UNCLE MAX.

CHAPTER XL.-Continued.

"Still, he would have come to me and told me so," she replied, quickly. "He is not weak or wanting in moral courage : if he had not changed to me he would have come.

"I have never had hope since that day, she went on, mournfully. "He is very kind to me,—ve y; but it is only the kindness of a friend. He tries to hide from me how much he is disappointed in me, how I have failed to come up to his standard; but of course I see it. But for Etta I should have resumed my wer't. You were present when he nearly persuad d me to do so; I was longing then to lease him; I think it would be a consolation to me if I could do something, however humble, to help him; but Etta always prevents them?" I asked myself, but always fruitme from doing to. She has taken all my
work, and I do not think she wants to give it
girl, who has never harmed her? Why does up, and she makes me ready to sink through the floor with the things she says. I dare not open my lips to Mr. Cunliffe in her presence; she always says afterwards how anxious I looked, or how he must have noticed my agitation: if I ever came down to see you, Ursula, she used to declare angrily that I only went in the hope of meeting him. She thinks nothing of telling me that I am so weak that she must protect me in spite of myself, and sometimes she implies that he sees it all and pities me, and that he has hinted as much to her. Oh, Ursula, what is the matter?" for I had pushed away my chair and was walking up and down the room, unable to endure my irritated feelings. She had suffered all this ignominy and prolonged torture under which her nerves had give way, and now Max's ridiculous scruples hindered me from giving her a word of comfort. Why could I not say to her, "You are wrong: you have been deceived; Max has never swerved for one instant from his love to you?" And yet I must not say it. I cannot sit down! I cannot bear it!" I

exclaimed, recklesely, quite forgetting how necessary it was to keep her quiet; but she put out her hand to me with such a beautiful sad smile.

"Yes, you must sit down and listen to what I have to say: I will not have you so disturbed about this miserable affair, dear. The pain is better now; one cannot suffer in that way forever. I do not regret that I have learned to love Max, even though that love is to bring me unhappiness in this world. He is worthy of all I can give him, and one day in the better life what is wrong will be put right; I always tell myself this when I hear people's lives are disappointed : my illness has taught me this.'

I did not trust myself to reply, and then all at once a thought came to me: "Gladys, when I mentioned Captain Hamilton's name just now-I mean at the commencement of our conversation-why did you seem so troubled? He is nothing to you, and yet the very mention of his name excited you. This perplexes me."

She hesitated for a moment, as though she feared to answer: "I know I can trust you, Ursula; but will it be right to do so? I mean, for other people's sake. But, still, if Etta be talking about him——" She paused, and seemed absorbed in some puzzling problem.
"You write to him very often," I hazarded

at last, for she did not seem willing to speak. Who told you that?" she returned, "Claude is my cousin, -at least auickly. step-consin, -but we are very intimate: there can be no harm in writing to him."

"No, of course not: but if people miscon strue your correspondence?"

"I cannot help that," rather despondently: "and I do not see that it matters now; but still I will tell you, Ursula. Claude is in love with Lady Betty. "With Lady Betty?"

"Yes, and Giles does not know. Etta did not for a long time, but she found out about it, and since then poor Lady Betty has had no peace. You see the poor children conhas promotion. She has got an idea that he place. would not allow of the engagement; it sounds wrong, I feel that; but in our unhappy house-

hold thing; are wrong."
"And Miss Darrell knows?"

"Yes; but we never could tell how she found it out: Claude corresponds with me, and Lady Betty only puts in an occasional letter; she is to dreadfully frightened, poor little thing ! for fear her secret should be dis-We think that Etta must have opened one of my letters; anyhow, she knows all there is to know, and she holds her knowledge as a rod over the poor child. She has promised to keep her counsel and not tell Giles; but when she is in one of her tempers she threatens to speak to him. Then she is always hinting things before him just to tease or punish Lady Betty, but happily he takes no notice. When you said what you did I was afraid she had made up her mind to keep silence no longer. "Why do you think your brother would object to Captain Hamilton?" I asked, trying

to conceal my relief at her words.
"He would object to the long concealment," she returned, gravely. "But from the first I wanted Lady Betty to be open about it; but nothing would induce her to let Claude write to bim. Our only plan now is to wait for Claude to speak to him when he arrives in November. Nothing need be said about the part : Claude has been wounded. and will get promotion, and Giles thinks well of him.

She seemed a little weary by this time, and our talk had lasted long enough; but there was still one thing I must ask her.

