STELLA:

OR, AT CROSS PURPOSES.

CHAPTER XXX. (CONTINUED.)

LADY HONORIA DOES HER DUTY.

"I shall get over it very soon," she said to herself once more, "and I am glad no one need ever know the truth—everybody will believe that I jilted him—that is bad enough, but not so bad as the truth. I could not bear to be pitied as a forsaken damsel-than would kill me !"

It will be seen that it was Lady Honoria's vanity that suffered throughout far more intensely than her heart.

Presently Mis. Norton came into the

"Is Sir Edward gone already?" she asked

her, kindly.

Lady Honoria did not lose a minute in tell-

ing the truth to her hostess. "Yes, he is gone. He will not dine here to-night, Mrs. Norton. The fact is, I have just broken off our engagement altogether."
"Oh! my dear!" cried Mrs. Norton, aghast, "how dreadfully sorry I am for

"You need not be sorry for me," said Lady Honoria, quietly, "because it is entirely my own doing. We found that we were not likely to make each other happy, so I thought it best to break everything off. I have done quite right, and require no pity at all. Will you please tell your husband and daughters, Mrs. Norton; and would you kindly send these letters to the post for

And that was all the information the family at the Rectory ever received concerning Lady Honoria's broken engagement. Only long afterwards, when they heard of another event, which as yet was in the dim future, then the two girls, talking the matter over to each other, thought that they could put two and two together, and a little more of the truth of the business became

clear to them.

Meanwhile, in the desolate little sitting. room in Mrs. Wilson's green-shuttered lodg ing-house there were that morning two peo ple who were very happy indeed, in spite of many stabs of conscience for the mistakes of the past on one side, and for sundry misgivings concerning the troubles of the future on the other.

"I think I have behaved abominably throughout both to you and to her," said Edgar to the little head that lay safe and happy upon his shoulder. "I wish I could feel more penitent and more umhappy; but just now, I can only feel insane with joy and

delight!"
"Oh! what will Lady Dyson say!" cried poor Lily, for the hundreth time.
"Well, I think she will forgive you, Lily. Do you know, that I believe she got very

fond of you during your illness?" 'She was very good to me," murmured

Lily. And now, my little drrling, I must go -I shall leave Sandyport this afternoon and when you are quite strong again, and the whole of this business has blown over, then you will come back to Baifield, and then-and then-

"Please do not do that any more," was Lily's only rejoinder to a course of action which, to people accustomed to the manners and customs of lovers, may be better imagined than described.

He left her and went back to the inn, and there, upon his table, lay a telegram await-

ing him. He tore it open. It was from his mother,

and ran thus:

"Please come home at once. Your brother has left home with Miss King.

CHAPTER XXXI. HER LAST CARD.

Old Mr. King left his bed unusually early on the morning of the lst of May, wrapped his dressing gown about his lean figure, and went eagerly to the window and looked out. It was a lovely spring morning; the trees were all covered with tender green leaves,

the dew lay thickly upon the grass, the hawthorn and laburuums were fast bursting ato bloom and the birds carolled gayl their greeting to the new-born summer. Never had Mr. King felt happier or in better spirits. It was Norman's wedding-Everything had been settled accord ing to his wishes; there had been no hitch and no disturbance in the programme he had laid out for his grandchildren's lives. Within a few hours he would stand within the flower-decked chancel of the village

church, and he would give Cecily away to her cousin, and the "Wedding March" would strike up, and the wedding bells would ring, and the darling wish of his old age would be fulfilled; and then the bride and bridegroom would be whirled off in a carriage and four to the station, on their way to the Continent, for their wedding-tour, and he and his Stella would be left alone in the big house together. He would send

Harriet Finch away, and Stella should keep house for him.

"It has all gone off well," said Mr. King, to himselt; "but I am glad I put that codicil into my will—it will do no harm by twelve o'clock to day it will be invalid, and it has kent my mind easy all this time. for I had a misgiving that the cirl was going to play me false, but I suppose I was mistaken; still it has kept me from fretting. and, as Graham is always telling me, if want to go on living I must not fret myself. Ah, well, I am happy enough now! Every

thing has turned out just as I wished it ! At that minute 'a slender figure, wrapped fror. head to foot in a long cloak, and wear ing a thick veil, was creeping slowly and cutiously across the dew-drenched grass at the back of the house.

