UNCLE MAX.

CHAPTER XX.-Continued. "Wait a moment, Mrs. Maberley, please.

I am deeply interested; but would Gladys—
would Miss Hamilton like me to know all

"To be sure she would,—though perhaps we would not care for the pain of telling it herself; but it would be better for you to hear it from me than from Mrs. Barton, or Mrs. Drabble, or any other gessiping person that takes it into her head to tell you, for you could not be much longer at Heathfield without hearing of it, when, as I say, every Jack and Tom in the village knows it,— though how it all got about is more than I can say. I tell the colonel, Leah must have had a hand in it: I know it was she who told

Tracy.' I saw by this time that Mrs. Maberley had quit; made up her mind to tell me the story hers if; she was garrolous, like many other old ladies, and perhaps she enjoyed a little gossip about her neighbors, so I only essayed one other feeble protest.

"I hope Mr. Hamilton will not mind-

but she answered me quite briskly,—
"Well, poor fellow, he knows by this time
people will talk; I dare say he thinks Mr. Cunliffe has told you. Now, I do not want to blame Mr. Hamilton; he is a great favorite of mine ever since he cured the colonel's gout, and I would not be hard on him for worlds; but I have always been afraid that he did not rightly understand Eric: the brothers were so different. Mr. Hamilton is very hardworking and rather matter-of-fact, and Eric was quite different, more like a girl, dreamy and enthusiastic and terribly idle, and then he fancied himself an artist. Mr. Hamilton could not bear that."

"Why not? An artist's is a very good

profession. "Yes, but he did not believe in his talent : and then Ecic was intended for the law; his brother had sent him to Oxford, but he would not work, and he was extravagant, and got into debt,—and, oh, yes, there was no end of trouble. I do not know how it was," went on Mrs. Maberley, "but Eric always seemed in the wrong. Etta used to take his part,—which was a not and of her as Eric always. which was very good of her, as Eric could not bear her and treated her most rudely. Mr. Hamilton used to complain that Gladys encouraged him in his idleness; he sometimes came in here of an evening looking quite miserable, poor fellow, and would say that his sisters and Eric were leagued against him; that but for Etta he would be at his wits' end what to do. E ic would not obey him; he simply defied his authority; he was growing more idle every day, and when he remon-strated with him, Gladys took his part. Oh, dear, I am afraid they were all very wretch-

"You think Mr. Hamilton did not under stand his young brother."
"Well, perhaps not. You see, Mr. Hamil-

ton had not the same temptations; he was always steady and hard-working from a boy, and never cared much about his own comfort. As for getting into debt, why, he would have considered it wicked to do so. I know the colonel thought once or twice that he was a little hard on Eric. I remember his saying once 'that boys will be boys, and that all are not good alike, and that he must not use the curb too much.' It was a pity, certainly, that Mr. Hamilton was so angry about his painting. I dare say it was only a temporary craze. I am afraid, though, Eric must have behaved very badly. I know he struck his elder brother once. Anyhow, things went on from bad to worse; and one day a dreadful thing happened. A check of some value, I have forgotten the particulars, was stolen from Mr. Hamilton's desk, and the next day Eric disappeared." Was he accused of taking it?"

"To be sure. Leah saw him with her own eyes. You must ask Mr. Cunliffe about all memory is ant to he tres about details. I know Leah saw him with his hand in his brother's desk, and though Eric vowed it was only to put a letter there, --- a very impertinent letter that he had written to his brother,—still the check was gone, and, as they heard afterwards, cashed by a very fair young man at some London bank; and the next morning, after some terrible quarrel, during which Gladys fainted, poor girl, Eric disappeared, and the very next thing they heard of him, about three weeks afterwards, was that his watch and a pocket book belong-ing to him had been picked up on the Brighton beach close to Hove.

"Do you mean that this is all they have ever heard of him ?" "Yes. I believe Mr. Hamilton employed

every means of ascertaining his fate. some months he refused to believe that he was dead. I am not sure if Gladys believes it now. But Etta did from the first. He was weak and reckless enough for anything, she has often said to me. Of course it is terrible, and one cannot bear to think of it, but when a young man has lost his character he has not much pleasure in his life,"
"I do not think Miss Hamilton really be-

lieves that he is dead."

"Perhaps not, poor darling. But Mr. Hamilton has no doubt on the subject, my dear Miss Garston. He is much to be pitied he has never been the same man since Eric went. I am afraid that he repents of his harshness to the poor boy. He told the colonel once that he wished he had tried milder treatment." "One can understand Mr. Hamilton's feel-

ings so well. You are right, Mrs. Maberley: he is much to be pitied."