"Gladys, you said you trusted me just now. I am going to put that trust to proof. All that has passed between us is sacred, and shall never cross my lips. On my womanly honor I can promise you that; but I make one reservation, -what you have just told me about Captain Hamilton.

She looked at me with an expression of in

credulous alarm. What can you mean, Ursula? Surely not to repeat a single word about Claude ?" "I only mean to mention to one person. with whom the knowledge will be as safe as | not be disappointed; I have very little to it will be with me, that Lady Betty is en-

gaged to your cousin Claude."
"You will tell Mr. Cunliffe," she replied, "I forbid it, becoming very pale again. "I forbid it, Ursula!" But I hindered all further remonstrance on her part, by throwing my arms round her and begging her with tears in my eyes, and with all the earnestness of which I was capable, to trust me as I would trust her

in such a case. "Listen to me," I continued, imploringly. "Have I ever failed or disappointed you have I ever been untrue to you in word or deed? Do you think I am a woman who would betray the sacred confidence of another

"No, of course not; but-" Here my

hand resolutely closed her lips.

"Then say to me, 'I trust you, Ursula, as I would trust my own soul. I know no word would pass your lips that if I were standing by you I should wish unuttered.' Say this to me, Gladys, and I shall know you love

She trembled, and turned still paler. Why need he know it? What can he

have to do with Lady Betty?" she said, ir-"Leave that to me," was my firm answer;

"I am waiting for you to say those words, Then she put down her head on my shoulder, weeping bitterly.

"Yes, yes, I will trust you. In the whole world I have only you, Ursula, and you have been good to me." And, as I soothed and comforted her, she clung to me like a tired

CHAPTER XLI.

"AT FIVE O CLOCK IN THE MORNING."

I passed a wakeful and anxious night, pondering over this strange recital that seemed to me to corroborate Max's account. I had no doubt in my own mind as to the treachery that had alienated these two hearts. I knew too well the subtle power of the smooth false tongue that had done this mischief; but the motive for all this evil-doing baffled me. "What is her reason for trying to separate she render her life miserable? It is she who has sown discord between Mr. Hamilton and myself. Ah, I know that well, but I am powerless to free either him or myself at present. Still, one can detect a motive for that. She has always disliked me, and she is jealous of her position. If Mr. Hamilton married she could not remain in his house; no wife could brook such interference. She knows this, and it is her interest to prevent him from marrying. "All this is clear enough; but in the case of poor Gladys?" But here again was the old tangle and perplexity.

I was not surprised that Gladys slept little that night : no doubt agitating thoughts kept her restless. Towards morning she grew quieter, and sank into a heavy sleep that I knew would last for two or three hours. I had counted on this, and had laid my plan accordingly.

I must see Uncle Max at once, and she must not know that I had seen him. In her weak state any suspense must be avoided. The few words that I might permit myself to say to him must be spoken without her know-

ledge.

I knew that in the summer Max was a ver early riser. He would often be at work in his garden by six, and now and then he would start for a long country walk, -"just to see Dame Earth put the finishing-touches to her toilet," he would say, But five had not struck when I slipped into Chatty's room half dressed. The girl looked at me with round sleepy eyes as 1 called her in a low

"Chatty, it is very early, not quite five, but I want you to get up and dress yourself as quietly as you can and come into the turret-room. I am going out, and I do not want to wake anybody, and you understand the fastenings of the front door. I am afraid I should only bungle at them."

"You are going out, ma'am!" in an as-onished voice. Chatty was thoroughly tonished voice. awake now.

"Yes. I am sorry to disturb you, but I do not want Miss Gladys to miss me. I shall not be long, but it is some business that I must do." And then I crept back to the turret-room.

Leah slept in a little room at the end of the passage, and I was very unwilling that unusual sound should reach her ears. Chatty seemed to share this feeling, for when she joined me presently she was carrying her shoes in her hands. "I can't help making a noise," she said, apologetically; "and so I crept down the passage in my stockings. If you are ready, ma'am, I will come and let you out.

I stood by, rather nervously, as Chatty manipulated the intricate fastenings. I asked her to replace them as soon as I had gone, and to come down in about half an hour and open the door leading to the garden. "I will return that way, and they will only think I have taken an early stroll," I observed. I was rather sorry to resort to this small subterfuge before Chatty, but the girl had implicit trust in me, and evidently thought no harm; she only smiled and nodsider themselves engaged, but Lady Betty ded; and as I lingered for a moment on the will not let Claude speak to Giles until he gravel path I heard the bolt shoot into its ded; and as I lingered for a moment on the

> It was only half-past five, and I walked on leisurely. I had not been further than the garden for three weeks, and the sudden sense of freedom and space was exhilarating.

