



Mary Diana Dods, a gentleman and a scholar

Betty T Bennett

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"By an investigative and analytical feat of true Sherlockian proportions, Bennett cracks an elaborate conspiracy that had successfully veiled a Pandora's box of sexual scandal and literary intrigue until Bennett herself revealed it to the world."--Los Angeles Times.

In the 1820s Mary Shelley, the celebrated author of *Frankenstein*, had among her many acquaintances two intriguing friends. One, the author David Lyndsay, had published admired books, poems, and short stories. The other, Walter Sholto Douglas, husband of Mary Shelley's dear friend Isabella Robinson Douglas, was an aspiring diplomat. In 1830 traces of both men suddenly and completely disappeared from Mary Shelley's life, but not from historical evidence.

Betty T. Bennett came across both men as she conducted research in the Shelley correspondence. Through years of investigation, Bennett uncovered the improbable truth: David Lyndsay and Walter Sholto Douglas were the same person and, despite historical and legal evidence to the contrary, that person was a woman--Mary Diana Dods, illegitimate daughter of a Scottish aristocrat. Now, nearly two centuries later, her story is revealed as a tale of imagination and defiance, with a sly grin at posterity.

"Most works of literary scholarship give us the finished product, cogently argued and persuasively documented. But in this astonishing book, Bennett also reveals the mysterious process behind the product, the teller behind the tale."--Women's Review of Books.

"An astounding tale of intrigue, collusion, and friendship... The uncovering of Mary Diana Dods must be one of the best literary mystery stories of our age."--Keats-Shelley Journal.

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