

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *The Churchman* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_churchman_os.php

Obituary.

MARGARET OLIPHANT.

MRS. OLIPHANT, the well-known novelist, historian, and magazine-writer, died during the Diamond Jubilee week. Her maiden name was Wilson, and she was born at Wallingford, near Musselburgh, in Midlothian, in 1828. She married in 1852, and her husband died seven years later. Her two sons are both dead. She had recovered from her serious illness of last year, and it was hoped that she would have lived to complete what she designed to be her *magnum opus*—namely, the “Annals of the House of Blackwood.” A return, however, of the old malady, has brought her strenuous and versatile life to a close. She was buried on June 29 in Eton cemetery. The Queen was specially represented, and her Majesty also sent a choice wreath, bearing the inscription, “A mark of admiration and respect from Victoria, R.I.”

It would be difficult to find in the long list of Victorian writers one more widely known and more fully appreciated than Mrs. Oliphant. For close upon half a century her fertile and ingenious brain has planned, and her skilful pen has carried out, a continuous and unbroken series of works, all excellent, while some of them have been of the highest ability. Her first book seems to have been the “Passages from the Life of Mrs. Margaret Maitland,” which was published by Mr. Henry Colburn in 1849. This story has the peculiar charm and power of most first books, being the description of places and people known in the writer's early life. Mr. Colburn also brought out her second book, “Mirkland,” in 1850; while Messrs. Hurst and Blackett, who took over the business shortly afterwards, published her third and fourth novels, and a good deal of her subsequent writing. It was, however, with Mr. John Blackwood that she was most closely associated in literary work, and also as an intimate friend. She began to write for *Blackwood* in 1852; and some contribution or other of hers, either article, or story, or essay, or verse, will be found in almost every subsequent number down to the present time. In the last June number will be found a fine article, entitled “’Tis Sixty Years Since,” while the following number contains a triumphant lyric, “The 22nd June.” Of her numberless works of fiction, “The Minister's Wife” and “The Beleaguered City” may be mentioned as specially striking. Her books on “The Makers of Florence,” “The Makers of Venice,” “The Makers of Modern Rome,” “The Literary History of England, 1790-1825,” show the extent and accuracy of her knowledge; while her monographs on Dante, Molière, and Cervantes, in “Foreign Classics for English Readers,” are admirably comprehensive. An exhaustive bibliography of her writings would fill many pages. Her style was easy and descriptive, good, without being laboured, simple, yet never weak; her writings are instructive, sincere, and always interesting. Her work is in striking contrast to that modern rubbish which seeks notoriety by its prurient descriptions of what is scandalous. It will, therefore, live, and be increasingly valued, because it is good and pure, when the corrupt work of mere sensationmongers will have been consigned to a deserved oblivion.