

# The Home Reading Circle

## The Wedding of Kate Carnegie

By Ian Maclaren.

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Great speculation is rife in Drumtochty as to how and where the approaching marriage of Kate Carnegie, an Episcopalian, and John Carmichael, the Free Kirk minister, will be celebrated. The problem is an absorbing and tremendous one to the people, until Kate settles the matter by asking Dr. Davidson, the minister of the Parish (Established) church, to perform the ceremony. One Sunday a letter from Dr. Davidson is read to the Free Kirk congregation, inviting them to the wedding in the parish church the following Friday afternoon at two, and asking that they take the pews set apart for their farms. Since the religious movement of '48, some thirty years before, which resulted in the establishment of the Free Kirk, none of the dissenters had ever set foot within the parish church to occupy their ancestral pews. The day of the wedding finds the village thus united for the first time in thirty years. Kate is to be married in white silk, with much old lace, and her mother's jewels. She has no bridesmaids, but men attendants in uniform as befitting a soldier's daughter. Carmichael has for his best man the minister of St. Bede's, Glasgow. John, the parish beadle, insists that the groom and his best man be at the church at a quarter to two.

### PART III.

"It's sine, nae doot," he explained to St. Bede's, "an' it might be easier to keep yer man quiet here"—for of Carmichael he took no more notice than a babe in arms—"but a' maun hae ye aff my mind afore the creel-time comes, for there's a leetit tae o'ny man's capacity."

"Ye see, a'na advised that the pairty frae the Lodge 'ill reach the gate at the 'oor exact, an' ye may trust the General for time, an' the Doctor an' me hae tae leave the Manse tae fa' in afore them at the Kirk door. A'ye paced it an' calculated it, an' kint see him, when we maun come round the hedge, for the doctor's pace is fixed, an' it canna be broken or hurried. Our step is thirty-year auld, an' it's fixed."

"Gin ye got in the road w' yer mon, or he took tae wander' at the last minute, it wud be fearsome; juist tak him down"—regarding the Free Kirk minister with pity, and without a sign of recognition, "He's an awfu' dlistakit condition, an' 'ill be a care tae ye. When yet gin intae the Kirk he'll no be responsible, an' he might try tae escape. Keep a grip o' him, an' for o'ny sake dinna let him get among the folk, or he might hide himself, an' it wud be a fine business gin Miss Kate and the General cam down here and he was here, he wud meet them; a' wud never enter Drumtochty Kirk again w' o'ny satisfaction."

The best man gave John to understand that the bridegroom was in safe hands. Carmichael regarded them both with a glassy stare, and only whispered softly to himself in different experimental keys, "I will," but it was not really necessary to keep him separate from the congregation. They were strongly under the influence of the funeral anxiety, and, treating him as chief mourner, affected not to see him, and would hold no conversation with him in any form. Nether-ton actually averted his face when Carmichael, as a last resource of nervousness, would have spoken to him, and gave all men to understand he had not provoked such unseemly frivolity.

Perhaps we did not glorify John overmuch afterwards, but let it be our excuse that when the two processions met there was not six feet between them; and this was how they came into Kirk—John first, who crossed the

Many are the pleasant tales which are told by the firesides in the winter time of what happened, how the Doctor carried himself with the most gracious stateliness; how Kate answered in a voice heard all over the Kirk—Elzabeth Macfadyen had her own doubts about the obeying; how Carmichael disengaged himself beyond belief and even beyond the defense of the Free Kirk, saying, "I do" and "I will" together, losing the ring after all his anxious care, and almost requiring the help of St. Bede's to put it on Kate's finger; how the Colonel took off Kate's glove with a dainty hand,



DOCTOR DAVIDSON KNEW FOR WHAT THEY WAITED.

and V.C. received it from him as an order of chivalry; but from all such details the talk turns to the address which Dr. Davidson gave to John Carmichael and Kate Carnegie. On such occasions it was his custom to impress upon the husband and wife such timely virtues as industry, temperance, good temper and forbearance, with illustrations of an extremely good character; but this day the depths of his heart were stirred. He forgot his worldly doubts of the wisdom of this marriage, and remembering the colored portrait of his little maid, and the angel which he brought home from Italy for his study, he let all men know what he thought of love, until even Margaret Howe was satisfied.

