Farm friend, George Bradford. It is understood that Mr. Newcomb did a large amount of literary work, but so far as is known he did not publish it. He died suddenly in Paris in 1894.

CHAPTER V

THE VISITORS

THE visitors were many and welcome to the simple hospitalities of board and even of bed, until their numbers grew from a few friends, who would run out to see how this Republic of lovable fools was faring, to a steadily increasing host of all kinds and conditions of reformers, and followers of reform, curiosity seekers, hostile critics, the partly mad, and the wholly mad. There was at the Hive a Visitors' Book, now lost, which is said to have contained four thousand entries made in a single year.

In spite of this heavy burden of hospitality laid so unreasonably on the small community, it was borne with distinguished courtesy, although many of the visitors came uninvited and evidently felt that they had much to receive, but little to return. When the slender resources could no longer stand this undue strain, a modest fee for each meal was asked, and paid, though sometimes with reluctance. There was, no doubt, something of policy in this urbanity toward the guests. The Brook Farmers were willing that

their light should shine before men to the end that outsiders might be moved to the right way of thinking, and perhaps of living. The fee may have acted as a deterrent; but when curiosity was, in a measure, gratified and the momentary fascination past, the mass of visitors dwindled away, normal conditions reasserted themselves, and only true friends or relatives of the Associates and the inevitable camp followers of reform made their calls.

It was no wonder that many should be drawn to this little Mecca of the Newness. There was news abroad of the boldness of the project, the beauty of the place, and the odd but delightful character of the inmates. And so it fell out that there was much running to West Roxbury to learn how the chosen people were prospering. The excitements of Boston have ever been few; and to see the regeneration of mankind going on under your own nose and eyes, with little or nothing to pay, proved an exhilarating and instructive experience. Notwithstanding the trouble to which the members were now and then put to provide accommodation of every sort, these visitors proved an important element in the history of Brook Farm, adding to its renown and somewhat to its charm. Some came from long distances, and some were people of real distinction. Among artists, were Story, Cranch, Sartain, Ordway, and Champney, naturally drawn to the beauty of the scene and the romantic features attending it. Publicists, editors, men of affairs, came from New York and even from distant parts of the country and from abroad. Robert Owen once made a visit and was well received, though his views little accorded with those of Brook Farm. But the clergy, and in particular the Unitarian clergy, were most numerous among those whose names were of some note. A Unitarian, himself a religious radical, could not well think of his Transcendental friends as heretic, although they certainly were schismatic. Good will, a fine toleration, and a genuine interest in the experiment brought the clergy to West Roxbury sure of a cordial greeting. One good champion of orthodoxy, Father Taylor, was an occasional guest. The neighbors must not be forgotten, for it was their clear privilege to "run in" on the community at any time. Of these good friends, George R. Russell, Francis G. Shaw, and Theodore Parker, and their respective families, were the most conspicuous and most devoted. Each of these men showed his friendliness toward the enterprise by taking mortgages on the estate. The records of the Norfolk Registry of Deeds show that Russell and Shaw used to transfer the mortgages which they held from one to the other, as if for the sake of variety. Neighborliness, a helpful spirit, and a willingness to hold

securities represented the extent of their faith in the theories of Mr. Ripley and his companions. There is little need to enumerate the celebrities, both men and women, who paid their respects to Brook Farm. They came, were amused or edified for the while, and then went their way. Some may have gone to scoff, but few indeed remained to pray.

A few choice visitors have always been so closely identified with the fame of Brook Farm that their connection with it has come to be an integral part of its history. Chief among them were Margaret Fuller, Emerson, William Henry Channing, Alcott, Charles Lane, Cranch, Brownson, Horace Greeley, Albert Brisbane, and Elizabeth Peabody. There also came Hedge, Higginson, and Lowell; these, however, came but seldom, and had no close identification with the life of the Associates. With the distinguished group first mentioned Brook Farm had a real affinity. The relations may have been closer in some cases than in others, but in each case they were important enough to demand a special consideration.

