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Ossoli, a down-at-heel Italian "marchese", nine years her junior, and no great interlocutor (on a trip to Italy made after Fuller's death, Hawthorne made a special point of confirming his bootliness). By all accounts, Ossoli am very glad to acknowledge that his spirit ing his boorishness). By all accounts, Ossoli am very glad to acknowledge that his spirit of the Risorgimento, she had a son by Ossoli, world could join the common throng of the sexes - much of it still available in anthol­ogies of her work (the best remains Perry apartment as a sign to the occupying army on a trip to Italy made after Fuller's death, life of Mazzini with almost as much pride as he could take her parasol to be repaired - and was so outspoken in her con­demnation of the French atrocities that the American vice-consult "personally raised an American flag on the balcony of Fuller's apartment as a sign to the occupying army that she was to be left alone". While Matte­son scrabbles to ascribe a coherent political philosophy to her - if anything, Fuller was divided among her own sensibilities, and in any case it was Mazzini who was the real lib­eral rival to Marx - it is nevertheless true that the revolutions of 1848 were a direct inspira­tion for the American women's rights move­ment that formally began at Seneca Falls the same year. In this sense, Fuller was a vital link between the two movements, and an important reminder that the great efforts for reform were less fragmented in the nine­teenth century than they are now.

While the book Fuller had completed on the Italian revolution was to be her great work is doubtful. As the writer Caleb Crain observes, we can only speculate whether she would have connected the short-lived liber­ation of the city with her own simultaneous sexual liberation. During the journey back to New York following the fall of the Republic, she ship the Elizabeth sank a few miles off Fire Island, and she, along with Ossoli and her boy Angelino, was drowned. Matteson relates the astonishing fact that Fuller years before had recorded dreams of similar drowning inci­dents in her diary. The popular account of her death has it that she could have saved herself, but when Captain Bangers asked her to leave the deck, she sat transfixed and said, "I see no thing but death before me".

The next day on a boat on the Hudson, the seven-year-old Henry James heard Washington Irving recount the incident in detail. Years later James remained mesmerized by the "Margaret-Ghost". He wondered in parti­cular what sort of figure she would have cut back in Boston she had survived. "Would she", he wrote, "with her appetite for ideas and her genius for conversation, have struck us but as a somewhat formidable bore, one of the worst kind, a culture-seeker without a sense of proportion, or, on the contrary, have affected us as a really attaching, a possibly picturesque New England Corinne"? Fuller the culture overdoser or Fuller the Romantic hero? The truth must lie somewhere in between. Despite all the posthumous attempts to disparage her - by Hawthorne, by Emerson

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