She went very slowly, turning round every now and then to listen and look back at the house. It was quite early—only about half-past six—and nearly all the blinds of the house were drawn closely down. Only from one distant window there was somebody with sharp eyes, and a keen, eager face, who saw that solitary figure stealing along under the shadow of the orchard wall. And the owner of those sharp eyes, who had only just got up out of bed, straightway began to huddle on the first clothes that came under her hands at her ut-

But Cecily, who was creeping along under the shadow of the orchard wall, did not

Cecily was playing her last card. She had come to the end of the serio-comedy she had been acting so long-and now she was ready to stake everything she had so long striven for upon this last desperate action. Last night the will that was to do so much for her, was signed. ISo far all was safe. Now nothing was left to her save to deal the death-blow to the old man whose house had sheltered her treacherous and wicked self for so many months! All night long she had sat up writing—writing the letter that she had laid on his library table before she stole forth from the house, so that he might see it the first thing when he came down-stairs-and writing too, to Stella, to tell her the truth of everything. As to Norman, she had not even gone through the form of writing to him—"Norman," she said to herself scornfully, "will console himself very easily; he and Stella will never be rich—but then they are the kind of people who do not care in the least for money; they will be perfectly content to be poor all the days of their lives-- whereas I-1 could not have done without it. I have worked hard for it too-oh! what hard work it has been !-but thank goodness, it is all over

She had got safely round the corner of the orchard wall by this time, and she was out of sight of the house. She walked quicker and breathed more freely now. She carried a heavy dressing-bag in her hand; into it she had crammed all the jewellery that bad been given to her as wedding presents, including the family diamonds from her grand-father, and the set of pearls and rubies that were Norman's wedding-gift to her. Cecily had no remorse of conscience at all in doing this. She had also a little money, about ten pounds, with her.

Presently she reached a low wooden gate that led out of the park into the road; here, behind a clump of trees that had hidden it from her sight until she came close to it, stood a Stanhope phaeton with the hood drawn up. As she reached the gate, Walter Dyson's face peered out from behind it.

"Here you are at last," he said, in a whisper. "I thought you were never coming—is everything right?"

"Yes, so far all has gone well—the will was signed last night."

"Is this all your lugges?"

Is this all your luggage !" "Oh! my boxes are ready packed; I dare say I shall get them to-morrow. I have got the diamonds here !" tapping the bag

with a laugh. "You are an uncommonly clever girl, and I must say I am very glad to get hold of you at last. Now jump up quickly, and let us be off before the alarm is given; and besides, we have not too much time to catch the train at the Junction-it is ten miles at

the very least." There was no servant, and he helped her up into the phaeton. She drew herself as far back as she could into the shadow of the hood, and Walter Dyson teok his seat by

her side.
"Off at last, my dear wife!" he said, bending down to her with an affectionate smile, for he was fond of her after a fashion.

And then Cecily uttered a cry. "Good gracious! there is Mrs. Finch!" she exclaimed. "Drive faster, Walter, or we shall be stopped!—hateful woman! she must have followed me!"

The phaeton dashed off rapidly, and was

soon whirled out of sight round a sharp corner of the road.

And there stood Mrs. Finch by the gate, in the long damp grass, in a short, dark woollen petticoat and a red flannel dressingjacket, with her scanty hair all flying loose-ly in the wind about her thin neck, shouting and waving her hands vainly after the departing couple.

But for all her shouting she was not able

to stop them. When the phaeton was quite out of sight, Mrs. Finch turned round and fled to the house. There was a glance of malicious delight upon her face.

