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A STUDY OF HAWTHORNE

BY

GEORGE PARSONS LATHROP.

[Illustration]

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A STUDY OF HAWTHORNE.

I.

POINT OF VIEW.

This book was not designed as a biography, but is rather a portrait. And, to speak more carefully still, it is not so much this, as my conception of what a portrait of Hawthorne should be. For I cannot write with the authority of one who had known him and had been formally intrusted with the task of describing his life. On the other hand, I do not enter upon this attempt as a mere literary performance, but have been assisted in it by an inward impulse, a consciousness of sympathy with the subject, which I may perhaps consider a sort of inspiration. My guide has been intuition, confirmed and seldom confuted by research. Perhaps it is even a favoring fact that I should never have seen Mr. Hawthorne; a personality so elusive as his may possibly yield its traits more readily to one who can never obtrude actual intercourse between himself and the mind he is meditating upon. An honest report upon personal contact always has a value denied to the reviews of after-comers, yet the best criticism and biography is not always that of contemporaries.

Our first studies will have a biographical scope, because a certain grouping of facts is essential, to give point to the view which I am endeavoring to present; and as Hawthorne's early life has hitherto been but little explored, much of the material used in the earlier chapters is now for the first time made public. The latter portion of the career may be treated more sketchily, being already better known; though passages will be found throughout the essay which have been developed with some fulness, in order to maintain a correct atmosphere, compensating any errors which mere opinions might lead to. Special emphasis, then, must not be held to show neglect of points which my space and scope prevent my commenting on. But the first outline requiring our attention involves a distant retrospect.

The history of Hawthorne's genius is in some sense a summary of all New

England history.

From amid a simple, practical, energetic community, remarkable for its activity in affairs of state and religion, but by no means given to dreaming, this fair flower of American genius rose up unexpectedly enough, breaking the cold New England sod for the emission of a light and fragrance as pure and pensive as that of the arbutus in our woods, in spring. The flower, however, sprang from seed that rooted in the old colonial life of the sternly imaginative pilgrims and Puritans. Thrusting itself up into view through the drift of a later day, it must not be confounded with other growths nourished only by that more recent deposit; though the surface-drift had of course its own weighty influence in the nourishment of it. The artistic results of a period of action must sometimes be looked for at a point of time long subsequent, and this was especially sure to be so in the first phases of New England civilization. The settlers in this region, in addition to the burdens and obstacles proper to pioneers, had to deal with the cares of forming a model state and of laying out for posterity a straight and solid path in which it might walk with due rectitude. All this was in itself an ample enough subject to occupy their powerful imaginations. They were enacting a kind of sacred epic, the dangers and the dignity and exaltation of which they felt most fervently. The Bible, the Bay Psalm Book, Bunyan, and Milton, the poems of George Wither, Baxter's Saint's Rest, and some controversial pamphlets, would suffice to appease whatever yearnings the immense experiment of their lives failed to satisfy. Gradually, of course, the native press and new-comers from England multiplied books in a community which held letters in unusual reverence. But the continuous work of subduing a new country, the dependence upon the mother-land for general literature, and finally the excitements of the Revolutionary period, deferred the opportunity for any aesthetic expression of the forces that had been at work here ever since Winthrop stepped from the Arbella on to the shore of the New World, with noble manliness and sturdy statesmanship enough in him to uphold the whole future of a great people. When Hawthorne came, therefore, his utterance was a culmination of the two preceding centuries. An entire side of the richly endowed human nature to which we owe the high qualities of New England,—a nature which is often so easily disposed of as meagre, cold, narrow, and austere,—this side, long suppressed and thrown into shade by the more active front, found expression at last in these pages so curiously compounded of various elements, answering to those traits of the past which Hawthorne's genius revived. The sensuous substance of the early New England character had piously surrendered to the severe maxims which religion and prudence imposed; and so complete was its suppression, that all this part of Puritan nature missed recording itself, except by chance glimpses through the history of the times. For this voluntary oblivion it has been rarely compensated in the immortality it meets with through Hawthorne. Not that he set himself with forethought to the illustration of it; but, in studying as poet and dramatist the past from which he himself had issued, he sought, naturally, to light it up from the interior, to possess himself of the very fire which burned in men's breasts and set their minds in movement at that epoch. In his own person and his own blood the same elements, the same capabilities still existed, however modified or differently ordered. The records of Massachusetts Bay are full of suggestive incongruities between the ideal, single-souled life which its founders hoped to lead, and the jealousies, the opposing opinions, or the intervolved passions of individuals and of parties, which sometimes unwittingly cloaked themselves in religious tenets. Placing himself in the position of these beings, then, and conscious of all the strong and various potencies of emotion which his own nature, inherited from them, held in curb, it was natural that Hawthorne should give weight to this contrast between the intense, prisoned life of shut sensibilities and the formal outward appearance to which it was moulded. This, indeed, is the source of motive in much of his writing; notably so in "The Scarlet Letter." It is thus that his figures get their tremendous and often terrible relief. They are seen as close as we see our faces in a glass, and brought so intimately into our consciousness that the throbbing of their passions sounds like the mysterious, internal beating of our own hearts in our own ears. And even when he is not dealing directly with themes or situations closely related to that life, there may be felt in his style, I think,—particularly in that of the "Twice-Told Tales,"—a union of vigorous freedom, and graceful, shy restraint, a mingling of guardedness which verges on severity with a quick and delicately thrilled sensibility for all that is rich and beautiful and generous, which is his by right of inheritance from the race of Non-conformist colonizers. How subtile and various this sympathy is, between himself and the past of his people, we shall see more clearly as we go on.

Salem was, in fact, Hawthorne's native soil, in all senses; as intimately and perfectly so as Florence was the only soil in which Dante and Michael Angelo could have had their growth. It is endlessly suggestive, this way that historic cities have of expressing themselves for all time in the persons of one or two men. Silently and with mysterious precision, the genius comes to birth and ripens—sometimes despite all sorts of discouragement—into a full bloom which we afterward see could not have reached its maturity at any other time, and would surely have missed its most peculiar and cherished qualities if reared in any other place. The Ionian intellect of Athens culminates in Plato; Florence runs into the mould of Dante's verse, like fluid bronze; Paris secures remembrance of her wide curiosity in Voltaire's settled expression; and Samuel Johnson holds fast for us that London of the eighteenth century which has passed out of sight, in giving place to the capital of the Anglo-Saxon race today. In like manner the

sober little New England town which has played a so much more obscure, though in its way hardly less significant part, sits quietly enshrined and preserved in Hawthorne's singularly imperishable prose.

Of course, Salem is not to be compared with Florence otherwise than remotely or partially. Florence was naturally the City of Flowers, in a figurative sense as well as in the common meaning. Its splendid, various, and full-pulsed life found spontaneous issue in magnificent works of art, in architecture, painting, poetry, and sculpture,—things in which New England was quite sterile. Salem evolved the artistic spirit indirectly, and embodied itself in Hawthorne by the force of contrast: the weariness of unadorned life which must have oppressed many a silent soul before him at last gathered force for a revolt in his person, and the very dearth which had previously reigned was made to contribute to the beauty of his achievement. The unique and delicate perfume of surprise with which his genius issued from its crevice still haunts his romances. A quality of homeliness dwells in their very strangeness and rarity which endears them to us unspeakably, and captivates the foreign sense as well; so that one of Hawthorne's chief and most enduring charms is in a measure due to that very barrenness of his native earth which would at first seem to offer only denial to his development. It is in this direction that we catch sight of the analogy between his intellectual unfolding and that of the great Florentines. It consists in his drawing up into himself the nourishment furnished by the ground upon which he was born, and making the more and the less productive elements reach a climax of characteristic beauty. One marked difference, however, is that there was no abundant and inspiriting municipal life of his own time which could enter into his genius: it was the consciousness of the past of the place that affected him. He himself has expressed as much: "This old town of Salem—my native place, though I have dwelt much away from it, both in boyhood and maturer years—possesses, or did possess, a hold on my affections, the force of which I have never realized during my seasons of actual residence here.... And yet, though invariably happiest elsewhere, there is within me a feeling for old Salem, which, in lack of a better phrase, I must be content to call affection.... But the sentiment has likewise its moral quality. The figure of that first ancestor, invested by family tradition with a dim and dusky grandeur, was present to my boyish imagination as far back as I can remember. It still haunts me, and induces a kind of home-feeling with the past, which I scarcely claim in reference to the present phase of the town."

It is by briefly reviewing that past, then trying to reproduce in imagination the immediate atmosphere of Hawthorne's youth, and comparing the two, that we shall best arrive at the completion of our proposed portrait. We have first to study the dim perspective and the suggestive coloring of that historic background from which the author emerges, and then to define clearly his own individual traits as they appear in his published works and Note-Books.

The eagerness which admirers of such a genius show, to learn all permissible details of his personal history, is, when freed from the vulgar and imbecile curiosity which often mars it, a sort of homage that it is right to satisfy. It is a respect apt to be paid only to men whose winning personal qualities have reached through their writing, and touched a number of grateful and appreciative hearts. But two objections may be urged against giving such details here: one is, that Hawthorne especially disapproved the writing of a Life of himself; the other, that the history of Salem and the works of Hawthorne are easily accessible to any one, without intervention.

Of the first it may frankly be said, indeed, that Hawthorne alone could have adequately portrayed his life for us; though in the same breath it should be added that the idea of his undertaking to do it is almost preposterous. To such a spirit as his, the plan would have had an exquisite absurdity about it, that might even have savored of imposition. The mass of trivial details essential to the accurate and consecutive account of an entire life could never have gained his serious attention: his modesty would have made as little of them as of boyish slate-scribblings, full of significance, fun, and character to observers, but subjected to the sponge without a pang by their producer. There is something natural and fine in this. I confess that to me the spectacle presented by Goethe when dwelling on the minutest incidents of his childhood with senile vanity and persistence, and fashioning with avaricious care the silver shrine and crystal case in which—like a very different sort of Saint Charles Borromeo—he hopes to have the reverent ages view him, is one which increases my sense of his defective though splendid personality. And yet I cannot suppress the opposite feeling, that the man of note who lets his riches of reminiscence be buried with him inflicts a loss on the world which it is hard to take resignedly. In the Note-Books of Hawthorne this want is to a large extent made good. His shrinking sensitiveness in regard to the embalming process of biography is in these somewhat abated, so that they have been of incalculable use in assisting the popular eye to see him as he really was. Other material for illustration of his daily life is somewhat meagre; and yet, on one account, this is perhaps a cause for rejoicing. There is a halo about every man of large poetic genius which it is difficult for the world to wholly miss seeing, while he is alive. Afterward, when the biographer comes, we find the actual dimensions, the physical outline, more insisted upon. That is the biographer's business; and it is not altogether his fault, though partly so, that the public regard is thus turned away from the peculiar but impalpable sign that floats above the poet's actual stature. But, under this subtile influence, forgetting that old, luminous

hallucination (if it be one), we suddenly feel the want of it, are dissatisfied; and, not perceiving that the cause lies largely with us, we fall to detracting from the subject. Thus it is fortunate that we have no regular biography of Shakespere authoritative enough to fade our own private conceptions of him; and it is not an unmixed ill that some degree of similar mystery should soften and give tone to the life of Hawthorne. Not that Hawthorne could ever be seriously disadvantaged by a complete record; for behind the greatness of the writer, in this case, there stands a person eminent for strength and loveliness as few men are eminent in their private lives. But it is with dead authors somewhat as it proved with those Etruscan warriors, who, seen through an eyehole lying in perfect state within their tombs, crumbled to a powder when the sepulchres were opened. The contact of life and death is too unsympathetic. Whatever stuff the writer be made of, it seems inevitable that he should suffer injury from exposure to the busy and prying light of subsequent life, after his so deep repose in death.

