







THE WRITINGS

OF

GEORGE ELIOT

Handy Library Edition

ADAM BEDE



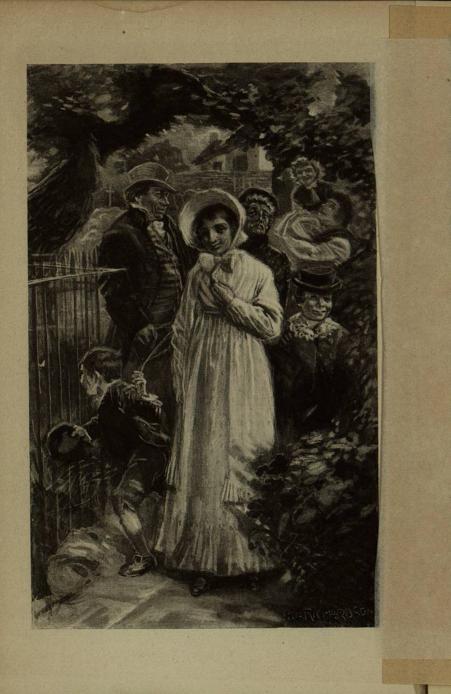
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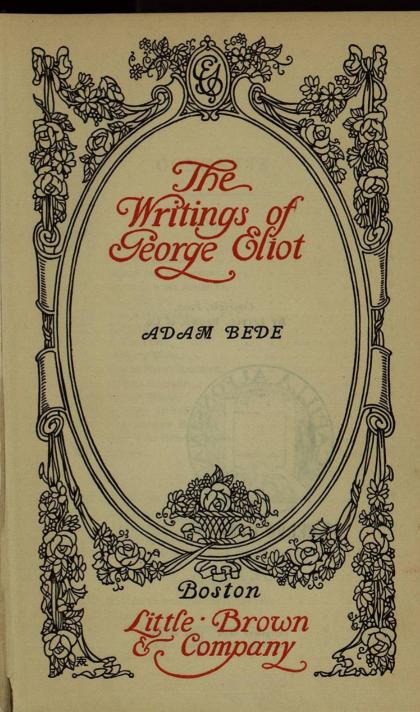


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Adam Bede, Frontispiece.



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CONTENTS.

	BOOK I.	
CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	THE WORKSHOP,	. 5
II.	THE PREACHING,	. 13
III.	After the Preaching,	. 33
IV.	Home and its Sorrows,	. 39
V.	THE RECTOR,	. 55
VI.	THE HALL FARM,	. 72
VII.	THE DAIRY,	. 84
VIII.	A Vocation,	. 90
IX.	HETTY'S WORLD,	. 98
X.	DINAH VISITS LISBETH,	. 105
XI.	IN THE COTTAGE,	. 117
XII.	IN THE WOOD,	. 126
XIII.	EVENING IN THE WOOD,	. 137
XIV.	THE RETURN HOME,	. 142
XV.	THE TWO BED-CHAMBERS,	. 151
XVI.	Links,	. 165
	the first contract of the state of the	
	BOOK II.	
XVII.	IN WHICH THE STOPY PAUSES A LITTLE,	. 179
XVIII.	Church,	. 188
XIX.		. 211
	ADAM VISITS THE HALL FARM,	. 218
XXI.		. 236
AAI.	THE MIGHT-SCHOOL AND THE SOLICOLASSIC,	
	BOOK III.	
		010
XXII.	Going to the Birthday Feast,	. 253
XXIII.	Dinner-Time,	. 264
XXIV.	THE HEALTH-DRINKING,	. 269
XXV.	THE GAMES,	. 277
YYVI	Tue Divor	. 285

	BOOK IV.					
CHAPTER						PAGE
XXVII.	A Crisis,					. 297
XXVIII.	A DILEMMA,					. 308
XXIX.	THE NEXT MORNING,					. 316
XXX.	THE DELIVERY OF THE LETT	TER,				. 324
XXXI.	IN HETTY'S BED-CHAMBER,	100	200			. 336
XXXII.	MRS. POYSER "HAS HER SA		r,"			. 345
XXXIII.	More Links,					. 355
XXXIV.	THE BETROTUAL,		•			. 361
XXXV.	THE HIDDEN DREAD,				•	. 366
	BOOK V.					
XXXVI.	THE JOURNEY IN HOPE,					. 878
XXXVII.	THE JOURNEY IN DESPAIR,					. 382
XXXVIII.	THE QUEST,					. 395
XXXIX.	THE TIDINGS,			10		. 409
XL.	THE BITTER WATERS SPREA					. 416
XLI.	THE EVE OF THE TRIAL,					. 426
XLII.	THE MORNING OF THE TRIAL	L, .				. 431
XLIII.			200	1		. 436
XLIV.			MI.			. 443
XLV.			100			. 450
XLVI.	THE HOURS OF SUSPENSE,		TO 10			. 461
XLVII.						. 467
XLVIII.		Wood,			•	. 468
	BOOK VI					
	BOOK 11					
XLIX.	AT THE HALL FARM, .					. 478
L.	IN THE COTTAGE, .					. 487
LI.	SUNDAY MORNING, .				•	. 499
LII.	ADAM AND DINAH, .					. 511
LIII.						. 520
LIV.	THE MEETING ON THE HILI					. 533
LV.	MARRIAGE BELLS, .					. 538
Maria .	EPILOGUE,					. 540

ADAM BEDE.

BOOK I.

CHAPTER I.

THE WORKSHOP.

With a single drop of ink for a mirror, the Egyptian sorcerer undertakes to reveal to any chance comer far-reaching visions of the past. This is what I undertake to do for you, reader. With this drop of ink at the end of my pen I will show you the roomy workshop of Mr. Jonathan Burge, carpenter and builder, in the village of Hayslope, as it appeared on the eighteenth of June, in the year of our Lord 1799.

The afternoon sun was warm on the five workmen there, busy upon doors and window-frames and wainscoting. A scent of pine-wood from a tent-like pile of planks outside the open door mingled itself with the scent of the elder-bushes which were spreading their summer snow close to the open window opposite; the slanting sunbeams shone through the transparent shavings that flew before the steady plane, and lit up the fine grain of the oak panelling which stood propped against the wall. On a heap of those soft shavings a rough gray shepherd-dog had made himself a pleasant bed, and was lying with his nose between his forepaws, occasionally wrinkling his brows to cast a glance at the tallest of the five workmen, who was carving a shield in the centre of a wooden mantelpiece. It was to this workman that the strong barytone belonged which was heard above the sound of plane and hammer, singing,—