THESIS

WOMEN OF LETTERS

By Anna F. Shattuck.

FOR THE DEGREE OF B. L.

COLLEGE OF LITERATURE AND SCIENCE.

1891.
Women of Letters have left deep traces of their beauty, character, and nobleness upon the pages of literature. Would these pages be so worthy or so attractive without the fine sketches of life, the broad studies of character, the harmony quivering from the soul strings into the music of words, and the bright dachles of color and humor which the hand of woman has left upon them?

Woman has need her "Ribble pens" to blot out many of the wrongs which the male population of this globe has not had leisure to meddle with. She has thrown all the power of her pure imaginations into her work. Literature is a great mass of world science,
We all know them and have read their strong truths and great thoughts.

George Eliot is a wonderful character painter. With strong, vigorous, yet tender strokes, she draws her figures of life, each one complete with its soul tragedy. She sketches in the light and frivolous with as much skill as great woman with her strange insight into life, had lived deeply. Meditative by nature, yet possessing a rich humor, cultured, skeptical, with a yearning sympathy for suffering humanity. Like so many of our thinkers, she went through a severe religious struggle. She did not embitter her nature, however, but left her a free thinker and a charitable critic. George Eliot comes before us as a woman of great intellectual force, with a
After her father's death, in 1843, she went abroad with some literary friends. While at Geneva, she met the editor of the "Westminster Review" and, as his assistant, began her career as a writer. In 1853, without social sanction, she became the devoted companion of Mrs. Lewes. Her life was quiet and uneventful during the following years when she was doing her wonderful work. In 1870, Mr. Lewes died, in 1880, she married a former friend, Mr. Cross. She lived but a few months which were spent in continental travel and on a December day, quietly and without pain, passed away. Her works are: "Ranola", "Adam Bede", "Daniel Deronda", "Hill or the Flore", "Felix Holt", "Clerical Kitches" and "Middlemarch".
coarse of face, character, pictures, ideas, notes of passion, a blending of soul melody and an outburst of thought. The pure, the horrible, the suffering, the divine — this is life. Woman has felt, has seen all these things.

Literature is a great analyzer of the soul. Woman has had her part of the anguish, joy, of the passion; she has had her share of life. She has done her share of bravely looking above the wearing pain, of drawing brightness out of the narrow blind. Her purity, deep love, devotion, anguish, sacrifice, sympathy and nobility — these are things which should not be cast aside. Literature, that record of life, would be incomplete without woman's story of living.

In the early period of the world of letters, we
her horrible death at the hands of the monk.

But what have the women of letters done for the world in more modern times? In England, we read the great names of George Elliot and Mrs. Browning.

The beginning of life was prosaic for George Elliot. "Dolly," by the name of Mary Ann Evans, was born, 1819, in the tame country district of Warwickshire. The outward appearances were common, the usual school duties, the home duties, the endless little social duties. Yet in the midst of these plans, every day surroundings, the great mind expanded. George Elliot pursued her education with intense interest and an eager reaching out for fresh truths and beauties. She studied Greek, Latin, French, German, Italian, and
find few women who left a lasting impression. It was not from lack of ability. They had received no education or experience. And what talent there was in them was crushed. Though the gloom of the fact, however, there stand out distinctly two noted women. In Greece, we catch a glimpse of "violet weaving" Sappho and eagerly grasp the fragments of Homer which have been handed down to us. She was a rival to Homer, the great bard, and her fame has never dimmed, though a few fragments of poetry are all that she has left to us. Among the Egyptian philosophers, exerted a strong influence over her time. She wrote much and was a great teacher; but she is remembered principally for her struggles with the religious fanaticism of the day and
deep strength and a noble character. Her broad, philosophical and scholarly mind appeals to us. Listen to a few of her sayings:

"I've never any pity for forsakened people, because I think they carry their comfort about with them."

"Men and women make sad mistakes about their own symptoms—taking their vague, uneasy longings, sometimes for genuine, sometimes for religion and often for a mighty love."

"Speech is but broken light upon the depths of the unspoken."

This great woman's prayer was to:

"Be to other souls the cup of strength in some great agony; Entangle generous adorer, feed thine love.
Despise the similes that have no cruelty;
Be the sweet presence of a good diffused,
And in diffusion ever more intense.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning, 1809–1861

A strange mixture of defect and beauty. An
exquisite loveliness of thought and expression in
striking contrast to its crude, grotesque and rugg
work. She seemed to make no attempt at effect,
but poured out that which was within her in
a varied mass of poetry—each from a soul
mood. Fragile, sensitive, sympathetic, reaching
out toward the eternal; there is a lack of
honor or lighter play of thought in her work.
The music that was in her came in fitful
strained at times with almost pain as though
she struggled with the dim, eternal thought
within her and could not express them.
Oh, how true in much of her poetry. 

