

In undertaking to write a new biography of Margaret Fuller which should be worth the effort, Mr. T. W. Higginson has been brilliantly successful. In this he has perhaps only answered the general expectation, as the literary public learned long ago to anticipate original and effective work whenever he applied his pen to the elucidation of any subject. For achieving this latest task he had special advantages through his personal association with the family and many of the Cambridge friends of Margaret Fuller. She was thirteen years his senior, but her younger brothers were his youthful companions, her only sister became a near relative by marriage, and there was that familiar acquaintance with her character and circumstances which results from membership in the same social circles in a small town. Moreover, as Mr. Higginson gratefully testifies, the writings of Miss Fuller had more immediate influence upon him than those of any other person except Emerson or Parker, and his feeling toward her has consequently been one of strong friendliness without the bias of personal affection. In preparing the present memoir — "Margaret Fuller Ossoli" (Houghton, Mifflin & Co.) — he has fulfilled a long cherished desire to make a more impartial study of her life and work than was possible when the first noble tribute to her memory was published by admiring friends. Mr. Higginson has had access to much entirely fresh material in the form of letters and manuscripts which throw precious light on the history of Margaret. It has enabled him to compose a biography which is as new in incidents as it is unhackneyed in expression. He borrows extremely little from the matter embodied in the previous memoirs, and, it is superfluous to say, is wholly independent in judgment. The copious extracts made from the journals of Margaret, her letters to Emerson, the diary of Mr. Alcott, and other hitherto unpublished MSS., are of the deepest interest; and, while clearing away obscurities, they heighten the respect for her abilities, aims, and aspirations. The chapters containing an account of "The Dial" and of "Brook Farm," translations of the letters between Margaret and her husband, and a review of the closing scenes of her life, are among the most valuable in a volume in which there is not a page to be lightly regarded.