

**LANDOR, ENGLISH  
MEN OF LETTERS**

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Landor, English Men of Letters by Sidney Colvin

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**SIDNEY COLVIN**

**LANDOR, ENGLISH  
MEN OF LETTERS**



# Landor

*by*

SIDNEY COLVIN, M.A.

AUTHOR OF

"ALBERT DÜRER" "KEATS" "FLAXMAN" ETC.

## English Men of Letters

EDITED BY

JOHN MORLEY



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## PREFATORY NOTE.

THE standard and indispensable authority on the life of Landor is the work of the late Mr. John Forster, viz.:

1. FORSYER, John: *Walter Savage Landor, a Biography*, London, Chapman and Hall; first edition in 2 vols., 1869; second edition, abridged, forming vol. i. of the collected "Life and Works of Walter Savage Landor" in 8 vols., 1876.

Mr. Forster was appointed by Landor himself as his literary executor; he had command of all the necessary materials for his task, and his book is written with knowledge, industry, affection, and loyalty of purpose. But it is cumbrous in comment, inconclusive in criticism, and vague on vital points, especially on points of bibliography, which in the case of Landor are frequently both interesting and obscure. The student of Landor must supplement the work of Mr. Forster from other sources, of which the principal are the following:

2. HUNT, J. E. Leigh, *Lord Byron and his Contemporaries*. London, 1827.
3. BLESSINGTON, Marguerite, Countess of, *The Idler in Italy*, 2 vols. London, 1839. Lady Blessington's first impressions of Landor are reported in vol. ii. of the above; her correspondence with him, and an *Imaginary Conversation* by Landor not elsewhere reprinted, will be found in
4. MADDEN, R. R., *The Literary Life and Correspondence of the Countess of Blessington*, 3 vols. London, 1855.
5. *The New Spirit of the Age*, edited by R. H. Horne. 2 vols. London, 1844. The article on Landor in vol. i. of the above is by Miss Barrett, afterwards Mrs. Browning, supplemented by the editor.
6. EMERSON, R. W., *English Traits*. London, 1856.

7. FIELD, Kate, *Last Days of Walter Savage Landor*, a series of three articles in the *Atlantic Monthly Magazine* for 1866.
8. ROBINSON, H. Crabbe, *Diary, Reminiscences, and Correspondence of*, edited by Thomas Sadler, 3 vols. London, 1869.
9. DICKENS, Charles: A short article on Forster's "Biography" in *All the Year Round* for 1869, supplementing with some striking physiognomic touches the picture of Landor drawn by the same hand in "*Bleak House*" (see below, p. 178).
10. LINTON, Mrs. E. Lynn: *Reminiscences of Walter Savage Landor*, in *Fraser's Magazine* for July, 1870; by far the best account of the period of Landor's life to which it refers.
11. HOUGHTON, Lord: *Monographs*. London, 1873.

I forbear to enumerate the various articles on Landor and his works which I have consulted in reviews and magazines between the dates 1798 and 1870; several of the most important are mentioned in the text. In addition to the materials which exist in print, I have had the advantage of access to some unpublished. To Mr. Robert Browning in particular my thanks are due for his great kindness in allowing me to make use of the collection of books and manuscripts left him by Landor, including Landor's own annotated copies of some of his rarest writings, and a considerable body of his occasional jottings and correspondence. Mr. Augustus J. C. Hare was also good enough to put into my hands a number of letters written by Landor to his father and to himself. To Lord Houghton I am indebted for help of various kinds, and to Mr. Swinburne for his most friendly pains in looking through the sheets of my work, and for many valuable suggestions and corrections.



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# LANDOR.

## CHAPTER I.

### BIRTH AND PARENTAGE—SCHOOL—COLLEGE.

[1775—1794.]

Few men have ever impressed their peers so much, or the general public so little, as WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR. Of all celebrated authors, he has hitherto been one of the least popular. Nevertheless he is among the most striking figures in the history of English literature; striking alike by his character and his powers. Personally, Landor exercised the spell of genius upon every one who came near him. His gifts, attainments, impetuosities, his originality, his force, his charm, were all of the same conspicuous and imposing kind. Not to know what is to be known of so remarkable a man is evidently to be a loser. Not to be familiar with the works of so noble a writer is to be much more of a loser still.

The place occupied by Landor among English men of letters is a place apart. He wrote on many subjects and in many forms, and was strong both in imagination and in criticism. He was equally master of Latin and English, and equally at home in prose and verse. He cannot prop-