Notwithstanding the greeting which was extended to the majority of those who came to see Brook Farm, — and they often came, it must be admitted, in the same spirit in which they would have inspected a gypsy encampment, — it should not be forgotten that the Brook Farmers

professed to hold "civilisées," as they liked to call the worldlings, in much contempt. This was in part a playful conception; but a pitying sentiment, such as Christian entertained for the benighted City of Destruction, was natural to these determined young separatists. Their deeper regard was kept for the few who were representative of the larger phases of Transcendentalism and Fourierism, and who were glad from time to time to cheer their allies by their presence and stimulating words. Of the relations of these friends to Brook Farm it is fitting to speak somewhat in detail. Horace Greeley, one of the most conspicuous of this group, should properly be mentioned later in these pages in connection with Albert Brisbane and the Fourierist movement.

Margaret Fuller

Although Margaret Fuller's connection with Brook Farm was slight, no general account of the community fails to lay some emphasis on her relation to it and her attitude toward it. Her position within the circle which had at heart the success of this movement is indicated by the fact that she is always associated with them even in a matter with which she did not deeply concern herself. Just why she looked doubtfully on the effort is to be accounted for in several ways, all of which necessitate a somewhat scrutinizing glance at her earlier life; for, at this time, she was over thirty, and she

had thought and felt, and therefore suffered, more than most men and women of that age.

On May 23, 1810, Margaret Fuller was born, the daughter of Timothy Fuller and Margaret Crane. Subsequent to this event the mother seems to have played an inconspicuous part in the life of the child, whose early education and training were wholly taken in charge by her father. Timothy Fuller, according to his daughter, had received from his father that kind of sound worldly advice which the Puritan clergyman's conscience has often permitted him to give — the admonition that he must make sure of two things: a position of professional distinction, and a sufficient income to maintain a family. These are, to be sure, only two phases of that ideal of success which has never ceased to be dear to both the church and the world. Starting with this, in a more or less modified form, as an inheritance, and left wholly to the care of the parent from whom it came, Margaret Fuller's chances of developing into a wholesome or noble maturity seemed slight indeed. The educational methods of the period were severe, and they were practised on her by her father with systematic, though unintentional, cruelty. Evening recitations, a good deal broken into at times, but never pretermitted on that account, produced the inevitable results attend-

ant upon an overstimulated brain — nightmares, somnambulism, nervous exhaustion, and morbidness. Perhaps the child's salvation came from an inward rebellion, seemingly her only natural and healthy emotion. Nothing shows Mr. Fuller's limitations more distinctly than his complacent pride in his wholly unnatural daughter. She was regarded only in her relation to his system, and she undoubtedly gave clear proof that a naturally well endowed human being can, by injudicious forcing, develop into an intellectual prodigy. That she was an isolated, unhappy girl did not occur to him until irreparable damage had been inflicted on her body and mind. She is said by some one to have been an imaginative child, but this is improbable; for an imaginative nature could hardly have survived such an intellectual ordeal as she underwent between the ages of six and thirteen. In any case, no signs of such a faculty appear in her later literary work.

Two years at the school of the Misses Prescott in Groton did something toward counteracting her overdeveloped arrogance and self-esteem; for there she was treated, at a critical moment, like any ordinary personality, and the experience sank deep. The few who knew her well at that time did not doubt that there was sympathy, and even humility, lurking somewhere under the crust of sarcasm and hauteur which

was evident to all the world; but with the latter, admiration for her attainments and her wit was predominant. The harsher qualities of her youth are thus insisted upon, because, in the writer's opinion, Margaret Fuller's glory is that, one by one, she exorcised these demons and substituted for them a noble spirit of self-sacrifice and love. We may "feel disposed," with George Eliot, "to extend to her whole career the admiration and sympathy inspired by the closing scenes," but we should only show ourselves unjust toward her highest accomplishment by so doing. Sincerity characterized her to the last, and her sense of superiority, equally dominant in the beginning, dwindled under the gradual restraint imposed by her widening sympathies and interests.

Her activities seem to form themselves into three distinct groups: those of preparation for her work in New York on the *Tribune*, covering the years of her teaching, her Conversations, and her labors on the *Dial* (1837–1844); her achievements as critic on Greeley's newspaper (1844–1846); and her life in Italy (1847–1850).

