

in *South Africa 1855–1881*, Human & Rousseau, Cape Town, 1989)

Schreiner should also be remembered for the novel of her mature years, *From Man To Man Or Perhaps Only*, which she did not complete revising before her death. It was published posthumously in 1926, in an edition produced by her husband, Samuel Cronwright-Schreiner, and has recently been re-edited and published by University of Cape Town Press (edited and introduced by Dorothy Driver). This edition corrects the editorial and proofreading errors that marred previous editions. It also provides another ending to the novel, in Schreiner's own words, besides the one her husband summarised. *From Man to Man or Perhaps Only* was Schreiner's favourite among her novels. From exploring white women's confinement to domesticity in late 19th century South Africa and England, the novel expands its gaze to include black women and girls whose presence gradually informs the central character's struggle to re-create herself and educate her children against the racism and sexism of the time.<sup>[1]</sup>

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## Biography

### Early life

**Olive Emilie Albertina Schreiner** (1855–1920) was the ninth of twelve children born to a missionary couple at the Wesleyan Missionary Society station at Wittebergen in the Eastern Cape, near Herschel in South Africa. Her parents, Gottlob Schreiner and Rebecca Lyndall, married in England in 1837.<sup>[2]</sup> She was named after her three older brothers, Oliver (1848–1854), Albert (1843–1843) and Emile (1852–1852), who died before she was born. Her childhood was a harsh one as her father was loving and gentle, though impractical, which led to difficulties for the family; but her mother Rebecca was intent on teaching her children the same restraint and self-discipline that had been a part of her upbringing. Olive received virtually all of her initial education from her mother, who was well-read and gifted. Her

eldest brother Frederic Samuel (1841–1901) obtained a BA at London University and founded New College in Eastbourne in 1873/4. He remained as headmaster until late 1897, but continued to run the junior school until 1901. He died in 1901 at the Grand Hotel in Eastbourne and was interred in the town.<sup>[3]</sup>

When Olive was six, Gottlob transferred to Healdtown in the Eastern Cape to run the Wesleyan training institute there. As with so many of his other projects, he simply was not up to the task and was expelled in disgrace for trading against missionary regulations. He was forced to make his own living for the first time in his life, and tried a business