

takes time. Shorthand is by far the more difficult of the two to master, and of this caligraphy—as of long hand—is it true, that the younger it is commenced the easier is it acquired.

VEVA KARSLAND.

THE VICAR'S DAUGHTER.*

An Autobiographical Story.

BY GEORGE MACDONALD, LL.D.,

Author of "David Elginbrod," "Alec Forbes," "Within and Without," "Malcolm," &c.

CHAPTER III. (CONTINUED).—MY WEDDING.

WELL, the birds were singing, and Dora and the boys were making a great chatter, like a whole colony of sparrows, under my window. Still I felt as if I had twenty questions to settle before I could get up comfortably, and so lay on and on till the breakfast bell rang; and I was not more than half dressed when my mother came to see why I was late, for I had not been late for ever so long before.

She comforted me as nobody but a mother can comfort. Oh! I do hope I shall be to my children what my mother has been to me. It would be such a blessed thing to be a well of water whence they may be sure of drawing comfort. And all she said to me has come true.

Of course, my father gave me away, and Mr. Weir married us.

It had been before agreed that we should have no wedding journey. We all liked the old-fashioned plan of the bride going straight from her father's house to her husband's. The other way seemed a poor invention, just for the sake of something different. So after the wedding we spent the time as we should have done any other day, wandering about in groups, or sitting and reading, only that we were all more smartly dressed—until it was time for an early dinner, after which we drove to the station, accompanied only by my father and mother.

After they left us, or rather we left them, my husband did not speak to me for nearly an hour. I knew why, and was very grateful. He would not show his new face in the midst of my old loves and their sorrows, but would give me time to rearrange the grouping so as myself to bring him in when all was ready for him. I know that was what he was thinking, or feeling rather; and I understood him perfectly. At last, when I had got things a little tidier inside me, and had persuaded my eyes to stop, I held out my hand to him, and then—I knew that I was his wife.

This is all I have to tell, though I have plenty more to keep, till we got to London. There, instead of my father's nice carriage, we got into a jolting, lumbering, horrid cab, with my five boxes and Percivale's little portmanteau on the top of it, and drove away to Camden Town. It was to a part of it near the Regent's Park, and so our letters were always, according to the divisions of the Post Office, addressed to Regent's Park, but for all practical intents we were in Camden Town. It was indeed a change from a fine old house in the country, but the street wasn't much uglier than Belgrave Square, or any other of those heaps of uglinesses, called squares, in the West End; and after what I had been told to expect, I was surprised at the prettiness of the little house when I stepped out of the cab and looked about me. It was stuck on like a swallow's nest to the end of a great row of commonplace houses, nearly a quarter of a mile in length, but itself was not the work of one of those wretched builders who care no more for beauty in what they build than a scavenger in the heap of mud he scrapes from the street. It had been built by a painter for himself—in the Tudor style; and though Percivale says the idea is not very well carried out, I like it much.

I found it a little dreary when I entered, though—from its emptiness. The only sitting-room at all prepared had just a table and two or three old-fashioned chairs in it—not even a carpet on the floor. The bedroom and dressing-room were also as scantily furnished as they well could be.

"Don't be dismayed, my darling," said my husband. "Look here"—showing me a bunch of notes—"we shall go out to-morrow and buy all we want—as far as this will go, and then wait for the rest. It will be such a pleasure to buy the things with you, and see them come home, and have you appoint their places. You and Sarah will make the carpets, won't you?—and I will put them down, and we shall be like birds building their nest."

"We have only to line it; the nest is built already."

"Well, neither do the birds build the tree.—I wonder if they ever sit in their old summer nests in the winter nights."

"I am afraid not," I answered; "but I'm ashamed to say I can't tell."

"It is the only pretty house I know in all London," he went on, "with a studio at the back of it. I have had my eye on it for a long time, but there seemed no sign of a migratory disposition in the bird who had occupied it for three years past. All at once he spread his wings and flew. I count myself very fortunate."

"So do I. But now you must let me see your

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