

Marx Hardy Machiavelli Joyce Austen  
Defoe Abbot Melville Montaigne Cooper Emerson Hugo  
Stoker Wilde Christie Maupassant Haggard Chesterton Molière Eliot Grimm  
Garnett Engels Schiller Byron Maupassant Schiller  
Goethe Hawthorne Smith Kafka  
Cotton Dostoyevsky Kipling Doyle Willis  
Baum Henry Nietzsche Dumas Flaubert Turgenev Balzac Crane  
Leslie Stockton Vatsyayana Verne  
Burroughs Tocqueville Gogol Busch  
Curtis Homer Tolstoy Darwin Thoreau Twain Plato  
Potter Zola Lawrence Stevenson Dickens Harte  
Kant Freud Jowett Andersen London Descartes Cervantes Voltaire Cooke  
Poe Aristotle Wells Burton Hesse  
Hale James Hastings Shakespeare Chambers Irving  
Bunner Richter Chekhov da Shaw Wodehouse  
Doré Dante Swift Pushkin Alcott  
Newton



tredition was established in 2006 by Sandra Latusseck and Soenke Schulz. Based in Hamburg, Germany, tredition offers publishing solutions to authors and publishing houses, combined with worldwide distribution of printed and digital book content. tredition is uniquely positioned to enable authors and publishing houses to create books on their own terms and without conventional manufacturing risks.

For more information please visit: [www.tredition.com](http://www.tredition.com)

## TREDITION CLASSICS

This book is part of the TREDITION CLASSICS series. The creators of this series are united by passion for literature and driven by the intention of making all public domain books available in printed format again - worldwide. Most TREDITION CLASSICS titles have been out of print and off the bookstore shelves for decades. At tredition we believe that a great book never goes out of style and that its value is eternal. Several mostly non-profit literature projects provide content to tredition. To support their good work, tredition donates a portion of the proceeds from each sold copy. As a reader of a TREDITION CLASSICS book, you support our mission to save many of the amazing works of world literature from oblivion. See all available books at [www.tredition.com](http://www.tredition.com).



The content for this book has been graciously provided by Project Gutenberg. Project Gutenberg is a non-profit organization founded by Michael Hart in 1971 at the University of Illinois. The mission of Project Gutenberg is simple: To encourage the creation and distribution of eBooks. Project Gutenberg is the first and largest collection of public domain eBooks.

# **The Vicar's Daughter**

George MacDonald

# Imprint

This book is part of TREDITION CLASSICS

Author: George MacDonald  
Cover design: Buchgut, Berlin - Germany

Publisher: tredition GmbH, Hamburg - Germany  
ISBN: 978-3-8424-3438-7

[www.tredition.com](http://www.tredition.com)  
[www.tredition.de](http://www.tredition.de)

Copyright:  
The content of this book is sourced from the public domain.

The intention of the TREDITION CLASSICS series is to make world literature in the public domain available in printed format. Literary enthusiasts and organizations, such as Project Gutenberg, worldwide have scanned and digitally edited the original texts. tredition has subsequently formatted and redesigned the content into a modern reading layout. Therefore, we cannot guarantee the exact reproduction of the original format of a particular historic edition. Please also note that no modifications have been made to the spelling, therefore it may differ from the orthography used today.

# THE VICAR'S DAUGHTER

BY GEORGE MACDONALD

The Vicar's Daughter was originally published in 1872 by Tinsley  
Brothers,  
London.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTORY

CHAPTER II. I TRY

CHAPTER III. MY WEDDING

CHAPTER IV. JUDY'S VISIT

CHAPTER V. GOOD SOCIETY

CHAPTER VI. A REFUGE FROM THE HEAT

CHAPTER VII. CONNIE

CHAPTER VIII. CONNIE'S BABY

CHAPTER IX. THE FOUNDLING REFOUND

CHAPTER X. WAGTAIL COMES TO HONOR

CHAPTER XI. A STUPID CHAPTER

CHAPTER XII. AN INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER XIII. MY FIRST DINNER PARTY. – A NEGATIVED  
PROPOSAL

