

STELLA; OR, AT CROSS PURPOSES.

CHAPTER XIX
THROUGH THE FOLDING DOORS.

When Sir Edgar Dyson had discovered, upon his return to Barfield, that Lily Finch had been already spirited away, he had been very much disturbed indeed. There had been a yearning to see her once more in his heart, that not all the duties of his new relations towards Lady Honoria had been able to quench; and there had also been misgivings in his own mind as to whether he had not possibly been too ready to misjudge and to think evil of her.

Lily's illness had softened his heart towards her, and he longed intensely to see with his own eyes that she was better, to hold her soft hand within his own, to look into her gentle eyes, and to say to her just once—"Forgive me—it is I who have wronged you."

But all this was seemingly to be denied him. When he came back to Barfield, Lily was gone, and he could not find out from his mother where she had been taken to.

"She has gone to friends at the seaside—I really cannot tell you where," was all that Lady Dyson would tell him, and she said it in a manner that made him fancy she knew no more than he did himself of her whereabouts. "It was the best thing in the world for her to have a thorough change of air. Of course she will come back to me by and by, when she is strong enough to resume her work."

"But, my dear mother, have you not provided for her at all—how is she to live?"

"Oh, of course I have given her plenty of money—she will not have to be a burden upon anybody," and that was all the information that he could extract from Lady Dyson.

In his perplexity Sir Edgar even rode over to Wrexham, and asked Mrs. Finch, who was a person he cordially detested, for news of her daughter.

"She has gone to the sea, was that lady's answer. 'I really haven't troubled myself much about it. I suppose Lady Dyson knows where she is, as she has been kind enough to send her—you know I never correspond much with Lily—it is somewhere in Essex, I believe.'"

Mrs. Finch possibly knew more than she chose to say, but she was too clever to impart the desired information. She had not forgotten that Lily had been once what she called "foolish" about Sir Edgar; and now that he was engaged to be married to Lady Honoria Rosett, of what possible interest could Lily Finch's movements be to him? She had always hated the Dysons, and to encourage the baronet's empty and meaningless attentions to her daughter, would be, she considered, worse than useless. There was one more person whom Sir Edgar consulted concerning Miss Finch, and that was his own brother. With a strange pang of anxiety at his heart he spoke to Walter about her.

"Walter, do you know—surely you do know—where Miss Finch is gone?"

"I? My dear fellow, I assure you I have not the remotest idea! Look here, Edgar, you have run your head against this idea until you have gone insane upon it. I give you my word that I have no more to do with the girl than—than you have—not so much probably!—don't look so savage; old man, I'm only joking! I dare say we both of us made a little love to the pretty governess, just for the sake of something to do; but upon my word of honor, she is nothing at all to me. Good Heavens! I have got my hands full enough as it is—if you only knew!"

But Sir Edgar was too much absorbed in his own troubles to remark the significant manner in which Walter disclaimed all knowledge of Lily's doings. He was annoyed with his brother for speaking of her so lightly, and yet he could not but believe in his earnest asseverations.

"I have been a madman," he said to himself, bitterly. "I have wrecked my own happiness, and possibly her too, because I judged her too hastily, and condemned her without giving her a chance of self-defence. But still, she had no business to allow Walter to kiss her—a woman cannot be quite true and pure who permits a man to embrace her, even in sport."

But though he blamed her still, he blamed himself far more, and was very unhappy.

It was not possible for him to do anything else—he could not in conscience set himself to work to trace Lily Finch and to pursue her. The scandal for her and for Lady Honoria, whom he deeply respected and sincerely liked, would have been too great.

Then Lady Honoria went to Sandport to get rid of her cold, and there came the news of her sprained ankle, and then the letter from her which summoned him to her side, and with it—at least—the information which he had been seeking for concerning Lily Finch.

As to Lily, she only heard the news of Sir Edgar's advent from Lady Honoria's lips upon the same day that he came. She was sitting by the couch of the invalid, doing her best to amuse her, and to vary the dullness and monotony which she complained of, when Lady Honoria said suddenly to her:

"Who do you suppose is coming here today, by the very next train?"

