

**GEORGE ELIOT**

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George Eliot by Mathilde Blind

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**MATHILDE BLIND**

**GEORGE ELIOT**



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GEORGE ELIOT

*By  
Frances Warran*

BY

MATHILDE BLIND

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## PREFATORY NOTE.

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DETAILED accounts of GEORGE ELIOT'S life have hitherto been singularly scanty. In the dearth of published materials a considerable portion of the information contained in this biographical study has, necessarily, been derived from private sources. In visiting the places connected with GEORGE ELIOT'S early life, I enjoyed the privilege of meeting her brother, Mr. Isaac Evans, and was also fortunate in gleaning many a characteristic fact and trait from old people in the neighbourhood, contemporaries of her father, Mr. Robert Evans. For valuable help in forming an idea of the growth of GEORGE ELIOT'S mind, my warm thanks are especially due to her oldest friends, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Bray, and Miss Hennell of Coventry. Miss Jenkins, the novelist's schoolfellow, and Mrs. John Cash, also generously afforded me every assistance in their power.

A great part of the correspondence in the present volume has not hitherto appeared in print, and has been kindly placed at my disposal by Mrs. Bray, Mrs. Gilchrist, Mrs. W. K. Clifford, Miss Marks, Mr. William

PREFATORY NOTE.

M. Rossetti, and the late James Thomson. I have also quoted from letters addressed to Miss Phelps which were published in *Harper's Magazine* of March 1882, and from one or two other articles that have appeared in periodical publications. For permission to make use of this correspondence my thanks are due to Mr. C. L. Lewes.

By far the most exhaustive published account of GEORGE ELIOT'S life and writings, and the one of which I have most freely availed myself, is Mr. Call's admirable essay in the *Westminster Review* of July 1881. Although this, as indeed every other article on the subject, states GEORGE ELIOT'S birthplace incorrectly, it contains many important *data* not mentioned elsewhere. To the article on GEORGE ELIOT in *Blackwood's Magazine* for February 1881, I owe many interesting particulars, chiefly connected with the beginning of GEORGE ELIOT'S literary career. Amongst other papers consulted may be mentioned a noticeable one in the *Contemporary Review*, and an appreciative notice by Mr. Frederick Myers in *Scribner's Magazine*, as well as articles in *Harper's Magazine* of May 1881, and *The Century* of August 1882. Two quaint little pamphlets, 'Seth Bede: the Methody,' and 'George Eliot in Derbyshire,' by Guy Roslyn, although full of inaccuracies, have also furnished some curious items of information.

MATHILDE BLIND.





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# GEORGE ELIOT.

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## CHAPTER I.

### INTRODUCTORY.

SPEAKING of the contributions made to literature by her own sex, George Eliot, in a charming essay written in 1854, awards the palm of intellectual pre-eminence to the women of France. "They alone," says the great English author, "have had a vital influence on the development of literature. For in France alone the mind of woman has passed, like an electric current, through the language, making crisp and definite what is elsewhere heavy and blurred; in France alone, if the writings of women were swept away, a serious gap would be made in the national history."

The reason assigned by George Eliot for this literary superiority of Frenchwomen consists in their having had the courage of their sex. They thought and felt as women, and when they wrote, their books became the fullest expression of their womanhood. And by being true to themselves, by only seeking inspiration from their own life-experience, instead of servilely copying that of men, their letters and memoirs, their novels and pictures have a distinct, nay unique, value, for the student of art and literature. Englishwomen, on the other hand, have not followed