> It was a lovely morning. A dawy freshness seemed on everything; the birds were singing deliciously; the red curtains were drawn across the windows of the Man and Plough; a few white geese waddled across the green; some brown speckled hens were feeding under the horse-trough; a goat browsing by the roadside looked up, quite startled, as I passed him, and butted slowly at me in a reflective manner. There was a scent of sweet-brier, of tall perfumy lilies and spicy carnations from the gardens. I looked at the windows of the houses I passed, but the blinds were drawn, and the bees and the flowers were the only waking things there. The village seemed asleep, until I turned the corner, and there, coming out of the vicarage gate, was Uncle Max himself. He was walk ing along slowly, with his old felt hat in his hand, reading his little Greek Testament as he walked, and the morning sun shining on his uncovered head and his brown beard.

He did not see me until I was close to him and then he started, and an expression of fear crossed his face.

"Ursula, my dear, were you coming to the vicarage? Nothing is wrong, I hope?" look-

ing at me anxiously.
"Wrong! what should be wrong on such morning?" I returned, playfully. "Is it not delicious! The air is like champagne only champagne never had the scept of those flowers in it. The world is just a big dewy bouquet. It is good only to be alive on such

morning. Max put his Greek Testament in his nocket and regarded me dubiously.

"Were you not coming to meet me, then It is not a quarter to six yet. Rather early tor an aimless stroll, is it not, my dear?"

"Oh, yes, I was coming to meet you," I returned, carelessly. "I thought you would be at work in the garden. Max, you are eyeing me suspiciously: you think I have something important to tell you. Now you must say, and I cannot answer questions; but there is one thing, I have found out all you wish to know about Captain Hamilton."

It was sad to see the quick change in his

face, -the sudden cloud that crossed it at the mention of the man whom he regarded as his rival. He did not speak; not a question came from his lips; but he listened as though my next word might be the death-warrant to his hopes.

"Max, do not look at me like that: there no cause for fear. It is a great secret, and you must never speak of it, even to me,—but Lady Betty is engaged to her cousin Claude." For a moment he stared at me incredu

lously. "Impossible! you must have been deceived," I heard him mutter.
"On the contrary, I leave other people to be duped;" was my somewhat cool answer. "You need not doubt my news: Gladys is my informant: only, as I have just told you, it is a great secret. Mr. Hamilton is not to know yet, and Gladys writes most of the lettens. Poor little Lady Betty is in constant terror that she will be found out, and they are waiting until Captain Hamilton has promotion and comes home in November."

He had not lost one word that I said: as he stood there, bareheaded, in the morning her defects. "I suppose he never sees her:

sunshine that was tingeing his beard with that is one reason," I thought, as I carried | had sealed it I had noiselessly left the room. gold, I heard his low, fervent "Thank God! up my roses. then it was that;" but when he turned to me his face was radiant, his eyes bright and vivid; there was renewed hope and energy in his aspect.

"Ursula, you have come like the dove with the olive-branch. Is this really true? It was good of you to come and tell me this." I do not see the goodness, Max."

"Well, perhaps not; but you have made me your debtor. I like to owe this to you,—
my first gleam of hope. Now, you must tell me one thing. Does Miss Darrell know of this engagement?"

"She does." "Stop a moment: I feel myself getting confused here. I am to ask no questions: you can tell me nothing more. But I must rake this clear to myself: How long has she) tint, without much color or gloss, always reknown, Ursula? a day? a week?"

"Suppose you substitute the word months," l observed, scornfully. "I know no dates, but Miss Darrell has most certainly been acquainted with her cousin's engagement for months."

"Oh, this is worse than I thought," he returned, in a troubled tone. "This is almost too terrible to believe. She has known all I suffered on that man's account, and yet she never undeceived me. Can women be so cruel? Why did she not come to me and say, frankly, 'I have made a mistake; I have unintentionally misled you: it is Lady Betty, not Gladys, who is in love with her cousin? Good heavens! to leave me in this ignorance, and never to say the word that would put me out of my misery !" I was silent, though silence was a torture

to me. Even now the extent of Miss Darrell's duplicity had not clearly dawned on him. He complained that she had left him to suffer through ignorance of the truth : but the idea had not yet entered his mind that possibly she had deceived him from the first. 'Oh, the stupidity and slowness of these honorable men where a woman is concerned !' I groaned to myself; but my promise to Gladys kept me silent.

