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**At Home And Abroad Or, Things
And Thoughts In America and
Europe**

Margaret Fuller

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PREFACE.

There are at least three classes of persons who travel in our own land and abroad. The first and largest in number consists of those who, "having eyes, see not, and ears, hear not," anything which is profitable to be remembered. Crossing lake and ocean, passing over the broad prairies of the New World or the classic fields of the Old, though they look on the virgin soil sown thickly with flowers by the hand of God, or on scenes memorable in man's history, they gaze heedlessly, and when they return home can but tell us what they ate and drank, and where slept,—no more; for this and matters of like import are all for which they have cared in their wanderings.

Those composing the second class travel more intelligently. They visit scrupulously all places which are noted either as the homes of literature, the abodes of Art, or made classic by the pens of ancient genius. Accurately do they mark the distance of one famed city from another, the size and general appearance of each; they see as many as possible of celebrated pictures and works of art, and mark carefully dimensions, age, and all details concerning them. Men, too, whom the world regards as great men, whether because of wisdom, poesy, warlike [pg iv] achievements, or of wealth and station, they seek to take by the hand and in some degree to know; at least to note their appearance, demeanor, and mode of life. Writers belonging to this class of travellers are not to be undervalued; returning home, they can give much useful information, and tell much which all wish to hear and know, though, as their narratives are chiefly circumstantial, and every year circumstances change, such recitals lessen constantly in value.

But there is a third class of those who journey, who see indeed the outward, and observe it well. They, too, seek localities where Art and Genius dwell, or have painted on canvas or sculptured in marble their memorials; they become acquainted with the people, both famed and obscure, of the lands which they visit and in which for a time they abide; their hearts throb as they stand on places where great deeds have been done, with whose dust perhaps is mingled the sacred ashes of men who fell in the warfare for truth and freedom,—a warfare begun early in the world's history, and not yet

ended. But they do much *more* than this. There is, though in a different sense from what ancient Pagans fancied, a genius or guardian spirit of each scene, each stream and lake and country, and this spirit is ever speaking, but in a tone which only the attent ear of the noble and gifted can hear, and in a language which such minds and hearts only can understand. With vision which needs no miracle to make it prophetic, they see the destinies which nations are all-unconsciously shaping for themselves, and note the deep meaning of passing events which only make others wonder. Beneath the mask of mere externals, their eyes discern the character of those whom they meet, and, refusing to accept popular judgment in [pg v] place of truth, they see often the real relation which men bear to their race and age, and observe the facts by which to determine whether such men are great only because of circumstances, or by the irresistible power of their own minds. When such narrate their journeyings, we have what is valuable not for a few years only, but, because of its philosophic and suggestive spirit, what must always be useful.

The reader of the following pages, it is believed, will decide that Margaret Fuller deserves to rank with the latter class of travellers, while not neglectful of those details which it is well to learn and remember.

Twelve years ago she journeyed, in company with several friends, on the Lakes, and through some of the Western States. Returning, she published a volume describing this journey, which seems worthy of republication. It seems so because it rather gives an idea of Western scenery and character, than enters into guide-book statements which would be all erroneous now.

Beside this, it is much a record of thoughts as well as things, and those thoughts have lost none of their significance now. It gives us also knowledge of Indian character, and impressions respecting that much injured and fast vanishing race, which justice to them makes it desirable should be remembered. The friends of Madame Ossoli will be glad to make permanent this additional proof of her sympathy with all the oppressed, no matter whether that oppression find embodiment in the Indian or the African, the American or the European.

The second part of the present volume gives my sister's impressions and observations during her European journey and residence in Italy. This is done through letters, which originally appeared in the New York Tribune [pg vi] but have never before been gathered into book form. There may be a degree of incompleteness, sometimes perhaps inaccuracy, in these letters, which are inseparable attendants upon letter-writing during a journey or amid exciting and warlike scenes. None can lament more than I that their writer lives not to revise them. Some errors, too, were doubtless made in the original printing of these letters, owing to her handwriting not being easily read by those who were not familiar with it, and very probably some such errors may have escaped my notice in the revision, especially as many emendations must be conjectural, the original manuscript not now existing.

