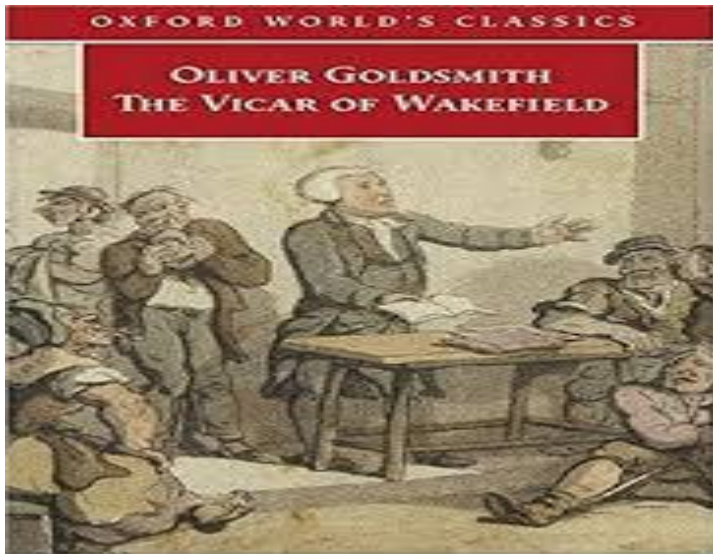


The Vicar of Wakefield

by Oliver Goldsmith



Vicar - Vicar is the title given to certain parish priests in the Church of England.



Wakefield – a village in England

Oliver Goldsmith, (1730 -1774), Anglo-Irish essayist, poet, novelist, dramatist, and eccentric, made famous by such works as the series of essays *The Citizen of the World*, or, *Letters from a Chinese Philosopher*, the poem *The Deserted Village*, the novel *The Vicar of Wakefield*, and the play *She Stoops to Conquer*.

The Vicar of Wakefield, novel by Oliver Goldsmith, published in two volumes in 1766. The story, a portrait of village life, is narrated by Dr. Primrose, the title character, whose family endures many trials—including the loss of most of their money, the seduction of one daughter, the destruction of their home by fire, and the vicar's incarceration—before all is put right in the end. The novel's idealization of rural life, sentimental moralizing, and melodramatic incidents are countered by a sharp but good-natured irony.

Character List 6 children

Major characters and minor characters

The vicar - Dr. Primrose : The **protagonist and narrator** of the novel, the vicar is virtuous, intelligent, moral, and religious. Though he has great pride in his family, he does not possess much worldly wisdom. He is often deceived by the appearances and behavior of those around him. He has a difficult time with the many misfortunes his family suffers, but learns the value of fortitude by the novel's end. He is sometimes referred to as Dr. Primrose.

Deborah : The vicar's wife, Deborah Primrose is smart and independent, but given over to vanity and pretensions to a higher social status. She is particularly prideful of her daughters.

George : The **vicar's eldest son**, George Primrose is an educated but naive young man. His journey into the wider world produces no great success, but does confirm his virtue and good character.

Olivia : The vicar's **eldest daughter**, Olivia Primrose is extremely vain, and concerned with her social status. Her reputation is nearly ruined through her relationship with Squire Thornhill, and she ends up consumed by guilt and resentment over it.

Sophia : The vicar's **second eldest** daughter, Sophia Primrose is less vapid than her sister is, but also cares for her social status. She falls in love with the (seemingly) penniless Mr. Burchell, who is impressed with her modesty and virtue.

Moses : The vicar's **second eldest** son, Moses Primrose is kind but gullible.

Dick : Dick Primrose is one of the vicar's two young sons. – Minor character

Bill : Bill Primrose is one of the vicar's two young sons. – Minor character

Mr. Burchell : Initially introduced as a handsome and intelligent, though penniless young man, Mr. Burchell is eventually revealed to be a disguise behind which Sir William Thornhill hides. Through this disguise, he and Sophia fall in love, and marry after he reveals his true identity. Sir William Thornhill's reputation rests on his having led a profligate youth but having reformed. Indeed, Burchell's virtue and wisdom - which is doubted by the Primrose family after they suspect him of sabotaging their plans to send the girls to town - make sense when he finally reveals his true identity.

Squire Thornhill : The Primrose family's young, handsome, and roguish landlord, who tricks his way into the family's confidence and then seduces Olivia. It turns out that he has conned several women in this way, leaving them to work as prostitutes after having his way with them. Eventually, his plan to ensnare the Wilmot fortune through marriage to Arabella is foiled. Nephew to Sir William Thornhill.

Ephraim Jenkinson : A scoundrel and a trickster, Jenkinson bilks the vicar and Moses out of their horses before later reforming to act as the vicar's confidante and assistant in prison. At this point, he reveals how much work he performs for Squire Thornhill, and is discovered to be young and attractive when not covered by disguise. Minor character

Solomon Flamborough : One of the Primrose's neighbors, Solomon is a friendly and honorable man.

Miss Flamboroughs : Solomon Flamborough's two daughters, and neighbors to the Primrose family. They are slighted by the Primrose girls for being too low-class, despite their sweetness.

Arabella : George's fiancée at the beginning of the novel, Arabella Wilmot is elegant and modest. Even after she is fooled into accepting Squire Thornhill's marriage proposal later in the novel, she remains devoted to George. She is an heiress to a large fortune.

Mr. Wilmot : Arabella's father, who initially prevents the marriage between Arabella and George after being insulted by the vicar's opinions of marriage, and learning about the vicar's

loss of fortune. Proud of his wealth and blustering, he later accepts George as an adequate son-in-law.

Mr. Arnold : The wealthy master of the house where the vicar has lunch after accepting the invitation of Mr. Arnold's butler, who is pretending to be the master. Mr. Arnold is also Arabella Wilmot's uncle.

Mrs. Arnold : Mr. Arnold's wife and Arabella's aunt.

Lady Blarney : Lady Blarney is one of the fashionable ladies the Squire brings to the Primrose family to impress them. She later turns out to be a disreputable and abandoned lady of the town.

Miss Carolina Wilelmina Amelia Skeggs : She is one of the fashionable ladies the Squire brings to the Primrose family to impress them. She later turns out to be a disreputable and abandoned lady of the town.

Farmer Williams : He is a kind and amiable neighbor of the Primrose family. Knowing he has feelings for Olivia, Deborah uses him as leverage to push the Squire into proposing to her. After this scheme fails, Farmer Williams and Olivia are engaged until she runs away.

The butler : The Arnold family servant pretends to be Mr. Arnold himself, and invites the vicar to lunch at the house, where he reveals radical political opinions. When the vicar pleads for Mr. Arnold not to fire him, the butler acts as an ally to the vicar.

Sir William Thornhill : Sir William Thornhill is uncle to Squire Thornhill. He spends most of the novel disguised as Mr. Burchell.