"It was too bad of her, was it not?" he said, appealing to me for sympathy; but I turned a deaf ear to this.

"Max, confess that you were wrong not to have taken my advice and gone down to Bournemouth: you might have spared yourself months of suspense."
"Do you mean---" And then he red-

dened and stroked his beard nervously; but I finished his sentence for him: he should not escape what I had to say to him.

"It is so much easier to come to an under standing face to face; but you would not take my advice, and the opportunity is gone. Gladys is in the turret-room: you could not gain admittance to her without difficulty: what you have to say must be said by letter; but you might trust that letter to me, Max.

He understood me in a moment. I could see the quick look of joy in his eyes. I had not betrayed Gladys, I had adhered strictly to my word that I would only speak of Lady Betty's engagement; and with his usual delicacy Max had put no awkward questions to me: he had respected my scruples, and kept his burning curiosity to himself. But he would not have been a man if he had not read some deeper meaning under my silence: he told me afterwards that the happy look in my eyes told him the truth.

So he merely said, very quietly, "You were right, and I was wrong, Ursula: I own my fault. But I will write now: I owe Miss Hamilton some explanation. When the letter is ready, how am I put it into your

"Oh," I answered, in a matter-of-fact way, as though we were speaking of some ordinary note, and it was not an offer of marriage from penitent lover, "when you have finished talking to Miss Darrell,—you will enjoy her "I am never too busy to see Uncle Max conversation, I am sure, Max; it will be both he knows that," I returned quickly. "Will to say to your niece Ursula, and would she kindly ask that young person to step down | sulkily into her own room. to you for a minute? and then, you see, that little bit of business will be done.

"Yes, I see; but—" but here Max hesitated—"but the answer, Uraula?"

'Oh. the answer?" in an cil-hand manner you must not be looking for that yet. My patient must not be hurried or flurried: you must give her plenty of time. In a day or two—well, perhaps, I might find an early stroll conducive to my health; these morn ings are so beautiful; and—— Nonsense. Max! I would do more than this for you; for quiet, undemonstrative Max had actually taken my hand and lifted it to his lips in token of his gratitude.

After this we walked back in the direction of Gladwyn, and nothing more was said about the letter. We listened to the rooks cawing from the elms, and we stood and watched lark rising from the long meadow before Maplehurst and singing as though its little throat would burst with its concentrated ecstasy of song; and when I asked Max if he did not think the world more beautiful than usual that morning, he smiled, and suddenly quoted Tennyson's lines, in a voice musical

All the land in flowery squares, Beneath a broad and equal-flowing wind, Smelt of the coming summer, as one large cloud

Drew downward; but all else of heaven wa pure

Up to the sun, and May from verge to verge, And May with me from heel to heel." "Yes, but Max, it is July now. The air

is too mellow for spring. Your quotation is not quite apt. "Oh, you are realistic; but it fits well Do you not remember how the

enough. poem goes on?

The garden stretches southward. In the midst

A cedar spread its dark-green layers of shrub. The garden-glasses shone, and momently The twinkling laurel scattered silver lights." always think of Gladwyn when I read that description."

I laughed mischievously: "I am sorry to leave you just as you are in a poetical vein but I must positively go in. Good-by, Max. I felt I had lingered a little too long when I saw the blinds raised in Mr. Hamilton's study. But apparently the room was empty. I sauntered past it leisurely, and walked down the asphalt path. On my return I picked one or two roses, wet with dew. As I raised my head from gathering them I saw Leah standing at the side door watching me.

"Oh, it was you," she grumbled. "I thought one of those girls had left the door unlocked. A pretty piece of carelessness that would have been to reach the master's ears! You are out early, ma'am."

I was somewhat surprised at these remarks, tor Leah had made a point of always passing me in sullen silence since I had refused her admittance into the sick-room. Her manner was hardly civil now, but I thought it best to answer her pleasantly. "Yes, Leah, I have taken my stroll early.