As a member of the Transcendental Club, and as a close friend of the Ripleys, she had taken part in the discussions which led to the establishment of Brook Farm; but until within a very short time of the taking of the final step she did not believe that the project would be attempted. Toward the last of December, 1840,

she wrote: "I fancy the best use of the plan, as projected thus far, will prove the good talks it has caused here upon principles;" and on March 29, 1841, on the eve of the hegira, she said: "I do not know what their scheme will ripen to; at present it does not deeply engage my hopes. It is thus far only a little better way than others."

The spirit of toleration was of slow growth in Margaret Fuller, and at this time it had attained only respectable proportions. Her position is generally stated in an unpublished letter to Mrs. Chapman, dated December 26, 1840: "Very probably to one whose heart is so engaged as yours in particular measures, this indifference will seem incredible or even culpable. But, if indifferent, I have not been intolerant; I have wronged none of you by a hasty judgment or careless words, and, where I have not investigated a case so as to be sure of my own opinion, have, at least, never chimed in with the popular hue and cry. I have always wished that efforts originating in a generous sympathy or a sense of neglect should have fair play, [and] have had firm faith that they must, in some way, produce eventual good." The toleration of indifference is not an uncommon attribute; it is the toleration which is exercised in the face of one's own strong feelings of opposition that really counts. At the same time, it is not fair to lose sight of the fact that in the seven or eight years which

preceded the making of this statement — years in which Miss Fuller had been obliged to renounce many of her own pleasures and ambitions in order to provide comfort for her mother, and education for her brothers and sisters — she had become far less self-centred and less disposed to bow before the god of intellect.

At Brook Farm, as in other places, there were differences of opinion regarding her greatness. Mrs. Kirby gave up her room at the Eyrie sometimes when Miss Fuller came, first burning pastilles as an appreciative preparation, and taking great pleasure in serving coffee every morning to the favored guest in her room, out of the only decorated china cup belonging to the estate. Miss Russell, on the other hand, seems not to have given an unqualified admiration to this visitor, of whom she says: "When listening to her wonderful conversations, which, by the way, were limited to one person — herself — and straining my mind to comprehend her meaning, I must own I have sometimes wished her English was rather plainer." Another woman is quoted as saying that she would like to have Margaret Fuller for a spiritual adviser. Margaret Fuller's own early impressions of the community are too familiar to need repetition here. It is true that she spoke freely of her own faults, but it has never been made clear that the criticism of others found ready acceptance with her;

and it is certain that she recognized her own virtues as generously as she did her shortcomings. She was still too much of an egotist and too little of a humorist to treat lightly any failure to take her at her own estimate. Humor, indeed, in its highest development, she did not have; otherwise she would have been too conscious of some of her own absurdities to indulge them. It was no secret among her friends that she sought Brook Farm primarily for solitude, and it is likely that her wish to be let alone was generally respected, and that she was left very much to herself, during the day at least, in accordance with the feeling expressed by Mrs. Kirby: "My great reverence for a person at once so remarkable, and so in need of rest and leisure, made me keep at a very careful distance." The pine woods so refreshed and soothed her that she retreated to them whenever the season permitted. It was her custom to spend New Year's Eve with the "fledglings of Community," and the deepening of her interest in their purpose, if not in their practice, is very apparent between 1841 and the New Year's Eve of 1844, when she recorded the strong feeling aroused in her by a recent Fourier convention and by a talk with Mrs. Ripley.

Miss Fuller's desire for a less hampered life having become possible through the completion of the education of her brothers, she accepted,

with much satisfaction, an offer from Horace Greeley to become a permanent member of his staff. Her work on the *Dial* had first called his attention to her ability; but it was at the suggestion of Mrs. Greeley, who had come to know Miss Fuller well in the course of several visits to Boston, that he decided to put forward this opportunity to strengthen her own reputation and that of the *Tribune*.