"A Drama Of Exile, Aurora Leigh."


Oh, so noble great self,

Conferred on poets of a foetid life,

When our life has been enough for pain.

We staggering 'neath our burden as mere men,

Being called to stand up straight and demi-god,

Support the intolerable strains and stress

Of the universal, and stand clearly up,

With voices broken by the human scoff.

Our poeme to find rhymes among the stern,

Such was this woman's life - tri-fold.

Doomed to bodily suffering from a young

woman to the day of her death; yet with the

spirit of poetry within her crying to be set

free. It was almost more than she could
For years, she lay on an invalid's couch untouched by the great world around her and yet with a heart full of love and sympathy.

In these dreary years of sickness, Mrs. Barrett eagerly read all that she could obtain, philosophy, poetry, languages, history. Her physicians said that it would kill her, but she refused to stop. The poor tired mind could not always lie still with the worn-out body and think of its panners and ills, but took itself in the great ideas which noble minds had pressed upon the pages of her favorite books. Her health began to improve.

In 1846, she married Mr. Browning, the poet. He took her to Italy where she lived till the end of her life. Mrs. Browning made a passionate effort to express the beauty
and height within life and yet the hopelessness
and agony of reaching the ideal
The wind goes round only in opposition straight
The sea, beside the shore, in the spirit tends
Its quick only up against the end
Of want and opposition, love and hate,
There, worked and worn by passionate
debates,
And facing by the loss it apprehends.
The fickle froth, round, and every breath
it sends
It ravelled to a sigh
Till in deep calms of space, my soul may rest
Her nature—Shout large fail on
lengthening cord,
And such exultant on the Infinite.
These fragments are good expressions of
Mrs. Browning's style and thought.

The two greatest women of letters that France has produced have been Madame de Staël and George Sand. With the name of that brilliant woman, Madame de Staël, we pass into the charm and spirit of the French salon where the accomplished and talented women of France gathered together the wit and genius of their country. It was in one of these centres of intellectual growth and culture that little Germaine Necker grew up. When a mere child, she sat on a little stool by her mother's side charming the men around her with her talk. She adored her father and loved her mother. Although she possessed such a broad and brilliant mind, she was not coldly intellectual. Her warm, enthusiastic character
and deep power of love gave a coloring and
sparkle to her genius which pure reason
and thought alone could not have imparted. She
brought a new element into her mother's salon
and gave it an original and animated tone
which it had lacked before. Diane Necker was
a grave, rather precious woman.

A marriage was arranged by the parents
of Germaine Necker according to the French
customs. She became the wife of the Swedish
ambassador and, in 1786, Diane de Staël entered
the world as a married woman; but she was
not happy with her husband and, in 1798, they
parted quietly. Her marriage took place a ba
some time when the revolution in the government was
gathering. In her salon were the Montmorencys,
Lafayette, Count Louis de Narbonne, Talleyard,
Chinier and Mirabeau, leaders in the revolution. But in 1792, this center of growth and culture was broken up and Wood de Staël barely escaped with her life. She organized her salon again on her return to Paris, 1795. Her enthusiasm for the republic was moderated; however, she soon gathered around her noted and gifted men. Her power was at its height, but she met with the disapproval of Napoleon in not upholding his cause and finally was banished. It was at this time that she went to Germany and became attracted to German literature. She undertook to show to the French public the riches of the German literature and philosophy. It required all her grace and ingenuity to do this and it was one of her
greatest achievements.

Mme de Stael was a strong, original and brilliant woman, but her place was in the great, active world of people, the scene to have had no appreciation of the great underlying beauty of the world. She longed for the gutter of Rive de Seaj when footnote on the soiliness of Lake Leman. Her enthusiasm was unbounded — so great in fact that she tired the slow Germans and even Schiller was relieved when released from her presence. "She kept them on such a mental strain." One does not tire of her books, however. Into these, she poured that part of her genius which was to become immortal. Unlike most authors, each of her books was better than the one preceding it.

George Sand, 1804-1876, was one of France's greatest novelists. Lucile Ariée Dupin was great granddaughter of Marshal de Saxe. Her father, Maurice Dupin, was an army officer under the Empire.

In 1808, her father having died, George Sand was left to the care of her mother and grandmother. Her mother, though warmly devoted, was far from being a woman of judgment; beneath the polished exterior of the grandmother, there was an absence of strict principles. After running wild in the
country, George Sand was sent to Paris to the convent of the English Augustinians. She
became at first time fervently religious; but
quickly recovered. Soon after, she left the
school, her grandmother died and George was
left to the care of her mother. Life became
unendurable and, in her distress and
loneliness, she married M. Cacineau Dudoan, 1832. He promised to be a solid and lasting
friend and she married him, committing
the greatest blunder of her life. He drank,
he was immoral. The prohibitory marriage
laws of France gave him every advantage.
In length, he was so indifferent to her that
he permitted her to take their two children
and go to Paris. She rented a garret, managed
to make it comfortable for her little ones and
hen began her literary work. She had written
before—she had talent. Would leap out; but the
talent had been idle play. Now she worked for bread and
brought the whole force of her intellect to guide her
real pen. It was at this time that she assumed
manic attire. She was poor, she could spare
herself from injury and insult; she could venture
where she pleded in search of literary material.
In later years, when she had become famous,
George Sand was severely criticized for her very
“unwomanly behavior.” But when a woman's
little children are crying for bread, when the
little hands she loves are reaching out for that
which she can not give them, does she aching
human heart think of form and the world's
opinion? Oh, no, unless in the dull agony of
her suffering, she sends out a bitter cry against
the cruel law that makes "uncoveted" that which a woman's nature can not help and that which in different circumstances would be called motherly devotion and sacrifice. The world should not make it so hard for lovely women if it wishes her to appear in the latest fashions on all occasions.

After many wretched years, Mme Dudevant obtained a divorce and her children. If she had not won her case, she had decided to fly to America.

George Sand had become famous, though the fact of her poverty obliged her to produce her works faster than even the most rapid writer should do. She is the author of over eighty books.

Harriet C. Conover, Valentine, Indiana
George Sand wrote bitterly against the marriage laws of France. In nearly all her books, we find traces of this. The system was indeed harsh and heavy against French women and its faults needed to be clearly and forcibly pointed out; but George Sand’s early experiences and unhappiness naturally left her morbid and much that she wrote was wild and unconnected. Her passionate unrestrainedness and high-flown sentiment and her utter lack of control were apt to call attention to the author’s faults rather than to the faults of the system. Her constant cry was, “nature!” certain things, therefore they should have them. Said to edy, we find a lack of true principle in this brilliant
woman, but we must remember her trials and the weakening atmosphere in which she breathed. In spite of her many faults, George Sand has done a great work for literature. With her many-sided nature, she has been able to give us a great variety of characters and scenes from life and her books show a wide experience and keen observation.

In our own country, America, we find that many able women have used their talent to build up a strong, rich literature.

Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe, 1812 — Her mother died when she was but four years old and the child was placed with her grandmother at Guilford, Conn. After her father's second marriage, her education was continued at the Litchfield Academy. At the
advanced age of twelve years, she wrote a composition on the juvenile subject, "Can the Immortality of the Soul be proved from the Light of Nature?" She took the negative and pleaded her father very much with the manner in which she developed it. Mr. Beecher was strongly opposed to slavery, preached eloquently against the evils of the system and prayed daily for the deliverance of the poor negroes. Thus the child grew up with a burning sense of the great wrong.

In 1832, Miss Beecher went to Cincinnati, Ohio, and taught with her sister. While there she made frequent visits to the slave states and became well acquainted with southern life. She and all her family were openly known to be opposed to the slavery system.
and during the winter of 1836, Lane Seminary where she taught, was saved only by the depth of mud and the distance from the city. Many a night, she and her sister sat up to buy ink by a furious storm.

In 1836, she married Mr. Stowe. The "poor professor's wife" was a frail little woman with a house full of children, yet she found time to write a little and with the money thus obtained, bought a mattress, a carpet, or some other necessary thing. Her life was full of cares, her sick children to tend, her amusements, her dark hours, the house which rocked in windy weather and was so cold in winter, the wretched months of breakdown and yet, through it all the brave woman's
vivacity and humor and her strong New England sense did not fail her.

