

**ELIOT  
PAPERS, NO. I**

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Eliot papers, No. I by Eliot Howard

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**ELIOT HOWARD**

**ELIOT  
PAPERS, NO. I**



ELIOT PAPERS

No. 1

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JOHN ELIOT

OF LONDON, MERCHANT

1735 — 1813

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COMPILED FROM FAMILY PAPERS BY HIS GREAT GRANDSON

ELIOT HOWARD

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1895

## INTRODUCTION

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"One generation passeth away and another generation cometh," and as each generation passes it becomes more and more difficult to realize the customs, the habits of life, and the thoughts of a past Age.

Especially is this the case when the subjects of our consideration belong to a Religious Body which possessed such strongly marked characteristics as the Quakers of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries, characteristics which seem strange now, even to the younger members of the same Body and are but little known to the generality of modern Englishmen. And yet these men and women of a past age are well worthy of respectful remembrance, not only for the sturdy conscientiousness which marked their character, but because they have had, in their quiet way, no small influence in shaping the England in which we now live.

I have found myself the inheritor of a large mass of papers, including Diaries, Letters, Entries in Bibles, etc., etc., extending from the seventeenth to the early part of the nineteenth centuries, chiefly belonging to the Eliot family, which entirely died out except in one Member of the female line—Mariabella Eliot who married Luke Howard in 1796.

When I began the investigation of these papers I saw that they presented such a detailed picture of the thoughts and ways of the writers that I was in hopes that some matter might have been collected from them which would be of more than family interest, but I have found that they lived such retired and peaceful lives that it is unlikely that their sayings and doings can claim attention beyond the rather numerous circle of descendants of Mariabella Howard and perhaps a few Members of the old Society who may care to recall the ways of their predecessors.

It is quite evident that this work could have been much better done a generation ago, but the sense of the difficulty which I have constantly found in tracing the threads of the narrative, has served to impel me to persevere—for, if left over for yet another generation, many of these must drop so completely that the task might then be impossible.

I am painfully conscious also that the work would have been much better done by one who was more entirely in sympathy with the peculiar religious views of the subjects of the history; but I hope I have not failed in reverent appreciation of their characters, and I trust also that I may not have written anything which can wound the feelings of any reader who still belongs to the beloved and honoured old Society.

E. H., *Walthamstow*, 1893.

These Papers were printed privately for the information of the descendants of the Ebot family and a few friends. Having been requested to bring out a public Edition, I have taken the opportunity to correct a few errors and to fill up various gaps from information which has since come into my hands, for which I have to thank several kind correspondents.

E. H., *Walthamstow*, 1895.

## INDEX

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Introduction

Chapter

i.	John Eliot's Ancestors . . . . .	1
ii.	A Chapter of Accounts (John Eliot I.) . . . . .	5
iii.	Two Brothers. John Eliot II. and Philip Eliot . . . . .	7
iv.	John Eliot III. Early Days . . . . .	15
v.	A few words explanatory of what follows . . . . .	19
vi.	Brother and Sister. John and Mariabella Eliot . . . . .	23
vii.	John Eliot's Journals . . . . .	27
viii.	John Eliot's Journals. His Choice of a Business . . . . .	31
ix.	do. Trewosgy and Aspley . . . . .	33
x.	do. More about Trewosgy, A Journey in the Olden Time . . . . .	37
xi.	The End of the Journal . . . . .	41
xii.	A Crisis in Life . . . . .	45
xiii.	John Eliot's Scruples . . . . .	51
xiv.	Quiet Life . . . . .	61
xv.	A Love Affair, a Journey and a Tragedy . . . . .	65
xvi.	Life flows on quietly again . . . . .	75
xvii.	Another eventful year. Marriage and other serious matters . . . . .	77
xviii.	Middle Life. Ashmore . . . . .	83
xix.	Mariabella Eliot. Pickhurst . . . . .	87
xx.	Journeys in Holland and France . . . . .	89
xxi.	Bartholomew Close . . . . .	93
xxii.	Sundry Letters . . . . .	99
xxiii.	do. The Civil War in Ireland, 1798 . . . . .	105
xxiv.	Later Life. Marriage of J. E's daughter Mariabella . . . . .	109
xxv.	John Eliot's Death . . . . .	115
xxvi.	John Eliot IV. . . . .	121
Appendix :	Essay and Poem by Mariabella Eliot . . . . .	125





