

TO FRANÇOIS D'ALBERT DURADE, 18 OCTOBER 1859

[III, 186-88]

Holly Lodge, South Fields | Wandsworth, Surrey
October 18, 1859.

My dear Friend

Does it ever happen to you now to think of a certain Englishwoman, née Marian Evans? She seems perhaps to deserve that you should forget her, seeing that she has let years pass without making any sign of her existence. . . . But in these last three years a great change has come over my life—a change in which I cannot help believing that both you and Madame d'Albert will rejoice. Under the influence of the intense happiness I have enjoyed in my married life from thorough moral and intellectual sympathy, I have at last found out my true vocation, after which my nature had always been feeling and striving uneasily without finding it. What do you think that vocation is? I pause for you to guess.

I have turned out to be an artist—not, as you are, with the pencil and the pallet, but with words. I have written a novel which people say has stirred them very deeply—and *not a few* people, but almost all reading England. It was published in February last, and already 14,000 copies have been sold. The title is “Adam Bede”; and “George Eliot,” the name on the title page, is my *nom de plume*. I had previously written another work of fiction called, “Scenes of Clerical Life,” which had a great *literary* success, but not a great *popular* success, such as “Adam Bede” has had. Both are now published by Tauchnitz in his series of English novels.

I think you will believe that I do not write you word of this out of any small vanity:—my books are deeply serious things to me, and come out of all the painful discipline, all the most hardly-learnt lessons of my past life. I write you word of it, because I believe that both your kind heart and Madame d'Albert's too, will be touched with real joy, that one whom you knew when she was not very happy and when her life seemed to serve no purpose of much worth, has been at last blessed with the sense that she has done something worth living and suffering for. And I write also because I want to give both you and her a proof that I still think of you with grateful affectionate recollection. . . .

Farewell, dear friend. Ask Madame d'Albert to accept my affectionate regards, and believe me faithfully yours

Marian E. Lewes.