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"The Very Temple of Democracy"

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A CAMPUS is unique. It is above and beyond [political] government. It is on the highest plane of life. Those who live there know the smell of good air, and they always take pains to spell truth with a small “t.” This is its secret strength and its contribution to the web of freedom; this is why the reading room of a college library is the very temple of democracy.”

From an editorial in The New Yorker, February 26, 1949, page 19.

OF MARGARET DELAND AND
“OLD CHESTER”

By Marjorie D. Gould

When Margaret Deland’s moving story of the shy apothecary, Mr. Tommy Dove, and his vain love for the wealthy Miss Jane Temple appeared in the Atlantic Monthly in 1889, Mrs. Deland probably did not guess that this was the beginning of a long series of stories destined to make the peaceful nineteenth-century village which she called “Old Chester” as famous as her name. Within a few years the citizens and surroundings of this Old Chester came to be as familiar to her readers as their own neighbors and neighborhood.

With the publication of the first collection of these stories in 1893, Mr. Tommy Dove, and Other Stories, and then Old Chester Tales in 1898, Mrs. Deland’s reading public began to inquire about visiting Old Chester itself. In her autobiography, Golden Yesterdays (1941), Mrs. Deland recalls the incident of receiving a letter of inquiry from a young girl whose aunt was an invalid: