

Merkland Or Self Sacrifice

Margaret Oliphant Wilson was born on April 4th, 1828 to Francis W. Wilson, a clerk, and Margaret Oliphant, at Wallyford, near Musselburgh, East Lothian. Her youth was spent in establishing a writing style and by 1849 she had her first novel published: *Passages in the Life of Mrs. Margaret Maitland*. Two years later, in 1851 *Caleb Field* was published and also an invitation to contribute to *Blackwood's Magazine*; the beginning of a life time business relationship. In May 1852, Margaret married her cousin, Frank Wilson Oliphant. Their marriage produced six children but, tragically, three died in infancy. When her husband developed signs of the dreaded consumption (tuberculosis) they moved to Florence, and then to Rome where, sadly, he died. Margaret was naturally devastated but was also now left without support and only her income from writing to support the family. She returned to England and took up the burden of supporting her three remaining children by her literary activity. Her incredible and prolific work rate increased both her commercial reputation and the size of her reading audience. Tragedy struck again in January 1864 when her only remaining daughter Maggie died. In 1866 she settled at Windsor to be closer to her sons, who were being educated at near-by Eton School. For more than thirty years she pursued a varied literary career but family life continued to bring problems. Cyril Francis, her eldest son, died in 1890. The younger son, Francis, who she nicknamed 'Cecco', died in 1894. With the last of her children now lost to her, she had little further interest in life. Her health steadily and inexorably declined. Margaret Oliphant Wilson Oliphant died at the age of 69 in Wimbledon on 20th June 1897. She is buried in Eton beside her sons.

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One of Queen Victoria's favorite writers, Margaret Oliphant's novels were often set in her native Scotland. In the popular novel *Merkland*, a spirited young Scottish woman is laid low by adversity and comes to learn about the value of honoring others' needs before one's own.

Margaret Oliphant Wilson Oliphant (nee Margaret Oliphant Wilson) (4 April 1828 - 25 June 1897), was a Scottish novelist and historical writer, who usually wrote as Mrs. Oliphant. Her fictional works encompass "domestic realism, the historical novel and tales of the supernatural." The daughter of Francis W. Wilson (c.1788-1858), a clerk, and his wife, Margaret Oliphant (c.1789-1854), she was born at Wallyford, near Musselburgh, East Lothian, and spent her childhood at Lasswade (near Dalkeith), Glasgow and Liverpool. As a girl, she constantly experimented with writing. In 1849 she had her first novel published: *Passages in the Life of Mrs. Margaret Maitland*. This dealt with the Scottish Free Church

movement, with which Mr. and Mrs. Wilson both sympathised, and met with some success. It was followed by Caleb Field in 1851, the year in which she met the publisher William Blackwood in Edinburgh and was invited to contribute to the famous Blackwood's Magazine. The connection was to last for her whole lifetime, during which she contributed well over 100 articles, including a critique of the character of Arthur Dimmesdale in Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*. In May 1852, she married her cousin, Frank Wilson Oliphant, at Birkenhead, and settled at Harrington Square in London. An artist working mainly in stained glass, her husband had delicate health, and three of their six children died in infancy, while the father himself developed alarming symptoms of tuberculosis, then known as consumption. For the sake of his health they moved in January 1859 to Florence, and then to Rome, where Frank Oliphant died. His wife, left almost entirely without resources, returned to England and took up the burden of supporting her three remaining children by her own literary activity. She had now become a popular writer, and worked with amazing industry to sustain her position. Unfortunately, her home life was full of sorrow and disappointment. In January 1864 her only remaining daughter Maggie died in Rome, and was buried in her father's grave. Her brother, who had emigrated to Canada, was shortly afterwards involved in financial ruin, and Mrs. Oliphant offered a home to him and his children, and added their support to her already heavy responsibilities. In 1866 she settled at Windsor to be near her sons who were being educated at Eton. That year, her second cousin, Annie Louisa Walker, came to live with her as a companion-housekeeper.[3] This was her home for the rest of her life, and for more than thirty years she pursued a varied literary career with courage scarcely broken by a series of the gravest troubles. The ambitions she cherished for her sons were unfulfilled. Cyril Francis, the elder, died in 1890, leaving a *Life of Alfred de Musset*, incorporated in his mother's *Foreign Classics for English Readers*. The younger, Francis (whom she called "Cecco"), collaborated with her in the *Victorian Age of English Literature* and won a position at the British Museum, but was rejected by Sir Andrew Clark, a famous physician. Cecco died in 1894. With the last of her children lost to her, she had but little further interest in life. Her health steadily declined, and she died at Wimbledon, London, on 25 June 1897. In the 1880s she was the literary mentor of the Irish novelist Emily Lawless. During this time Oliphant wrote several works of supernatural fiction, including the long ghost story *A Beleaguered City* (1880) and several short tales, including "The Open Door" and "Old Lady Mary.."

Excerpt from *Merkland: Or Self Sacrifice* Was not in the least degree like what my son Mrs. Ross, stiffly, while me grew pale. You will see that orders are strictly attended to, May, and let Duncan come to Whenever we have had breakfast. Take your place, Anne. About the Publisher Forgotten Books publishes hundreds of thousands of rare and classic books. Find more at www.forgottenbooks.com This book is a reproduction of an important historical work. Forgotten Books uses state-of-the-art technology to digitally reconstruct the work, preserving the original format whilst repairing imperfections present in the aged copy.

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