There is one fact, however, which gives this part of the volume a high value. Madame Ossoli was in Rome during the most eventful period of its modern history. She was almost the only American who remained there during the Italian Revolution, and the siege of the city. Her marriage with the Marquis Ossoli, who was Captain of the Civic Guard and active in the republican councils and army, and her own ardent love of freedom, and sacrifices for it, brought her into immediate acquaintance with the leaders in the revolutionary army, and made her cognizant of their plans, their motives, and their characters. Unsuccessful for a time as has been that struggle for freedom, it was yet a noble one, and its true history should be known in this country and in all lands, that justice may be done to those who sacrificed much, some even life, in behalf of liberty. Her peculiar fitness to write the history of this struggle is well expressed by Mr. Greeley, in his Introduction to one of her volumes recently published. ^A "Of Italy's last struggle for liberty and light," [pg vii] he says, "she might not merely say, with the Grattan of Ireland's kindred effort, half a century earlier, 'I stood by its cradle; I followed its hearse.' She might fairly claim to have been a portion of its incitement, its animation, its informing soul. She bore more than a woman's part in its conflicts and its perils; and the bombs of that ruthless army which a false and traitorous government impelled against the ramparts of Republican Rome, could have stilled no voice more eloquent in its exposures, no heart more lofty in its defiance, of the

villany which so wantonly drowned in blood the hopes, while crushing the dearest rights, of a people, than those of Margaret Fuller."

Inadequate, indeed, are these letters as a memorial and vindication of that struggle, in comparison with the history which Madame Ossoli had written, and which perished with her; but well do they deserve to be preserved, as the record of a clear-minded and true-hearted eyewitness of, and participator in, this effort to establish a new and better Roman Republic. In one respect they have an interest higher than would the history. They were written during the struggle, and show the fluctuations of hope and despondency—which animated those most deeply interested. I have thought it right to leave unchanged all expressions of her opinion and feeling, even when it is evident from the letters themselves that these were gradually somewhat modified by ensuing events. Especially did this change occur in regard to the Pope, whom she at first regarded, in common with all lovers of freedom in this and other lands, with a hopefulness which was doomed to a cruel disappointment. She was, however, never for a moment deceived as to his character. His heart she believed kindly and good; his intellect, of a low order; his views as to reform, narrow, intending [pg viii] only what is partial, temporary, and alleviating, never a permanent, vital reform, which should remove the cause of the ills on account of which his people groaned. Really to elevate and free Italy, it was necessary to remove the yoke of ecclesiastical and political thralldom; to do this formed no part of his plans,—from his very nature he was incapable of so great a purpose. The expression in her letters of this opinion, when most people hoped better things, was at first censured, as doing injustice to Pius IX.; but alas! events proved the impulses of his heart to be in subjection to the prejudices of his mind, and that mind to be weaker than even she had deemed it, with views as narrow as she had feared.

The third part of this volume contains some letters to friends, which were never written for the public eye, but are necessary to complete, as far as can now be done, the narrative of her residence abroad. Some few of these have already appeared in her "Memoirs," a work I cannot too warmly recommend to those who would know my sister's character. Many more of her letters may be there found,

equally worthy of perusal, but not so necessary to complete the history of events in Italy.

The fourth part contains the details of that shipwreck which caused mourning not only in the hearts of her kindred, but of the many who knew and loved her. These, with some poems commemorative of her character and eventful death, form a sad but fitting close to a book which records her European journeyings, and her voyage to a home which proved to be not in this land, where were waiting warm hearts to bid her welcome, but one in a land yet freer, better than this, where she can be no less loved by the angels, by our Saviour, and the Infinite Father. [pg ix] After the copy for this volume had been sent to the press, it was found necessary to omit some portions of the work in the republication, as too much matter had been furnished for a volume of reasonable size. The Editor made these omissions with much reluctance, but the desire to bring a record of Madame Ossoli's journeyings within the compass of one volume outweighed that reluctance. He believes the omissions have been made in such a way as not materially to diminish its value, especially as most which has been omitted will find place in another volume he hopes soon to issue, containing a portion of the miscellaneous writings of Madame Ossoli.

All of these omissions that are important occur in the *Summer on the Lakes*, it being thought better to omit from a portion of the work which had previously been before the public in book form. The episodic nature of that work, too, enabled the Editor to make omissions without in any way marring its unity. These omissions, when other than mere verbal ones, consist of extracts from books which she read in relation to the Indians; an account of and translation from the *Seeress of Prevorst*, a German work which had not then, but has since, been translated into English, and republished in this country; a few extracts from letters and poems sent to her by friends while she was in the West, one of which poems has been since published elsewhere by its author; and the story of Marianna, (a great portion of which may be found in my sister's "*Memoirs*,") and also *Lines to Edith*, a short poem. Marianna and *Lines to Edith* will probably be republished in another volume. From the letters of Madame Ossoli in Parts II. and III. no omissions have been made other than verbal, or when pertaining to trifling incidents, [pg x]

having only a temporary interest. Nothing in any portion of the book recording my sister's own observations or opinions has been omitted or changed. The reader, too, will notice that nothing affecting the unity of the narrative is here wanting, the volume even gaining in that respect by the omission of extracts from other writers, and of a story and short poem not connected in any regard with Western life.

