

**CARITÀ, IN THREE  
VOLUMES, VOL. III**

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Carità, in Three Volumes, Vol. III by Mrs. Margaret Oliphant Wilson

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**MRS. MARGARET OLIPHANT WILSON**

**CARITÀ, IN THREE  
VOLUMES, VOL. III**



# C A R I T À

BY

MRS OLIPHANT

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'THE CHRONICLES OF CARLINGFORD'  
ETC. ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. III.



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OF  
THE THIRD VOLUME.

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# CARITÀ.

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## CHAPTER XXXII.

### TAKING UP BROPT STITCHES.

NEXT day Mr. Beresford paid Mrs. Meredith a visit of condolence. It was natural and necessary, considering their friendship; but the manner in which that friendship had been interrupted, and the occasion upon which it was resumed, were both embarrassing. It had been a short note from Maxwell which had communicated the news to him, and in this it had been taken for granted that he would now remain at home. Old Mr. Sommerville had himself communicated the information to Maxwell, and his letter was enclosed. 'I hear your friend Beresford had made up his mind to go away, out of consideration for Mrs. Meredith,'

he had written, 'which was very gentlemanly on his part, and showed fine feeling. I think it right accordingly to let you know at once of the great change which has taken place in her position. I have received the news this morning of her husband my poor friend John Meredith's death at Calcutta, on the 3rd inst. It was sudden, but not quite unexpected, as he had been suffering from fever. This of course changes Mrs. Meredith's situation altogether. She is now a widow, and of course responsible to no one. I would not for the world be answerable for depriving her of the sympathy of a kind friend, *which may in the long run be so important for her*, at a period of trouble. So I trust you will communicate the news to your friend with the least possible delay. I have not seen Mrs. Meredith; but as they have been long separated, I do not doubt that she bears the loss with Christian composure,' said the sharp-witted old man. 'I send you old Sommerville's letter,' Mr. Maxwell added on his own account; 'it does not require any comment of mine; and of course you will act as you think proper; but my own opinion is, that he is an old busybody, making suggestions of

patent absurdity.' Mr. Beresford was much nettled by this note. Whatever Sommerville's suggestion might mean it was for him to judge of it, not Maxwell, who thrust himself so calmly into other people's business. Sommerville's letter might not have pleased him by itself, but Maxwell's gloss was unpardonable. He tore it up and threw it into his wastebasket with unnecessary energy. But for that perhaps he might have felt more abashed by the embarrassing character of the reunion; but being thus schooled, he rebelled. He went to the house next door in the afternoon, towards the darkening. The spring sunshine had died away, and the evening was cold as winter almost. There had been no reception that day—visitor after visitor had been sent away with the news of the 'bereavement.' The same word has to be used whether the loss is one which crushes all delight out of life, or one which solemnly disturbs the current for a moment, to leave it only brighter than before. All the servants at Mrs. Meredith's were preternaturally solemn. The aspect of the house could not have been more funereal had half the population succumbed. Already, by some