"Wicked, abandoned girl!" she cried to herself, triumphantly; I always knew she was false and deceitful. She has eloped with one of the Dysons! I could not see which, but I know the grav horse and harness well enough. And now, at last, I can be revenged upon the old man who has ground down my life for so many years, and treated me like an upper servant instead of a relation! Now, at last, I can repay him all the rough words and the insulting sneers he has cast at me for so long! Oh! what a blow this will be for him!—his darling chemes overthrown-his nephew tricked out of his bride—his beautiful plans for everybody all shattered at a stroke! How delighted I am to think I shall be the first to tell him—perhaps even he wil be grateful to me for revealing to me this inquitious preceding to him, and he will add something to his will in acknowledgment—who

And this latter thought still further quickened Mrs. Finch's returning footsteps towards the house.

In another minute she was knocking loudly at Mr. King's bedroom door, quite oblivious, in her excitement, of her own very remarkable, and not very presentable cos-

"Mr. King, I must speak to you at once!"

she cried. "My good woman, I am just out of my

bed—you must wait."

"I cannot wait a moment, my dear cousin—I positively must speak to you! I have something of the utmost importance to reveal to von !"

"What a nuisance an impatient woman is I" grumbled the old man from within. "Wait a moment, then, and I will open the door.' After a few seconds he did so, and ap-

peard enveloped in a long flowery dressing-gown, in which his gaunt figure looked leaner and more attenuated than ever. "Now what on earth is it?" he began,

confronting the strangely-attired figure who came in as he opened the door, "what have you get to say that you couldn't wait till I dressed? I suppose the confectioner hasn't sent the cake, or the cook has spoilt the jellies, or some such rubbish?'

"Mr. King, it is no rubbish at all," said Mrs. Finch, eagerly. "I have rible piece of news to tell you!" "I have a very ter-

The old man frowned uneasily; but he had no serious apprehensions as yet "You women think everything terrible-

there is no end to the fuss made about every trifle. Out with it, then !"

"I assure you this is no trifle," she said, earnestly, and with such evident agitation, that, he said, I might be bound irrevocably that his attention was arrested to it. "You to him. We were married at the English

must prepare yourself for a great shock, Mr. King.

The old man trembled.
"Don't go beating about the bush," he said, hoarsely, "but in Heaven's name tell me what has happened at once! Is it Nor-

man?' "Norman is quite well. It is Cecily King

who has gone away."
"What!" shouted the old man, wildly,

catching hold of her hands.
"She has run sway with one of the Dysons—I am not sure which—I could not see; but they have driven off together not ten minutes ago.

The old man was livid. "They must be followed at once-instantly; they can be stopped! Where is Norman? Ring the bell. What are you standing staring here for? Let me go!" He was struggling to reach the door; he shivered from head to foot. Mrs. Finch tried to quiet him; he shook her off wildly. "They must be followed at once," he repeated. "It is not too late; they can be stopped."

And then suddenly Stella, white as a

sheet, stood behind them on the threshold, holding an open letter in her hand,

"Oh! grandpapa—dear grandpapa—it is no use!" she cried; "they cannot be stop-ped—it is too late. Cecily has deceived us all; she has been married to Walter Dyson ever since she came here!"

He stopped short and gasped for breath; the blood rushed back in a flood to his face. his eyes stared blankly for one minute before him. Then he flung up his arms wildly into the air; one short gasping cry burst from his lips; and he fell face forward all

his length upon the floor. Cecity's evil work had prospered. killed her granfather, but it was Stells lov-ing lips that all unwittingly had given his death blow.

From that instant all was confusion and terror; the fugitive couple were forgotten; was a wild hurrying to and fro through the flower-decked house. Instead of the merry laughter, and the good wishes, and the happy faces that were to have filled Wrexham Hall that bright May morning, there were scared locks and terrified whispers, and the grave face of the hastily-sum moned doctor pressing through the frightened cluster of servants towards the chamber of death.

By and by Sir Edgar came over from Barfield, in great distress of mind concerning his brother's conduct, but the greater anxiety about the master of the house had absorbed all lesser troubles.

They had got the old man into his bed ; he did not die at once; he lingered till the afternoon, but he was never couscious again. At three o'clock he died, and Norman led the weeping Stella away from his death-

These two, who had comforted each other throughout these terrible hours of horror and misery, had no other consolation upon earth now save each other.

