

her mother. Poor Lucy was not brought up according to our ideas, you know."

"She reminds me of Dr. Dale, sometimes," said Mrs. Wright, who was conspicuous in Old Chester for always saying the wrong thing.

Mrs. Dale's face hardened. "I only wish she may grow to be like my dear husband in—in amiability."

"Oh, dear me, yes!" cried Mrs. Wright with an exuberance that betrayed her. "Dear Dr. Dale!"

Mrs. Dale bowed her head.

The thoughts of both these women were on Dr. Eben Dale—one with honest pity, the other with the scorch of mortification and anger. He was dead, the brilliant, weak old man—dead, and escaped from his wife's fierce rectitude. In their youth she had harassed him with the passionate spur of exacting love, but later that had been exchanged for contempt. And then he died. No one guessed her grief, covered as it was by bitterness, and yet no one knew her fear of that joyous and imaginative temperament which had made it easy for him to go wrong, and which she saw repeated in her grandchild.

When Mrs. Wright said that little Ellen was like her grandfather, Mrs. Dale's heart contracted; she lost her interest in Jane Temple's affairs; she began to examine her conscience as to whether she was doing her duty to the child. It seemed to her that her husband was looking at her from Ellen's eyes—looking and laughing, as though he and she took up the old quarrel again.

"Like her grandfather!" Mrs. Dale's thin old hands clasped each other in a tremulous grip. "Oh—no—no!" she said to herself. "Oh, if my Heavenly Father will only give me grace to train her for Him!"

II.

Old Chester is a hundred years behind the times; so, at least, it is assured by its sons and daughters who have left it to live in the great world, but who come back, sometimes, for condescending visits to old homes. The town lies among the rolling hills of western Pennsylvania—hills which have never echoed with the scream of the locomotive, but are folded in a beautiful green silence, broken only by the silken ripple of little streams which run across the meadows or through the dappled shadows of the woods.

There is not much variety in Old Chester. The houses are built in very much the same way; broad porches; square rooms on either side of a wide hall that runs from the front door to the back; open fireplaces like black caverns under tall wooden mantelpieces. In all the gardens the flower-beds are surrounded by stiff box hedges, and all the orchards are laid out in straight lines.

The people are as much alike as their houses; they read the same books, go to the same church, train their children by the same rules, and are equally polite, reserved, and gently critical of one another.

Perhaps the most striking thing about the village is the way in which the children are brought up. In Old Chester young persons are supposed to be seen, and not heard; they are taught that when they have the privilege of being in the company of their elders and betters it is to profit by example and be grateful for advice. Thus they early perceive that their opinions are of no importance—a perception which adds greatly to the comfort of grown persons.

In spite of this admirable system, there has been more than one black sheep in the village. There was Eben Dale himself, although his youth dated so very far back that perhaps his maturity should not be quoted against Old Chester. Henry Temple, too, had not turned out well, except in a worldly way; and the worldly way was of small importance in Old Chester. Indeed, without quite putting it into words, the village felt a little lack of gentility in Henry's undoubted wealth; and that, added to his change in politics, and his indifference to church matters, and his willingness to live in the great world instead of the village, was enough to make

Old Chester say that he had "not turned out well." "Such a pity that his father was so lenient with him!" people said, and waited calmly for some Nemesis to overtake him; it being a peculiarity of Old Chester to believe that an overruling Providence agreed with it in questions of desert.

There had been one instance of over-severity in the village, but only one, and that not among the families of importance. This was in the case of Mr. Tommy Dove, the apothecary. His mother had ruled him with an iron rod until his forty-seventh year; then death pushed her from her throne, and left Mr. Tommy free, except indeed for the restraint of tenderness, which death, kindly but untrue, left in her place. Yet he soon rallied into self-reliance—"remarkably soon," Old Chester commented disapprovingly; for within three months after her death he took advantage of his liberty to go gadding about the world, leaving his patrons to get their medicines where they might.

Dates were remembered chronologically in the village. "Dr. Dale gave up practice the winter that the first Mrs. Drayton died;" "Henry Temple voted the wrong ticket the year there was a snowstorm when the apple-trees were in bloom;" and "Mr. Tommy's first ill-regulated action in mysteriously leaving town took place the summer that Henry Temple and his family were here."

Mr. Tommy was hardly important enough to gossip about, but Mr. Temple was; and, incidentally, his children were discussed, for spoiling Richard and Euphemia was another of his sins. Not even his sister's efforts to train them could make up for his shocking carelessness, people said. That Miss Jane was gentle and timid and self-distrustful, as every unmarried woman should be, and the children, unfortunately, were like their father, headstrong and self-satisfied. So how could she discipline them?

Besides, the summer of the Temples' first visit—the summer Mr. Tommy had disappeared—Miss Jane had a small happiness and interest of her own, which no doubt claimed the thought that might have been given to Effie and Dick. It was not a very exciting happiness; only a pleasant talk now and then with Mr. Dove, or an occasional call from him in those fragrant summer evenings. They would sit alone, these two elderly persons, in the dimly lighted drawing-room, hearing a murmur of talk in the library across the hall, or starting with a fright which neither of them understood if a door opened and closed, or if Mr. Henry Temple's voice were heard in the hall. Mr. Dove had dared to give Miss Temple a bunch of flowers, once; and once, too, had embarrassed and touched her by bringing her a little green crape shawl which had belonged to his mother. It was all very harmless and very pleasant, when, suddenly, Old Chester learned with astonishment that its apothecary had gone! Of course the reason could not long be concealed: Mr. Tommy, the village declared, aghast and disapproving, but grateful for a bit of gossip,—Mr. Tommy had made love to Jane Temple.

But that was four years ago and Mr. Tommy, who returned as soon as the Temples had left the village, had behaved so properly ever since that his presumption was not remembered against him, until now, when they were coming back again, a second abrupt and mysterious departure brought it all to mind.

"So foolish in Mr. Tommy," every one said severely, and looked at Jane Temple to see how she took it. Miss Temple took it calmly. There was a quick, surprised glance at the closed house standing in its neglected garden, and a little heightened color in her cheek when she went to Willie King's to have one of Mrs. Temple's prescriptions filled. Perhaps she was too busy for any embarrassment, or regret, or wonder; her sister-in-law's health was an absorbing anxiety; Effie's lessons had to be looked after; Dick needed her to keep his fishing-lines in order; Mr. Temple was so good as to let her be of use in his literary work to the extent of copying manuscript for him. Beside, there was a certain occupation in the mere delight of being back again in her old home, among old friends. This quiet, old-fashioned, living which