In the "National Intelligencer," at Washington, she commenced her great book, "Uncle Tom's Cabin," as a serial story. More than 300,000 copies of the two volumes edition in which the work reappeared, in 1852, were sold in the United States in four years, and in ten years, it was circulating all over the world in most of the foreign languages. Yet Mrs. Stowe felt very anxious about the fate of her book at first. She said — "It seemed to me that there was no hope; that nobody would hear, that nobody would pity, that this frightful system which had plunged its victims into the free states, might at last threaten them even in Canada."

So more powerful agents had been set in
motion in behalf of popular liberty and the brotherhood of men in any land during this century than the book Of Uncle Tom's Cabin. She is the author of one book and long after her many other excellent books are forgotten, Uncle Tom's Cabin will be read with interest and enthusiasm. It was a powerful blow against slavery and awakened many minds which had been unaffected before, to the injustice and evil of the system which existed in our country. Uncle Tom's Cabin, Dred, Joel Mosby, Old Town Folks, The Pearl of Orr's Island.

Her books are true descriptions of American life and sentiment. She possessed the power of representing the emotions very vividly and of keeping the interest of her reader.
from beginning to end.

Mrs. Stowe is still living, a very old lady, broken down in health. Her life work is done and a great and helpful work it has been, wiping away injustice, soothing weary hearts and raising pity in hardened and indifferent natures. Toward those who are weak and crushed and heavy laden. Who will say that this work has not been glorious.

Helen Marie Fiske Jackson, 1831–1886, was daughter of Prof. Nathan M. Fiske of Amherst College. She married Captain Edward O. Cling, an eminent engineer of the U. S. army. Her wife resided with him at various military posts: West Point, Newport, Washington, etc. She had several children; but
all died. In 1863, Major Hunt was killed from the suffocating vapor from a submarine battery of his own invention. A year or two afterward, Pere Hunt moved to Newport. Up to this time she had shown no literary talent, having been fond of society, witty, vivacious, and taken up with home duties. Now she began to publish under the initials of W. C. In 1876, she married William Jackson of Colorado Springs and had for the remaining years of her life a pleasant, happy home. 

Booth: Site of Travels, Site of Travel at Rome, The Story Of Borne, Ramona, Century Of dishonor.

Then she took up literature, she threw herself into her work with all the energy of her nature. Although so impulsive, she had
a careful worker and always prepared herself
for the task before her. Her writing was done
on large sheets of yellow post-office paper
with a lead-pencils - pen and ink were
too slow for her swift thought. Emerson
was a warm admirer of her poems,
especially the sonnet, "Thought."
Mrs. Jackson was a woman with an
entirely unique character full of warm
colorful, bright and sunny, her very faults
were attractive and she left a strong
impressions on all who came into close
contact with her. Her poems are always
good - her prose work is varied. Her
greatest work, "Ramona," was in prose,
however. Her interest in the Indians
concentrated all her attention during the
last years of her life. It was in their defense that she wrote her "Century of Dishonor."

Mrs. Jackson's health was not good. Away from all her old friends, she lay in her last sickness; but the new friends were kind to her and her brightness did not desert her in her pain and sorrow. They buried this talented woman, at her own request, in a deserted spot near the summit of Cheyenne Mountain, about four miles from Colorado Springs, and so high up that nothing but the sage brush can grow there. Only every now and then in this lonely place among the wind except boulders, only a great pile of stones to which, as she had added, each visitor adds his stone in memory of "No. 10."

With the names of Emerson, Alcott,
Thoreau and Theodore Parker, we link that of Margaret Fuller. She was born, 1810, at Cambridge, Mass. Her father from her early childhood took charge of her education. At the age of thirteen, she became a pupil in the school of Dr. Chittick in Boston. She began her work in life under the disadvantage of ill health. Her writing and reading were carried on under the most trying circumstances, with the worry of a thousand little household cares, "teaching the little Fullers," as she called it, sewing and doing private tutor work. But still she bravely persevered. In 1837, she began to teach schools in Boston, later at Providence. Then came conversations at Boston. A company of women met together and, with Miss Fuller's at their head, talked over the great
questions of the day.
Mr. Biggins says, "Apart from every word she ever wrote, Alice Fuller will always be an important figure in American history, for this plain reason, that she was the organizer and executive force of the first thoroughly American literary enterprise." The "Dial" is the only authentic record of that great intellectual movement Transcendentalism.
Margaret Fuller was the editor of this little magazine in which some of the most famous men of our country have expressed their thoughts. She was a frequent visitor at Brook Farm, though Lenobia, in Hawthorne's "Blithedale Romance" is an imaginary character and not Margaret Fuller as Miss Osgood. In 1845, came an offer from Mr. Greeley to make her
future home in New York and write for the "Tribune". In 1846, she sailed for Europe. At Rome, she met Marquis Oesolli and married him. They had one child—a beautiful little boy.