CHAPTER XIV. A PICTURE

CHAPTER XV. RUMORS

CHAPTER XVI. A DISCOVERY

CHAPTER XVII. MISS CLARE

CHAPTER XVIII. MISS CLARE'S HOME

CHAPTER XIX. HER STORY

CHAPTER XX. A REMARKABLE FACT

CHAPTER XXI. LADY BERNARD

CHAPTER XXII. MY SECOND DINNER PARTY

CHAPTER XXIII. THE END OF THE EVENING

CHAPTER XXIV. MY FIRST TERROR

CHAPTER XXV. ITS SEQUEL

CHAPTER XXVI. TROUBLES

CHAPTER XXVII. MISS CLARE AMONGST HER FRIENDS

CHAPTER XXVIII. MR. MORLEY

CHAPTER XXIX. A STRANGE TEXT

CHAPTER XXX. ABOUT SERVANTS

CHAPTER XXXI. ABOUT PERCIVALE

CHAPTER XXXII. MY SECOND TERROR

CHAPTER XXXIII. THE CLOUDS AFTER THE RAIN

CHAPTER XXXIV. THE SUNSHINE

CHAPTER XXXV. WHAT LADY BERNARD THOUGHT OF IT

CHAPTER XXXVI. RETROSPECTIVE

CHAPTER XXXVII. MRS. CROMWELL COMES

CHAPTER XXXVIII. MRS. CROMWELL GOES

CHAPTER XXXIX. ANCESTRAL WISDOM

CHAPTER XL. CHILD NONSENSE

CHAPTER XLI. "DOUBLE, DOUBLE, TOIL AND TROUBLE"

CHAPTER XLII. ROGER AND MARION

CHAPTER XLIII. A LITTLE MORE ABOUT ROGER, AND ABOUT  
MR. BLACKSTONE

CHAPTER XLIV. THE DEA EX



## CHAPTER I.

### INTRODUCTORY.

I think that is the way my father would begin. My name is Ethelwyn Percivale, and used to be Ethelwyn Walton. I always put the Walton in between when I write to my father; for I think it is quite enough to have to leave father and mother behind for a husband, without leaving their name behind you also. I am fond of lumber-rooms, and in some houses consider them far the most interesting spots; but I don't choose that my old name should lie about in the one at home.

I am much afraid of writing nonsense; but my father tells me that to see things in print is a great help to recognizing whether they are nonsense or not. And he tells me, too, that his friend the publisher, who,—but I will speak of him presently,—his friend the publisher is not like any other publisher he ever met with before; for he never grumbles at any alterations writers choose to make,—at least he never says any thing, although it costs a great deal to shift the types again after they are once set up. The other part of my excuse for attempting to write lies simply in telling how it came about.

Ten days ago, my father came up from Marshmallows to pay us a visit. He is with us now, but we don't see much of him all day; for he is generally out with a friend of his in the east end, the parson of one of the poorest parishes in London,—who thanks God that he wasn't the nephew of any bishop to be put into a good living, for he learns more about the ways of God from having to do with plain, yes, vulgar human nature, than the thickness of the varnish would ever have permitted him to discover in what are called the higher orders of society. Yet I must say, that, amongst those I have recognized as nearest, the sacred communism of the early church—a phrase of my father's—are two or three people of rank and wealth, whose names are written in heaven, and need not be set down in my poor story.

A few days ago, then, my father, coming home to dinner, brought with him the publisher of the two books called, "The Annals of a Quiet Neighborhood," and "The Seaboard Parish." The first of these had lain by him for some years before my father could publish it; and then he remodelled it a little for the magazine in which it came out, a portion at a time. The second was written at the request of Mr. S., who wanted something more of the same sort; and now, after some years, he had begun again to represent to my father, at intervals, the necessity for another story to complete the *trilogy*, as he called it: insisting, when my father objected the difficulties of growing years and failing judgment, that indeed he owed it to him; for he had left him in the lurch, as it were, with an incomplete story, not to say an uncompleted series. My father still objected, and Mr. S. still urged, until, at length, my father said—this I learned afterwards, of course—"What would you say if I found you a substitute?" "That depends on who the substitute might be, Mr. Walton," said Mr. S. The result of their talk was that my father brought him home to dinner that day; and hence it comes, that, with some real fear and much metaphorical trembling, I am now writing this. I wonder if anybody will ever read it. This my first chapter shall be composed of a little of the talk that passed at our dinner-table that day. Mr. Blackstone was the only other stranger present; and he certainly was not much of a stranger.

"Do you keep a diary, Mrs. Percivale?" asked Mr. S., with a twinkle in his eye, as if he expected an indignant repudiation.

"I would rather keep a rag and bottle shop," I answered: at which Mr. Blackstone burst into one of his splendid roars of laughter; for if ever a man could laugh like a Christian who believed the world was in a fair way after all, that man was Mr. Blackstone; and even my husband, who seldom laughs at any thing I say with more than his eyes, was infected by it, and laughed heartily.

"That's rather a strong assertion, my love," said my father. "Pray, what do you mean by it?"

"I mean, papa," I answered, "that it would be a more profitable employment to keep the one than the other."

"I suppose you think," said Mr. Blackstone, "that the lady who keeps a diary is in the same danger as the old woman who prided

herself in keeping a strict account of her personal expenses. And it always was correct; for when she could not get it to balance at the end of the week, she brought it right by putting down the deficit as *charity*."

"That's just what I mean," I said.

"But," resumed Mr. S., "I did not mean a diary of your feelings, but of the events of the day and hour."

"Which are never in themselves worth putting down," I said. "All that is worth remembering will find for itself some convenient cranny to go to sleep in till it is wanted, without being made a poor mummy of in a diary."

"If you have such a memory, I grant that is better, even for my purpose, much better," said Mr. S.

"For your purpose!" I repeated, in surprise. "I beg your pardon; but what designs can you have upon my memory?"

"Well, I suppose I had better be as straightforward as I know you would like me to be, Mrs. Percivale. I want you to make up the sum your father owes me. He owed me three books; he has paid me two. I want the third from you."

I laughed; for the very notion of writing a book seemed preposterous.

"I want you, under feigned names of course," he went on, "as are all the names in your father's two books, to give me the further history of the family, and in particular your own experiences in London. I am confident the history of your married life must contain a number of incidents which, without the least danger of indiscretion, might be communicated to the public to the great advantage of all who read them."

"You forget," I said, hardly believing him to be in earnest, "that I should be exposing my story to you and Mr. Blackstone at least. If I were to make the absurd attempt,—I mean absurd as regards my ability,—I should be always thinking of you two as my public, and whether it would be right for me to say this and say that; which you may see at once would render it impossible for me to write at all."

"I think I can suggest a way out of that difficulty, Wynnie," said my father. "You must write freely, all you feel inclined to write, and then let your husband see it. You may be content to let all pass that he passes."

"You don't say you really mean it, papa! The thing is perfectly impossible.

I never wrote a book in my life, and" —

"No more did I, my dear, before I began my first."

"But you grew up to it by degrees, papa!"

"I have no doubt that will make it the easier for you, when you try. I am so far, at least, a Darwinian as to believe that."

"But, really, Mr. S. ought to have more sense—I beg your pardon, Mr. S.; but it is perfectly absurd to suppose me capable of finishing any thing my father has begun. I assure you I don't feel flattered by your proposal. I have got a man of more consequence for a father than that would imply."

All this time my tall husband sat silent at the foot of the table, as if he had nothing on earth to do with the affair, instead of coming to my assistance, when, as I thought, I really needed it, especially seeing my own father was of the combination against me; for what can be more miserable than to be taken for wiser or better or cleverer than you know perfectly well you are. I looked down the table, straight and sharp at him, thinking to rouse him by the most powerful of silent appeals; and when he opened his mouth very solemnly, staring at me in return down all the length of the table, I thought I had succeeded. But I was not a little surprised, when I heard him say,—

"I think, Wynnie, as your father and Mr. S. appear to wish it, you might at least try."

This almost overcame me, and I was very near,—never mind what. I bit my lips, and tried to smile, but felt as if all my friends had forsaken me, and were about to turn me out to beg my bread. How on earth could I write a book without making a fool of myself?

"You know, Mrs. Percivale," said Mr. S., "you needn't be afraid about the composition, and the spelling, and all that. We can easily set those to rights at the office."

He couldn't have done any thing better to send the lump out of my throat; for this made me angry.

"I am not in the least anxious about the spelling," I answered; "and for the rest, pray what is to become of me, if what you print should happen to be praised by somebody who likes my husband or my father, and therefore wants to say a good word for me? That's what a good deal of reviewing comes to, I understand. Am I to receive in silence what doesn't belong to me, or am I to send a letter to the papers to say that the whole thing was patched and polished at the printing-office, and that I have no right to more than perhaps a fourth part of the commendation? How would that do?"

"But you forget it is not to have your name to it," he said; "and so it won't matter a bit. There will be nothing dishonest about it."

"You forget, that, although nobody knows my real name, everybody will know that I am the daughter of that Mr. Walton who would have thrown his pen in the fire if you had meddled with any thing he wrote. They would be praising *me*, if they praised at all. The name is nothing. Of all things, to have praise you don't deserve, and not to be able to reject it, is the most miserable! It is as bad as painting one's face."

"Hardly a case in point," said Mr. Blackstone. "For the artificial complexion would be your own work, and the other would not."

"If you come to discuss that question," said my father, "we must all confess we have had in our day to pocket a good many more praises than we had a right to. I agree with you, however, my child, that we must not connive at any thing of the sort. So I will propose this clause in the bargain between you and Mr. S.; namely, that, if he finds any fault with your work, he shall send it back to yourself to be set right, and, if you cannot do so to his mind, you shall be off the bargain."

"But papa, — Percivale, — both of you know well enough that nothing ever happened to me worth telling."

"I am sorry your life has been so very uninteresting, wife," said my husband grimly; for his fun is always so like earnest!

"You know well enough what I mean, husband. It does *not* follow that what has been interesting enough to you and me will be interesting to people who know nothing at all about us to begin with."

"It depends on how it is told," said Mr. S.

"Then, I beg leave to say, that I never had an original thought in my life; and that, if I were to attempt to tell my history, the result would be as silly a narrative as ever one old woman told another by the workhouse fire."

"And I only wish I could hear the one old woman tell her story to the other," said my father.

"Ah! but that's because you see ever so much more in it than shows. You always see through the words and the things to something lying behind them," I said.

"Well, if you told the story rightly, other people would see such things behind it too."

"Not enough of people to make it worth while for Mr. S. to print it," I said.

"He's not going to print it except he thinks it worth his while; and you may safely leave that to him," said my husband.

"And so I'm to write a book as big as 'The Annals;' and, after I've been slaving at it for half a century or so, I'm to be told it won't do, and all my labor must go for nothing? I must say the proposal is rather a cool one to make, — to the mother of a family."

"Not at all; that's not it, I mean," said Mr. S.; "if you will write a dozen pages or so, I shall be able to judge by those well enough, — at least, I will take all the responsibility on myself after that."

"There's a fair offer!" said my husband. "It seems to me, Wynnie, that all that is wanted of you is to tell your tale so that other people can recognize the human heart in it, — the heart that is like their own, and be able to feel as if they were themselves going through the things you recount."

"You describe the work of a genius, and coolly ask me to do it. Besides, I don't want to be set thinking about my heart, and all that," I said peevishly.

"Now, don't be raising objections where none exist," he returned.

"If you mean I am pretending to object, I have only to say that I feel all one great objection to the whole affair, and that I won't touch it."

They were all silent; and I felt as if I had behaved ungraciously. Then first I felt as if I might *have* to do it, after all. But I couldn't see my way in the least.

"Now, what is there," I asked, "in all my life that is worth setting down,—I mean, as I should be able to set it down?"

"What do you ladies talk about now in your morning calls?" suggested Mr.

Blackstone, with a humorous glance from his deep black eyes.

"Nothing worth writing about, as I am sure *you* will readily believe, Mr.

Blackstone," I answered.

"How comes it to be interesting, then?"

"But it isn't. They—we—only talk about the weather and our children and servants, and that sort of thing."

"*Well!*" said Mr. S., "and I wish I could get any thing sensible about the weather and children and servants, and that sort of thing, for my magazine. I have a weakness in the direction of the sensible."

