

CONDENSED CLASSICS

THE VICAR OF WAKEFIELD

By OLIVER GOLDSMITH

Condensation by Conyn H. H.



Oliver Goldsmith is a Irish poet, playwright, novelist and man of letters. He was born in 1730. There has been some question as to the place of his birth but recent investigations have shown that it was at Smith-Field House, Dublin, Ireland. While Oliver was still a child the family moved to the country of West Meath. He was sent to the village school when only seven, where the master, while teaching reading, writing and arithmetic managed to also fill the minds of his pupils with stories of fairies, ghosts, bunnies.

Goldsmith left this school at the age of nine, and went to several grammar schools, and acquired some knowledge of the ancient languages. He was not a brilliant scholar; in fact was considered rather backward. He was small of stature, with features harsh to ugliness, and was the butt of the other boys and the masters.

After many and varied attempts to fit himself for a profession, and repeated failures, he took to writing. As his name gradually became known his circle of acquaintances widened. He was introduced to Johnson, then considered the first of English writers; to Mr. Johnson Reynolds, the famous English painter, and others.

Before the "Vicar of Wakefield" appeared in 1766, came the great crisis of Goldsmith's life. In Christmas week 1764, he published a poem entitled the "Traveler." It was the first work in which he had put his name, and it placed him at once to the rank of a legitimate English classic.

After the "Traveler" appeared "The Vicar of Wakefield," and it rapidly obtained a popularity which has lasted down to our own times. "The vicar" chapters show all the sweetness of pastoral poetry, together with all the vivacity of comedy. It is claimed that the latter part of the tale is not worthy of the beginning.

The success which he won with this story encouraged Goldsmith to try his hand as a dramatist, and he wrote the "Good Natured Man." The play, however, is best known in later times as "The Stage Coachman." It was brought out at the Covent Garden Theatre, and "hit, boxes and galleries were in a constant roar of laughter." Goldsmith died on April 4, 1774, at the fifth year. He was laid in the churchyard of the Temple, but the spot was not marked by any inscription and is now forgotten.

I CHOSE my wife for such qualities as would wear well. She could read any English book without much spelling; but for pickling, preserving and cookery, none could exceed her. We were ever unostentatious of our hospitality, and our gooseberry wine had great reputation, so that our cousins, even to the fortieth remove, remembered their affinity without any help from the heralds' office, and came very frequently to see us.

My children were well-formed and healthy. Two daughters, who to conceal nothing, were certainly very hand some: Olivia, of luxuriant beauty, an Sordida soft, modest and alluring. My eldest son, George, was bred at Oxford while Moses, my second boy, received a sort of miscellaneous education at home.

But, alas, by a sudden stroke of ill luck, my entire fortune was swept away, and out of £14,000 I had but four hundred remaining. This caused my neighbor, Mr. Wilnot, to break off the engagement existing between my son, George, and his daughter, Arabel la. Mr. Wilnot had one virtue in perfection, which was prudence, too after the only one that is left us at seventy-two.

We were now poor, and wisdom had me conform to our humble situation. I gave George £5 and sent him to London to do the best he might for himself and for us. I found a small cure of £15 a year in a distant neighborhood, and thither we at once repaired. On our journey we fell in with one Mr. Burchell, a pleasing and instructive companion, who told me much of Squire Thornhill, our new landlord, who, it seemed, was the pleasure-loving nephew of the great and worthy Sir William Thornhill. Mr. Burchell had the great kindness to rescue my daughter, Sophia, who had the mischance to fall into a rapid stream, and who, but for his timely assistance, must have been drowned. On this, my wife immediately built a future romance for the two young people. I could not but smile, to hear her, but I am never displeas'd with those harmless delusions that tend to make us more happy.

Our landlord, Squire Thornhill, became a frequent visitor at our little habitation, lured, perhaps by my wife's venison pasty—or perhaps by the charms of my pretty daughters. Mr. Burchell, too, came often, so we were not at loss for merry company. My wife, ambitious to hold our heads a little higher in the world, desired that I sell our coat at a neighboring fair, and buy, instead, a horse that would make better appearance at church or upon a visit.

She sent Moses, who was a most discreet bargainer, and whom his sisters fitted out bravely for the fair.

They trimmed his locks, brushed his buckles and cocked his hat with pins. He wore a thunder-and-lightning coat and a gossling green waistcoat; but, alas, at the fair he was imposed upon by a prowling sharper, who, after Moses had well bargained away the coat, managed to get the purchase money from him in return for a gross of green spectacles in shagreen cases! and so, as usual, unforeseen disaster frustrated our attempts to be fine.

My daughters planned a pleasure expedition to town, and this Mr. Burchell so strongly disapproved of that a quarrel ensued between him and my wife, and the gentleman left our house in a fit of anger, nor could Sophia's pleading looks stay him.

The town trip being still in prospect, my wife decreed that I go to the fair myself, and sell our one remaining horse. But when one would be purchased examined the animal, and declared him blind of one eye, another observed he had a spavin, a third perceived he had a windgall, a fourth said he had the bots, and so on. I began to have a most hearty contempt for the poor beast myself, for I reflected that the number of witnesses was a strong presumption they were right, and St. Gregory himself is of the same opinion. However, I at last sold my horse, but had the misfortune to receive in payment a forged and worthless draft, the same being, indeed, the wicked work of the very man who had sold Moses the spectacles.