"Yes, and to make matters worse, Gladys was very ill, and refused to see or speak to him in her illness. I believe the breach is healed between them now; but she is not all

that a sister ought to be to him." "Perhaps Miss Darrell usurps her place." I replied, a little incautiously, but I saw my mistake at once. Mrs. Maberley was evi dently a devout believer in Miss Darrell's

merits. 'Oh, my dear, you must not say such Hamilton has told me over and over again that he does not know how he would have got through that miserable time but for his cousin Etta's kindness. She did every. thing for him, and nursed Gladys in her illness. I am sure she would have died but for Etta. Dear me! Flossie looks restless. Ido believe she hears her master's step outside.— Yes, Flossie, that is his knock.—But I wonder who he is bringing in with him." And Mrs. Ma berley straightened herself and smoothed the folds of her satin gown, and tried to look as usual, though there were tears in her bright eyes and her hands were a little tremulous. I do not know why I felt so sure that it would be Mr. Hamilton, but I was not at all surprised when he followed the tall old co) nel into the room. But he certainly looked astonished when he saw me.

" Miss Garston!" he ejaculated, darting one of his keen looks at me. But when he had shaken hands he sat down by Mrs.

Maberley somewhat silently.

I was rather sorry to see Mr. Hamilton, for our talk had unsettled me and made me I certainly saw him look at me more than once, as though something had aroused his suspicion. For the first time I was unwilling to an ounter one of those straight glances. I feel nervous in his presence. I was afraid he

but all the more I feit he was watching me.

I was anxious to put a stop to this uncomfortable state of things, but I could not silence

Mrs. Maberley, who was relating to her bus-band the story of poor Flossie's accident. My presence of mind and skill were so much lauded, and the colonel said so many civil things, that I felt myself getting hotter every

Mr. Hamilton came at last to my relief. "I think Miss Garaton resembles me in one thing, colonel. She hates to be thanked for and there doing her duty. You will drive her away if question. doing her duty. You will drive her away if you say any more about Flossie. Oh, I thought so," as I stretched out my hand for my hat: "I thought I interpreted that look aright. Well, I must be going too. I only brought him back safe to you, Mrs. Maberley. By the bye, colonel, I shall tell Gladys that you have never asked after her."

"My sweetheart, Gladys! To be sure I have not. Well, how is she, my dear fel-

have not. Well, how is she, my dear fellow?"

"As obstinate as ever, colonel. Came down-stairs to-day, and declares she will go to early service to-morrow, because it will be Christmas Day, and she has never missed your lap, in the dear old fashion, and then we yet. Women are kittle cattle to manage. can talk nicely. What a snug little room Now, Miss Garston, if you are ready I will this is! it looked just delicious when I came see you a little on your way."

whenever I had an hour to spare.

"I wish I had known you before, my dear. But there, we all make mistakes sometimes." And she patted me on the shoulder. "Edbrooke, will you see them out? He will be your friend forever, after your goodness to Flossie: won't you, Edbrooke?"
I never felt so afraid of Mr. Hamilton be-

fore. I was wondering what I should say to him, and hoping that he had not noticed my nervousness, when he startled me excessively by saying.—

"What makes you look so odd this evening? You are not a bit yourself, Miss Garston. Come! I shall expect you to confess. Mrs. Maberley is an old friend of mine, and I am very much attached to her. I should like to know what you and she have been talking about?"

It was too dark for Mr. Hamilton to see my face, so I answered, a little flippantly,—"I dare say you would like to know. Women are certainly not much more curious than men, after all.'

"Oh, as to that, I am not a bit curious, was the contradictory answer. "But all the same I intend to know. So you may as well make a clean breast of it."

"But-but you have no right to be so in quisitive, Mr. Hamilton."

"Again I say I am not inquisitive, but I mean to know this. Mrs. Maberley had been crying. I could see the tears in her eyes. You looked inclined to cry too, Miss Gafston. Now,"-after a moment's hesitation, as though he found speech rather difficult,—"1 know the dear old lady has only one fault. She is rather too fond of gossiping about her neighbors, though she does it in the kindest manner. May I ask if her talk this evening at all related to a family not a hundred miles away from Maplehurst?"

His voice sounded hard and satirical in the darkness. "I wish you would not ask me such a question, Mr. Hamilton," I returned, much distressed. "It was not my fault: I did not wish....." But he interrupted me.

"Of course; I knew it. When am I ever deceived by a face or manner? Not by yours, certainly. So my good old friend told you about that miserable affair! I wish she had held her tongue a little longer. I wish

But I burst out, full of remorse,-"Oh. Mr. Hamilton, I am so sorry! have no right to know, but indeed I was hardly to blame."