It is easy to accept Miss Fuller's announcement, fortified by the assertions of her friends, that she talked better than she wrote. The "excess of reflective consciousness" which Charles Dana discerned in her "Papers on Literature and Art" was much less apparent in her talk, when she felt the stimulating friction of other minds and forgot herself. She did not particularly like literary work, because it forced her to a recognition of her own limitations; but realizing it as the only medium through which to reach large numbers of people, she readily determined to subject herself to its discipline. Greeley's early disappointment in her he explains as follows: "While I never met another woman who conversed more freely and lucidly, the attempt to commit her thoughts to paper seemed to induce a singular embarrassment and hesitation. She could write only when in the vein; and this needed often to be waited for through several days, while the occasion sometimes required an immediate utterance." The long strain which she had undergone had doubtless produced a certain degree of exhaustion which was in part responsible for this; and it is also probable that the thought of the effect which her writing might produce on the public acted as a restraint on her. Mr. Greeley has added a fine appreciation of the widespread good accomplished by the unfaltering truthfulness of her work, however little this quality may have added to her popularity. In their first acquaintance Mr. Greeley and Miss Fuller found themselves in imperfect accord on sundry questions. He resented the exactions of deference made by a woman who was battling for sex-equality; and she caustically rejected his intimation that she would not have so many headaches if she drank less tea and coffee. These superficial disagreements, however, wore away, and each came to make a just and sound estimate of the other's excellences. Her sympathies broadened daily; and the result of her contact with all sorts and conditions of men and women was that she became a more and more pronounced champion of the weak and neglected.

The residence in New York covered less than two years, for it was in August, 1846, that she went to Europe for her great and overwhelming experience. The friends, the triumphs, and the

failures of her first year there must be ignored for the sake of a passing glance at the spirit which her Italian life called forth. Secretly married in the winter of 1847 to the young Marchese d'Ossoli, who had become, partly, at least, through her influence, one of the intrepid followers of Mazzini, she gave the fearless intensity of her best self to the Republican party. With the birth of her son in September, 1848, she cast aside the shackles which heredity had imposed but which a continuous chain of circumstances had been steadily weakening; and in the entire interval which dates from her motherhood to her death within sight of her native shore, the greatness of her character cannot be lost sight of or denied.

Three of Margaret Fuller's passionate loves had been for children: the young Waldo Emerson, Pickie Greeley, and Hermann Clarke; and the depth of her feeling for her own child need not be dwelt upon. Yet she left him in what she had every reason to fear were unsafe hands, because she believed that the claim of a struggling people was stronger than any other. In poverty, ill health, and desperate anxiety for the little Angelo and her husband, she spent her strength and affection in visiting hospitals, of one of which she had charge, and in giving cheer and encouragement to the allies of Young Italy. If her youthful aim had been mere self-

culture, the refining process of years had converted it into self-forgetfulness; if her early sphere of interests had been contracted, it had grown to embrace all human service. Strong, yet without health, her capacity for work was always astonishing; with an inborn love of ease and luxury, her acceptance of almost uninterrupted poverty was cheerful and sometimes grateful; and it is not easy to feel reconciled to the cutting-off of this renewed spirit from further participation in that human happiness for which she had always sighed, and which she had but just tasted.

William Henry Channing

Noyes, in his "History of American Socialisms," ascribes to Dr. Channing the inception of a plan out of which grew Brook Farm; and to W. H. Channing, his nephew, the fateful change from Associationism to Fourierism. There is some truth in both assertions, though of the most general character. Both the Channings had a courage and a loftiness of soul equal to the demands of any cause; but the lesser of the two had an overenthusiasm and lack of definiteness well calculated to wreck any project dependent on him alone to shape its course. He preached truths which, as Frothingham says, "were fundamental to him" though not to his hearers.

