

## MARGARET FULLER OSSOLI.



ONE of the most earnest and high-minded American women known to fame was Margaret Fuller Ossoli.

Her father, Timothy Fuller, was a direct descendant of the old Pilgrim Fathers, and inherited the stern morality and uncompromising sense of duty which distinguished the Puritans of England.

His timid, shrinking wife left the management of the children very much to him; and thus it happened that little Margaret, who was born at Cambridge, Port Massachusetts, upon the 23rd of May, 1810, was very early brought under his influence.

Mr. Fuller, admirable as he was, knew nothing whatever of the needs of a sensitive little child, and his one idea was to make her a prodigy of learning.

Margaret had excellent abilities, but she had also a very great deal of imagination, and all the nervous excitement which belongs to such a temperament. She was not strong, and before she was six years old the long lessons and heavy tasks set her by her father told terribly upon her health.

She was required by him to learn so much and commit so much to memory that it was often very late at night before she could go to rest, and then sleep was impossible. Mr. Fuller was only at home in the evenings, and was so stern if any mistake occurred in the recitations Margaret prepared for him that her education must have been a time of great torture.

When at last she went to bed, the poor little overtasked child could not rest; horrible dreams tormented her, and she awoke shrieking with terror. For this she was often severely punished, and told to "leave off talking rubbish" when she tried to explain her dreadful visions.

Before she was six she was learning Latin, and before she was eight her acquaintance with Shakespeare was thorough. She became so devoted to learning that when she was thirteen her one wish and aim in life was to cultivate her mind. To this she lent every faculty she possessed, and we find her at fifteen rising before five, and in the course of a day's work studying French, Italian, Greek, Latin, music, singing, metaphysics, and philosophy! In addition to all this she kept a journal regularly.

But Margaret was not to be allowed to sacrifice everything to her love of learning. She was to be taught that life has higher lessons to teach than mere knowledge. When she was about twenty her acquaintance with German literature inspired her with a rapt desire to visit Europe and acquaint herself thoroughly with the nations of which her varied reading gave her such exalted ideas.

To this end she determined to earn sufficient money to pay her expenses, for her father was not well enough off to afford her the luxury of travel.

She undertook the education of her younger sisters and brothers upon the understanding that the money thus saved should be hers. She looked upon this self-imposed task, which to many girls would have been delightful, as the most irksome thing in the world. But although the education of the children occupied her for eight hours a day, and she was housekeeper and attendant upon an invalid

mother, at the same time she still carried on her own intellectual training. We find her passing her evenings in the study of European geography, and writing out analytical criticisms of the works of Schiller and Goethe, and it is not surprising that the immediate result of so much exertion was a long and serious illness.

In 1835 Mr. Fuller died, and Margaret's plans were completely overthrown. As the eldest of a large family, much devolved upon her. They were comparatively poor, and the question was no longer one of only saving money, but of the need of making it.

The voyage to Europe was an impossibility, if justice was to be done to the other members of the family. Margaret realised this, and her sense of duty led her to relinquish her own ambition, not without a pang which she could not hide, but with cheerfulness, which, if at first assumed, became natural to her.

She had many friends, and among them some sufficiently influential to obtain an appointment for her as teacher in a large school at Providence. Sixty scholars were under her management, and after awhile her earnest nature met with a fitting reward in the enthusiastic affection felt for her by her pupils.

She has been called egotistical and conceited—perhaps she was—but her great powers of mind were joined to a very simple and sincere character, and she talked naturally of all that interested her. Her conversational powers were so esteemed that the recognition of them led to a curious scheme. A class was formed for conversation and placed under her directions, and, rather strangely, the plan was very successful. The first meeting was in November, 1839, and the fame of these conversational gatherings became so great that gentlemen wished to join them. Accordingly the next year mixed classes were held, but were not quite so successful. In 1844 Margaret Fuller became engaged in literary work, and Mr. Greeley, a proprietor of the *New York Tribune*, proposed that she should live in his family, and write for his newspaper. This led to her going to reside near New York, and then she first interested herself in philanthropic work. In 1846 her longed-for voyage to Europe became possible, and the first country she visited after her arrival at Liverpool was Scotland.

Later in the year she came to London, and at once became a favourite of society. She is described as having been of medium height, with light hair and blue eyes, and a curious habit of closing her eyelids frequently whilst speaking.

After a stay of some months in London, Margaret went to Paris, and thence to Italy, where the romance of her life began. Her sympathies with the ardent people of this country were so great and so engrossing that she threw herself into all the political contests of the period. She became accidentally acquainted with a young nobleman, the Marchese Ossoli. He belonged to a poor patrician family, and was greatly interested in the American lady. His acquaintance ripened into love, and although Margaret refused the offer of his hand and left Rome, it was only to return some few months later, when she rewarded his devoted attachment and became his wife in December, 1847.