Oh! how horrible it was to Stella to pass along the passages and staircases all wreathed for the marriage festivities with satin ribbons, and trails of flowers and greenery: to see the long table laid out in the great dining room below, and the waiters, with white and horrified faces. clearing away the preparations for the wed And then there was the open door of Cecily's room, and her boxes standing already packed in the middle of the

"She has killed him—she has killed him!" moaned Stella in her misery. Norman, what did she do it for? How could she deal him such a cruel blow?"

Stella, in the absorption of her grief, did not even think of how great an alteration in her own life Cecily's conduct was likely to effect.

"She could not have known that he had heart disease," said Norman, gravely; "She could never have realized that such a shock

But Dr. Graham, who stood by the sorrowing cousins, and who heard the words, remembered very well that Cecily knew all about her grandfather's heart disease, and he could have told them so, had he not been too kind-hearted to make unnecessary mischief in the already afflicted family.

"What did she say to you in that letter?" asked Norman of his cousin, as he stood at the door of her room with her. "I think you ought to read it,"

Stella. She went into her room and found it, and bringing it out to him, placed it in his

"Thank you," said Norman, simply And then he took the letter out-of-doors and read it by himself in the garden among the budding trees and the carolling birds, and all the bright summer sights and sounds that were going on without, just the same as if death and sorrow did not come to visit Wrexham Hall.

CHAPTER XXXII.

BY THE FOUNTAIN.

This was Cecily's letter to her sister: "MY DEAR STELLA,

"I soppose you will be very much shocked and horrified at me when you find out that I have run away from home with Walter Dyson. I think long ago you must have guessed that I had some secret which I was keeping from you, and now the time has come when I must tell you the truth. Last winter, when I stayed with the Halevys, Imet Walter Dyson in Paris. We fell in love with each other, and he proposed to me. But Walter is a younger son, and I had nothing. Marriage under such circumstances would have been folly. To be poor, you know, would never have suited me; the most devoted husband would weary me out in six weeks had I to live in a cottage with him. Yet I was fond enough of Walter to be unwilling to give him up. Then it came into my head that I had only to promise to marry Norman in order to get our grand-father's money. I did not much think about the future, nor where it would lead me to; but I proposed to Walter that we should cancel our engagement, and that I should go to Wrexham, and feign to consent to marry our cousin-for I knew that you had refused him, and therefore it would not be taking anything from you. Well, Walter did not like the plan at all, not from any scruples of conscience, but because he is very jealous. The only way in which I could gain his consent was by agreeing secretly to marry him at once, in order

Chapel in Paris. I left Madame Halevy's ostensibly to join you on the very day of my

wedding. "Two college friends of Walter's witnessed the ceremony, and one of them gave me away. Afterwards we crossed over to England, and spent three days in London together. Walter and I came down home together, and on the evening of my strange appearance at Wrexham, when you were so irtled and puzzled at my unexpected ar rival on foot outside your window, my hus-band had just dropped me, not a hundred yards from the house, from the fly in which he was going on to Barfield. "Well, now, you can easily guess the

rest. I have not had a very happy time of it, as you may imagine. What with workof Norman, and having to meet Watter at all hours of the day and night, to keep him in good temper; and then naving to elude Mrs. Finch, whose keen eyes began to suspect me; you may imagine that I have had my hands pretty full. Do you remember the night we dined at Barfield, when Walter took me in for dinner? You may guess what a good joke the whole thing was to me; and yet, I assure you, I have had many a sleepless night and many an anxious day. especially since that horrible Finch has taken to watch me; for if she had found me out and betrayed me to any of you, all my

trouble would have been thrown away. "Well, now it is all over, and grandpapa's will is signed; and by the time you get this letter, Walter and I will be away on the road to France, and Norman will have learnt that the whole of my engagement to him has been a farce. As he does not care a farthing about me, and is over head and ears in love with-well, I won't say whom ! - I don't think it even necessary to apologize to

him for taking myself off. "And now, Stelle, I have only to ask your forgiveness. Don't think worse of me than you can help, and when all this has blown over, I hope some day to come over to England and to have a good laugh with you over the whole story.