"I cannot tell, Lady Honoria," answered Lily, smiling.

"Guess, then."

"Oh, dear, no; the last person in the world who would come."

"Lady Dyson, perhaps."

"No; try once more."

And then Lily bent her head very low, and her heart throbbled rapidly and painfully.

"Perhaps it is Sir Edgar."

"Yes, you have guessed it. Fancy Sir Edgar coming to a fearful place like Sandport!—none of the Norton family, it may be mentioned, were present—'Is it not devoted to him to subject himself to such a fearful boredom just to come and see me?'"

"It is natural he should wish to see you," murmured Lily.

"No, I don't think it is natural at all for a man to condemn himself to the discomfort of a second-rate country inn, and to the intense stupidity of the most dead-alive little seaside town in the world, merely to see a woman whom in course of time he would be able to see with perfect comfort and convenience to himself. Men are not so fond of

putting themselves out, and of giving up their own creature-comforts, I can tell you, Miss Finch. But then, perhaps you don't know so much about them as I do—and lucky for you that you don't. Why! what are you getting up for? You are not going away so soon, are you? You are not going away so soon, are you?"

"I'm afraid I must, Lady Honoria."

"She had risen, and was putting on her hat and gloves."

"Oh! do stay a little longer. If you wait you will see Sir Edgar—and he must be here in less than half an hour now. Oh! do stay to see him. I believe you are rather a favorite of his, Miss Finch—he told me so one day; now do stop a little longer to see him."

"I—I have some letters to write—indeed I must go," stammered poor Lily, and made her escape as quickly as she could from Lady Honoria's well-meant and good-natured entreaties.

What a relief it was to the poor child to be out-of-doors, away from the good natured, handsome woman, whose unconscious tongue inflicted such a terrible stab upon her poor wounded heart—how glad she was to feel the cool sea-breezes blowing upon her cheeks, and to smell the fresh, salt spray as it dashed up against the sea wall! The tears that in Lady Honoria's presence she had been forced to drive back and to hide, welled freely up into her eyes now she was alone. Oh! how bitter it was to hear him spoken about by her happy and successful rival! to witness her contented approbation of him! and worse still, to listen to the idle words of commendation of herself that he had spoken to her!

She was "a favorite of Sir Edgar's," so he had told Lady Honoria. Oh! how could he, who had so often sworn eternal love and devotion to her, even mention her name to this other woman, who was to be his wife! Oh! it was hard—very hard to bear!

And yet, deep down at the very bottom of her heart, there was a great gush of guilty gladness. He was coming again—and she would see him again—he would speak to her kindly and gently, perhaps—would tell her he forgave her—and though she would never be able, probably, to explain to him how terribly he had mistaken her in deeming her guilty for the unmanly persecution of his own brother—yet if he were only to say, "I forgive you," would not that be comfort enough to brighten her life through many of the long, dismal, unlovely years that spread themselves out gloomily and drearily before her.

"Oh! I wish I had died when I was so ill!" said the poor child, miserably, to herself, as she sought the seclusion of her dull-looking lodgings.

And here, when she knew that the train must have arrived, and Sir Edgar actually be in Sandport, Lily Finch felt strongly inclined at first to lock herself up in her bedroom.

But during the course of the afternoon, a little note came to the lodging-house by the sea from the Rectory. It was an invitation to Miss Finch to come to dinner that very evening.

"Mamma hopes you will come," wrote Marian Norton, "as Sir Edgar will be here, and Lady Honoria thinks he will like to meet you."

Lily had not the strength of mind to decline this invitation; she sent back word that she would go.

Now, the back drawing-room of the Rectory had been for the last two days transformed, by the kindness of her hostess, into Lady Honoria's bedroom. In this way she could, with the help of her maid, and a strong crutch-stick of the Rectory's, hobble backwards and forwards from her room to her sofa by the window, without the pain and fatigue of going up-stairs.

Accordingly, on this particular evening, when Sir Edgar, who had been sitting with her for an hour or so in the afternoon, had gone away to the inn again, in order to dress for dinner, Lady Honoria also retired through the folding-doors into the inner-room, to make sundry changes in her toilet for dinner.

