

mime, "The Rose and the Ring." Thackeray's famous book, on which the play is founded, is an universal favourite, and the comedy seems to be ditto, ditto, if we are to believe the critics.

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"Bis" is the name of a new book by Miss E. Gerard. It is a set of short tales, which, having appeared in magazines previously, have now been collected and reprinted under the above appropriate title. "Grey Fur," one of these tales, is a Russian story, and is quaintly yet simply told.

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 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 recognising 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 is so fond of good work that he never grumbles at any alterations writers choose to make—at least he never says anything, 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 recognised 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 Neighbourhood* 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 that the world was in a fair way after all, that man was Mr. Blackstone; and even my husband, who seldom laughs at anything 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

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