

and a most touching little relic is an accidentally preserved list of seaside lodgings, with a detailed description of accommodations and charges, drawn up by her to spare trouble to a suffering lady, the wife of a valued friend. Such books as she had in her little library—which after all was not hers in a way, for she had few books save those which had been bought by her mother—were always eagerly pressed into the service of any friend likely to find them useful. Mr. Mackenzie Bell says, "Whenever Christina Rossetti wished to confer a favour, her manner of doing so was as if she were about to ask one." That is the hall-mark of God's ladyhood.

It is said she was a great judge of character and had strong likes and dislikes. But she held all this in charity. None of her parables are more telling than that which narrates how a traveller was received at a certain house with great hospitality and courtesy, so that he felt "he lacked nothing but a welcome," and so went away with a most gloomy impression, only to learn afterwards that the hosts he had thought so chill, had been bearing an irretrievable grief, which they could hide from him, though they could not rejoice with him. So they had given him all they could. Her comment is—

"The fret of temper we despise may have its rise in the agony of some great, unflinching, unsuspected self-sacrifice, or in the sustained strain of self-conquest, or in the endurance of unavowed, almost intolerable pain."

Elsewhere, remarking that even our most cherished opinions are almost inevitably modified by time, she adds, with subtle wisdom—

"If even time lasts long enough to reverse a verdict of time, how much more eternity?"

"Let us take courage, secondary as we may for the present appear. Of ourselves likewise, the comparative aspect will fade away, the positive will remain."

She drained all the little pleasures of life to their last drop, loving to tend her ferns, to watch the sunlight effects in the trees of the London square, to walk in the London square itself. But let nobody think that this noble contentment is reached without effort. She was not one to talk of her struggles, but we can trace the marks of them, as it were, in her poems. She had cried—

"If I might only love my God and die!  
But now He bids me love Him and live on."

She had felt—

"These thorns are sharp, yet I can tread  
on them;  
This cup is loathsome, yet Christ  
makes it sweet,

My face is steadfast towards Jerusalem—  
My heart remembers it.  
Although to-day, I walk in tedious ways,  
To-day His staff is turned into a rod,  
Yet will I wait for Him the appointed days  
And stay upon my God."

And thus she reached the calm heights where she could sing—

"Chimes that keep time are neither slow  
nor fast,  
Not many are the numbered sands nor  
few;  
A time to suffer, and a time to do,  
And then the time is past."

The end came to her just when her selfless nature would have chosen, for as she had

thought God that she was left to mourn her mother and not her mother to mourn her, so she survived till both the aged aunts were also removed. Indeed, all the family circle, save her youngest brother, had gone before her—Danie Gabriel, the unhappy genius, her sister, and both her brothers' wives.

Christina Rossetti had suffered much from physical ill-health all her life, and her end was full of bodily pain of a peculiar nature which tended to gather clouds of depression about her. But one of those who best knew and appreciated her, declares that Christina herself would accept even this with joy, could she but have realised how the thought of her passage through these deep waters must strengthen and cheer others called to follow her by the same dark way. Her beautiful spirit never failed. To the offertory of the church, in whose services she had found so much comfort, she sent the regular contribution she could no longer give with her own hand. She liked to be told when visitors called, though she could no longer see them, and she liked them to be detained till she could send down some special, kind little message. She even instructed her nurse that if a certain valued friend should call soon after her departure, that friend should be at once admitted to look on her dead face.

In person, Christina Rossetti was very attractive, though an illness from which she suffered twenty years before her death, slightly marred the beauty of her face. She had a placid, gentle manner. "In going into her house," says her biographer, "one seemed to have passed into an atmosphere of rest and of peace."

Speaking, as she spoke, in symbols, we would say that the sweetest fruits often ripen in walled gardens.

## "IF LOVING HEARTS WERE NEVER LONELY—";

OR,

MADGE HARCOURT'S DESOLATION.

By GERTRUDE PAGE.

### CHAPTER XXIV MORE REASONING.



THE following day Madge rose and went down to breakfast as usual, and there was no shadow of regret on her face as she sat down to the table alone.

At ten o'clock Elsie entered the room ready dressed for walking, and greeted her affectionately.

"It is a grand day for a walk," she said brightly. "I am quite looking forward to it."

Madge did not say much, but she looked pleased.

Elsie had hoped in coming early to make Guy's acquaintance, and it was with disappointment she found him absent.

"Your husband is always out," she

said frankly. "I had hoped to make his acquaintance this morning."

"He has gone away for a few days," replied Madge. "Come, shall we start? I am quite ready."

Leaving the gay shops and promenades behind them, the two friends quickly made their way out into the open country, both drinking in the fresh morning air with delight, and glorying in the invigorating atmosphere.

For some time they talked of many ordinary subjects, both feeling shy of introducing the topic uppermost in their minds.

At last Madge said quietly—

"I want to thank you for all you said yesterday. You helped me a great deal; I wish I were good like you."

"But I am not good," said Elsie, half-sadly. "Sometimes I am very far from good. I have envious rebellious thoughts still."

"Have you?" said Madge. "I shouldn't have thought it; but I am rather glad, I shall not feel so shy with you."

"Indeed, you need never feel shy with me," said Elsie warmly. "I am at best a very faulty person, but I feel very much for anyone who is unhappy and long to

help them. I hope you are going to take my advice and try not to worry and think so much. Do you think you will?"

"I don't know," replied Madge doubtfully. "I feel sure it would be a wise thing to do, but I am afraid it is an impossible one for me. Leaving things alone will not tell me where Jack is, or if I shall ever see him again." Her voice trembled a little, but she continued, "To me the present goes for very little; it is the future I care about; I want to know what comes after! I used to try and persuade myself that it was nothingness, but the very fact that I cannot rest satisfied in that belief, goes to show me that I am wrong."

"You can take it in a broader light still," said Elsie, thoughtfully. "The fact that ever since man was created, the possibility of a future life and a strong belief in it and craving for it has existed; and that, after centuries of thinking, puzzling and doubting, it still exists, goes to prove strongly that there is truth in the idea."

"It is hardly possible that anything without truth in it could have lived on in spite of the perpetual questioning and doubting to which it has always been subjected."