The maid, a Frenchwoman whose fashionable appearance had filled the minds of the sober Rectory servants with astonishment mingled with awe, was desired to redress her mistress' abundant dark locks, which, from lying down all day among her soft-cushions, had become extremely disordered and untidy. Then, of course, it is a difficult and tedious operation to dress a lady who is unable to put her foot to the ground; and also, there was the injured limb to be bathed and bandaged; so that altogether Lady Honoria was a very long time indeed over her dressing.

Before, indeed, it was half completed, Lily Finch, arriving quite punctually, was shown into the adjoining room, and neither she nor Lady Honoria perceived, what the latter became aware of soon after, that the folding-door was not quite closed between the two rooms.

Lily sat quite quietly by herself in the bow-window, looking thoughtfully out upon the gray line of sea beyond the sands. She was rather pale, but not otherwise than calm and self-contained. The light was steadily rather dim and indistinct, and yet it was by no means dark enough for candles.

None of the Nortons were down stairs. They were rather an unpretentious family, and were never quite ready in time for anything. So Lily sat on for some time in the window and looked at the sea; and Lady Honoria, on the other side of the folding-doors, sat having her ankle bandaged by her French maid.

All at once she heard the slam of the front door, and the rapid footsteps of a man as he ran lightly up the stairs and entered the adjoining room.

"It was, as Lady Honoria knew, Sir Edgar coming in ready for dinner from the hotel. It came into her mind that she would make haste and finish her dressing, so as to join him as quickly as she could; when all at once she heard his voice so plainly, that she discovered instantly that the door was ajar; and the words which she heard Sir Edgar speak was such an utter shock to her, that it did not even occur to her to close it.

"Lily," she heard him say, "Lily, is it really you! Oh! my little darling, how white and ill you look!"

"Oh! please, Sir Edgar, don't speak like that to me!" said the girl's trembling voice.

"My pretty one, don't cry! I can't bear it! Oh! Lily, I can see in your face I have wronged you cruelly! You have always

loved me truly, have you not, my sweet! Don't turn from me now! Let me look at you once more."

"Oh! Sir Edgar—you know you ought not to speak to me like this. Lady Honoria—"

"Yes, I know you loved her, and she loved you, and behaved like an idiot! and Lady Honoria is very good, and I am quite unworthy of her. I shall try to make her a good husband, because there is nothing else left for me to do; but, oh! she is not like my Lily—my little darling, that I love so well! Do you know that I have come here on purpose to see you, child—just to look at you once more and to say good-bye? Yes, my pet, I must have seen you once more; and now we shall have to say good-bye, and pray heaven that we may forget each other, and never meet again!"

"Henriette," said Lady Honoria in a whisper to her maid, "go away at once—I don't want you any more; and go to Mrs. Norton's room, and tell her I feel too unwell to come down to dinner."

Henriette left the room, and there was great consternation amongst the Nortons that evening, because Lady Honoria Rosett positively declined to leave her room.

CHAPTER XXX.
LADY HONORIA DOES HER DUTY.

"When one has a great and important resolution to make, there is nothing like sleeping a night upon it before making up one's mind as to what is to be done."

This was Lady Honoria's waking reflection the following morning, as the sun came shining brightly into her room. She rang the bell for her maid, and began to get up.

"I feel much better about it today than I did last night," she said to herself; "and now I can see my way plainly, and I know what my duty is! Can I ever be thankful enough for the accident which has prevented the wreck of three lives!"

And then, as soon as she was dressed, and installed upon the sofa by the bow-window, and had finished the tea and toast that had been set upon a little tray by her side, Lady Honoria sent round a note to the hotel, begging Sir Edgar to come and see her as quickly as possible.

He came in brightly and cheerfully.

"Well, how are you this morning, Honoria—better, I hope? I was sorry you felt so unwell last night; we must get you away from here; this place is too quiet for you—"

And then something in her face stopped him, and he saw, by the way in which she looked at him, that something was wrong with her.

He sat down upon the low chair by her side.