It was very warm last night, and I did not sleep well. There is nothing so refreshing as a morning walk after a bad night. I am going to take these roses to Miss Gladys." But she tossed her head and muttered something about people being mighty pleasant all of a sudden. And, seeing her in this mood, walked away. She was a bad-tempered, Coarse natured woman, and I could not under-stand why Mr. Hamilton seemed so blind to eyes; but before her trembling hands could

G'adys was still asleep. I had finished my breakfast, and had helped Chatty arrange the turret-room for the day, when I heard the long-drawn sigh that often preluded Gladya's waking. I hastened to her side, and found her leaning on her clow looking at my roses.

"They used to grow in the vicarage gar den," she said, wistfully. "Dark crimson ones, like these. I have been dreaming. And then she stopped and flung herself back wearlly on her pillow. "Why must one ever wake from such dreams?" she finished, with the old hopeless ring in her voice. "What was the dream, dear?' I asked,

smoothing her hair caressingly. It was fine, soft hair, like an infunt's, and its pule gold minded me of baby hair. I have heard people find fault with it. But when it was unbound and streaming in wavy masses over her shoulders it was singularly beautiful. She used to laugh sometimes at my admiration of her straw-colored tresses, or lint-white locks, as she called them. But indeed there was no tint that quite described the color of Gladys's hair.

"Oh, I was walking in some fool's paradise or other. There were roses in it like these. Well, another blue day is dawning, Ursula, and has to be lived through somehow. Will help in making everything clear. you help me to get up now?" But, though she tried after this to talk as usual, I could and I was not surprised that Mr. Hamilton grumbled a little when he paid his morning visit.

"How is this? You are not quite so comfortable to-day, Gladys," he asked, in a dis-satisfied tone. "Is your head aching again?" She reluctantly pleaded guilty to the headache. Not that it was much, she assured him; but I interrupted her.

"The fact is, she sat up too late last night, and I let her talk too much and over-exert herself." For I saw he was determined to come to the bottom of this

"I think the nurse was to blame there he returned, darting a quick, uncasy look at me. I knew what he was thinking: Miss Darrell's speech, that Miss Garston always excited Gladys, must have come into his

"If the nurse deserves blame she will take it meekly," I replied. "I know I was wrong to let her talk so much. I must enforce extra quiet to-day." And then he said no more. I do not think he found it easy to give me the scolding that I deserved. And, after all, I had owned my fault.

I had just gone out in the passage an hour later, to carry away a bowl of carnations that Gladys found too strong in the room, when I heard Uncle Max's voice in the hall. The front door was open, and he had entered without ringing. I was glad of this. door of the turret-room was closed, and Gladys would not hear his voice. I should manage to slip down without her noticing the

So I busied myselt in Lady Betty's room until I heard the drawing-room door open and close again, and I knew Miss Darrell was coming in search of me. I went out to meet her, with Gladys's empty luncheon tray in my hands. I thought she locked rather cross and put out, as though her interview with Uncle Max had disappointed her.

"Mr. Canliffe is in the drawing-room, and he would like to speak to you for a moment, she said. in a voice that showed me how un willing she was to bring me the message 'I told him that you never cared to be dis turbed in the morning, as you were so busy; but he was peremptory.'

pleasant and profitable,—you might mention you kindly allow me a few moments alone casually that there was something you wanted with him?" for she was actually preparing to follow me, but after this request she retired

I found Max standing in the middle of the room, looking anxiously towards the door: the moment it closed behind me he put a thick white envelope in my hand. "There it is, Ursula," he said, nervously

will you give it to her as soon as possible I have been literally on thorns the last quar ter of an hour. Miss Darr II would not take any of my hints that I wished to see you : so I was obliged at last to say that I could not wait another moment, and that I must ask her to fetch you at once."
"Poor Max! I can imagine your feelings;

but I have it safe here," tapping my aproupocket. "But you must not go jut yet." And I beckoned him across the room to the window that overlooked a stiff prickly shrub. He looked at me in some surprise. "We are alone, Ursula.'

"Yes, I know: but the walls have ears in this house: one is never safe near the conservatory: there are too many doors. Tell me, Max, how have you got on with Miss Darrell this morning?"

"I was praying hard for patience all the time," he replied, half laughing. "It was maddening to see her sitting there so cool and crisp in her yellow tea-gown-well, what germent was it?" as I uttered a dissenting isculation: "something flimsy and methetic. I thought her smooth sentences would never

stop."
"Did she notice any change in your man

ner to her?" "I am afraid so, for I saw her look at me quite unessily more than once. I could not conceal that I was terribly bored. I have no wish to be discourteous to a lady, especially to one of my own church workers; but after what has passed I find it very difficult to forgive her.