"Who says you are to blame?" he returned, so harshly that I remained silent: "it is no fault of yours if people will not be But all the know; your opinion of me is quite changed now, eh? You think me a hard-hearted taskmaster of a brother. Well, it does not matter: Gladys would have made you believe hat in time."

His voice was so full of concentrated bitterness that I longed to say something consoling; in his own fashion he had been kind to me

and I did not wish to misjudge him.
"I know your sister Gladys sufficiently to be sure that she will never act ungenerously by her brother," I returned, hotly. "Mr Hamilton, you need not say such things : it is not for me to judge."

"But all the same you will judge," he replied, moodily. "Oh, I know how you good women cling together: you know nothing o n man's nature; you cannot estimate his difficulties; because he has not got your sweet nature, because he cannot bear in solence patiently—Oh," with an abrupt-ness that was almost rude but for the con-cealed pain in his voice. "I am not going to excuse myself to you: why should I? I have only to account to my Maker and my own And he was actually walking conscience." off in the darkness, for we were now in sight of the parlor window, but I called him back so earnestly that he could not refuse to obey. "Mr. Hamilton, pray do not leave me like this; it makes me unbappy. Do you know

it is Christmas Eve?" "Weil, what of that?" with a short laugh. "People ought not to quarrel and be disagreeable to each other on Christmas Eve." "I am afraid, Miss Garston, that I do feel

intensely disagreeable this evening." "Yes, but you must try and forgive me all the same. I could not quite help myself; but indeed 1 do not mean to judge you or any one, and I should like you to shake hands.

"There, then," with a decidedly hearty grasp; and then, without releasing me, "So you don't think so very badly of me, after

"I am very sorry for you," was my prudent answer; "I think you have had a great deal to bear. Good-night, Mr. Hamilton." "Wait a minute; you have not answered my question. You must not have it all your own way. I repeat, has Mrs. Maberley given you a very bad impression of my character?"
"Certainly not; oh, she spoke most kindly; I should not have been afraid if you had heard the whole of our conversation."

"I wish I had neard of it." "She made me feel very sorry for you all.
Oh, what trouble there is in the world, Mr. Hamilton! It does seem so blind and foolish to sit in judgment on other people! how can we know their trials and temptations?"

"That is spoken like a sensible woman. Try to keep, a good opinion of us, Miss Garston : we shall be the batter for your friendship. Well, so we are friends again, and this little misuniferstanding is, healed: 1 so much the better : I should hate to quarrel with

you. Now run in out of the cold."

I hastened to bey him, but he stood at the gate until I had entered the House; his voice and manuer had quite changed during the last few minutes, and had had become strangely gentle, reminding me of his sister Gladya's voige in What a singular man he. was 1-and yet a felt sorry for him. "I wonder if he is really to blame!" I thought,

short thick locks of hair tossing roughly on her neck, turned quickly at my entrance.

'Jill l' "Yes, it is I, Ursie dear! Oh, you darling bear, what a time you have been?" Two strong arms pulled me down in the usual fashion, and a hot cheek was pressed lovingly against mine.

"Oh, Jill, What does this mean?" exclaimed, in utter amazement; but for a long time Jill only laughed and hugged me, and there was no getting an answer to my

CHAPTER XXI. "I RAN AWAY, THEN !"

"Now, Jill," I demanded, at last, taking her by the shoulders, "I insist on knowing what this means." And when I spoke in that tone Jill always obeyed me at once. So she shook her uutidy mane, and looked at me with eyes that were brinful of fun and naughtiness.

"Very well, Ursie dear, if you will know, you shall; but first sit down in that coseylooking chair, and I will put my albows in in, and Mrs. Barton made me such a nice cup I knew it was no good to remonstrate, so I held my peace. Mrs. Maberley kissed me quite affectionately, and begged me to come one: so you are not so poor and miserable, after all."

"I am not at all poor, thank you; and I work so hard that I think I deserve to be warm and comfortable. And when people live alone, a fire is a nice, cheerful com-panion. But this is not answering my ques-

tion, Jocelyn."

Now, Jill hated me to call her Jocelyn, so she made a face at me, and said, in rather a grummy voice, "Well, I ran away, then!" "Ran away from Hyde Park Gate! Were you mad, Jili !"

"Oh, dear, no,-not from Hyde Park Gate. Did you not get my letter? Oh, I remember, I forgot to post it: it is in my blotting case now. Then you did not know that Sara has scarlatina?"