"Your affectionate sister,

"CECILY,"

The letter fluttered from Norman's hand to the ground, and a strong feeling of disgust took possession on him. Selfish, un-principled, and shameless—how different was Cecily from Stella! Not a vestige of re-morse for her duplicity and her deceit—not a particle of shame for her love of wealth and the greed with which she had grasped at the money of which she was in truth defrauding Stella—only a light wish that they might enjoy a "good laugh" over the discreditable story, and an unseemly reading of the "joke" it had been to outwit and deceive all her relations and friends.

Nothing could exceed the contempt which Norman felt towards her, excepting his own deep thankfulness for having escaped from such a wife.

Cecils had in a posteript given an address to which she entreated her sister to write, within the next few days, to tell her what had happened at Wrexham after her departure. It was at an hotel at Rouen, and there she stated that she and her husband would remain for a fortnight, and look anxiously for news from home.

In point of fact, the success ef Cecily's whole scheme depended upon the news she was to receive from Wrexham; if her grandfather lived, he would certainly alter his will. But if he died-Cecily was ashamed to own even to her own heart, how earnestly she desired that her wicked scheme might have succeeded.

There came a telegram from Stella to the hotel at Rouen on the very day after their arrival there. Oh! how Cecily trembled as she opened it-and how the words danced before her eves before she could read them ! But there they were, as plain as daylight before her :

"Grandpapa is dead-the news has killed him—the funeral will be on Friday—will you come home?"

"Everything is safe !" said Cecily, white with agitation, to her husband, won't go home for the whole worldshould feel like a murderess!" she added shuddering.

have nothing to do with his death at all; an old man with heart-disease may drop down dead any day. You must not think of it any longer—the money is all right, they will telegraph to us again, of course, as soon as the will is read.

So Mr. and Mrs. Walter Dyson waited at the pleasant city on the Seine, and beguiled the days of waiting by many excursions in the neighborhood, and many rambles through the streets and churches of the interesting

On the Friday, there was, however, no telegram, and Cecily began to feel uneasy. "You will hear to morrow morning; they will write," said her husband, consolingly. "Don't fidget yourself about it-it is quite sure to be all right—there is nothing to be anxious about—you are sure to have a letter in the morning."

Saturday morning came, and with it a black edged envelope with the Loughton postmark. Cecily tore it open breathlessly,

and remained speechless, staring at it.
"Well, what is it?" said Walter, taking it from her hand, And then Cecily uttered a wild cry of de-

spair, flung up her arms madly into the air, and then fell down prone and unconscious into a heap at her husband's feet. This was the letter: -

"MY DEAR MRS. DYSON,
"I have great pleasure in writing to tell you that your dear sister has inherited the whole of your grandfather's fortune, with the exception of the house, furniture, pictures, plate, &c., and twenty thousand pounds which are left Mr. Allingham. The greater portion of his fortune was originally left to you, but by a codicil to the will, it was so left conditionly only upon your marriage with your cousin; failing that, it reverts to your sister: under the circum stanc s, of course, you are quite unprovided

> "Your sincere friend, "HARRIET FINCH."

Two months have passed away since Mr King's death, and Stella King and Mrs Finch now are the only inhabitants of Wrexham Hall.

Directly after the funeral, Norman had gone away. He had expressed a wish that

Stella and Mrs. Finch would continue to make Wrexham their home for the present, but had said no further word about his future

Stella remained therefore all alone. She sorrowed at first deeply for her grandfather and for her sister's treachery; but by and by another grief began to settle at her

heart.
Why did not Norman come to her—what was there now to keep them apart! Had he forgotten his old love to her, and the passionate words he had spoken to her that day when he had rescued her fron the gypsy on Loughton Common! Was all that a dream that is past to him? or had he been so thoroughly disgusted by her sister's can duct, that unconsciously he had recoiled from her also, and had included her in the just blame due only to Cecily?

Stella could not answer these questions be herself; but she was very sad, for Norman remained up in London, and neither wrote

or came to her.