"Would you have me a damned author?" exclaims Oberon, in "The Devil in Manuscript," [Footnote: See the Snow Image, and other Twice-Told Tales.] "to undergo sneers, taunts, abuse, and cold neglect, and faint praise bestowed against the giver's conscience!... An outlaw from the protection of the grave, —one whose ashes every careless foot might spurn, unhonored in life, and remembered scornfully in death!" This, to be sure, is a heated statement, in the mouth of a young author who is about to cast his unpublished works into the fire; but the dread expressed here is by no means unfounded. Even the publication of Hawthorne's Note-Books has put it in the power of various writers of the day to assume an omniscience not altogether just, and far from acceptable. Why, then, should further risk of this be incurred, by issuing the present work?

It is precisely to put a limit to misconstructions, as well as to meet—however imperfectly—the desire of genuine appreciators, that it has been written. If this study for a portrait fulfils its aim, it will at least furnish an outline, fix a definite shape, within which whatever is observed by others may find its place with a truer effect and more fitting relation. The mistakes that have been made, indeed, are in no wise alarming ones; and it would be difficult to find any author who has been more carefully considered, on the whole, or with such generally fair conclusions, as Hawthorne. Still, if one sees even minor distortions current, it can do no harm to correct them. Besides, there has as yet been no thorough attempt at a consistent synthetic portraiture; and the differences of different critics' estimates need some common ground to meet and be harmonized upon. If this can be supplied, there will be less waste of time in future studies of the same subject.

It will be seen, therefore, that my book makes no pretension to the character of a Life. The wish of Hawthorne on this point would alone be enough, to prevent that. If such a work is to be undertaken, it should be by another hand, in which the right to set aside this wish is much more certainly vested than in mine. But I have thought that an earnest sympathy with the subject might sanction the present essay. Sympathy, after all, is the talisman which may preserve even the formal biographer from giving that injury to his theme just spoken of. And if the insight which guides me has any worth, it will present whatever material has already been made public with a selection and shaping which all researchers might not have time to bestow.

Still, I am quite alive to the difficulties of my task; and I am conscious that the work may to some appear supererogatory. Stricture and praise are, it will perhaps be said, equally impertinent to a fame so well established. Neither have I any rash hope of adding a single ray to the light of Hawthorne's high standing. But I do not fear the charge of presumption. Time, if not the present reader, will supply the right perspective and proportion.

On the ground of critical duty there is surely defence enough for such an attempt as the one now offered; the relative rank of Hawthorne, and other distinctions touching him, seem to call for a fuller discussion than has been given them. I hope to prove, however, that my aim is in no wise a partisan one. Criticism is appreciative estimation. It is inevitable that the judgments of competent and cultivated persons should flatly contradict each other, as well as those of incompetent persons; and this whether they are coeval or of different dates. At the last, it is in many respects matter of simple individual impression; and there will always be persons of high intelligence whom it will be impossible to make coincide with us entirely, touching even a single author. So that the best we can do is to set about giving rational explanation of our diverse admirations. Others will explain theirs; and in this way, everything good having a fit showing, taste finds it easier to become catholic.

Whoever reverences something has a meaning. Shall he not record it? But there are two ways in which he may express himself,—through speech and through silence,—both of them sacred alike. Which of these we will use on any given occasion is a question much too subtle, too surely fraught with intuitions that cannot be formulated, to admit of arbitrary prescription. In preferring, here, the form of speech, I feel that I have adopted only another kind of silence.

[Illustration]

II.

SALEM.

Let us now look more closely at the local setting. To understand Hawthorne's youth and his following development, we must at once transport ourselves into another period, and imagine a very different kind of life from the one we know best. It hardly occurs to readers, that an effort should be made to imagine the influences surrounding a man who has so recently passed away as Hawthorne. It was in 1864 that he died,—little more than a decade since. But he was born sixty years before, which places his boyhood and early youth in the first quarter of the century. The lapse since then has been a long one in its effects; almost portentously so. The alterations in manners, relations, opportunities, have been great. Restless and rapid in their action, these changes have multiplied the mystery of distance a hundred-fold between us and that earlier time; so that there is really a considerable space to be traversed before we can stand in thought where Hawthorne then stood in fact. Goldsmith says, in that passage of the Life of Parnell which Irving so aptly quotes in his biography of the writer: "A poet while living is seldom an object sufficiently great to attract much attention.... When his fame is increased by time, it is then too late to investigate the peculiarities of his disposition; the dews of morning are past, and we vainly try to continue the chase by the meridian splendor." The bustle of American life certainly does away with "the dews of morning" very promptly; and it is not quite a simple matter to reproduce the first growth of a life which began almost with the century. But there are resources for doing so. To begin with, we shall view Salem as it is. Vigorous and thriving still, the place has fortunately not drifted so far from its moorings of seventy years since as to take us out of our bearings, in considering its present aspect. Pace its quiet, thoroughfares awhile, and you will find them leading softly and easily into the past.

You arrive in the ordinary way, by railroad, and at first the place wears a disappointingly commonplace aspect. It does not seem impressively venerable; hacks and horse-cars rattle and tinkle along the streets, people go about their affairs in the usual way, without any due understanding that they ought to be picturesque and should devote themselves to falling into effective groups posed in vistas of historic events. Is antiquity, then, afraid to assert itself, even here in this stronghold, so far as to appear upon the street? No. But one must approach these old towns with reverence, to get at their secrets. They will not yield inspiration or meaning save to an imaginative effort. Under the influence of that, the faded past, traced in sympathetic ink, as it were, revives and starts into distinctness. Passing down Essex Street, or striking off from its modest bustle a little way, we come upon shy, ungainly relics of other times. Gray gambrel-roofed houses stand out here and there, with thick-throated chimneys that seem to hold the whole together. Again you pass buildings of a statelier cast, with carved pilasters on the front and arched doorways bordered with some simple, dainty line of carving; old plaster-covered urns, perhaps, stand on the brick garden-wall, and the plaster is peeling off in flakes that hang long and reluctant before falling to the ground. There are quaint gardens everywhere, with sometimes an entrance arched with iron gracefully wrought by some forgotten colonial Quentin Matsys, and always with their paths bordered by prim and fragrant box, and grass that keeps rich and green in an Old World way, by virtue of some secret of growth caught from fresher centuries than ours. If your steps have the right magic in them, you will encounter presently one of the ancient pumps like to the Town Pump from which Hawthorne drew that clear and sparkling little stream of revery and picture which has flowed into so many and such distant nooks, though the pump itself has now disappeared, having been directly in the line of the railroad. But, best of all, by ascending Witch Hill you may get a good historic outlook over the past and the present of the place. Looking down from here you behold the ancient city spread before you, rich in chimneys and overshadowed by soft elms. At one point a dark, strong steeple lifts itself like a huge gravestone above the surrounding houses, terminating in a square top or a blunt dome; and yonder is another, more ideal in its look, rising slight and fine, and with many ascents and alternating pauses, to reach a delicate pinnacle at great height in the air. It is lighted at intervals with many-paned and glittering windows, and wears a probable aspect of being the one which the young dreamer would have chosen for the standpoint of his "Sights from a Steeple"; and the two kinds of spire seem to typify well the Puritan gloom and the Puritan aspiration that alike found expression on this soil. Off beyond the gray and sober-tinted town is the sea, which in this perspective seems to rise above it and to dominate the place with its dim, half-threatening blue; as indeed it has always ruled its destinies in great measure, bringing first the persecuted hither and then inviting so many successive generations forth to warlike expedition, or Revolutionary privateering or distant commercial enterprise. With the sea, too, Hawthorne's name again is connected, as we shall presently notice. Then, quitting the brimming blue, our eyes return over the "flat, unvaried surface covered chiefly with wooden houses, few or none of which pretend to architectural beauty," with its "irregularity which is neither picturesque nor quaint, but only tame"; and retracing the line upon which Hawthorne has crowded the whole history of Salem, in "Main Street," [Footnote: See The Snow Image,

and other Twice-Told Tales.] we fall to pondering upon the deeds that gave this hill its name. At its foot a number of tanneries and mills are grouped, from which there are exhalations of smoke and steam. The mists of superstition that once overhung the spot seem at last to have taken on that form. Behind it the land opens out and falls away in a barren tract known from the earliest period as the Great Pastures, where a solitude reigns almost as complete as that of the primitive settlement, and where, swinging cabalistic webs from one to another of the arbor-vitae and dwarf-pine trees that grow upon it, spiders enough still abide to furnish familiars for a world full of witches. But here on the hill there is no special suggestion of the dark memory that broods upon it when seen in history. An obliging Irish population has relieved the descendants of both the witches and their exterminators from an awkward task, by covering with their own barren little dwellings the three sides of the height facing the town. Still, they have not ventured beyond a certain line. One small area at the summit is wholly unencroached upon. Whether or not through fear of some evil influence resting upon the spot, no house as yet disturbs this space, though the thin turf has been somewhat picked away by desultory sod-diggers. There is nothing save this squalid, lonely desolation to commemorate the fact that such unhappy and needless deaths were here endured. It is enough. Mere human sympathy takes us back with awful vividness to that time when the poor victims looked their last from this, upon the bleak boundary-hills of the inland horizon and that hopeless semicircle of the sea on the other side. A terrible and fitting place for execution, indeed! It looms up visible for many miles of lower country around; and as you stand upon the top, earth seems to fall away with such a fatal ease around it!

The stranger is naturally drawn hence to the Court House, where, by calling a clerk from his routine in a room fairly lined and stuccoed with bundles of legal papers, he may get a glimpse of the famous "witch-pins." These are the identical little instruments which the afflicted children drew from different parts of their dress, in the trial-room, declaring that some one of the accused had just caused them to be sharply inserted into their persons. The pins are kept in a small glass bottle, and are thin and rudely made; and as one looks at the curious, homely little relics, it is hard to know whether to laugh at the absurdly insignificant sight, or shudder at the thought of what deadly harm they worked in the hands of the bewitched. So, while one is hesitating, one gives the bottle back to the clerk, who locks it up speedily, and at the next instant is absorbed in the drawing up of some document; leaving the intruder free to pursue his search for antiquities elsewhere. But the monuments and remains of the past are nowhere large enough, in our American towns, to furnish the pilgrim a complete shelter and make an atmosphere of their own. The old Curwin Mansion, or "Witch House," to be sure, with its jutting upper story, and its dark and grimy room where witch-trials are rumored to have been held, is a solid scrap of antique gloom; but an ephemeral druggist's shop has been fastened on to a corner of the old building, and clings there like a wasp's nest,—as subversive, too, of quiet contemplation. The descendants of the first settlers have with pious care preserved the remains of the First Church of Salem, and the plain little temple may still be seen, though hidden away in the rear of the solid, brick-built Essex Institute. Yet, after all, it is only the skeleton of the thing, the original framework set into a modern covering for protection,—the whole church being about as large as a small drawing-room only. Into this little space a few dumb and shrinking witnesses of the past have been huddled: the old communion-table, two ancient harpsichords, a single pew-door, a wooden samp-mortar, and a huge, half-ruinous loom; and some engraved portraits of ancient ministers hang upon the walls. When I visited the place, a party of young men and women were there, who hopelessly scattered any slight dust of revery that might have settled on me from the ancient beams, and sent the ghosts fleeing before their light laughter. The young women fingered the old harpsichords, and incontinently thrummed upon them; and one cried, "Play a waltz!" She was a pretty creature; and, as her gay tone mingled with the rattle of protesting strings in the worn-out instrument, one might easily have divined how dire a fate would have been hers, in the days when men not only believed in bewitchment, but made it punishable. Then a young man who had clung for guidance amid her spells to the little printed pamphlet that describes the church, read aloud from its pages, seriously: "'Nowhere else in this land may one find so ancient and worshipful a shrine. Within these walls, silent with the remembered presence of Endicott, Skelton, Higginson, Roger Williams, and their grave compeers, the very day seems haunted, and the sunshine falls but soberly in.'"

"O don't!" besought the siren, again. "We're not in a solemn state."

And, whether it was the spell of her voice or not, I confess the sunshine did not seem to me either haunted or sober.

Thus, all through Salem, you encounter a perverse fate which will not let you be alone with the elusive spirit of the past. Yet, on reflection, why should it? This perverse fate is simply the life of to-day, which has certainly an equal right to the soil with that of our dreams and memories. And before long the conflict of past and present thus occasioned leads to a discovery.

In the first place, it transpires that the atmosphere is more favorable than at first appears for backward-reaching revery. The town holds its history in reverence, and a good many slight traces of

antiquity, with the quiet respect maintained for them in the minds of the inhabitants, finally make a strong cumulative attack on the imagination. The very meagreness and minuteness of the physical witnesses to a former condition of things cease to discourage, and actually become an incitement more effective than bulkier relics might impart. The delicacy of suggestion lends a zest to your dream; and the sober streets open out before you into vistas of austere reminiscence. The first night that I passed in Salem, I heard a church-bell ringing loudly, and asked what it was. It was the nine-o'clock bell; and it had been appointed to ring thus every night, a hundred years ago or more. How it reverberated through my mind, till every brain-cell seemed like the empty chamber of a vanished year! Then, in the room where I slept, there was rich and ponderous furniture of the fashion of eld; the bed was draped and canopied with hangings that seemed full of spells and dreamery; and there was a mirror, tall, and swung between stately mahogany posts spreading their feet out on the floor, which recalled that fancy of Hawthorne's, in the tale of "Old Esther Dudley," [Footnote: See also American Note-Books, Vol. I.; and the first chapter of The House of the Seven Gables.] about perished dames and grandees made to sweep in procession through "the inner world" of a glass. Such small matters as these engage the fancy, and lead it back through a systematic review of local history with unlooked-for nimbleness. Gradually the mind gets to roving among scenes imaged as if by memory, and bearing some strangely intimate relation to the actual scenes before one. The drift of clouds, the sifting of sudden light from the sky, acquire the import of historic changes of adversity and prosperity. The spires of Salem, seen one day through a semi-shrouding rain, appeared to loom up through the mist of centuries; and the real antiquity of sunlight shone out upon me, at other times, with cunning quietude, from the weather-worn wood of old, unpainted houses. Every hour was full of yesterdays. Something of primitive strangeness and adventure seemed to settle into my mood, and the air teemed with anticipation of a startling event; as if the deeds of the past were continually on the eve of returning. With all this, too, a certain gray shadow of unreality stole over everything.

Then one becomes aware that this frame of mind, produced by actual contact with Salem, is subtly akin to the mood from which so many of Hawthorne's visions were projected. A flickering semblance, perhaps, of what to him must have been a constant though subdued and dreamy flame summoning him to potent incantation over the abyss of time; but from this it was easy to conceive it deepened and intensified in him a hundred-fold. Moreover, in his youth and growing-time, the influence itself was stronger, the suggestive aspect of the town more salient. If you read even now, on the ground itself, the story of the settlement and the first century's life of Salem and the surrounding places, a delicate suffusion of the marvellous will insensibly steal over the severe facts of the record, giving them a half-legendary color. This arises partly from the imaginative and symbolic way of looking at things of the founders themselves.

John White, the English Puritan divine, who, with the "Dorchester Adventurers," established the first colony at Cape Ann, was moved to this by the wish to establish in Massachusetts Bay a resting-place for the fishermen who came over from Dorchester in England, so that they might be kept under religious influences. This was the origin of Salem; for the emigrants moved, three years later, to this spot, then called Naumkeag. In the Indian name they afterward found a proof, as they supposed, that the Indians were an offshoot of the Jews, because it "proves to be perfect Hebrew, being called Nahum Keike; by interpretation, the bosom of consolation." Later, they named it Salem, "for the peace," as Cotton Mather says, "which they had and hoped in it"; and when Hugh Peters on one occasion preached at Great Pond, now Wenham, he took as his text, "At Enon, near to Salim, because there was much water there." This playing with names is a mere surface indication of the ever-present scriptural analogy which these men were constantly tracing in all their acts. Cut off by their intellectual asceticism from any exertion of the imagination in literature, and denying themselves all that side of life which at once develops and rhythmically restrains the sense of earthly beauty, they compensated themselves by running parallels between their own mission and that of the apostles,—a likeness which was interchangeable at pleasure with the fancied resemblance of their condition to that of the Israelites. When one considers the remoteness of the field from their native shores, the enormous energy needful to collect the proper elements for a population, and to provide artificers with the means of work; the almost impassable wildness of the woods; the repeated leagues of hostile Indians; the depletions by sickness; and the internal dissensions with which they had to struggle,—one cannot wonder that they invested their own unsurpassed fortitude, and their genius for government and war, with the quality of a special Providence. But their faith was inwoven in the most singular way with a treacherous strand of credulity and superstition. Sometimes one is impressed with a sense that the prodigious force by which they subdued the knotty and forest-fettered land, and overcame so many other more dangerous difficulties, was the ecstasy of men made morbidly strong by excessive gloom and indifference to the present life. "When we are in our graves," wrote Higginson, "it will be all one whether we have lived in plenty or penury, whether we have died in a bed of downe or lockes of straw." And Hawthorne speaks of the Puritan temperament as "accomplishing so much, precisely because it imagined and hoped so little." Yet, though they were not, as Winthrop says, "of those that dreame of perfection in this world," they surely had vast hopes at heart, and the fire of repressed imagination played around them and