In conclusion, the Editor would express the sincere hope that this volume may not only be of general interest, but inspire its readers with an increased love of republican institutions, and an earnest purpose to seek the removal of every national wrong which hinders our beloved country from being a perfect example and hearty helper of other nations in their struggles for liberty. May it do something, also, to remove misapprehension of the motives, character, and action of those noble patriots of Italy, who strove, though for a time vainly, to make their country free, and to deepen the sympathy which every true American should feel with faithful men everywhere, who by art are seeking to refine, by philanthropic exertion to elevate, by the diffusion of truth to enlighten, or by self-sacrifice and earnest effort to free, their fellow-men.

A.B.F.

Boston, March 1, 1856.

Footnote A: (return)

Introduction to Papers on Literature and Art, p.
8.

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PART I

SUMMER ON THE LAKES.

Summer days of busy leisure,
Long summer days of dear-bought pleasure,
You have done your teaching well;
Had the scholar means to tell
How grew the vine of bitter-sweet,
What made the path for truant feet,
Winter nights would quickly pass,
Gazing on the magic glass
O'er which the new-world shadows pass.
But, in fault of wizard spell,
Moderns their tale can only tell
In dull words, with a poor reed
Breaking at each time of need.
Yet those to whom a hint suffices
Mottoes find for all devices,
See the knights behind their shields,
Through dried grasses, blooming fields.

Some dried grass-tufts from the wide flowery field,
A muscle-shell from the lone fairy shore,
Some antlers from tall woods which never more
To the wild deer a safe retreat can yield,
An eagle's feather which adorned a Brave,
Well-nigh the last of his despairing band, —

For such slight gifts wilt thou extend thy hand
When weary hours a brief refreshment crave?
I give you what I can, not what I would
If my small drinking-cup would hold a flood,
As Scandinavia sung those must contain
With which, the giants gods may entertain;
In our dwarf day we drain few drops, and soon must thirst
again.

CHAPTER I.

NIAGARA.

Niagara, June 10, 1843.

Since you are to share with me such foot-notes as may be made on the pages of my life during this summer's wanderings, I should not be quite silent as to this magnificent prologue to the, as yet, unknown drama. Yet I, like others, have little to say, where the spectacle is, for once, great enough to fill the whole life, and supersede thought, giving us only its own presence. "It is good to be here," is the best, as the simplest, expression that occurs to the mind.

We have been here eight days, and I am quite willing to go away. So great a sight soon satisfies, making us content with itself, and with what is less than itself. Our desires, once realized, haunt us again less readily. Having "lived one day," we would depart, and become worthy to live another.

We have not been fortunate in weather, for there cannot be too much, or too warm sunlight for this scene, and the skies have been lowering, with cold, unkind winds. My nerves, too much braced up by such an atmosphere, do not well bear the continual stress of sight and sound. For here there is no escape from the weight of a perpetual creation; all other forms and motions come and go, the tide rises and recedes, the wind, at its mightiest, moves in gales and gusts, but here is really an incessant, an indefatigable motion. Awake or asleep, there is no escape, still this rushing round you and through you. It is in this way I have most felt the grandeur,—somewhat eternal, if not infinite.

At times a secondary music rises; the cataract seems to seize [pg 4] its own rhythm and sing it over again, so that the ear and soul are roused by a double vibration. This is some effect of the wind, causing echoes to the thundering anthem. It is very sublime, giving the effect of a spiritual repetition through all the spheres.

When I first came, I felt nothing but a quiet satisfaction. I found that drawings, the panorama, &c. had given me a clear notion of the position and proportions of all objects here; I knew where to look for everything, and everything looked as I thought it would.

Long ago, I was looking from a hill-side with a friend at one of the finest sunsets that ever enriched, this world. A little cowboy, trudging along, wondered what we could be gazing at. After spying about some time, he found it could only be the sunset, and looking, too, a moment, he said approvingly, "That sun looks well enough"; a speech worthy of Shakespeare's Cloten, or the infant Mercury, up to everything from the cradle, as you please to take it.

