

# The Selected Works of Margaret Oliphant

General Editors: **Joanne Shattock** and **Elisabeth Jay**

## *The Pickering Masters*

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*Margaret Oliphant Wilson Oliphant*  
by (Anthony) Frederick Augustus Sandys  
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Margaret Oliphant produced well over a hundred works during a career that spanned half a century. This is the most ambitious scholarly critical edition of Oliphant's work ever undertaken. The sheer scale of her output has meant that selection is essential, but the edition aims to convey the range and variety of her work in both fiction and non-fictional genres. It brings together for the first time her critical writing and other journalism for *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, *The Spectator*, the *St James's Gazette*, as well as her articles in *Atalanta*, the *Contemporary Review*, the *Edinburgh Review*, *Fraser's Magazine*, *Good Words* and *Macmillan's Magazine*.

Much of Oliphant's fiction, including full length novels, short stories and novellas, was first published in periodicals: in *Blackwood's*, the *Cornhill*, *Longman's Magazine*, *Macmillan's*, and *Good Words*. Few of her manuscripts survive, but substantive textual work remains to be done on the editorial changes made between periodical serialization and first appearance in volume form.

The edition places particular emphasis on her shorter fiction, much of which is republished here for the first time, and on her work as a biographer, historian and literary historian.

- The most wide-ranging critical edition of Oliphant's works ever undertaken
- This is the first time that most of Oliphant's non-fiction writings have been made available since their original publication.
- Full editorial apparatus including textual variants between serialization and publication

## Margaret Oliphant

Margaret Oliphant Wilson Oliphant (1828–97) had a wide-ranging and prolific literary career that spanned almost fifty years. She wrote some ninety-eight novels, over fifty short stories, twenty-five works of non-fiction, including biographies and historic guides to European cities, and more than three hundred periodical articles. As the self-styled ‘general utility woman’ for *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, often contributing both fiction and literary reviews to the same issue, she became a major critical voice for her generation. Her influence, usually cast on the side of ‘the common reader’, was such that it provoked fellow novelists such as Anthony Trollope, Henry James and Thomas Hardy to savage fictional portraits by way of retaliation.

The scholarly interest that her work now receives is hampered by difficulty in accessing the full range of her oeuvre: whilst her most famous fictional series, ‘The Chronicles of Carlingford’, together with a handful of her tales of the supernatural, have gone in and out of print in recent years, the bulk of her fiction and critical writing remains uncollected.

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