"No, indeed; but I am very sorry to hear

"Oh, she is nearly well now; but no one knows how she caught it. There was a terrible fuss when Dr. Armstrong pronounced it scarlatina. Mamma made father take lodgings at Brighton at once, and Fraulein and I were packed off there at a minute's notice. You can fancy what my life has been for the last ten days, mewed up in a dull,

ugly parlor with that old cat."
"My poor, dear Jill! But why did you not write to me, and I would have come over

at once? "So I did write, twice, and I do believe that horrid creature never posted my letters, -I dare say they are in her pocket now,and I could not get out by myself until to-day. Now just think, Ursula, what a sort of Christmas day I was likely to have; and then you never came to me, and I got desperate; so when Fraulein said she had one of her

headaches," and here Jill made a comical grimace, "I just made up my mind to take French leave, and spend Christmas day with you, and here I am; and scold me if you dare, and I will hug you to death." And, indeed, Jill's powerful young arms were quite capable of fulfilling her threat.

"It is not for me to soold you," I replied, quietly; "but I am afraid you will get into trouble for this piece of recklessness. Think how frightened poor Fraulein will be when she misses you.'

"Poor Francein, indeed! a deceitful creature like that. Why, Ursula, what do you think? I just peeped into her room to be sure that she was safe and it was all dark: she was not there at all. Oh, oh, my lady, I said to myself, so that is your little game, is Frankein Hennig was still there, and when heard that she was having tea I nearly laughed in his face. What do you think of that for an instructress of youth,—getting up the excuse of a headache, and leaving me over those stupid lessons, while she paid a visit on her own account? Does she not deserve a thorough good fright as a punishment?"

"I think Aunt Philippa ought to be un deceived. I have never trusted Fraulein Hennig since you told me she shut herself up in her bedroom to read novels. Jill, my dear, you have acted very wrongly, and I am afraid we shall all get into trouble over this school girl trick of yours. I must think what is best o be done under the circumstances.'

"You may think as much as you like," returned Jill. obstinately, "but I have come to spend my Christmas day with you, and nothing will induce me to go back to Fraulein: I shall murder her if I do. Now, Ursie, darling," in a coaxing voice, "do be nice, and make much of me. You can't think how delicious it is to see your face again; it is such a dear face, and I like it so much better than Sara's and Lesbla's." I was unable to reply to this flattering

speech, for Jill suddenly put up her hand—I noticed it was a little inky—and said, Hark, there is some one coming up to the donr!" and for the mement we both believed that it was Fraulein; but, to Jill's immense relief, it was only Mr. Tudor, with a great bough of holly in his hand.

"We have just finished at the church, and I have brought you this, Miss Garston," he began, and then he stopped, and said, "Miss Jocelyn here!" in a tone of extreme surprise. and Jill got up rather awkwardly and shook hands with him. I could see that she felt shy and uncomfortable. I was very pleased to see Mr. Tudor, for I knew he would help

us in this emergency. Jill was such a child. in spite of her womanly proportions, that I was sure that her escapade would not seriously shock him; he was young enough himself to have a fellow-feeling for her; and I was not wrong. Mr. Tudor locked decidedly smart for the evening. Jill seldom troubled amused when I told him Jill had taken her head about such sublunary affairs as French leave. He tried to look grave until I dress. had finished, but the effort was too much for him, and he burst out laughing.

Jill, who was looking very sulky, was so charmed by his merriment that she began to laugh too, and we were all as cheerful as possible until I called them to order, and asked Mr. Tudor if he would send off a telegram at

"A telegram! Oh, Ursula!" And Jill's dimples disappeared like magic.
"My dear, Fraulein would not have a

moment's sleep to night if she did not know you were safe. Do not be afraid, Jill: we will spend our Christmas day together, in spite of all the Frauleins in the world." And then I wrote off the telegram, and a short note, and gave them to Mr. Tudor. The telegram was necessarily brief :

Joselyn, safe with me. Will not return until Thursday. Write to explain," and The note was more explanatory. I apologized profusely to Fraulein for her

pupil's naughtiness, but begged her to say nothing to her mother, as I would communicate myself with Aunt Philippa and let her know what had happened. Under the circumstances I thought it better to keep Jocelyn with me over Christmas day, until I heard from Aunt Philippa. But she might depend on my bringing her back myself.

felt guilty, as though I must avoid his eyes, huddled up before the grate; a head, with had been reading the letter over my shoulder. "How can you orings so to that creature?"
"I consider it a masterpiece of diplomacy,"
observed Mr. Tudor, as I handed it for his inspection. "Civil words pay best in the long run; and you know it was very naughty

to run away, Miss Jocelyn."

to run away, Miss Jocelyn."