Even such a familiarity, worthy of Jonathan, our national hero, in a prince's palace, or "stumping," as he boasts to have done, "up the Vatican stairs, into the Pope's presence, in my old boots," I felt here; it looks really *well enough*, I felt, and was inclined, as you suggested, to give my approbation as to the one object in the world that would not disappoint.

But all great expression, which, on a superficial survey, seems so easy as well as so simple, furnishes, after a while, to the faithful observer, its own standard by which to appreciate it. Daily these proportions widened and towered more and more upon my sight, and I got, at last, a proper foreground for these sublime distances. Before coming away, I think I really saw the full wonder of the scene. After a while it so drew me into itself as to inspire an undefined dread, such as I never knew before, such as may be felt when death is about to usher us into a new existence. The perpetual trampling of the waters seized my senses. I felt that no other sound, however near, could be heard, and would start and look behind me for a foe. I realized the identity of that mood of nature in which these waters were poured down with [pg 5] such absorbing force, with that in which the Indian was shaped on the same soil. For continually upon my mind came, unsought and unwelcome, images, such as never haunted it before, of naked savages stealing behind me with uplifted tomahawks; again and again this illusion recurred, and even after I had thought it over, and tried to shake it off, I could not help starting and looking behind me.

As picture, the falls can only be seen from the British side. There they are seen in their veils, and at sufficient distance to appreciate the magical effects of these, and the light and shade. From the boat, as you cross, the effects and contrasts are more melodramatic. On the road back from the whirlpool, we saw them as a reduced picture

with delight. But what I liked best was to sit on Table Rock, close to the great fall. There all power of observing details, all separate consciousness, was quite lost.

Once, just as I had seated myself there, a man came to take his first look. He walked close up to the fall, and, after looking at it a moment, with an air as if thinking how he could best appropriate it to his own use, he spat into it.

This trait seemed wholly worthy of an age whose love of *utility* is such that the Prince Puckler Muskau suggests the probability of men coming to put the bodies of their dead parents in the fields to fertilize them, and of a country such as Dickens has described; but these will not, I hope, be seen on the historic page to be truly the age or truly the America. A little leaven is leavening the whole mass for other bread.

The whirlpool I like very much. It is seen to advantage after the great falls; it is so sternly solemn. The river cannot look more imperturbable, almost sullen in its marble green, than it does just below the great fall; but the slight circles that mark the hidden vortex seem to whisper mysteries the thundering voice above could not proclaim,—a meaning as untold as ever.

It is fearful, too, to know, as you look, that whatever has been swallowed by the cataract is like to rise suddenly to light here, whether uprooted tree, or body of man or bird.

[pg 6]

The rapids enchanted me far beyond what I expected; they are so swift that they cease to seem so; you can think only of their beauty. The fountain beyond the Moss Islands I discovered for myself, and thought it for some time an accidental beauty which it would not do to leave, lest I might never see it again. After I found it permanent, I returned many times to watch the play of its crest. In the little waterfall beyond, Nature seems, as she often does, to have made a study for some larger design. She delights in this,—a sketch within a sketch, a dream within a dream. Wherever we see it, the lines of the great buttress in the fragment of stone, the hues of the waterfall copied in the flowers that star its bordering mosses, we are delight-

ed; for all the lineaments become fluent, and we mould the scene in congenial thought with its genius.

People complain of the buildings at Niagara, and fear to see it further deformed. I cannot sympathize with such an apprehension: the spectacle is capable of swallowing up all such objects; they are not seen in the great whole, more than an earthworm in a wide field.

The beautiful wood on Goat Island is full of flowers; many of the fairest love to do homage here. The Wake-robins and May-apples are in bloom now; the former, white, pink, green, purple, copying the rainbow of the fall, and fit to make a garland for its presiding deity when he walks the land, for they are of imperial size, and shaped like stones for a diadem. Of the May-apple, I did not raise one green tent without finding a flower beneath.

And now farewell, Niagara. I have seen thee, and I think all who come here must in some sort see thee; thou art not to be got rid of as easily as the stars. I will be here again beneath some flooding July moon and sun. Owing to the absence of light, I have seen the rainbow only two or three times by day; the lunar bow not at all. However, the imperial presence needs not its crown, though illustrated by it.