before them as a vital and guiding gleam, of untold value to them, and using a mysterious power in their affairs. They were something morbid in their imaginings, but that this morbid habit was a chief source of their power is a mistaken theory. It is true that their errors of imagination were so closely knit up with real insight, that they could not themselves distinguish between the two. Their religious faith, their outlook into another life, though tinged by unhealthy terrorism, was a solid, energetic act of imagination; but when it had to deal with intricate tangles of mind and heart, it became credulity. That lurking unhealthiness spread from the centre, and soon overcame their judgment entirely. The bodeful glare of the witchcraft delusion makes this fearfully clear. Mr. Upham, in his "Salem Witchcraft,"—one of the most vigorous, true, and thorough of American histories, without which no one can possess himself of the subject it treats,—has shown conclusively the admirable character of the community in which that delusion broke out, its energy, common-sense, and varied activity; but he points out for us also the perilous state of the Puritan imagination in a matter where religion, physiology, and affairs touched each other so closely as in the witchcraft episode. The persecution at Salem did not come from such deep degeneration as has been assumed for its source, and it was not at the time at all a result of uncommon bigotry. In the persecution in England in 1645-46, Matthew Hopkins, the "witch-finder-general," procured the death, "in one year and in one county, of more than three times as many as suffered in Salem during the whole delusion"; several persons were tried by water ordeal, and drowned, in Suffolk, Essex, and Cambridgeshire, at the same time with the Salem executions; and capital punishments took place there some years after the end of the trouble here. It is well known, also, that persons were put to death for witchcraft in two other American colonies. The excess in Salem was heightened by a well-planned imposture, but found quick sustenance because "the imagination, called necessarily into extraordinary action in the absence of scientific certainty, was ... exercised in vain attempts to discover, unassisted by observation and experiment, the elements and first principles of nature," [Footnote: Upham, I. 382] and "had reached a monstrous growth," nourished by a copious literature of magic and demonology, and by the opinions of the most eminent and humane preachers and poets.

The imagination which makes beauty out of evil, and that which accumulates from it the utmost intensity of terror, are well exemplified in Milton and Bunyan. Doubtless Milton's richly cultured faith, clothed in lustrous language as in princely silks that overhang his chain-mail of ample learning and argument, was as intense as the unlettered belief of Bunyan; and perhaps he shared the prevalent opinions about witchcraft; yet when he touches upon the superstitious element, the material used is so transfused with the pictorial and poetic quality which Milton has distilled from the common belief, and then poured into this *image* of the common belief, that I am not sure he cared for any other quality in it.

"Nor uglier follow the night-hag, when, call'd
In secret, riding through the air she comes,
Lured by the smell of infant blood, to dance
With Lapland witches, while the laboring moon
Ellipses at their charms."

Paradise Lost, II. 662.

Again, in Comus:—

"Some say, no evil thing that walks by night,
Blue meagre hag, or stubborn, unlaid ghost
That breaks his magic chains at curfew time,
No goblin, or swart faery of the mine,
Hath hurtful power o'er true virginity."

How near these passages come to Shakespere, where he touches the same string! And is it not clear that both poets exulted so in the *beauty* born among dark, earthy depths of fear, that they would have rejected any and every horror which failed to contribute something to the beautiful? Indeed, it may easily be that such high spirits accept awful traditions and cruel theologies, merely because they possess a transmuting touch which gives these things a secret and relative value not intrinsically theirs; because they find here something to satisfy an inward demand for immense expansions of thought, a desire for all sorts of proportioned and balanced extremes. This is no superficial suggestion, though it may seem so. But in such cases it is not the positive horror and its direct effect which attract the poet: a deeper symbolism and an effect both aesthetic and moral recommend the element to him. With Milton, however, there follows a curious result. He produces his manufactured myth of Sin and Death and his ludicrous Limbo of Vanity with a gravity and earnestness as convincing as those which urge home any part of his theme; yet we are aware that he is only making poetic pretence of belief; so that a certain distrust of his sincerity throughout creeps in, as we read. How much, we ask, is allegory in the poet's own estimation, and how much real belief? Now in Bunyan there is nothing of this doubt. Though the author declares his narrative to be the relation of a dream, the figment becomes absolute