"It was nothing of the kind," returned Jill, rebelliously. "And I would do it again to-morrow. I am more than sixteen; I am "I want to go up to town for a d not a child now, and I have a right to come and see Ursula if I like." And Jill threw back her head, and the color came into her face, and she looked so handsome that I was little longer. She is very much improved. I not surprised to see Mr. Tudor regard per had no idea that there was so much in her:

was gone. But I think she liked him very well on the whole; and, indeed, no one could dislike such a bright, kind-hearted fellow. As soon as he had left the house I had to call a council. It was quite certain my bed would not hold Jill: so, at Mrs. Barton's sugges-tion, some spare mattresses were dragged in my room and a bed made up on the floor. Jill voted this delicious; nothing could have pleased her more, and she was so talkative and excited that I had the greacest trouble in coaxing her to be quiet and let me go to sleep: in fact, I had to teign sleep to make her hold her tongue. But I was much too restless to sleep, and

once when I crept out of bed to replenish the fire I stood still for a moment to look at Jill. She was sleeping as placidly as an infent in its cradle, her short black locks pushed back from her face, and one arm stretched on the coverlet. I was surprised to see how fine Jill's face really was. The ugly duckling, as Uncle Brian called her, was tast changing into a swan. At present she was too big and undeveloped for grace; her awkward manners and angularities made people think her rough and uncouth. "I expect she will eclipse Sara's commonplace prettiness some day; but, poor child, no one understands her," I sighed, and as I tucked her up more warmly, with a kiss, Jill's sleepy arms found their way to my neck and held me there. "Is not it delicious, Ursie dear?" she mur-

mured, drowsily. I was glad to see that Miss Hamilton was at the early service. She looked pale and delicate, but there was a brighter look upon her face when she nodded to me in the porch. Her brother was putting her into a fly, and Miss Darrell and Lady Betty followed.

I was rather surprised to see him close the door after them and step back into the porch. And the next moment he joined us.

"Well, Miss Garston," holding out his naturally reserved. She would find it easier hand, with a friendly smile, "you see Gladys to be open with you."

contrived to have her way. A happy Christmas to you! But I see you are not alone," what does it matter what I chink? There is looking rather inquisitively at Jill, who looked very big and shy as usual.

"I think you have heard of my cousin Jocelyn?" I returned, without entering into any further particulars. I should have been sorry for Jill's escapade to reach Mr. Hamil ton's ears. But he shook hands with her at at once, and said, very pleasantly, that he had heard of her from Mr. Cunliffe. And then, after a few more words, we parted.

to recall our stormy interview on the previous evening. Perhaps he wished to efface the recollection from my memory, for there was something significant in his smile, as though we perfectly understood each other. I had lain awake for a long time thinking

over Mrs. Maberley's talk and that uncomfortable walk from Maplehurst. Mr. Hamilton's voice and words haunted me; the suppressed irritation and pain that almost mastered him, and how he had flung away from me in the darkness.

I was glad to remember that I had called him back and spoken a conciliatory word. No doubt he had been to blame. I could few days he intended to remain in town. it? And, just to be certain, I rang at the imagine him hard and bitter to a fault. But him. As he said, what could I know of a man's nature? And I was still more glad not disturbed, and that there was peace beme feel more cheerful.

"What a strange-looking man!" observed Jill, in rather a grumbling voice, as we walked up the hill. "Is that Mr. Hamilton? I thought he was young; but he is quite old, Uraula." "No, dear, not more than three or four-

and-thirty, Uncle Max says."
"Well, I call that old," returned Jill, with

had got used to it myselt.
"Humph!" observed Jill, significantly.
But she did not explain the meaning of her satirical smile, and I proceeded to call her Miss Gillespie, who was most highly recom-attention to the hear-frost that lay on the mended as a well-principled and thoroughly cottage roof, and the beauty of the clear winter eky. "It is a glorious Christmas morn-ing," I finished.
We had a very merry breakfast, for Jill

was almost wild with spirits, and then we went to church again. Gladys was in her usual place, and looked round at me with a smile as I entered. When the service was over. I went to the Marshalt's, accompanied by Jill, who announced her intention of not letting me out of her sight, for I had to preside over the children's Christmas-dinner. and to look after my patient. We visited Robin next, and then went on to the Lockes', and Jill sat open-eyed and breathless in a corner of the room as I sang carols to Phoehe in the twilight.