By and by an event happened which shed a little brightness and pleasure over her monotonous life. There was a wedding as monotonous life. There was a wedding at Barfield, and Lily Finch was the bride; and no one rejoiced more sincerely in her happi ness than did Stella, although her deep mourning precluded her from being at the ceremony. Lady Dyson had at last given her willing consent to Sir Edgar's marriage. It had been a great blow to her when his engagement to Lidy Honoria had been broken off; but as she never quite under-stood the rights of it, she behaved to her dying day that the Earl's daughter had be haved very badly to her son; and she felt such a sincere compassion for his supposed disappointment, that she was the ready to listen patiently to him when he

spoke to her about Lily.
"I suppose it is fate," said Lady Dyson, resignedly. "It is evident that it is to be. so I had better make the best of it. so I had better make the best of it. And after all, Lily is a dear girl, and she behaved wonderfully well during her illness."

So one fine June morning Lily was married to Edgar in Barfield Church, and.

amongst the handsomest of her wedding presents, there figured a diamond locket from Lady Honoria Rosett.

Mrs. Finch, of course, was very great on the occasion, and talked so incessantly afterwards of "my daughter Lady Dyson," Stella got very tired of the subject. Mrs. Finch, of course, forgave her old scores against the Dysons in consequence of her daughter's marriage.

"I never thought he would have married her, you know," she explained to Stella; "and though I could see that Lily was foolish about him, I discouraged it in every way. thinking he meant nothing serious. However, I must say the girl played her game better than I gave her credit for.'
"I think her own sweetness and goodness

is the only 'game' Lily has ever been guilty of," said Stella, a little indignantly.

Then, when the wedding was over, and the newly married couple gone away, and the neighborhood had settled down again after the commotion, Stella became very lonely and very sad. She received frequent letters from Cecily, but they were very unsatisfactory ones. Mr. and Mrs. Walter Dysen were drifting about from one gamblingplace to another upon the Continent, Walter, apparently, had taken to Rouge-et-Noir as a profession—sometimes he won, but oftener he seemed to lose; and then Cecily wrote very despondingly. She was evidently far from happy- the love founded on selfishness and want of principle, which might have flourished and increased in sunshing and prosperous conditions was fast perish ing utterly under the cold winds of poverty

and adversity.
Stella at last determined to do something substantial for her sister and her husband. Out of her own abundance she would provide for them. It was however, impossible to do this without consulting Norman; and so, after a great deal of hesitation, one day she wrote to him to his club in London, propounding her scheme of making to Cecily an annual alloware; out of her own ample fortune, that might enable her to live in comfort if not in luxury, and she begged him to come down and see her, that she might consult with him about it.

The letter was sent, and two days went

One afternoon she sit alone on the edge of the stone basin in the garden. The foun-tain was still, and the clear pool shone in the sunshine-every little gold-rish looked like a jewel as it darted across the trans parent water. Stella looked down lazily at them, and

dipped her white fingers into the basin. She did not hear the approaching footsteps across the lawn behind her, only all at once a shadow was thrown across the fountain, and looking np quickly, she found Norman standing by her side. "Oh ! Stella, what a long time you have

been in sending for me!" he said reproach-fully, as he took her hands in his: but his face was beaming with delight and happinesss. "In sending for you, Norman!" she repeated, wonderingly. "Did you expect me to do that!"

"Of course I did. Do you think I would have obtruded my own selfish hopes into your days of mourning for the old man you loved so well? I waited for you to write to

me. Besides, you are a rich woman now." Oh, hush!" she interrupted, quickly. "Do not pain me by saying that !" and then, with a deep blush, she added, slowly, "Norman, I would like to share all that money with you!"

"I only know of one way in which you can do that, my darling!" he said, with all the glow of his love in his eyes; and then he kneit down beside her, and put his arms around her. 'Stella, will you not give me that long waited for kiss now, and with it your dear self?"

She bent her face, rosy as any flower, towards him in silence, and their lips met in a

happiness too deep for words.
"Oh! Stella," he said, presently, "how much of our lives you and I have wasted: We might have been happy long ago!" "Yes," said Stella, amiling out of the fullness of her content. "But then, we were playing in the dark, for we have all been at 'Cross Purposes!"

THE END.

Sir John Macdonald has subscribed twenty, five dollars towards the erection of new bar-racks at Kingston for the Salvation Army-