This was strong language on Max's part. could see that as a woman he could hardly tolerate her, but he could not bring himself to condemn her even to me. He hardly knew vet what he had to forgive: neither he nor Glalys had any real idea of the treachery that had separated them.

Max would not stay many minutes, he wa so afraid of Miss Darrell coming into the room again. I did rather an imprudent thing after that. Max was going to the Maberleys', for the colonel was seriously ill. so I begged him to go the garden way, and I kept him for a moment under the window of the turret-room.

I saw him glance up eagerly, almost hungrily, but the blinds were partially down, and there was only a white curtain flapping in the summer breeze. But an unerring instinct told me that the

sound of Max's voice would be a strong cordial to the invalid, it was so long since she had heard or seen him. As we sauntered under the oak-trees I knew Gladys would be watching us. On my return to the room I found her sit-

ting bolt upright in her arm-chair, grasping the arms: there were two spots of color on her cheeks; she looked nervous and excited. "I saw you walking with him, Ursula: he looked up, but I am glad he could not see me, Did—did he send me any message?" in a faltering voice. "Yes, he sent you this." And I placed the thick packet on her lap. "Miss Hamil-

ton,"—yes, it was her own name: he had written it. I saw her look at it, first incre-

CHAPTER XLII.

DOWN THE PEMBERLEY ROAD. Three-quarters of hour had elapsed before I ventured into the room again; but at the hrst sound of my footsteps Gladys looked up, and called to me in a voice changed and broken with happiness.

"Ursula, dear Ursula, come here." And as I knelt down beside her and put my arms round her she laid her cheek against my shoulder: it was wet with tears.

"Ursula, I am so happy. Do you know that he loves me, that he has loved me all brough these years? You must not see what he says; it is only for my eyes; it is what he says; It is only for my eyes, it I was rather a trial which her touch roused me too sweet and sacred to be repeated; but I out of a delicious dream; but one glance at

seemed to be a lump in my throat just then. I did not often repine, but the yearning sense of pain was strong on me. When would this cruel silence between me and Giles be broken? But Gladys, wrapt in her own blissful thoughts, did not notice my emotion. "He says that there is much that he can

only tell me by word of mouth, and that he dare not trust to a letter explanations for his silence, and much that I shall have to tell him in return: for we shall need each other's

"He seems to reproach himself bitterly, and asks my pardon over and over again for see the old restlessness was on her. A sort misunderstanding me so. He says my giving of feverish reaction had set in. She could up my work was the first blow to his hopes, settle to nothing, take pleasure in nothing; and then he had been told that I cared for my cousin Claude. He believed until this morning that I was in love with him; and it was your going to him-oh, my darling! how good you have been to me and him!—that gave him courage to write this letter, Ursula." And here she cried a little. "Was it Etta who told him this falsehood about Claude? How could she be so wicked and cruel?"

"Do not think about her to-day, my dear est," I returned, soothingly. "Her punishment will be great some day. We will not sit in judgment on her just now. She cannot

touch your happiness again, thank heaven!"
"No," with a sigh; "but, as Max says, it is difficult to forgive the person who is the chief source of all our trouble. He did say that, and then he reproached himself again for uncharitableness, and added that he ought to have known me better.

"He does not seem quite certain yet that I can care for him, and he bigs for just one word to put him out of his suspense, to tell him if I can ever love him well enough to be his wife. I don't want him to wait long for my answer. Ursula: he has suffered too much already. I think I could write a few words that would satisfy him, if I could only trust Chatty to take them."
"You had better wait until to-morrow

merning and intrust your letter to the 'five o'clock carrier.' " And as my meaning dawned on her her doubtful expression changed into a smile. "Do wait, Gladys," I continued, coaxingly. "It is very sulfish of me, perhaps, but I should like to give that letter to Max."

"You may have your wish, then, for I was half afraid of sending it by Chatty. I have grown so nervous, Ursula, that I start at a shadow. I can trust you better than myself. Well, I will write it, and then it will be safe in your hands." I went away again after this, and left her

alone in the quiet shady room. I fought rather a battle with myself as I paced up and down Lady Betty's spacious chamber. need I think of my own troubles? why could I not keep down this pain? I would think only of Gladys's and of my dear Max's happiness, and I dashed away hot tears that would keep blinding me as I remembered the chilly greeting of the morning. And yet once—but no; I would not recall that bittersweet memory. I left Gladys alone for an hour: when I went back she was leaning wearily against the cushions of her chair, the closely-written sheets still open on her lap, as though she needed the evidence of sight and touch to remind her that it was not part of her dream.

