

As the reading world well knows, this is not the first published Life of Margaret Fuller. One, entitled "Memoirs," was printed about the time of her death, thirty-two years ago, and has passed through three editions; and another, from the pen of Mrs. Julia Ward Howe, came from the press last year. These have given an impression of her which Mr. Higginson considers partial and incomplete, — that of a woman whose chief desire was self-culture. Her new biographer, thoroughly acquainted with her, familiar with all that has been published concerning her life, and having access to her journal and letters heretofore unused, brings her before us as one whose supreme desire was "a career of mingled thought and action, such as she finally found." She was not merely a devourer of books, but a woman of vigorous executive power, manifest in various ways for the improvement and help of others; and this most conspicuously at a time when she was most industrious and thorough in her efforts for self-culture. Thoughtful, filial, sisterly, self-sacrificing in her home, she there and then fitted herself by attaining a full and well-rounded womanhood, to be to her pupils what one of them so well describes:

"As she was powerful, so she was tender; as she was exacting she was generous. She demanded our best, and she gave us her best. To be with her was the most powerful stimulus, intellectual and moral. It was like the sun shining upon plants and causing buds to open into flowers. This was her gift, and she could no more help exercising it than the sun could help shining."

The manifestation of these traits in her character enable Mr. Higginson to place before us an instructive and thoroughly enjoyable biography; the perusal of which we are filled with admiration of the intellectual force of a woman who had no peer while living, and whose place has not been taken by a superior since her departure from earth;

and what is better still, a woman strong in her affections, helpful to others, hoping always for the best, and daring to suffer or to do so that she might be a co-worker with the Infinite Goodness whose lavish bounty she beheld on every hand. Much of the source of her strength is suggested in Mr. Higginson's chapter on "Hereditary Traits," but more is probably intimated in what she tells us she learned in her childhood amid the beautiful hills, and wide, rich fields where she passed the days of her youth :

"Precious lessons of faith, of fortitude, of self-command, and of less selfish love. There the heart was awakened to sympathize with the ignorant, to pity the vulgar, and hope for the seemingly worthless; for a need was felt of realizing the only reality, the divine soul of this visible creation, which cannot err and will not sleep, which cannot permit evil to be permanent or its aim of beauty to be eventually frustrated in the smallest particular."

Those who have known Margaret Fuller as possessing only a cold, intellectual nature, a devourer of books, unsympathetic towards her kind, isolated except from a choice few who dwelt with her in the region of high ideas and the solitudes of Transcendentalism, will find in Mr. Higginson's pages a delightful revelation of a truly helpful and loving woman.