

possibly he was a foreigner. It might be that the clergy or the patron, who was subscribing liberally to the work, had seen a church some distance off, which, for the sake of association, he desired to see copied. At Lostwithiel, in Cornwall, is a spire so thoroughly unlike anything in this country, and so exactly similar to some German spires, that the nationality of its design cannot be doubted; and other examples of a similar kind may be pointed out.

We must not expect to find the local characteristics so distinctly displayed in city churches as in country ones, because, of course, local influences are always more strongly felt in the country than in the city, neither shall we find them so apparent in monastic, as in parochial churches, and the village or market-town church tower will often display them to a much stronger degree than will that of the cathedral. In fact, as a rule (exceptions there are), the cathedrals do not exhibit much county influence. It would almost appear as if a special distinction was attempted to be gained for the cathedral, by making it as different as possible to the parish churches of the district; thus we find that in a county like Norfolk, peculiar for towers, the cathedral has a tall stone spire, and the noble spire of Salisbury is almost alone in Wiltshire, whereas Lincolnshire, which is remarkable for its beautiful church spires, has only towers to its cathedral.

It is to the parish churches, and more especially the country parish churches, that we must look for the solution of this question. The parish church was, of course, essentially the church of the people, they only shared the monastic or cathedral churches with the clergy of those establishments to which they were attached, so that if we want to know about the people in the Middle Ages, the ecclesiastical edifices which will naturally afford us the most certain instruction are the parish churches. It will be understood that our observations extend only to mediæval churches, because, after the introduction into this country of the Italian or "Revival Classic" style, all local peculiarities vanished.

We now propose to consider each English county separately with a view to discovering what is the special type of each, and how it originated. We must begin with Middlesex, or rather London. Of course, we know that London and Middlesex are different counties, and to speak of London being "in Middlesex" is absolutely a geographical error, yet, for the purposes of this article, we must deal with the

two in one paper. It is difficult to speak of the old church towers of London, because but one solitary example has escaped destruction or modernisation, and that is the small and unimportant one of Allhallows Staining. The church itself was pulled down some years back, but the old Gothic tower was allowed to remain. It had nothing ancient or remarkable about it except a curious traditional observance: the churchwardens used to dine off a boiled leg of pork on the 17th of November in honour of Elizabeth's accession. It is said that the curious custom came about from Elizabeth's remarkable generosity in "tipping" the clerk when she visited the church, which so astonished that worthy man, that he asked a number of friends home with him to dine off a leg of pork which his wife was boiling. The tower is a very ordinary example of the Middlesex type. The tower of St. Sepulchre's Church, Snow Hill, is old, but so much modernised that it is not quite possible to say for certain what its original design was, but probably the ancient outline is preserved; if so it was a tall embattled tower with four very lofty pinnacles at the angles; judging from ancient views of London before the fire, this was a very common type of tower for large parochial churches in the city. St. Michael's, Cornhill, was the most magnificent example. Wren considered it "so noble," that he attempted to copy it when rebuilding the church, but the result can scarcely be pronounced satisfactory.

When we leave London and come to examine the country churches of Middlesex, we find that they possess a very marked character, and that they tell us in a most interesting manner what was the condition of the county at the time they were erected; they generally consist of a rather low but solid square structure embattled at the top round a lead flat, with a turret at one angle rising above the parapet, also embattled; the belfry windows are small, and the whole presents rather the appearance of a castle than of an ecclesiastical structure. In point of construction they are somewhat plain, not to say rude, a fact which at first strikes one as singular, as they are close to the capital city of a great nation. When, however, we come to examine into the former condition of the county, we shall find that it was for the most part covered with wood and forest, with small clearances here and there sparsely inhabited and poorly cultivated. There were few castles to which the people could fly for refuge when the district was invaded by robbers or other vagabonds who infest the

parlous of a vast city, so that they built their church towers as much for purpose of defence as for holding the church bells. The tall turret at the angle was intended to hold a beacon for the purpose of conducting the traveller through the forest or undrained swamp; to those forced to proceed by the crooked paths and primitive roads, the beacon high up upon the distant church tower must indeed have been welcomed "As a cresset true that darts its length of beamy luster from a tower of strength guiding the traveller." Those who, like the writer, have lost themselves in Hadley Wood with the shades of evening closing in around must have wished that the old beacon of Hadley were still lighted up of a night.

Do our girls know Hadley Wood? If they want to gain an idea of Middlesex in olden times, nothing will bring it more vividly before them, but they should put on strong boots and leave their bicycles at home. Close at hand is old Hadley Church, with its weather-worn and ivy-clad tower, the perfection of the Middlesex type of church tower, with its ancient beacon still surmounting its turret, the only one now existing in England.

Another very interesting feature is the slab over the western doorway bearing the date 1494 and two little rebuses, one with a rose carved upon it, and the other with a wing. Some very far-fetched explanations of these have been given, but we believe they stand for "Rose Wing." Who was Rose Wing? We know not: did she build the tower, or restore it, or did she give the beacon? She has long, long back gone to her rest, and let us hope she has received her reward for this and other good deeds.

The similarity of Middlesex towers is quite remarkable, and the exceptions very few. Some of the smaller and poorer churches have miniature wooden towers and squat little spires crowning them, placed astride the nave roof and supported internally upon rude axe-cut beams.

The towers of Harrow and Stanwell Churches are crowned with lofty spires, but as they are absolutely plain and constructed of wood, they were probably intended as landmarks or guides; just as the Israelites of old were led to the Promised Land by a pillar of cloud during the day and one of fire by night, so were the weary wayfarers of later times led through dangerous paths by the church tower in the day and its beacon through the night.

(To be continued.)

## SISTERS THREE.

By Mrs. HENRY MANSERGH, Author of "A Rose-coloured Thread," etc.



### CHAPTER III.

HE old grandfather's clock was just striking six o'clock when Raymond and Bob, the two public school-boys, came home from their afternoon excursion. They walked slowly up the drive, supporting between them the figure of a young fellow a few years older than themselves,

who hopped painfully on one foot, and was no sooner seated on the oak bench in the hall, than he quietly rested his head against the rails, and went off into a dead faint. The boys shouted at the pitch of their voices, whereupon Mr. Bertrand rushed out of his sanctum, followed by every other member of his household.

"Good gracious! Who is it? What is the matter? Where did he come from? Has he had an accident?" cried the girls in chorus, while Miss Briggs rushed off for sal volatile and other remedies.

The stranger was a tall, lanky youth,

about eighteen years of age, with curly brown hair and well-cut features, and he made a pathetic figure leaning back in the big oak seat.

"He's the son of old Freer, the Squire of Brantmere," explained Raymond, as he busied himself unloosening the lad's collar and tie. "We have met him several times when we have been walking. Decent fellow—Harrow—reading at home for college, and hates it like poison. We were coming a short cut over the mountains, when he slipped on a bit of ice, and twisted his ankle trying to keep up. We had an awful time getting him back. He meant to stay at