

afforded Mr. Henry Temple much diversion, was dear and sacred to her. There was nothing droll to her ears in being called a "girl;" it gave her a pathetic happiness to have Mrs. Dale apologize for speaking of a delicate subject in her presence. "I forgot you were here, my dear," Mrs. Dale said; and Miss Jane blushed, properly and prettily, and felt comforted and cared for. She knew more of the great, indifferent, vulgar world than Mrs. Dale ever dreamed of, but she cast down her eyes unaffectedly when the older women apologized for speaking of the misconduct of a village girl. She wished she might draw Dick and Effie into this tranquil life which so refreshed her. She looked at these two young persons, and pitied them because they did not know Youth. Here in Old Chester, how carefully Youth was guarded! It was still protected and considered when maturity had set its mark about soft lips and gentle eyes. It was done by snubbing. Henry Temple said, but Miss Jane never felt snubbed; she saw only kindly protection in the condescension which so amused her brother, and her elderly starved heart basked in it with great content. She was so modest, so grateful, that her friends were pleased to say of her that Jane had no "airs." This most satisfying praise could not be given to the rest of the

Temple household; the two children were especially "airy," and "snubbing" became a matter of duty to all thoughtful persons. "That unfortunate Temple child," Old Chester said, in speaking of Effie, "must really be reproofed." The reproof was only the rebuke of a grave manner and a discreet indifference to what she said and did, but it astounded and irritated the child. To hear herself addressed, on the rare occasions when she was noticed, as Euphemia instead of Effie—for Old Chester did not approve of nick-names—filled her with childish rage.

"My name's Effie; I don't like to be called Euphemia," she retorted glibly; and she gave her opinion of Old Chester, in this connection, with great freedom and force to Ellen Dale. "How queer and old-fashioned everybody is here," she said, "and how funny to be called Ellen; it's such an ugly name! Why don't you make your grandmother call you Nellie?"

"Make" her grandmother! Ellen, who was really a year older than the fine young lady who addressed her, shivered; yet there was no other Old Chester child so quickly influenced by Effie Temple as she.

(To be Continued.)

Mrs. Aubrey, of the Pines.

WHO was she, what was she, that young and handsome Mrs. Aubrey, of The Pines? That is just what nobody about the neighborhood of Tooting could have told. No one knew a bit more about her now than they had when she came to the queer old house, four years ago. It had been to let furnished, "with its extensive grounds and good stabling," for a long time. Then suddenly the London agent came, took down the "To Let" board, turned in cleaners, and a week later down came the new tenant, this young widow lady, with an elderly man servant and three women servants, the latter just engaged, and strangers to their new mistress. The man was believed to be an old servant, but he knew how to be silent. All attempts to "pump" Barton were met by a taciturn, even gruff, "My mistress's affairs are her concern, not mine. I know nothing about her but what is good."

She was well off, and free-handed where need or suffering reached her notice. Beyond the good vicar's occasional visits Mrs. Aubrey saw no visitors nor did she visit, but lived her own solitary and sorrowful life. She walked, drove, rode, but always alone save for, her attendant, Barton. She dressed well, but not in mourning; so, said the busy tongues, if she was a widow, she must have been one a long time before she came to the Pines. No one could say, however, that she had ever herself said that she either was or was not a widow; nor had the servants, or the vicar even, ever heard her make the least allusion to her husband.

Perhaps even her name was not her own. One thing the vicar noticed, and this was that Mrs. Aubrey was always eager to assist any woman whose distress was brought about by the loss of a child, or of the husband or by her having a bad husband. His own idea was that the mysterious tenant of The Pines was not a widow, but a deserted wife; he kept his conjecture to himself however, as he should, and gave no idle gossip the right to say "the vicar said this, or thinks that."

And by degrees, as time went on four years, gossip died down into a sort of quiescence for want of fresh food.

Of course Mrs. Aubrey's wealth was much exaggerated by gossip, and it was said that she kept valuable plate and jewels at the isolated old house; some added that Barton had grimly hinted that at night both himself and his mistress kept loaded firearms within reach. Which last *on dit* was likely true enough, for Mrs. Aubrey was one of those quietly determined-looking women who have any amount of pluck in reserve, both physical and moral.

One September night, after the servants had retired, and doors and windows were shuttered and barred, Margaret Aubrey threw aside her book and began pacing the drawing-room, locking and unlocking the slender white hands as if mere physical movement were, at least, some relief to the mental pain which nothing could dispel—to-day, too, of all others in the year—her wedding-day, eight long years ago; a happy girl-bride, loving and beloved; ah, surely yes, he had loved her then—wild sinner though she too soon learned he had been, and was again, after a brief year or so of happiness.

Bitter, pitiless retrospect gave it all back now with terrible vividness; the gradual change from lover's devotion to neglect, the yielding to old temptations, dissipation and unfaith, the shame and misery of it all, the cruel heart-break and then desertion.

Time and again, half mad with remorse in the earlier period of his drifting back, he had vowed reform, and she, the wife, had forgiven him; it was shame and dishonor to her widowhood, she told him. She had her own little fortune, and he had the wrecks of his. He had broken her heart and made her forgiveness but a scorn and weakness, and she must separate from him.

"I don't care," he had retorted fiercely, with a bitter laugh; "I'm past praying for, I suppose, so I'll go to the dogs my own way."

And that night he was gone. This was abroad, four years ago, and she, poor heart-broken wife, had come back and hidden her misery and shame in this place, away from all who had once known her under his name. It was

"Only the old, old story,
Sung so often in vain,"

a bitter, sorrowful story enough, Heaven knows, with its end, perhaps, still untold.

She had believed, in the first passion of indignation and anguish after her abandonment, that he had crushed her love, killed it root and branch, but she knew better afterwards, poor heart; all her bitter wrongs could not kill the roots that were bound in with her very life.

Even now she suddenly turned and went swiftly up to her own room, compelled by an irresistible yearning, to look on the treasured likeness of the man who had been the lover of her early youth, and was her husband "till death did them part."

She took the miniature from that locked up drawer and gazed through blinding tears on the handsome face that