have a chat until the Colonel arrives."

"If you like, of course you can come in," answered Ruth; and the young soldier at once dismounted and flung the reins of his horse to his groom, and having opened the latch of the garden gate, was speedily walking by Ruth's side among the wet lilac bushes and laurels which grew round Colonel Forth's little house.

He had a good face, this Kenard Seaforth, whom Colonel Forth had asked to take lunch with his daughters, and whom the gossips at Headfort said he would not object to have for a son-in-law. A face which, though not absolutely handsome, impressed you favorably as to its owner's character. His features were straight, and his eyes smiling, honest, and clear. He had, moreover, a certain well-bred look, which is not easily assumed. He was tall, erect, and slim, and looked very happy as he walked by Ruth Forth's side, keeping somewhat unnecessarily close to her slender form. An only son of General Seaforth, and a senior lieutenant in the —th Regiment, two companies of which were stationed at Headfort, he was supposed to be fairly well off in this world's goods, and he was a very frequent guest at Colonel Forth's.

And it was Ruth Forth, not the beautiful elder sister, whom he admired.

CHAPTER III.

COLONEL KENYON.

THE following day Colonel Forth and his two daughters, Ruth and Frances, visited Sudley Park on the invitation