

one thing I must know. Were you ever in love with Pereivale ? ”

“ Never. Not for a day. But how is a girl to know ? When I said ‘ Yes ’ to him I did not know what I was doing. I had not met you. I could not tell that there were such feelings in the world as you awoke in me ! But I did not know it was love, I thought it was only the acuteness of the memory, the secret, that we shared—Oh, Miles ! Oh, Miles ! ”

“ I think,” he said, “ that I have been yours ever since that day you kissed me, when you were ten years old. There was magic in your lips even then. They sealed me yours, though I had no idea then that you would come to such splendour of beauty.”

“ Nonsense ! ”

“ You must let me tell you the truth for once, Pixie. You are the most beautiful thing I ever saw.”

“ But I hope you are not in love with my looks only ? That would be very disappointing. I feel as if there were something much deeper between us. You seem to know what I mean, and what I want, and I have the same perception where you are concerned. Now at Gray Ashted, I could see what *they* wanted, and with a little trouble, I could make myself the kind of person they wanted me to be. But they never knew, nor cared to know, what *I* wanted, nor what kind of person I really was.”

“ I know what you mean,” he replied, “ but you must consider that in giving up Gray Ashted you are giving up a great deal. I am not a bit rich, and I like a quiet country life. I’m afraid we shall have to be here most of the year—there is so much to be done, and it wants personal supervision. Shall you mind living here ? ”

“ Mind ? ” Her glowing eyes reassured him. “ I have always loved Fendallscombe. If I lived permanently the kind of life I lived up there, I should be choked with weeds, and grow selfish and artificial.