fact to us; and the homely realism of Giant Despair gives him a firmer hold upon me as an actual existence, than all the splendid characterization of Milton's Beelzebub can gain. Even Apollyon is more real. Milton assumes the historic air of the epic poet, Bunyan admits that he is giving an allegory; yet of the two the humble recorder of Christian's progress seems the more worthy of credit. Something of this effect is doubtless due to art: the "Pilgrim's Progress" is more adequately couched in a single and consistent strain than the "Paradise Lost." Milton, by implying veracity and then vaporing off into allegory, challenges dispute; but Bunyan, in humbly confessing himself a dreamer, disarms his reader and traps him into entire assent. Certainly Bunyan was not the greater artist: that supposition will not even bear a moment's contemplation; but, as it happened, his weakness was his strength. He had but one chance. His work would have been nothing without allegory, and the simple device of the dream—which is the refuge of a man unskilled in composition, who feels that his figures cannot quite stand as self-sufficient entities—happens to be as valuable to him as it was necessary; for the plea of unreality brings out, in the strong light of surprise, a contrast between the sincere substance of the story and its assumed insubstantiality. Milton had many chances, many resources of power to rely on; but by grasping boldly at the effect of authenticity he loses that one among the several prizes within his reach. I do not know that I am right, but all this seems to me to argue a certain dividing and weakening influence exerted by the imagination which uses religious or superstitious dread for the purposes of beauty; while that which discourses confidently of the passage from this to another life, with all the several stages clearly marked, and floods the whole scene with a vivid and inartificial light from "the powers and terrors of what is yet unseen," affects the mind with every atom of energy economized and concentred.

Leaving the literary question, we may bring this conclusion to bear upon the Puritans and Salem, as their history affected Hawthorne. I have said that a gradual suffusion of the marvellous overspreads the comparatively arid annals of the town, if one reviews them amid the proper influences; and I have touched upon the two phases of imagination which, playing over the facts, give them this atmosphere. Now if what I guess from the contrast between Milton and Bunyan be true, the lower kind of imagination—that is, imagination deformed to credulity—would be likely to be the more impressive. This uncanny quality of superstition, then, is the one which insensibly exudes from the pages of New England's and perhaps especially of Salem's colonial history, as Hawthorne turns them. This is the dank effluence that, mingling with the sweeter and freer air of his own reveries, has made so many people shudder on entering the great romancer's shadowy but serene domain.

And just here it is advisable to triangulate our ground, by bringing Milton, Bunyan, and Hawthorne together in a simultaneous view. Wide apart as the first two stand, they seem to effect a kind of union in this modern genius; or, rather, their influence here conjoins, as the rays from two far-separated stars meet in the eye of him who watches the heavens for inspiration. Something of the peculiar virtue of each of these Puritan writers seems to have given tone to Hawthorne's no less individual nature. In Bunyan, who very early laid his hand on Hawthorne's intellectual history, we find a very fountain-head of allegory. His impulse, of course, was supremely didactic, only so much of mere narrative interest mixing itself with his work as was inseparable from his native relish for the matter of fact; while in Milton's poetry the clear aesthetic pleasure held at least an exact balance with the moral inspiration, and, as we have just seen, perhaps outweighed it at times. The same powerful, unrelaxing grasp of allegory is found in the American genius as in Bunyan, and there likewise comes to light in his mind the same delight in art for art's sake that added such a grace to Milton's sinewy and large-limbed port. In special cases the allegorical motive has distinctly got the upper hand, in Hawthorne's work; yet even in those the artistic integument, that marvellous verbal style, those exquisite fancies, are not absent: on the contrary, in the very instances where Hawthorne has most constantly and clearly held to the illustration of a single idea, and made his fiction fit itself most absolutely to the jewelled truth it holds,—in these very causes, I say, the command of his genius over literary resources is generally shown by an unusual splendor of means applied to the ideal end in view. It is here that, while resembling Bunyan, he is so unlike him. But more commonly we find in Hawthorne the two moods, the ethical and the aesthetic, exerted in full force simultaneously; and the result seems to be a perfection of unity. The opposing forces, like centripetal and centrifugal attractions, produce a finished sphere. And in this, again, though recalling Milton, he differs from him also. In Milton's epic the tendency is to alternate these moods; and one works against the other. In short, the two elder writers undergo a good deal of refinement and proportioning, before mixing their qualities in Hawthorne's veins. However great a controversialist Milton may be held, too, the very fact of his engaging in the particular discussions and in the manner he chose, while never to be deplored, may have something to do with the want of fusion of the different qualities present in his poetry. We may say, and doubtless it is so, that Hawthorne could never have written such magnificent pamphlets as the "Eikonoklastes," the "Apology," the "Tetrachordon": I grant that his refinement, though bringing him something which Milton did not have, has cost him something else which Milton possessed. But, for all that, the more deep-lying and inclusive truths which he constantly entertained, and which barred him from the temporary exertion of controversy, formed the sources of his completer harmony. There is a kind of analogy, too, between the

omnipresence of Milton in his work, and that of Hawthorne in his. The great Puritan singer cannot create persons: his Satan is Milton himself in singing-robes, assuming for mere argument's and epic's sake that side of a debate which he does not believe, yet carrying it out in the most masterly way; his angels and archangels are discriminated, but still they are not divested of his informing quality; and "Comus" and "Samson Agonistes," howsoever diverse, are illustrations of the athletic prime and the autumnal strength of the poet himself, rather than anywise dramatic evolutions of his themes. Bunyan, with much less faculty for any subtle discrimination of characters, also fails to give his persons individuality, though they stand very distinctly for a variety of traits: it is with Bunyan as if he had taken an average human being, and, separating his impulses, good and evil, had tried to make a new man or woman out of each; so that there is hardly life-blood enough to go round among them. Milton's creatures are in a certain way more vital, though less real. Bunyan's characters being traits, the other's are moods. Yet both groups seem to have been cast in a large, elemental mould. Now, Hawthorne is vastly more an adept than either Milton or Bunyan in keeping the creatures of his spirit separate, while maintaining amongst them the bond of a common nature; but besides this bond they are joined by another, by something which continually brings us back to the author himself. It is like a family resemblance between widely separated relatives, which suggests in the most opposite quarters the original type of feature of some strong, far-back progenitor. These characters, with far more vivid presence and clear definition than those of the other two writers, are at the same time based on large and elementary forces, like theirs. They are for the most part embodied moods, or emotions expanded to the stature of an entire human being, and made to endure unchanged for years together. Thus, while Hawthorne, as we shall see more fully further on, is essentially a dramatic genius, Bunyan a simple allegorist, and Milton an odic poet of unparalleled strength,—who, taking dramatic and epic subjects and failing to fill them, makes us blame not *his* size and shape, but the too minute intricacies of the theme,—there is still a sort of underground connection between all three. It is curious to note, further, the relation of Milton's majestic and multitudinous speech, the chancellor-like stateliness of his wit, in prose, to Hawthorne's resonant periods, and dignity that is never weakened though admirably modified by humor. Altogether, if one could compound Bunyan and Milton, combine the realistic imagination of the one with the other's passion for ideas, pour the ebullient undulating prose style of the poet into the veins of the allegorist's firm, leather-jerkined English, and make a modern man and author of the whole, the result would not be alien to Hawthorne.

