

THE
STUDENTS' MONTHLY.

THE KNIGHTS OF MAPLE WOOD.

CHAPTER VII.

CROSS PURPOSES.

Ned Ellis sat in his room a prisoner, accused of having stolen the bracelet. Much to the surprise of all who knew him, and especially of Edith, he refused to say how the cross had come into his possession: of the bracelet he denied having any knowledge whatever. As soon as Edith had time to escape from the drawing-room she made her way to the boys' room, and, after knocking at the door, turned the key so as to let herself in. "Oh, it is you, Edie; I knew you would come. Well I don't think you believe me to be the thief. Do you?" The boy looked at her half laughing. For this knowing him to be so sensitive, she was not prepared, considering that so grave a charge hung over him.

"No, Edward, I do not. But I cannot understand what reason you have for not being more open."

"I will be as open as I can with *you*. I want you to believe me when I tell you that I know nothing whatever of the bracelet. I don't mind saying strictly between ourselves that I do suspect what has become of it. The cross fell into my hands; how, you must not ask me. Perhaps I may be yet able to explain it to you. However, the cross having come into my possession under very peculiar circumstances, I wanted to send it back to Mrs. Cadgett, and I was stupid enough to tell Figgs to put it in her room instead of taking it to her myself." "Well, Edward, I am quite confident that you tell me the truth. But are you sure that your reasons justify you in refusing to say more about the cross?"

"Believe me, Edie, I am. I should like much to tell you and Cyril all about it. But I cannot do so now." And so Edith left him with a kind "Good-night," and an assurance that she at least would not lose confidence in him. As she returned to her room, she met Cyril Ellis. "I was on my way to see poor Ned." "Have you been with him, Edith?" "Yes, I have just left him. Is not all this strange? The boy is generally so very frank!"

The excitement of her sympathy with Edward prevented her from being embarrassed, neither did she notice that there was an air of preoccupation about Cyril as