For political reasons the marriage was concealed for more than a year. The marriage of the Marchese with a Protestant would have been fatal to him. The secrecy this entailed was very galling to Margaret. But three of her husband's brothers were in the service of the State, and Margaret had written and spoken so openly of the glory of Italian independence that she was necessarily unpopular with the reigning powers.

In 1848 she went to Rieti, and there, on the 5th of September, her baby boy was born.

Her husband was engaged in Rome, and could only visit her occasionally; sometimes, after many hours' travelling, he could only pass a few hours with her. Margaret was a devoted mother, and her suffering was very great when she found that if she was to be a true wife to her husband and join him in Rome she must leave her boy to strangers.

"Ah," she writes to her husband, "how can I ever, ever leave him!"

Yet it had to be done, and little Angelo was left with a trustworthy nurse, as his mother hoped, and when after a month's absence she returned to find him well and strong she became a little more reconciled to it. But political troubles thickened. In April, Rome was in a state of siege, and once with her husband, Margaret could not leave the city to visit her darling. Every day she walked a great distance to meet a physician who was allowed to pass out into the country, and upon the scanty tidings he brought, her heart tired.

She was too energetic to be still. She began to nurse at one of the hospitals for the wounded, spending her whole time amid scenes of suffering. She sent money as constantly as she could for her child, and only hoped that the nurse might prove faithful; but when at last she and her husband could leave Rome she found that her little one, her darling, had been all but starved to death.

How keen her anguish was we learn from her letter. "My baby," she writes, "I found too weak to smile, to lift his little wasted hand!" and it was four long weeks before he had strength to smile.

She determined that no circumstances should ever reconcile her to parting from him again, and a conviction grew upon her that life in beautiful Italy could not be hers. In 1850 it was decided that the whole family should go to America. Her marriage was now known, and she had been assured that her husband and little son would be welcome in her native land.

Passages were taken in the "Elizabeth," a merchant vessel, leaving Leghorn upon the 17th of May.

The lovely breezes of early summer made the trip along the shores of the Mediterranean most delightful. Little Angelo was the idol of all the passengers and crew; and a special pet of the Captain's.

A few days after leaving port, Captain Hayes sickened with the small-pox, and died upon the 2nd of June. Angelo, who had been much with him, took the dreadful complaint. His mother's anguish was terrible, but she was not to lose him so. He recovered, and with a grateful heart Margaret Fuller spent her time in trying to comfort the widow of the unfortunate Captain.

The Atlantic was crossed, home seemed near, New York was to be reached next day, the pilot came on board, and in spite of a thick fog all appeared to be going well. But, about four in the morning of the 16th of July the ship received a fearful shock. She had struck!

All on board recognised the danger! The little one awakened from his sleep, terrified and shivering, cried piteously, but no other cries were heard. Margaret, taking her boy in her arms, sung him to sleep! They were so close to land that a few brave resolute men on shore might have saved all their lives; but no brave sailors were near them, only wretched outcasts, who streamed in sight hoping to profit by the wreck.

Margaret might have been saved would she have left husband or child, for the mate with incredible effort had managed a rope and plank, by means of which he took the Captain's widow to shore. The ship broke up fast; still Margaret would not try to save her own life without her loved ones. The

dashing waves carried fresh victims away; at four o'clock in the afternoon only three seamen remained, beside the family, when the mate declared he would save Angelo or die.

He had the child in his arms, prepared to put his resolve into execution, when "a wave burst over the fore-castle, and the foremast fell, carrying the deck and all upon it." Margaret was last seen "clad in her white night-dress with her hair loose on her shoulders."

Parents and child died together! Little Angelo's remains were washed on shore and reverently buried. Afterwards his grandmother, old Mrs Fuller, visited the spot, and his tiny body was removed to the churchyard where her husband lay buried.

Margaret Fuller Ossoli, and the husband she had devotedly loved, rest together at the bottom of the vast ocean. Her memory will live as long as earnestness of purpose and purity of life are valued in the world.

J. E. RUNTZ REES.

## THAT CAPTIVATING WIDOW.

By SARAH DOUDNEY.

### CHAPTER II.

**B**y Monday all Oxworthy knew all that was to be known about the interesting widow. She was seen walking slowly down the narrow lane that led to the Nettletons' house, her fine figure displayed to perfection in her tightly-fitting black dress, her lustrous golden hair shining in the afternoon sunlight. She had learnt from her landlady that a cottage standing close to Major Nettleton's residence, and belonging to that gentleman, was without an occupant.

A little later she was seated in the major's drawing-room, talking in her smooth, easy way to Mrs. Nettleton and the girls. It was surprising how much information she contrived to give them about herself in a quarter of an hour. It was still more astonishing to hear the names of all the grand people whom she classed among her friends. Was the cottage to be let furnished? Yes. Ah! that was delightful, for she had sold all her own furniture, and stored her plate. In fact, she did not mind frankly confessing that she had recently had some very severe losses. Her dear husband had invested considerable sums in mining shares, and the shares were now worth next to nothing. But, she added, with her sad, sweet smile, she had no one to care for, saving herself; and so what did it matter? She only wanted to end her days in peace and retirement, cherishing the memory of him whom she had lost.