"Dear friends of us all, your two have now been crowned with the blessing of the Church, which is the Bride of Christ, and your feet stand within the goodly Land of Promise. You have entered into that holy estate which is the deepest mystery of experience, and the very sacrament of the Divine Love. It is a chief moment in life when two people, who yesterday were strangers to one another, are drawn together by an irresistible attraction so that their souls cannot be henceforward divided by time or space, or life or death; when one sees in a single woman that dream of purity and sweetness which has ever haunted his soul; when in a single man he finds that rest and satisfaction her heart has been unconsciously seeking. It is a revelation from above, and makes all things new: it is the hand of Providence, and annuls every argument of worldly providence. You have performed an act of utter faith; believe in one another to the end. As the bride has given herself to the bridegroom, let him be to her now father and mother, sister and brother, and, most sweet, husband. As he has given himself to her, let the bride sustain and inspire his heart in the great affairs of life and his holy calling. If you wish your new estate to be touched with perennial beauty, cherish these gracious visions which have made spring within your heart during the days of your betrothal. You must never forget your duty to the bridegroom; you must never allow it to be stolen from you by ridicule or cynicism; you must resolve that it be not blotted out nor blurred by the commonplace experience of life. Faults may appear which were once hidden in a golden mist; excellencies may seem to fade in the glare of the noon-day sun. Still be unmoved in your devotion; still remain confident and hopeful. Amid the reality of present imperfection, believe in the Ideal. You saw it once, it still exists; it is the final truth. That is the man, that is the woman you love. That is the shape of mortal beauty God sees, and which for an hour He showed unto you. That is the soul which is to be when this conflict with temptations from above and from below is over, and the angels of God in the Kingdom of our Father."

Kate held her court in the Gallery of the Lodge, and all Drumtochty paid their devotions; for she had insisted every person should come—from Burnbrae, who held her hand in both of his, and with a trembling voice prayed that the blessing of the God of Israel might rest on her all the days of her life, unto Tammas Mitchell, clothed in misery and his Sunday blacks, who

was dragged to the spot by Annie with many appeals, but could not be induced to offer a hand, confining himself to a jerk of the head and an impatient noise, as though he would say, "ye weel," and forcibly escaping to the open air, where he wiped his forehead, and an hour later remarked to Saunders—Bell had made him also pass through the fire—they might begin on the barley onny day." With the exception of a few who had not the courage of speech, and Whinnie, who began "Miss Carnegie," and departed covered with shame, everyone was most careful to say "Mrs. Carmichael," and since we had no such conventional formula, offered some personal word of kindness. Drumtochty was happy: "We're a' proud o' the minister, for he's kept ye in the Glen;" and Mrs. Macfadyen very hearty: "Gin our love can make a castle ye 'ill no miss the Lodge;" Archie Moncur overcame his shyness to make his jest: "Ye've deposed the minister an' tae'en the first place;" but Jamie Soutar was best of all, for he gave them a keen glance to see they understood, and only said, "nather life nor death." It was a strange sight to see the ancient house filled with simple country folk—one wondered what Black John Carnegie would have said to this invasion—and V. C. remarked on their utter acquaintance with high-class manners, for the Glen did not crush one another on the stair, nor fight for food at the tables, nor drown one another's voices, nor say bitter things behind one another's backs, but made a very modest meal, and then went quietly out to the sunny bank in front of the Lodge and

Carmichael because she was bonnie and true and kind, and we have all respected John Carmichael for his work, and his honesty, and his warm heart. Our friends have united their lives, and our hearts are full of good-will to them both, and ever will be while any of us are living. Wherefore I call upon you, men and women, all together and with all your might, to give three cheers for the bride and the bridegroom."

With this cheer—the heart of Drumtochty in it—they drove away, and as they went along the avenue the younger folk standing on either side pelted them with flowers. They drove down to the Tochtie, halting for a time on the bridge, and up the other side till they came to that place where the departing traveler gets his last view of the Glen. From that spot they could see the woods round the Lodge, and the people waving to them from a knoll. Then they plunged into the cover of the firs, drawing nearer to one another as the shadow of the unknown fell upon them; but when they came out into the sunshine on the other side they found a white rose lying between them, and Kate fastened it on her breast.

(The End.)

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