"Is anything the matter, Honoria?" he asked her, gravely and kindly.

"Yes," she said, "there is something very much the matter. I have a very serious and important thing to say to you."

He had no idea what was the manner of thing that she had to say to him. He smiled at her in a kind and friendly way.

"You know very well that I will give my very best attention to anything you have to say to me."

For a minute she did not speak, but looked away out of the window. She had not, perhaps, loved him very deeply—it was not in her nature to do so; but she was disappointed in him, and she felt the slight to her vanity and her self-love very keenly indeed.

"Edgar," she said suddenly turning round again and looking at him, "do you know that I overheard what you said to Miss Finch in this room last night?"

He looked startled and his face flushed, and then he said, earnestly:

"I am very, very sorry for it, Honoria."

"But I am not sorry at all," she answered, bravely, with something of her usual downrightness and dash of manner; "for it has shown me the truth, and has prevented us all from making a very great mistake. You know, Edgar I love the truth—at any price!"

"Then, Honoria, let me tell the truth!" he cried, eagerly. "The truth is, that I was once engaged to Lily Finch, but my engagement with her has long ago been at an end. I am pledged to you, and nothing on earth shall induce me to break my faith to you; I would not do you such an injury for the whole world! Do not imagine that I will not keep true to you! I shall never see Lily—Miss Finch I mean—again. Last night I walked home with her, and I have said 'Good-bye' to her, and she quite understands that all is over between us. Believe me, I have too high a regard and esteem for you, to be guilty of wanting in anything that is your due. Honoria, upon my honor that is the truth!"

She smiled rather sadly.

"My dear Edgar, do not deceive yourself; the truth is what I can tell you far better than you can me—the truth is, that you love the girl, and that you don't love me; and not all the sophistry on earth can alter that! Pray recollect that I heard all that you said to her last night! Do not blame yourself—I can see it all quite plainly—you loved her, and you like me, and in some way there was a quarrel or a misunderstanding between you. I gathered so much as that from what I heard—and then you were angry with her, and you fancied that you liked me the best. Well, perhaps it is all for the best that I have found this out in time. Of course I am fond of you, but I don't suppose I have given you quite as much as you expected from me; and though naturally, I am very sorry, yet I would not marry you now upon any consideration. I am not mean enough to make myself happy upon the ruins of other people's lives. It will be a disappointment to my father, and to your mother, of course; and, well, yes, I don't mind twining to me, too; but I am not the sort of woman to go out of her mind, or to fall into decline, for this sort of thing. I shall have a good gallop across the Downs, and perhaps go yachting for a month, and then I dare say I shall be all right again, and feel very glad indeed to think that I have done only what is my duty after all!"

"Lady Honoria, I think that you are a noble creature," said Edgar, earnestly. "I can never forgive myself for having behaved to you so shamefully!"

"Oh! I don't think you have behaved shamefully at all. I don't see that you could help it. Your mother wished you to marry

me, I know that; and of course from a worldly point of view, Miss Finch is not a good match for you. But I think if you have made her love you, that you ought to marry her, will you not, Sir Edgar?"

"Oh! Lady Honoria, pray do not speak to me like that!" said the distressed voice.

"No! Why should I not? We shall always be friends, I hope. You mean to marry her, I trust?"

"Of course I shall marry her," he said, in a low voice, not daring to look at her.

"That is right," she answered, heartily.

"I am glad of that."

And then she stretched out her hand to him. He took it almost reverently between his own, and raised it to his lips.

There was a little quiver at the corners of her mouth as he did this.

"Say that you forgive me, Lady Honoria," he said, rather unsteadily.

"Of course," she answered, in a cheerful voice; "there is nothing to forgive. You made a mistake, but we have found it out in time, that is all. I liked you very much—I like you still! We shall always be good friends, I hope; but you know I am not going to break my heart, nor die an old maid, not at all!" and she laughed a little as she said this.

"We need not tell anybody about this," she said again, presently, after a moment's pause. "Nobody need know exactly what has happened. We will just say that we have quarreled—that we agreed to break our engagement by mutual consent. There is no occasion to let everybody into the secret." And there was a little flush of wounded pride upon her face as she said this; for, after all, it was hard upon Lord Alchester's beautiful daughter that her lover should have preferred a little unknown governess to herself. She felt the humiliation of it more intensely than she would have liked to own.