"But there never is any thing sensible said about any of them,—not that I know of."

"Now, Wynn timer, I am sure you are wrong," said my father. "There is your friend, Mrs. Cromwell: I am certain she, sometimes at least, must say what is worth hearing about such matters."

"Well, but she's an exception. Besides, she hasn't any children."

"Then," said my husband, "there's Lady Bernard"—

"Ah! but she was like no one else. Besides, she is almost a public character, and any thing said about her would betray my original."

"It would be no matter. She is beyond caring for that now; and not one of her friends could object to any thing you who loved her so much would say about her."

The mention of this lady seemed to put some strength into me. I felt as if I did know something worth telling, and I was silent in my turn.

"Certainly," Mr. S. resumed, "whatever is worth talking about is worth writing about, — though not perhaps in the way it is talked about. Besides, Mrs. Percivale, my clients want to know more about your sisters, and little Theodora, or Dorothea, or — what was her name in the book?"

The end of it was, that I agreed to try to the extent of a dozen pages or so.

## CHAPTER II.

### I TRY.

I hope no one will think I try to write like my father; for that would be to go against what he always made a great point of, — that nobody whatever should imitate any other person whatever, but in modesty and humility allow the seed that God had sown in her to grow. He said all imitation tended to dwarf and distort the plant, if it even allowed the seed to germinate at all. So, if I do write like him, it will be because I cannot help it.

I will just look how "The Seaboard Parish" ends, and perhaps that will put into my head how I ought to begin. I see my father does mention that I had then been Mrs. Percivale for many years. Not so very many though, — five or six, if I remember rightly, and that is three or four years ago. Yes; I have been married nine years. I may as well say a word as to how it came about; and, if Percivale doesn't like it, the remedy lies in his pen. I shall be far more thankful to have any thing struck out on suspicion than remain on sufferance.

After our return home from Kilkhaven, my father and mother had a good many talks about me and Percivale, and sometimes they took different sides. I will give a shadow of one of these conversations. I think ladies can write fully as natural talk as gentlemen can, though the bits between mayn't be so good.

*Mother.* — I am afraid, my dear husband [This was my mother's most solemn mode of addressing my father], "they are too like each other to make a suitable match."

*Father.* — I am sorry to learn you consider me so very unlike yourself, Ethelwyn. I had hoped there was a very strong resemblance indeed, and that the match had not proved altogether unsuitable.

*Mother.*—Just think, though, what would have become of me by this time, if you had been half as unbelieving a creature as I was. Indeed, I fear sometimes I am not much better now.

*Father.*—I think I am, then; and I know you've done me nothing but good with your unbelief. It was just because I was of the same sort precisely that I was able to understand and help you. My circumstances and education and superior years—

*Mother.*—Now, don't plume yourself on that, Harry; for you know everybody says you look much the younger of the two.

*Father.*—I had no idea that everybody was so rude. I repeat, that my more years, as well as my severer education, had, no doubt, helped me a little further on before I came to know you; but it was only in virtue of the doubt in me that I was able to understand and appreciate the doubt in you.

*Mother.*—But then you had at least begun to leave it behind before I knew you, and so had grown able to help me. And Mr. Percivale does not seem, by all I can make out, a bit nearer believing in any thing than poor Wynnie herself.

*Father.*—At least, he doesn't fancy he believes when he does not, as so many do, and consider themselves superior persons in consequence. I don't know that it would have done you any great harm, Miss Ethelwyn, to have made my acquaintance when I was in the worst of my doubts concerning the truth of things. Allow me to tell you that I was nearer making shipwreck of my faith at a certain period than I ever was before or have been since.

*Mother.*—What period was that?

*Father.*—Just the little while when I had lost all hope of ever marrying you,—unbeliever as you counted yourself.

*Mother.*—You don't mean to say you would have ceased to believe in God, if he hadn't given you your own way?

*Father.*—No, my dear. I firmly believe, that, had I never married you, I should have come in the end to say, "*Thy will be done,*" and to believe that it must be all right, however hard to bear. But, oh, what a terrible thing it would have been, and what a frightful valley of the shadow of death I should have had to go through first!