

**CROSS CURRENTS:
A NOVEL; IN THREE
VOLUMES. VOL. III**

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Cross currents: a novel; in three volumes. Vol. III by Mary Angela Dickens

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MARY ANGELA DICKENS

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A Novel.

BY

MARY ANGELA DICKENS.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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CROSS CURRENTS.

CHAPTER I.

Two days after the Sunday on which Helen, Humphrey, and Selma dined at the Cornishes', Mervyn Ferris was left alone at home with the prospect of a solitary fortnight, and Mrs. Cornish asked her to come and spend the time with them. Roger, whose business arrangements at that time were rather unsettled, was a good deal at home just then, and the ice having been so thoroughly broken between them, Selma's old lover and her enthusiastic little adorer found a constant bond of sympathy, and an unfailing topic for tête-à-tête conversations, in Selma's perfections.

The bitter and unpardoning animosity which

had lurked in the tone of almost every one who had hitherto spoken or written to him of Selma—though any open expression of such a feeling to him had from the very first received a simple and decided check—had been a constant distress and reproach to Roger. That she should lose affection and respect for what he looked upon as entirely his own fault, hurt him almost as though he himself had actually done something to lower her in popular estimation. The bitter pain of his first disappointment was past for him now, although he hardly realised the fact; the element of reverent uncertainty which had been so prominent a characteristic of his love, had come to his help in his trouble, and he had grown, with time, to look upon the girl he had lost as an altogether superior order of being—to be admired and worshipped as such, but to be thought of no longer with the simple, protecting love which such a man as Roger Cornish gives to his wife.

To hear her talked of as Mervyn talked of

her, to be able to dwell on her beauty and her general perfection was, to him, like the restoration of his own self-respect. That the conversation which began with Selma should not invariably end with her, was not so wonderful as it seemed, on reflection, to Roger.

Mervyn's visit to the Cornishes was drawing to a close, when Helen, coming in one afternoon about tea-time, as she often did, found the whole party assembled in the drawing-room. Roger and Mervyn were both there, and, after a few minutes, a most unusual fit of silence and abstraction seemed to come over Helen, which lasted until she found herself in Sylvia's bedroom, whither the latter had conducted her to inspect something or other—Helen was not quite sure what. She was standing with the recent purchase in question—a hat—in her hand, looking at it vaguely, when she said, slowly :

“ Sylvia, have you noticed anything ? ”

Sylvia looked at her quickly.

“ What sort of thing, Helen ? ” she asked,

looking down again at the hat, on which Helen's eyes were also fixed.

"Roger and—and Mervyn," said Helen. And then she and Sylvia looked up simultaneously, their eyes met, and the new hat was nearly demolished as they suddenly and vigorously embraced. "Oh, my dear!" cried Helen, joyfully. "Is it really, do you think? How long has it been going on? Oh, tell me all about it, do!"

"We all think so," returned Sylvia, eagerly, as though she were only too delighted to talk about it. "I don't believe they've any idea of it themselves, yet; it would take them ever so long to think of such a thing, you know. But wouldn't it be delightful?"

"Nothing could possibly be better," answered Helen. "Selma will never really forgive herself until he is married; and perhaps when there's no doubt as to his being quite cured, you'll all forgive her, Sylvia?" she finished, wistfully.