"No one shall ever know," he answered. "But you have behaved very nobly, Lady Honoria. I must tell you once more that had you not accidentally discovered my secret, you should never have found it out from my conduct to you. The effort of my life would have been to crush my love for Lily out of my heart, and to be to you the best and most devoted of husbands."

"I dare say; but then, you see, I had rather have a husband to whom it would not be an effort to be good and devoted," she said, quietly. "And now, Sir Edgar, I think you had better wish me good-bye—and—give Lily my love, and tell her I am not at all vexed with her. I have always liked her very much, and by and bye, when I come back from that yachting, you know, and when you are settled down at Barfield—I shall come over and call upon her, and I hope we shall end by being very good friends. You need not trouble to write to my father; I will do that—and to your mother, too. Now go, Sir Edgar—good-bye!"

She held out her hand again, and Sir Edgar kissed it once more, murmuring a devout and heartfelt "Heaven bless you," as he bent over it.

And then he got himself away somehow out of the room and the house, feeling just a little bit ashamed of himself for the part he had played in the whole business, and yet with a load of care lightened from off his heart, such as he had not experienced for many a long day.

He lifted his hat from his head as he stood for a minute outside the Rectory hall, and drew a long breath of relief, inhaling the fresh sea-breezes as he did so.

"Now for Lily!" he said to himself, and walked rapidly away from the Rectory in the direction of the row of green-shuttered lodging-houses.

As for Lady Honoria, after she was left alone she lay back for some minutes upon her sofa-cushions, with her eyes closed. She looked rather pale, as though she were very tired, and there were two large circles round her eyes, which certainly had no accustomed place there.

After a minute or two she opened her eyes, and sat half up.

"So ends that chapter of my life," she said aloud to herself, as she drew her writing-case near to her on the table by her side. Then she dipped her pen into the ink, and wrote the two following notes:

"MY DEAR PAPA,

You will be surprised to hear that I have broken off my engagement with Sir Edgar. I find, when it comes to the point, that I do not care for him sufficiently to marry him, so I thought it best to put an end to everything between us at once. My ankle is getting on very well, and I shall make a great effort to come home on Friday or Saturday. Please tell everything about me before I come back."

"Your affectionate daughter,

"HONORIA."

"MY DEAR LADY DYSON,

Sir Edgar and I have settled that we are not likely to make each other happy, so we have mutually agreed to break off our engagement to each other. You must not blame him, for it is entirely my doing. But I hope that there may be no interruption of our friendly relations together, and that after a while you may resume your kind friendship to yours,

"Always affectionately,

"HONORIA ROSETT."

The second of these notes gave her more trouble than the first, and she read it over several times before she felt quite satisfied with it. At last, however, she folded them both up and addressed and sealed them.

"That is done!" she said aloud to herself, with a sigh of relief, and leaned her head once more back among the sofa-cushions. She was not going to break her heart, as she had told him, but she would have been more than human had she not felt it.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

The Hebrew New Year.

On Tuesday and Wednesday Oct. 2 and 3, the Hebrews throughout the world celebrated their New Year, which opened the year 5644 in their calendar. On Wednesday evening, October 10th, the day of Atonement, or Yum Kipur, began, when services were held all day at the various synagogues and other places of worship, and all devout Hebrews abstained from any food for twenty-four hours.

Murder Discovered by a Dream.

The dead body of William Scott was lying along the track of the Erie Railroad a mile from the Olean, N.Y., depot, about midnight recently. There were no marks about the head, back, and shoulders. Coroner J. J. returned a verdict that he had been killed by the cars. On Tuesday night that he had dreamed on Tuesday night that his brother was murdered on a piece of woods and robbed. When the dreamer awoke he was so nervous that he was unable to sleep again during the night. He awoke from his dream between 6 o'clock and midnight.