She rose reluctantly when I put my hand on her shoulder and told her that we must hurry back to the cottage to make ourselves smart for the evening. Jill seldom troubled

"I shall be obliged to wear my old tweed," she said, contentedly. "I have only to smooth my hair, and then I shall be ready." And she grumbled not a little when I insisted on arranging a beautiful spray of holly as a breast knot, and twisting some very hard-some coral beads that Charlie had given me round her neck. Jill always looked better for a touch of warm color : the dark-red berries just suited her brown skin. "You will do better now," I said, pushing her away gently, "so you need not pout and hunch your shoulders. Have I not told you that it is your duty to make the best of yourself?we cannot be all handsome, but we need not offend our neighbors eyes." But, as usual, Jill turned a deaf ear to my philosophy.

The study looked very cosey when we

entered it, and Uncle Max gave us a warm welcome. To be sure, he shook his head at Jill, and told her that he was afraid she was prudently refrained from teasing her on the subject of her escapade. On the contrary, they treated her with profound respect, as though she were a grown-up, sensible young lady, and this answered with Jill. She grew bright and animated, forgot her shyness, and talked in her quaint racy manner. I could

amused him; and I am sure Uncle Max was equally surprised and pleased.

I could see Max was making strenuous efforts to be cheerful, but every now and then he relapsed into gravity. After dioner I drew him aside a moment to speak to him about Jill: to my relief, he promised to be

"I want to go up to town for a day or two," he said, "and I may a well do this business for you. How happy the child looks, Ursula! I wish you could keep her a attentively. I never saw a face so capable of abe will be far more attractive than Sara varying expression as Jill's.

Jill declared she was glad when Mr. Tudor of vanlty." And I fully endorsed this opi-

We went home early, for I could see Max. was very tired, but both he and Mr. Tudor insisted on escorting us. It was a beautiful starlight night, clear and frosty: our footsteps rang crieply on the ground: not a breath of wind stirred the skeleton branches that stretched above our heads: a solemn peacefulness seemed to close us round. Jill's mirthful laugh quite startled the echoes. She and Mr. Tudor were following very slowly. Once or twice we stood still and waited for them, but Mr. Tudor was in the middle of some amusing story, and so they took no notice of us.

I told Max about my visit to Mrs. Maberley, and of the conversation that had taken place between us. I thought he started a little when I mentioned Eric Hamilton's

name. "What a pity!" he said, quietly. "I had hoped she would have told you herself. I was waiting for her to do so. "But, Max, surely you might have told

me ?' "Who ?-I? I should not have presumed. You must remember that I was in Hamilton's confidence, and," after a moment's hesitation, "in her's too. Ursula," with a sudden passionate inflexion in his voice, "you have no idea how she loved that poor boy, and how she suffered: it nearly killed her. Now you know why I say that she is lonely and wants a friend.

"But she has you, Max," I exclaimed, involuntarily, for I knew what he must have been to them in their trouble; Max could be as tender as a woman; but he started aside as though I had struck him; and his voice was quite changed as he answered me.

"You mistake, Ursula. I was only her clergyman: if she confided in me it was because she could not do otherwise; she is

one question I want to ask: do you think Mr. Hamilton was at all to hlame?" "I am Hamilton's friend," he returned, in

a tene that made me regret that I had asked the question, and then he stood still and waited for the others to join us. Indeed, he did not speak again, except to wish us good-

night.
"It is the loveliest Christmas day I have ever spent," cried Jill, flinging herself en me, Mr. Hamilton was unusually genial this and she was no light weight. "I do like morning. There was nothing in his manner Mr. Tudor so; he is nicer than any one I know, more like a nice funny boy than a man. only he tells me he can be grave sometimes. What was the matter with Mr. Cunliffe ?he looks tired and worried and not inclined to laugh." And so Jill chattered on without waiting for my answers, talking in the very fulness of her young heart, until I pretended again to be seleep, and then she consented to

be quiet. I saw Max for a few minutes the next day hen he came to fetch my letter. He looked no.e like himself, only there was still a tired expression about his eyes; but he talked very cheerfully of what he should do during the

I made him promise to be very diplomatic bell at 37 Brunswick Place, where the he had suffered; there were lines upon his with Aunt Philippa, and he most certainly bell at 37 Brunswick Place, where the Schumackers live, and asked the servant if face that had been traced by no common except the word, for the next morning I reschumackers live, and asked the servant if face that had been traced by no common except the word, for the next morning I resolved a letter that surprised us both, and that drove Jill nearly frantic with joy.