"Have you written your letter, Gladys?" short, only a few words. He will under stand that I am weak and cannot exert myself Will you read it, Ursula, and tell me

if it will do? I thought it better to set her mind at rest. so I took it without demur. The pretty, clear handwriting was rather tremulous: he

would be sorry to see that.
"My dear Mr. Cunliffe,"—it said,—"Your letter has made me very happy. I wish I coult answer it as it ought to be answered : but I know you will not misunderstand the

reason why I say so little.
"I have been very ill, and am still very weak, and my hand trembles too much when I try to write; but I am not ungrateful for all the kind things you say; it makes me very happy to know you feel like that, even though I do not deserve it.

"You must not blame yourself so much for misunderstanding me: we have both been deceived: I know that I now. It was wrong of me to give up my work; but Etta told me that people were saying unkind things of me, and I was a coward and listened to her : so you see I was to blame too.

"I have not answered your question yet, but I think I will do so by signing myself, think I will do so by Segarate "Yours, always and forever, "GLADYS."

"Will he understand that, Ursula?" "Surely, dear; the end is plain enough: vou belong to Max now."

"I like to know that," she returned, simply. "Oh, the rest of feeling that he will take care of me now! it is too good to talk about. But I hope I am sufficiently thankful." And Gladys's lovely eyes were full of solemn feeling as she spoke.

I thought she wanted to be quiet, -it was difficult for her to realize her happiness at once, -so I told her that I had some letters to write, and carried my desk into the next room, but she followed me after a time, and we had a long talk about Max.

When Mr. Hamilton came up in the evening he noticed the improvement in Gladys's appearance.

it would hurt me to have a drive to-morrow? I am so tired of these two rooms. A drive alone with Ursula would be delicious. We could go down the Redstone lanes towards Pemberley: one always has a whiff of sea-air there over the downs."

Gladys's request surprised me quite as much as it did Mr. Hamilton. She had proposed it in all innocence; no idea of encountering Max entered her head for a moment Gladys's simplicity would be incapable of laying plans of this sort. Her new-born happiness made hor anxious to lay aside her invalid habits; she wanted to be strong, to resume daily life, to breathe the fresh outer air. made hor anxious to lay aside her in-As for Mr. Hamiltan, he did not try to conceal his pleasure.

"I see we shall soon lose our patient nurse," he said, with one of his old droll looks. "She is anxious to make herself independent of us. Oh, you shall go, by all means. I will go round to the stable and tell Atkinson myself. It is an excellent idea, Gladys."

"I am so glad you do not object. I am so break the old-fashioned seal with which he much stronger this evening, and I have the soft shadows that lurked in the distant

wanted to go out for days; but, Giles," touching his arm gently, -"you will make Etta understand that I want to go alone with Ureula."

"Certainly, my dear." He would not cross her whim; she might have her way she liked; but the slight frown on his face showed that he was not pleased at this allu-sion to Miss Darrell. He thought Gladys was almost morbidly prejudiced against her cousin; but he prudently refrained from tell. ing her so, and Galys went to bed happy.

I had taken the precaution of asking Chatty

wake me the next morning. I had slept little the previous night, and was afraid that I might oversleep myself in consequence. It was rather a trial when her touch roused me too sweet and sacred to be repeated; Dut I out of a deliberation dream, but one giance at never dreamt that any one could care for me indolence. I dressed myself as quickly as I indolence. I dressed myself as quickly as I could, and then looked at my little clock. Chatty had been better than her word: it had not struck five yet.

Max would not be out for another hour, I thought, but all the same I might swell take advantage of the morning freshness: so I summoned Chatty to let me out as noise. lessly as possible, and then I stole through the shrubberies, breaking a silver-spangled cobweb or two and feeling the wet beads of dew on my face.

I walked slowly down the road, drinking deep draughts of the pure morning air. I had some thoughts of sitting down in the churchyard until I saw some sign of life in the vicarage; but as I turned the corner I heard a gate swing back on its hinges, and there was Max standing bareheaded in the road, as though he had come out to reconnoitre; but directly he caught sight of me two or three strides seemed to bring him to my side.