On the same day a sister of Scott's lives in Rochester, sent word to a friend in Olean that she had a dream Tuesday night in which she saw two men beat her brother to death in the woods, and take money from his pockets. She awoke screaming, and then she said she saw two men beat her brother to death in the woods. She awoke screaming, and then she said she saw two men beat her brother to death in the woods. She awoke screaming, and then she said she saw two men beat her brother to death in the woods.

These singular declarations led to a search to light the fact that there was a man named William Scott who had sold some property, for which he was paid \$1,000. He was seen in an out-of-door cafe on Monday afternoon, and was with two strange men. He was intoxicated and exhibited a large roll of money, and boasted of the bargain he had made in the sale. Between 4 and 5 o'clock he was so drunk that the men carried him out to a barn in the rear of the saloon, and left him there. About 11:30 o'clock the night he was met by an acquaintance and road loading from Olean to the Erie depot near a piece of woods. He was not seen alive again.

There was no money in his clothes when found. It is noted now that there was blood on the rails or anywhere about the track at the spot where he was found. The railroad men say that it would be impossible for a person to be near the engine or run over there without the body being discovered at once either by the engineer or fireman. The belief is strong that Scott was murdered and robbed at the place where he was found to give the impression that he had been killed by the cars. The case is to be re-investigated.

The Toiled Shirt.

What sort of an idiot the man was who conceived the idea of the boiled shirt, we would like to speak to him calmly and gently, and point out to him where he was wrong. The flannel shirt is sensible, useful, and comfortable, but the boiled shirt is a white sepulchre, and a starched, ornament, of no use whatever. It is a collar, and taken in connection with the neck, a vexation. To begin with the boiled shirt has no shape or style about it; there was some tone about the ruffled shirt of our ancestors, but the shirt of the present day looks like a pillow-slip with a curved string at one end of it and the bottom out of the other end. Then there is an absurd tab at the lower end of the collar with a button-hole in it. We have wondered what that meant. We don't know whether it was intended as an appropriate place for the owner to inscribe his name; but if anything should happen to him, and deny the coroner could tear it off and identify the man, or whether it was merely mental. We judge it as merely ornamental, however, in consequence of the buttons, as the most careful research has failed to find a button to fill it. Then, look what a mass of contingencies have arisen because of modern boiled shirts. In our grandmothers' days the collars and cuffs were tucked in and the sleeves were made of a length approximating to the length of the arms of the wearer. Now we have to buy separate collars and cuffs, and sleeve-buttons and gum-elastic bands to hold our sleeves in place, and we have Chinese laundry-men to do and altogether it looks like working the dead horse to own a boiled shirt. We do not want to be understood that we are the civil and world to retrograde and practice barbaric customs, but our society degrades over; we care not what the world may say and we believe it would be a relief to millions of gentlemen in this country if the boiled shirt were barred (some of the shirts already barred) and the plain muslin as-you-please bleached muslin shirts of the forefathers, with collars and cuffs adopted.

A Game of Chess.

A singular game of chess has just been finished in the north of Scotland. The game was begun about twelve months ago in Brooklyn. The first player, Mr. J. R. Munoz, made a move, and then passed the sheet on by post to a friend. That friend made a move in reply, and then passed the paper on by post to another well-known player, who made a move in reply. In this way the document found its way to Baltimore, where Mr. Sellman, who is lately in the London tournament, also made a move and sent the paper on to Jamaica. From Jamaica it was sent to England, after passing through the hands of several known players in London and other towns who each added a move, it began to travel among the chess players of Scotland, travelling as far north as Dalwhinnie. A document was sent back to Sheriff's Glasgow. That gentleman examined the position, and decided that the game was for white, as black could force an exchange of rooks and win with the pawns. He of white returned the game to the first player, Mr. J. B. Munoz, who now sent it to the monthly, where it has just appeared.

The world is a looking-glass, and it looks back to every man the reflection of its own face. Frown at it and it will frown at you; smile at it and it will smile at you; laugh at it and it will laugh at you; cry at it and it will cry at you; weep at it and it will weep at you. It is a jolly, kind companion, and it is all young persons take their choice.

Goes without saying—the deal and alphabet.