At these words the major and his son Conrad both looked as if Mrs. Belgrave's resolve to remain a widow was a public calamity. Mrs. Nettleton and her daughters, on the contrary, evidently approved of her faithfulness to the departed. The young ladies felt that she would have been a formidable rival had she taken the field against them. And

as to their mother, that anxious matron could scarcely refrain from applauding a woman who was contented to be only once married!

They all went with her to look at the cottage—a damp little place, with ridiculously small Gothic windows, which admitted hardly any light. The furniture had found its way here from Mrs. Nettleton's lumber-rooms; but the widow praised it, and called it charmingly antique. She paid a quarter's rent in advance, and took possession at once.



### CHAPTER III.

THE summer days wore on, and the Nettletons became devoted to their new acquaintance. She was so sweet, was the general verdict; so even-tempered without being uninteresting. Then, too, she had such wonderful and varied knowledge of places and people, and was so familiar with the family secrets of the aristocracy that it was most improving to be in her company. Yet withal her affability was such that her friends found it necessary to warn her against being too civil to her inferiors.

"You must be careful to keep that little Bretton girl at a distance, dear Mrs. Belgrave," said Amelia Nettleton, one day. "Give her an inch, and she will take an ell. The rector and his wife have made a great deal too much of her."

"Her father is nothing but a broken-down merchant," chimed in Mrs. Nettleton. "And would you believe it? She was actually scheming to get poor young Mayflower to propose to her, but I am happy to say we rescued him," added the lady, complacently.

"Ah," said Mrs. Belgrave, with a sigh, "how incomprehensible it seems that girls should be setting matrimonial traps! My dear sisters and myself were quite pestered with offers as soon as we came out. I am afraid to remember how many we rejected," added the fair widow, pensively.

The sigh was echoed by the three Miss Nettletons, who had not found eligible suitors to be as plentiful as blackberries. Even the ungrateful Mayflower, although rescued from the Bretton snare, did not seem disposed to cast himself at the feet of his deliverers.

The rector and his wife had not enrolled themselves among the number of Mrs. Belgrave's worshippers. They received her gracefully and genially enough, but in their hearts they mistrusted her.

"Did you ever see such wonderful hair and such a complexion, Paul?"

asked Mrs. Harlowe of her husband. "I wonder if it is all quite real?"

"That is just what one is always saying to oneself about her," he replied. "One feels, somehow, that she is too good-looking, and knows too many grand people. But really, Kate, I have not time to investigate her thoroughly; and as the Nettletons have taken her up so warmly, let them enjoy her."

"They say she is doing wonders for Conrad," said Mrs. Harlowe, "and certainly the young man doesn't seem so gloomy nor so sickly as he was. I often see him walking in the lane with her, evidently in confidential talk."

"Will the confidential talk end in love-making?" asked the rector, laughing. "Conrad is sickly, it is true; but he has a fine fortune, and will soon be master of it."

"O, Mrs. Belgrave has taken vows of perpetual widowhood," returned Mrs. Harlowe. "And the Nettletons will never let poor Conrad marry, if they can help it. All the doctors think he is sure to die young; and if he lives to be five-and-twenty he can bequeath his fortune to his step-mother and sisters, which is just what they expect him to do. They always speak of his marriage as a sheer impossibility."

"Well, well, let them go their own ways," said the rector; "but it surprises me to see how ready the Nettletons are to take up an utter stranger like Mrs. Belgrave while they will not even notice little Ellen Bretton! The one is imperfectly educated, I am convinced, and may turn out to be a mere adventuress; the other is accomplished and refined, and we know all her history."

"Don't enter upon that subject," cried his wife, "it makes me too angry! Ellen Bretton takes their rudeness quite calmly, like a sensible girl as she is. And as to Mayflower, I think she is rather glad his visits are less frequent. But I own that these things try my patience."

Meanwhile Ellen Bretton performed her daily duties, and thought very little either about the Nettletons or the faithless curate. She was a good girl, who worked hard that she might not be a burden to her parents. They had but a small income to live upon, and Ellen was resolved that they should have all the comfort that their reduced means could give them, and something more. What did it matter to her that the Major's daughters passed her without even the shadow of a recognition when she encountered them in the village street? What did it matter that the curate's boyish pink face grew pinker still, from a sense of shame, at her approach? For the quiet, busy little woman life had joys enough without the Nettletons' notice or Mr. Mayflower's devotion.

In her silent way Ellen studied Mrs. Belgrave with considerable interest and curiosity. Like the rector, she had soon found out that the fascinating widow was not a cultivated woman. She had overheard enough of Mrs. Belgrave's conversation to detect her slips of gram-