General Porter and Jack Downing were not unsuitable figures here. The former heroically planted the bridges by which we cross to Goat Island and the Wake-robins-crowned genius has [pg 7] punished his temerity with deafness, which must, I think, have come upon him when he sunk the first stone in the rapids. Jack seemed an acute and entertaining representative of Jonathan, come to look at his great water-privilege. He told us all about the Americanisms of the spectacle; that is to say, the battles that have been fought here. It seems strange that men could fight in such a place; but no temple can still the personal griefs and strifes in the breasts of its visitors.

No less strange is the fact that, in this neighborhood, an eagle should be chained for a plaything. When a child, I used often to stand at a window from which I could see an eagle chained in the balcony of a museum. The people used to poke at it with sticks, and my childish heart would swell with indignation as I saw their insults, and the mien with which they were borne by the monarch-bird. Its eye was dull, and its plumage soiled and shabby, yet, in its

form and attitude, all the king was visible, though sorrowful and dethroned. I never saw another of the family till, when passing through the Notch of the White Mountains, at that moment glowing before us in all the panoply of sunset, the driver shouted, "Look there!" and following with our eyes his upward-pointing finger, we saw, soaring slow in majestic poise above the highest summit, the bird of Jove. It was a glorious sight, yet I know not that I felt more on seeing the bird in all its natural freedom and royalty, than when, imprisoned and insulted, he had filled my early thoughts with the Byronic "silent rages" of misanthropy.

Now, again, I saw him a captive, and addressed by the vulgar with the language they seem to find most appropriate to such occasions,—that of thrusts and blows. Silently, his head averted, he ignored their existence, as Plotinus or Sophocles might that of a modern reviewer. Probably he listened to the voice of the cataract, and felt that congenial powers flowed free, and was consoled, though his own wing was broken.

The story of the Recluse of Niagara interested me a little. It is wonderful that men do not oftener attach their lives to localities of great beauty,—that, when once deeply penetrated, [pg 8] they will let themselves so easily be borne away by the general stream of things, to live anywhere and anyhow. But there is something ludicrous in being the hermit of a show-place, unlike St. Francis in his mountain-bed, where none but the stars and rising sun ever saw him.

There is also a "guide to the falls," who wears his title labelled on his hat; otherwise, indeed, one might as soon think of asking for a gentleman usher to point out the moon. Yet why should we wonder at such, when we have Commentaries on Shakespeare, and Harmonies of the Gospels?

And now you have the little all I have to write. Can it interest you? To one who has enjoyed the full life of any scene, of any hour, what thoughts can be recorded about it seem like the commas and semicolons in the paragraph,—mere stops. Yet I suppose it is not so to the absent. At least, I have read things written about Niagara, music, and the like, that interested *me*. Once I was moved by Mr. Greenwood's remark, that he could not realize this marvel till, open-

ing his eyes the next morning after he had seen it, his doubt as to the possibility of its being still there taught him what he had experienced. I remember this now with pleasure, though, or because, it is exactly the opposite to what I myself felt. For all greatness affects different minds, each in "its own particular kind," and the variations of testimony mark the truth of feeling. ^B

I will here add a brief narrative of the experience of another, as being much better than anything I could write, because more simple and individual.

"Now that I have left this 'Earth-wonder,' and the emotions it excited are past, it seems not so much like profanation to analyze my feelings, to recall minutely and accurately the effect of this manifestation of the Eternal. But one should go to such a scene [pg 9] prepared to yield entirely to its influences, to forget one's little self and one's little mind. To see a miserable worm creep to the brink of this falling world of waters, and watch the trembling of its own petty bosom, and fancy that this is made alone to act upon him excites—derision? No,—pity."

As I rode up to the neighborhood of the falls, a solemn awe imperceptibly stole over me, and the deep sound of the ever-hurrying rapids prepared my mind for the lofty emotions to be experienced. When I reached the hotel, I felt a strange indifference about seeing the aspiration of my life's hopes. I lounged about the rooms, read the stage-bills upon the walls, looked over the register, and, finding the name of an acquaintance, sent to see if he was still there. What this hesitation arose from, I know not; perhaps it was a feeling of my unworthiness to enter this temple which nature has erected to its God.

At last, slowly and thoughtfully I walked down to the bridge leading to Goat Island, and when I stood upon this frail support, and saw a quarter of a mile of tumbling, rushing rapids, and heard their everlasting roar, my emotions overpowered me, a choking sensation rose to my throat, a thrill rushed through my veins, "my blood ran rippling to my fingers' ends." This was the climax of the effect which the falls produced upon me,—neither the American nor the British fall moved me as did these rapids. For the magnificence, the sublimity of the latter, I was prepared by descriptions and by