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WOMAN AND LABOUR

OLIVE SCHREINER



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Woman and Labour

Olive Schreiner (1855–1920), South African author and feminist, and friend of Havelock Ellis and Eleanor Marx, was one of the most important and challenging social commentators of her time. The ninth of twelve children, she lacked formal education and was taught by her mother. It was her 1883 novel *The Story of an African Farm* that secured her reputation as an author and feminist, which her activities in England (1881–9) further consolidated. First published in 1911, this acclaimed feminist work, one of the most influential of the early twentieth century, established Schreiner's place in the Women's Movement. A reworking of an earlier manuscript destroyed during looting of her Johannesburg home by British soldiers, it considers how the role and position of women has been determined by the artificial constrictions of society. Schreiner ends the work with her vision of true equality between man and woman. This is the 1914 printing.

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WOMAN AND LABOUR

WOMAN AND LABOUR

BY

OLIVE SCHREINER

AUTHOR OF

"DREAMS," "THE STORY OF AN AFRICAN FARM," "TROOPER PETER HALKET,"
"DREAM LIFE AND REAL LIFE," ETC. ETC.

TORONTO

S. B. GUNDY

Publisher in Canada for Humphrey Milford

1914

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DEDICATED
TO
CONSTANCE LYTTON

“Glory of warrior, glory of orator, glory of song,
Paid with a voice flying by to be lost on an endless sea—
Glory of virtue, to fight, to struggle, to right the wrong—
Nay, but she aim'd not at glory, no lover of glory she :
Give her the glory of going on and still to be.”

TENNYSON.

OLIVE SCHREINER.

DE AAR,
CAPE OF GOOD HOPE,
SOUTH AFRICA.
1911.

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

IT is necessary to say a few words to explain this book. The original title of the book was "Musings on Woman and Labour."

It is, what its name implies, a collection of musings on some of the points connected with woman's work.

In my early youth I began a book on Woman. I continued the work till ten years ago. It necessarily touched on most matters in which sex has a part, however incompletely.

It began by tracing the differences of sex function to their earliest appearances in life on the globe; not only as when in the animal world, two amoeboid globules coalesce, and the process of sexual generation almost unconsciously begins; but to its yet more primitive manifestations in plant life. In the first three chapters I traced, as far as I was able, the evolution of sex in different branches of non-human life. Many large facts surprised me in following this line of thought by their bearing on the whole modern