

the last half century for the most part disappeared.

Perhaps the most characteristic tower in the county is the very pretty one of Maids-Moreton Church. This beautiful little building was erected by two maiden sisters, the daughters of the last male heir of the Peyvove family about the year 1450, and from this circumstance the place came to be called "Maids" Moreton. These good women carried out their intention in a most generous manner; for, although the church is a very small one, only capable of seating about two hundred people, it is an architectural gem,

constructed entirely of cut stone both within and without, after the manner of a cathedral; the windows, which are unusually large and handsome, were, within the memory of a man who was living a few years back, entirely filled with rich stained glass, fragments of which still remain. The roofs are of oak, beautifully carved, and the sedilia and "Easter-sepulchre" are celebrated for their elaborate canopy work. The porches, vestry and tower are vaulted in stone with fan tracery, and the penthouse porch over the west doorway is a singularly original piece of design. It is certainly one of the most costly

little village churches in England. Upon the floor is a large stone from which the brass effigies of two female figures and the inscription have been torn away; beneath this the two maidens "await, his resurrection of the just."

What ruffian defaced their monument and tore up their inscription? Who knows! In all probability it was done to save a few pence in mending a kettle, or its price was expended in some degraded orgie at the village ale-house! As long, however, as this beautiful little church exists, "the maids" can never be forgotten.

(To be continued.)

"IF LOVING HEARTS WERE NEVER LONELY—";

OR,

MADGE HARCOURT'S DESOLATION.

By GERTRUDE PAGE.

CHAPTER XV.

A DIFFICULT QUESTION.

EIGHT months have passed since merry Jack Harcourt was laid in his last resting-place, and the sunlight went out of Madge's life.

Already the cold winds of winter have laid bare the trees and desolated the gardens and spread an aching monotony over the hills of Cumberland.

The first snow of the season was just beginning to fall as Madge was tending her graves one afternoon in the beginning of December. She had a beautiful wreath of chrysanthemums in her hand, which had come from Guy that morning, he having never failed to send her flowers constantly since he went away in the spring.

To-day, the intense keenness of the wind caused her to remain a much shorter time than usual in the churchyard, and on leaving it she started for a brisk walk to warm herself.

As she hurried along, the set expression of her face and a certain contraction of her forehead, proclaimed a conflict of some kind within her breast. She appeared to walk without seeing anything about her, or caring in what direction she went. And a close observer could see too, that what has passed in her heart during these eight months has affected that which can only be undone with great difficulty.

From the first cold torpor of enforced endurance, there had issued no softer, gentler spirit, but a restive, rebellious, indignant one which only deepened her scepticism and still further marred her character.

Madge hated selfishness, but in her blind self-dependence she allowed it, to a certain extent, to dominate her life.

She did not see that by persistently mourning her heavy loss and dwelling upon the hardness of her fate, she was resolutely placing "Self" first.

She did not forget the sorrows of others, but she looked upon them in a hopelessly morbid spirit and lost belief in happiness. Once again she fell into her old fault of idolatry, and this time her idol was "Sorrow."

She had succumbed to the dangerous, but by no means uncommon, habit of placing her sorrow, as it were, on a pedestal and looking at it.

Thus she came to dwell upon it morbidly and bitterly, and to hug it to her, instead of trying to lessen it, by losing herself in an unwearying effort to brighten the lives of others.

She thought she had probed into the heart of things and learnt their value. She thought she had grown old in worldly wisdom, though her years were only twenty; and all the time she was a mere child as regards the simplest and most important lesson of all.

She had yet to learn that the one great balm in sorrow, strengthener in weakness and only creator of true happiness in this mysterious life is just to forget self in living for others. In fact in obeying the second great commandment, which is like unto that first one, without obedience to which no man knows true life—enjoyment and repose.

The dusk of the early winter twilight was already deepening into night when she reached the Manor House after her quick walk.

In the hall her step-mother met her. "I wish you had told me you were going for a walk," she said, in quick, short tones. "I particularly wanted to send a note to Mrs. Trevor."

"The postman will deliver it," was the careless answer.

"No doubt, but it would have been no trouble to you. You must have heard me mention it at dinner, and it isn't much you do for anyone but yourself."

"Perhaps not, but I can, if you like, sympathise with you for having to live with anyone so eminently objectionable," and Madge's lips curled unpleasantly as she proceeded with a slow and somewhat haughty bearing upstairs, paying no heed to Mrs. Harcourt's parting shaft, that it was extraordinary what pride some people took in parading their disagreeable tempers.

By this it will be seen, that even the cold politeness that had previously marked the relations between step-mother and step-daughter, had not

proved of an enduring nature, and though they were generally distant to each other, passages of this kind were by no means infrequent.

When Madge had taken off her things, she went downstairs again and sat over the drawing-room fire lost in conflicting thoughts.

She took a letter from her pocket and read it carefully. She had had it two or three days and it ran thus—

"Piccadilly Club.

"MY DEAR MISS HARCOURT,—Last May, when I spoke to you on a certain subject, you declined to consider it at all, and asked me not to allude to it again. I hope I shall not be offending you in doing so, but I cannot help asking you the same question once again. I am always thinking of you and longing to help you somehow, and I can't tell you how glad I should be, if you would only come to me and let me try to make your life a little brighter. You need not be afraid of over-shadowing mine, for somehow nothing has been the same since Jack died. I am no hand at letter-writing and I don't know in the least how to tell you all I want to. May I come and see you, I could make you understand so much better? Don't say 'no' only because you are afraid you don't care about me enough, I could be content with a little.

"I shall wait anxiously for your answer, and hope you will at least let me come.

"With kind regards,

"Yours sincerely,

"GUY FAWCETT."

For several minutes she held the letter open in her hand, and looked fixedly at the fire. For the last three days she had been in a restless, unsettled state because of it, and to-night she was determined to make up her mind one way or another.

"It is his wish," she argued, "I shall but be yielding to him, and he cannot blame me if he lives to regret it.

"I have told him I have no heart, and he must know I mean it, for he saw me with Jack and knows I used to be able to love."