Born in 1810, he had, before he was twenty-five years of age, returned to Cambridge en-

riched by an experience of a few months' preaching in the near West, but troubled with his "disease of disproportionate speculation." Shortly after this he sailed for Europe, and there, as was the most natural thing in the world for a troubled soul, felt the charm of Romanism, which, had it "been as broad intellectually as it was grand sentimentally," would have lulled his restlessness into acceptance. During this trip his uncle wrote to ask him, among other probing inquiries, if his new connection took him more from himself, or diminished his "selfish sensitiveness." After his marriage in 1836, he undertook brief ministries in New York and elsewhere, and then went to Cincinnati. While still preaching there he heard the clamor in Massachusetts over the disintegration of the older Unitarianism. Persuaded that "Jesus Christ did not understand his own religion" — another way of saying that Christianity was not the religion of its founder — he resigned a successful pastorate. "I walk in a consciousness of unemployed force," he wrote in 1840. Later came a series of meetings in Brooklyn for a few months, and then a return to New York. Some time in 1845 he left his work in New York; and at about this period arose a plan to take the place left vacant by Parker, who had been invited to Boston, and who was installed there on January 4, 1846. Channing had some reason to suppose that he would succeed Parker, and doubtless was disappointed in the failure of his hopes. His nearness to Brook Farm made it easy for him to harbor there, and this he did during the summer of 1846. He had left New York not only for the sake of a settlement in West Roxbury, but also to devote himself in part to the enterprise at Brook Farm, and especially to serve the interests of the *Harbinger*, to which, however, the total number of his contributions, to 1847, is less than forty. There is a general indefiniteness in regard to Channing's position at Brook Farm; it is not sure when or how long he was there; even his habitation is not clearly known. His own purpose was to join the Association actively with his family, but the wishes of his wife, who shared happily the life of her husband without accepting all his fervidness, stood out against this plan, and Channing was therefore an inspiration and an occasional presence, not a constant factor. The mention of his name is frequent, though generally on some special occasion; he did not enter largely into the intimate daily life, and was not in truth one of the sturdy comrades of the barnyard and hayfield. It is evident from detached memoranda that Channing came to Brook Farm with no cool and logical convictions; he had not even a programme, then as indispensable to a Reformer as his cloth-

ing. There was, however, no lack of an overflowing ardor which displayed itself even when an occasion might be lacking in inspiration. For the simple ritual of joining hands in dedication to the Universal Unity, Channing had a genuine relish, since he used it after Brook Farm had ceased to be; but it is impossible to infer how others were affected by a ceremonial which makes no solemn impression at a later day. Portentous phrases which once have thrilled earnest seekers sound hollow to an unappreciative generation. Such influence as Channing at this time was exerting is indeterminable, though he frankly espoused Brisbane's doctrines. Probably the momentary exaltation over his fine presence and his effective voice was great; then only did he assume prominence. Of his personality at this time Judge Mellen Chamberlain lately wrote: "After forty years I still see the light in his eyes; his wonderful voice thrills me yet, and to this day I ponder his ethical utterances." Channing was at no odds with his associates, and never quarrelsome; but he evidently felt, as he afterward admitted, that there was at Brook Farm too little spiritual atmosphere. He was well fitted in some respects, and aside from a want of organizing force, to impose a measure of religious discipline, not severe but sufficiently binding to commit the Association to a formal assent to the

essential doctrines of Christ, to which, in fact, a nominal adherence was never denied. There would have been, at worst, no violent dissent, but, at best, some little indifference. So far as there may have been the suggestion of a vital religious life at Brook Farm, it is safe to admit that Channing sounded the dominant note. Dr. Codman recalls one Sunday afternoon on which the Associates were asked to join with Channing in a simple service in the grove near by. He speaks with deep feeling of the unpretentious beauty of the scene, and of the earnest idealist appealing to the young and hopeful spirits gathered apart from the strenuousness and realities of life. "Memory is the only photograph of it, and be assured the picture is a beautiful one." At times Channing would preach in the long parlors of the Pilgrim House.

With the burning of the Phalanstery came the real *coup de grâce*. Three years later Channing revisited Brook Farm "to close the eyes of that old friend, and say dust to dust, ashes to ashes." The conversion of the estate into a site for an almshouse, he calls a contrast between the "highest ideal and the lowest actual." Extravagantly but sincerely he continues: "Never did I feel so calmly, humbly, devoutly thankful that it has been my privilege to fail in this grandest, sublimest, surest of all movements";