"Have you brought it?" he asked, breath.

lessly.
"Yes, Max" And I put the letter in his outstretched hand; and then, without look. ing at him, I turned quietly and retraced my steps. I would not wait with him while he read it; he should be alone, with only the sunshine round him and the birds singing their joyous melodies in his ear. No doub he would join his Te Deum with theirs, Happy Max, who had won his Lady of Delight!

But I had not quite crossed the green when I heard his footsteps behind me, and turned to meet him.

"Ursule, you naughty child! why has you run away without waiting to congratu late me? And yet I'll be bound you know the contents of this letter." "Yes, Max, and from my heart I wish you and Gladys every happiness.'

be happy." And the satisfaction in Max's brown eyes was pleasant to see. "She will need all the care and tenderness that I can give her. We must make her forget all these sad years. Do you think that she v

"Good little Ursula! Oh, yes, we that

centent at the old vicarage, Ursula? as he asked the question there was no doubt -no doubt at all-on his face. "I think she will be content anywhere with you, Max. Gladys loves you dearly."
"Ah," he said, humbly, "I know it now,
I am sure of it; but I wish I deserved my blessing. All these years I have known her goodness. She used to show me all that was in her heart with the simplicity of a child.

Such sweet frankness! such noble unselfish.

ness! was it a wonder that I loved her? If

I were only more worthy to be her hus-I liked Max to say this: there was nothing unmanly or strained in this humility. The man who loves can never think himself worthy of the woman he worships: his very affection casts a glamour over her. When I told Max that I thought his wife would be a happy woman, he only smiled and said that he hoped so too. He had not the faintest idea what a hero he was in our eyes; he would not have believed me if I had told him.

Max said very little to me after that: happiness made him reticent. Only, just as he was leaving me, I said, carelessly, "Max, do you ever go to Pemberley ?" "Oh, yes, sometimes, when the Calverleys

are at the Hall," he returned, rather ab-"Pemberley is a very pretty place," I went on, stopping to pick a little piece of sweet-brier that attracted me by its sweetness: "it is very pleasant to walk there through the Redstone lanes. There is a fine view over the down, and at four o'clock, for

example— "What about four o'clock?" he demanded and now there was a little excitement in his manner.
"Well, if you should by chance be in one

of the Redstone lanes about then, you might possibly see an open berouche with two ladies ın it.' "Ursula, you are a darling!" And Max seized my wrists so vigorously that he hurt me. "Four-did you say four o'clock?"
"It was very wrong of me to say anything

about it. Gladys would be shocked at my making an appointment. I believe you are demoralizing me, Max; but I do not mean t tell her." And then, after a few more eager questions on Max's part, he reluctantly let I had plenty to tell Gladys when she wok that morning, but I prudently kept part of

our conversation to myself. She wanted to know how Max looked when he got her let ter. Did he seem happy? had he sent he any message? And when I had satisfied her on these points she had a hundred other questions to ask. "I am engaged to him, and yet we cannot speak to each other," she finished, a little mournfully.

I turned her thoughts at last by speaking

about the promised drive. We decided sh should put on her pretty gray dress and bon net to do honor to the day. "It is a fete day, Gladye," I said, cheerfully, "and we must be as gay as possible." And she agree to this.

At the appointed time we heard the horse coming round from the stables, and Mr. Hamilton came up-stairs himself to fetch his sister. Chatty had told me privately that Miss Darrell had been very cross all day. She had wanted the carriage for herself that afternoon, and had spoken quite angrily t "You are better to-night, my dear."

"Oh, yes, so much better," looking up in his face with a smile. "Giles, do you think for once. Thornton heard master say that he was surprised at her selfishness: he had thought she would be glad that Miss Glady should have a drive. "Miss Darrell looked as black as possible, Thornton said, ma'am," continued Chatty; "but she did not dare argue with master; he always has the best of it with her."

As we drove off, I saw Miss Darrell watch ing us from the study window: evidently her bad temper had not evaporated, for she ha not taken the trouble to come out in the ha to speak to Gladys, and yet they had not m for a month. Gladys did not see her: sh was smiling at her brother, who was waving a good-by from the open door. My hear smote me a little as I looked at him. he think me very deceitful, I wondered, for giving Max that clue? but after a moment abandoned these thoughts and gave mysel

up to the afternoon's enjoyment. The air was delicious, the summer hes tempered by cool breezes that seemed to come straight from the sea. Gladys lay back luxuriously among the cushions, swatching the flicker of green leaves over our heads, of