After the dream of a Roman Republic had died away, the Oesolli decided to leave for America. May 17, 1863, they sailed. June 19th, the ship struck on Fire Island Beach. The body of the little child was washed ashore in the dead steward's arms and they buried him in a crumpled sheet in the sand. One other of mine. Oesolli's possessions came to shore—a trunk, holding the letters which had passed between herself and her husband. Margaret Fullers was a woman with strong mental faculties and a determined
perseverance. She was in the closest contact with the greatest and most original minds in America and yet kept her distinctive character. Her writings are full of original expression and spirited ideas with a rich coloring and the spice of contrast. Probably no woman in the United States has had so greater influence on the literary life of her country than Margaret Fuller.


A woman who came in contact with Margaret Fuller was Louisa Alcott. Her grave is with her father in the cemetery at Concord. lovely Old Sleepy Hollow where you
you see the graver of Hawthorne and Thoreau
under the solemn, tall trees and the great
granite rock which marks Emerson's
place of rest. She wrote many stories and
books, which interest old and young alike,
in a style which had a peculiar style of its
own. Of all these, "Little Women" has found
its way straight into the lives and hearts
of her readers.

The women writers of the present day
are numerous. Almost any good magazine
which we may pick up contains articles
by competent women upon science, art
and literature. About half of the books which
are published today in America are the
work of women. Among these numerous
women writers, we only mention
Constance Fenimore Woolson, niece of James Fenimore Cooper. On the death of her father, 1869, she began to write. She went south and resided in Florida until 1879. In that year, on the death of her mother, she went to England where she has since lived.

Wrote: "Anne", "East Angle", "Jupiter Lighte".

Edith Thomas is a poetess who writes much for the magazines. Most of her poems are very delicate and beautiful. In 1886 she made the acquaintance of Helen Hoist Jackson who became very much interested in her and advised her to write. Her poems came at once into popular favor.

Charles Egbert Craddock, who wrote Hurfee, is a writer of southern life, scenery
and dialect. She has written, In the Tennessee Mountains, Down the Ravine, The Prophet of Great Smoky Mountain. Octave Sanet, like French, is a rising young author. Her scenes are laid in Texas and where she spends her winters with friends. “Expiration” is a novel full of fine contrast and vivid writing.

We may mention Emma Lazarus who has written some expressive poems, Sarah Orne Jewett and Kate Tannett Words, both novelists, also Willa Catherwood who has taken up the early life of Illinois. Her “Romance of Dollard” and Story of Fonti have received much notice.

A great future lies before the women of letters in all lands; but especially in
the country. Fifty years ago, the public schools were opened to women for the first time. What a change there has been since that time! See the number of women who have taken honorable places in professions in business, science and in literature. Look at the patents granted during the last few years—how many have used their quick mental faculties to invent useful and helpful articles. There must have been capabilities in women or they could not have developed so rapidly. All women can expand now and use their talents to help along the work of the world. Woman has more leisure than formerly, the result of modern inventions which have greatly lightened the house hold drudgery. They have
greater advantages for observations and a
much wider experience. From their
education, they possess cultivated minds,
which understand how to use their material.
The great world stretches out before
them scattered over with truth and beauty.
Each flower has expression and the depth
of a thought. Exquisite coloring paints the
sky and lovely ideas are written on the
rippling cheeks of many waters. The stars
are golden tones surging into the music of
the spheres. And the whole land is a mass
of varied shading. The boundless inner
world is open before them, with its deep,
noble thoughts and everlasting laws. Lives
surround them on every side; each one has
its story, each one has its little picture with
with its shifting lights and shades.

Colleges, laboritories, work-shops, and hospitals, once shut, are now thrown open for their entrance. The great curious map of society is spread out before woman for study and with her quick intuitions and ruddy wit, she should be able to grasp much that hitherto has been unperceived. She is able to take any route and search out the unusual and wonderful spots of the globe and render them back again to those who do not foresee the same advantages. Her world is widening every day for woman and she should leave a record of life as she has seen and lived it. A great work lies before our women of letters and they should use their pure imaginations.
guick intuitions, strengthening characters
and expanding intellect to help in adding
beauty, wit, and thought to the literature of
the world.