## CHAPTER I.

### JOHN ELIOT'S ANCESTORS

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The Story of the Eliots begins in the West Country. The carefully kept Registers of the "Society of Friends" show that in the seventeenth century there must have been a considerable colony of Eliots in and about the town of St. Austell in Cornwall. How they were mutually related it is impossible now to trace, but the fact probably points to a lengthy residence of the family in that neighbourhood. There is strong reason to believe that they came of the same stock as the Eliots of St. Germans in the same county.

Among these, one Philip Eliot (or "Phillip Ellyott" as he himself spells his name) married Rebecca Chapman of Liskeard, and their eldest son, John Eliot, was born about 1683. It is probable that he was named after his Grandfather, for the Registers mention the burial of "John Eliot, the elder" in 1692.\* It is true that Philip Eliot died in 1691, but as his widow married again, it is likely that he was not advanced in years, and his father may easily have survived him.

Philip Eliot had three other children, viz:—

JACOB ELIOT, who appears by the Registers to have married Priscilla, daughter of Thos. Gwyn of Falmouth, in 1731. He died, without issue, about 1740.

JANE ELIOT, married John Turner of Lurgan, in Ireland. Three generations later, in 1822, we meet with a descendant, by name John Eliot Turner, as a pensioner of his relatives, John Eliot and Sir George

\* It was probably this John Eliot who was in Lazonian Gaol in Annapolis, 1683, see *Quarterly Review's* Suffrages, Vol. I. 126 and 127.

Shifner, who paid for his funeral and headstone and his debts, including "malt liquor" and "public house." He seems, however, to have led a harmless, if useless, life, "reading newspapers, writing verses, etc., etc." (Correspondence between Sir Geo. Shifner and John Eliot, 1822.)

REBECCA ELIOT, married Robert Wallis in 1704, and left issue.

As we now come to four generations of John Eliots, I propose to distinguish them as I, II, III and IV respectively, beginning with the son of Philip Eliot.

John Eliot (I) who was at that time living at Liskeard,\* married, in 1706, Hester Chappell of Topsham, in Devon. The Chappells must have been well-to-do people owning various houses and lands in and about Topsham, some of which descended to Hester's children.

Travellers by the Great Western Railway below Exeter are familiar with the pretty town that lies on the other side of the Estuary of the Exe, between Exeter and Exmouth. At one time Topsham was a place of no small importance as a seaport, being the nearest point to Exeter that vessels of heavy draught could reach, and Exeter was a very important centre of West Country life. Topsham fitted out a number of ships to go against the Spanish Armada and at one time carried on a larger trade with Newfoundland than any other port in the kingdom. But after a ship canal was made to Exeter in the sixteenth century the trade gradually left the town, and during the lifetime of John Eliot (I) we find allusions in family letters to the declining fortunes of the place and the difficulty of letting dwelling houses and warehouses.

John and Hester Eliot settled at Falmouth, where he began his long and successful career as a Merchant, exporting pilchards and tin to Venice, then the great port of the Mediterranean, and probably trading with the West Indies. It must be remembered that before the days of steam ships, Falmouth was a place of much more relative importance than it is now. The magnificent harbour afforded a welcome refuge to homeward bound vessels, especially if short of provisions and wanting repairs, and it was the station at which the outward bounds, that had perhaps taken three weeks in beating down the Channel, waited for

\* J. E. owned two Farms near Liskeard called Liskeard and Greenfield. It is possible that they were inherited from his Mother's family.