

SHERIDAN

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649129515

Sheridan by Mrs. Margaret Oliphant

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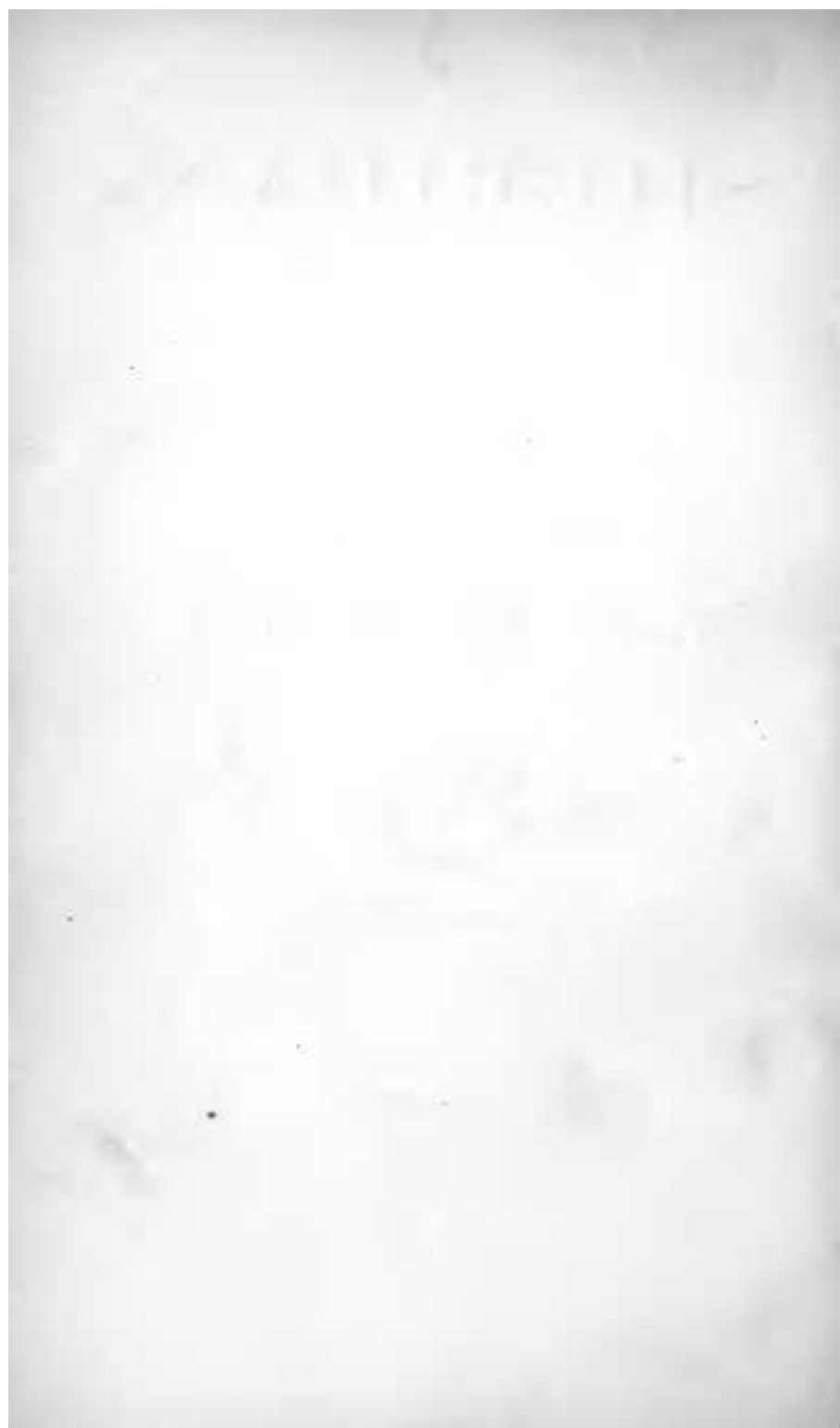
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MRS. MARGARET OLIPHANT

SHERIDAN



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BY
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PUBLISHED BY HARPER & BROTHERS, NEW YORK.

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NOTE.

THE most important and, on the whole, trustworthy life of Sheridan is that of Moore, published in 1825, nine years after Sheridan's death, and founded upon the fullest information, with the help of all that Sheridan had left behind in the way of papers, and all that the family could furnish—along with Moore's own personal recollections. It is not a very characteristic piece of work, and greatly dissatisfied the friends and lovers of Sheridan; but its authorities are unimpeachable. A previous Memoir by Dr. Watkins, the work of a political opponent and detractor, was without either this kind of authorisation or any grace of personal knowledge, and has fallen into oblivion. Very different is the brief sketch by the well-known Professor Smyth, a most valuable and interesting contribution to the History of Sheridan. It concerns, indeed, only the latter part of his life, but it is the most life-like and, under every aspect, the most touching contemporary portrait that has been made of him. With the professed intention of making up for the absence of character in Moore's *Life*, a second volume of *SHERIDANIANA* was published the year after, which is full of amusing anecdotes, but little, if any, additional information. Other essays on the subject have been many. Scarcely an edition of Sheridan's plays has been published (and they are numberless) without a biographical notice, good or bad. The most noted of these is perhaps the *Biographical and Critical Sketch*

of Leigh Hunt, which does not, however, pretend to any new light, and is entirely unsympathetic. Much more recently a book of personal *Recollections by an Octogenarian* promised to afford new information; but, except for the froth of certain dubious and not very savoury stories of the Prince Regent period, failed to do so.

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