Mr. Burchell being absent from our bedside, only Sophia missed him, for the rest of us were greatly pleased by the visits of our landlord, who now came often. It must be owned that my wife laid a thousand schemes to entrap him as a husband for Olivia, and used every art to magnify the merits of her daughter. The results, however, being small, my wife sought to rouse Mr. Thornhill's jealousy by hinting of Olivia's marriage with Farmer Williams, a most worthy, though humble neighbor. This failing to egg on the backward Thornhill, the wedding day was set for Olivia and Farmer Williams. But four days before the day I learned to my distraction that my Olivia had gone off secretly in a post-chaise with a gentleman who, as I was told by an onlooker, kissed her and said he would die for her. Well did I know the villain who had thus robbed me of my sweet innocent child; it was none other than the wicked Thornhill. My wife fell to loud berating of him and Olivia as well, but I declared my house and heart should ever be open to the returning repentant sinner. I set out to find her—but my first efforts persuaded me that it was Mr. Burchell, and not Squire Thornhill, who had seduced my darling. This, though, was not the truth.

Two but part of the villain's plan. After long search I found my darling girl, in a hiding place, whither she had fled from the dreadful Thornhill who under pretense of marriage, had ruined her. It seems they were married by a black scoundrel, who had before married the squire to six or eight other wives!

I took my poor darling home, only to be met with the astounding news that my little home was utterly destroyed by fire. With what cheerfulness we might, we made shift to live in one of our farm outbuildings, and endeavored to enjoy our former serenity.

But this was not to be. The despicable Thornhill, about to marry Miss Wilnot—yes, the same to whom my son, George, was once betrothed—made proposal that we marry my Olivia to another, yet let her still be a friend of his own. My righteous denunciation of this resulted in the squire's threats of retribution, and this came, in the form of a demand for my annual rent, the which I was unable to pay. I was thereupon thrown into a debtor's prison, but even here I endeavored to preserve my calm, and after my usual meditations, and having prayed my Heavenly Corrector, I slept with the utmost tranquillity.

Man frequently calls in the consolations of philosophy, which, I have found, are amusing, but often fallacious. In the prison, though I attempted a much-needed reform movement, and though I lectured and advised with all my powers, I suffered many and various sorrows and disappointments. I was informed of the death of my

daughter, Olivia—an unkind report, thank Heaven! I was told of the forcible abduction of Sophia, by desperate villains.

From this danger, however, dear Sophia was rescued by Mr. Burchell; to whom I willingly gave my treasure for a wife. And, we then learned that our friend Mr. Burchell was in reality the great Sir William Thornhill, and my daughter would be a fine lady. And, another joy, I learned that my daughter, Olivia, was the lawful wife of Squire Thornhill, his previous marriages all having been so performed by the wicked clergyman that they were not legal.

Whereupon, my son, George, having reappeared, Miss Wilnot, his one-time lover, accepted anew his offers, and those two were happy together. As a compensation to my harvest of good fortune, the vessel who did me out of my fortune so long ago was arrested, and forced to give up his effects. My wrongs being set right, I, of course, was freed of the prison, and it now remained only that my gratitude in food fortune should exceed my former submission in adversity.

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Overlooking Opportunity.

Some folks are so used to havin' teeter bells and buzzers on their doors that when Opportunity does knock they think it's the janitor fussin' with the furnace.—Sing Sing Bulletin.

VOTES COUNT NOW

For many years we men have been told what would happen if women were ever given equal suffrage with men.

Now they have it. In future the vote of the humblest female citizen will count just as much as that of the president of the United States.

Acts, not words, will write the story of the future.

It is a matter of speculation as to just what effect the feminine vote will in national and state politics, but the presumption is that it will have a tendency to purify the ballot and retire a certain stamp of politicians who have been seeking to debauch the ballot for years.

Morally woman is unquestionably the superior of man, and if she demonstrates the fact that she is broad minded enough to rise above

petulant politics and vote for men of stability and character, regardless of political considerations, we may reasonably expect her advent to be one of supreme importance to the future welfare of our country. In such an event political leaders will hesitate long before attempting to foist upon the voters of their party a man who does not truly represent the intelligence and the integrity of that party.

Until women adjust themselves to their new station in life some no doubt will vote merely as their husbands do, while others will do their own thinking and vote as they please.

It is to the latter class that we must look for any material change from our present political methods and system.

The November election will tell much of the story, but few political forecasters are willing to make even the smallest kind of a prediction at this time.

The politicians themselves are all floundering in a sea of uncertainty.

The fellow who makes a big noise is sure to be heard—that's all.

Any person can give good advice, but it's quite a different thing to set a good example.

OUR RELIABLE PLUMBING

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Where's Your Bread Buttered?

WHAT makes your community a prosperous one? You don't need to do a "Sherlock Holmes" to figure out that the industries of a state or community are the sturdy oaks around which the vine of prosperity twines. And that the successful development of an industry depends upon the quality of the product and a market.

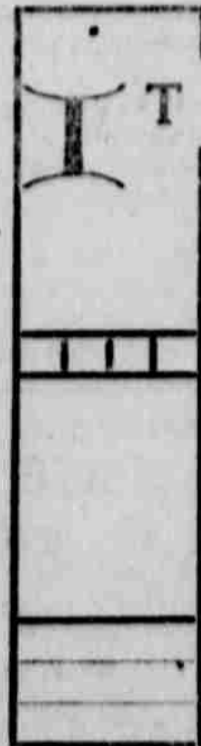
Oregon manufacturers are putting the quality into their products; you can help extend their market by asking for "Oregon Made" when you buy. And incidentally put more butter on your own bread.

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