Aunt Philippa's letter was very long and when I saw Mr. Hamilton in the church rambling. She began by expressing herself porch, and knew that the day's harmony was as deeply shocked and grieved at Jocelyn's not disturbed, and that there was peace be behavior, which was both dishonorable and tween us. His bright, satisfied smile made | unlady-like, and had given her father great "Dear old dad! I don't believe it," pain. observed Jill, pursing her lips at this. Aunt Philippa regretted that she could no

longer trust her young daughter, -she was sure Sara would never have behaved so at her age,—and she felt much wounded by Jozelyn's defiant action. At the same time, she was equally deceived in Fraulein Hennig, she was certainly more to blame than Jocelyn. Mr. the obstinacy of sixteen. "He is an old Cunliffe had told her things that greatly surbachelor, too, for of course nobody wants to prised her. Uncle Brian was very ungry, marry him; he is too ugly."

"Oh, Jill, how abourd you are! Mr. Hamilton is not ugly at all. You will soon get used to his face. It is only rather peculiar." And I quite meant what I said, for I as a favor to herself and Uncle Brian to keep Joselyn with me until they went to Hastings. Mr. Conliffe knew of a finishing governess, a cultured person, only she would not be at liberty for three or four weeks. As I reached this point of Aunt Philippa's letter, I was obliged to lay it down to prevent myself from

being strangled. "Well, Jill, there is no need to hug me to death: it is Uncle Max that you have to

thank, and not me.' "Yes, but you see it would never do to hug him, for he is not a bit my uncle, so I am doing it by deputy," observed Jill, recklessly. "Oh, Ursula, what a darling you jare! and what a dear fellow he is! To think of my staying here three or four weeks! You will let me help you nurse people, won't

yeu?" very coaxingly.
"We will see about that presently; but, Jill, you have never opened your mother's letter. Now, as it is perfectly impossible that you can sleep on the floor for weeks, and as I do not intend to keep such a chatterbox in my room, I am going to see what Mrs. Barton advises." And, leaving Jili to digest Aunt Philippa's scolding as well as she could, I went in search of the little widow.

I found, to my relief, that there was another room in the cottage, though it could not boast of much furniture beyond a bed and wash-stand: so, after a little consideration, 1 started off to the vicarage to hold a consulta-

tion with Mrs. Drabble. The upshot of our talk was so satisfactory, well in my service, that when bed time came her one day, when I was in the conservatory Jill found harself the possessor of quite a snug room. There were curtains up at the window, and strips of carpet on the floor. A dressing table had been improvised out of a talking in such a disagreeable, sneering voice to Miss Hamilton, only I stopped, my ears and covered with clean and would not listen. And now she has got dressing table had been improvised out of a deal packing case, and covered with clean dimity. Jill's travelling box stood in one used to me she says unpleasant little things corner, and on the wall there was a row of before my face. and then when adear Cousin neat pags for Jill's dresses. Jill exclaimed at Giles' comes in and here Jill looked wicked the clean trim look of the room, but I am sure she regretted her bed on the floor. She charming, in fact. Now, that is what I hate, the clean trim look of the room, but I am sure she regretted her bed on the floor. She a naughty girl, but both he and Mr. Tudor came down presently in her scarlet dressinggown to give me a final hug and reiterate her

petition for work. "Mamma has talked a lot of rubbish about my keeping up my studies and practising two hours a day, and she means to disinfect my books and send them down, but I have made up my mind that I will not open one. I am see that Mr. Tudor was much taken with her. going to enjoy myself, and nurse sick people "It is far too polite," growled Jill, who She was so different from the stereotyped and do real work, instead of grinding away

young lady; her cleverness and originality at that stupid German." And Jill set her little white teeth, and looked determined, to I thought it best not to contradict her. "I am so glad Uncle Max thought of Miss

Gillespie, dear.'
Who is she? I hate her already. I ex pect she is only an Anglicized Fraulein," observed Jill, with a vixenish look,

You are quite wrong. Miss Gillespie is Scotch, and she is very nice and good, and pretty too, for I have often heard Uncle Max talk of her. Her father was Max's great friend, and at his death the daughters obliged to go out in the world. Miss Gillespie is the eldest. No, she is not very young, nearly forty, I believe, but she is so nice. looking; she was engaged to a clergyman, but he died; and they had been engaged so many years, and so now she will not marry, She is very cheerful, however, and all her pupils love her, and I am sure you will be happy with her, Jill."

Jill would not quite allow this, but the next cay she recurred to the audject, and asked me a good many questions about Miss Gillespie, and when I told her that it was settled that Miss Gillespie should join them at Hastings she really looked quite plessed; but nothing would induce her to open the case of books Aunt Philippa had sent down, and when I told Uncle Max he only laughed

"Let her be as idle as she likes. She is over-educated now, and knows far more than most girls of her age. Take her about with you, and make her useful." And I followed this advice implicitly, but for a different reason,—there was no keeping Mr. Tudor out of the house: so when I was engaged, and Jill could not be with me, I took advantage of a general invitation that Miss Hamilton had

given me, and sent her op to Gladwyn. They were all very kind to her, and she seemed to amuse Miss Darrell, but after a time Mr. Tudor began going there too, and then indeed I should have been at my wits' end, only Mrs. Maberley came to my rescue. She took a fancy to Jill, and Jill reciprocated it, and presently she and Lady Betty hegan to spend most of their idle hours at Maple. hurst.

