



A Man of no Importance.: A romantic novel, first published in 1907.

Rita" (Eliza Margaret Jane Humphreys 1850-1938).

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I first became acquainted with the novels of "Rita" some years ago, when I discovered that two of my ancestors were used by her, as models for characters in one of her books. That book was A Man of No Importance - first published in 1907. Within this novel, Charles and Eliza Skerrett of Droitwich, Worcs (Eliza being my great great grandmother) become Mr and Mrs Chance of Salwych. Rita met Charles and Eliza by chance, whilst receiving treatment for rheumatism, at the Royal Brine Baths, Droitwich; where both Charles and Eliza worked. Many Droitwich landmarks have been used by Rita for this novel; for example, the Salter's Hall becomes the Salwych Hall, and the Raven Hotel becomes the Magpie. Droitwich and A Man of No Importance are mentioned briefly by Rita, in her 1936 autobiography, on page 281. Eliza Margaret Jane Humphreys (née Gollan), 1850-1938, wrote for over fifty years under the pseudonym of "Rita"; this enabled her to retain her privacy. Born in Gollanfield, Scotland, she was first unhappily married to a German professor of music. In 1894 she married William Humphreys from Cork, Ireland; the pair had one daughter, and spent the rest of their lives together. From the 1880s to the 1930s, it would have been hard to find someone who had not heard of Rita, and yet today she is almost forgotten. This is a little odd, when we take into account that she was as prolific as Eden Phillpotts; writing over 100 beautifully written novels and plays. This is the complete unabridged romantic novel.

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