CHAPTER XXII.

"THEY HAVE BLACKENED HIS MEMORY FALSELY."

I loved having Jill with me, but I could not deny to myself or other people that I found her a great responsibility. In the first place, I had so little leisure to devote to her. for just after Christmas I was unusually busy. Poor Mrs. Marshall died on the eve of the new year, and both Mr. Hamilton and I feared that Elspeth would soon follow her. A hard frost had set in, and grannie's feeble strength seemed to succumb under the pres sure of the severe cold; she had taken to her ted, and lay there growing weaker every day. Poor Mary had died very peacefully, with her hand in her busband's. I had been with her all day, and I did not leave until it

was all over. Jill was as good as gold, and hefped me with Elspeth and the children, and she atways spent an hour or two with Robin; but by and by she began a king me to go up to Gladwyn of her own accord, or proposing to

have tea with Mrs Maberley.

"Of course I would prefer to stop with you, Ursie, dear," she said, affectionately;
"I would rather talk to you than to any one else; but then, you see, you are never at home, and when you do come in, poor darling, you are so tired that you are only fit for a nap." And I could not deny that this was the truth. After my hard day's work I was not always disposed for Jill's lively chatter, and yet her bright face was a very pleasant sight for tired eyes.

I used to question her sometimes about her visits to Gladwyn, and she was always ready to talk of what had passed in the day. She and Lady Betty had struck up quite a friendship: this rather surprised me, as they were utterly dissimilar, and had different tastes and pursuits. Jill was far superior in intelligence and intellectual power; she had wider and sympathies, too; and though Lady Betty had a fund of originality, and was fresh and naive I could hardly understand Jill's fancy for her,

until Jill said one day,—
"I do like that dear Lady Betsy, she is such a crisp little piece of human goods; no one has properly unfolded her, or tested her good qualities; she is quite new and fresh, a novelty in girls. One never knows what she will say or do next: it is that that fascinates me, I believe; because," went on Jill, and her great eyes grew bright and puzzled, "it is not that she is clever; one gets to the bot-tom of her at once; there is not enough depth

to drown you.' Jill did not take so readily to Gladys; she a imired her, even liked her, but frankly owned that she found her depressing. "If I talk to her long, I get a sort of ache over me,' she observed, in her graphic way. "It is not that she looks dreadfully unhappy, but that there is no happiness in her face. Do you know what I mean? for I am apt to be vague. It rests me to look at you, Ursula; there is something quiet and comfortable in your expression; now, Miss Hamilton looks as though she had lost something she values, or never had it, and must go on looking for it, like that poor ghost lady who wanted to find her

l sat pearl.' Jill never could be induced to say much in Mr. Hamilton's favor, though he was very civil to her and paid her a great deal of attention. "Oh, him!" she would say, contemptuously, if I ever hazarded an observation: "I never take much notice of oddlooking, ugly men: they may be clever, but they are not in my line. Mr. Hamilton stares too much for my taste, and I don't believe he is kind to his sisters; they are half afraid of him." And nothing would induce her to alter her opinion.

But Miss Darrell thoroughly amused her. Jill's shrewd, honest eyes were hardly in fault there: she used to narrate with glee any little fact she could glean about "the lady with two faces," as she used to call her. "Oh, she is a deep one," Jill would say. "I could not understand her at first. thought she was just bright and talkative and good-natured, and I thought it nice to sit and listen to her, and she was very kind, and petted me a good deal, and I did not find her out at first,"

"Find her out! what do you mean, Jill?" I asked, innocently. "Why, that she is not good-natured a bit,

really," with a sagacious nod of her head. She keeps a stock of smiles for Cousin Giles and any chance visitor. She is not half so nice and charming when Miss Hamilton and and Mrs. Barton and Nathaniel worked so Lady Betty are alone with her. Oh, I heard and would not listen. And now she has got before my face, and then when Adear Cousin for a person to wear two faces, and have different voices: it shows they are not true." "Well, perhaps you are right, dear;" for, without being uncharitable to Miss Darrell, I

wished to put Jill on her guard a little. (To be Continued.)

Ella says that she loves the bustle in a large city. It does look rather ridiculous in the country, that's a fact.