Yet that native love of historic murkiness and mossy tradition which we have been learning to associate with Salem would have to be present in this compound being, to make the likeness complete. And this, with the trains of revery and the cast of imagination which it must naturally breed, would be the one thing not easily supplied, for it is the predisposition which gives to all encircling qualities in Hawthorne their peculiar coloring and charm. That predisposition did not find its sustenance only in the atmosphere of sadness and mystery that hangs over the story of Salem; bygone generations have left in the town a whole legacy of legend and shudder-rousing passages of family tradition, with many well-supported tales of supernatural hauntings; and it is worth while to notice how frequent and forcible a use Hawthorne makes of this enginery of local gossip and traditional horror, in preparing the way for some catastrophe that is to come, or in overshooting the mark with some exaggerated rumor which, by pretending to disbelieve it, he causes to have just the right effect upon the reader's mind. Some of the old houses that stand endwise to the street, looking askant at the passer,—especially if he is a stranger in town,—might be veritable treasuries of this sort of material. Gray, close-shuttered, and retiring, they have not so much the look of death; it is more that they are poor, widowed homes that have mournfully long outlived their lords. One would not have them perish; and yet there is something drearily sad about them. One almost feels that the present tenants must be in danger of being crowded out by ghosts, or at least that they must encounter strange obstacles to living there. Are not their windows darkened by the light of other days? An old mansion of brick or stone has more character of its own, and is less easily overshadowed by its own antiquity; but these impressible wooden abiding-places, that have managed to cling to the soil through so many generations, seem rife with the inspirations of mortality. They have a depressing influence, and must often mould the occupants and leave a peculiar impress on them. We are all odd enough in our way, whatever our origin or habitation; but is it not possible that in a town of given size, placed under specified conditions, there should be a greater proportion of oddities produced than in another differently circumstanced? Certainly, if this be so, it has its advantages as well as its drawbacks; a stability of surrounding and of association, which perhaps affects individuals in the extreme, is still a source of continuity in town character. And Salem is certainly remarkable for strong, persistent, and yet unexhausted individuality, as a town, no less than for a peculiar dignity of character which has become a pronounced trait in many of its children. But, on the other hand, it is fecund of eccentricities. Though many absorb the atmosphere of age to their great advantage, there must be other temperaments among the descendants of so unique and so impressionable a body of men as the early settlers of this region, which would succumb to the awesome and depressing influences that also lurk in the air; and these may easily pass from piquant personality into mere errant grotesqueness. Whether from instinctive recognition of this or not, it has never seemed to me remarkable that people here should see apparitions of themselves, and die within the

year; it did not strike me as strange when I was told of persons who had gone mad with no other cause than that of inherited insanity,—as if, having tried every species of sane activity for two or three hundred years, a family should take to madness from sheer disgust with the monotony of being healthy; nor could any case of warped idiosyncrasy, or any account of half-maniacal genius be instanced that seemed at all out of keeping. One day I passed a house where a crazy man, of harmless temper, habitually amused himself with sitting at a window near the ground, and entering into talk, from between the half-closed shutters, with any one on the sidewalk who would listen to him. Such a thing, to be sure, might easily be met with in twenty other places; but here it seemed natural and fitting. It was not a preposterous thought, that any number of other men in the neighborhood might quietly drop into a similar vein of decrepitude, and also attempt to palm off their disjointed fancies upon the orderly foot-passengers. I do not by this mean to insinuate any excessive leaning toward mental derangement on the part of the inhabitants; but it is as if the town, having lived long enough according to ordinary rules to be justified in sinking into superannuation, and yet not availing itself of the privilege, but on the contrary maintaining a life of great activity, had compensated itself in the persons of a few individuals. But when one has reached this mood, one remembers that it is all embodied in "The House of the Seven Gables." Though Hawthorne, in the Preface to that romance, takes precautions against injuring local sentiment, by the assurance that he has not meant "to describe local manners, nor in any way to meddle with the characteristics of a community for whom he cherishes a proper respect and a natural regard," the book is not the less a genuine outgrowth of Salem. Perhaps the aspect under which Salem presents itself to me is tinged with fancy, though Hawthorne in the same story has called it "a town noted for its frugal, discreet, well-ordered, and home-loving inhabitants, ... but in which, be it said, there are odder individuals, and now and then stranger occurrences, than one meets with almost anywhere else." But it is certain that poor Hepzibah Pyncheon, and the pathetic Clifford, and quaint Uncle Venner, are types which inevitably present themselves as belonging pre-eminently to this place. Not less subtle is the connection with it of the old wizard Maule, and the manner of his death at the witchcraft epoch; for it is hinted in the romance that old Colonel Pyncheon joined in denouncing the poor man, urged by designs on a piece of land owned by Maule; and Mr. Upham's careful research has shown that various private piques were undoubtedly mixed up in the witchcraft excitement, and swelled the list of accusations. Young Holgrave, the photographer, also, represents in a characteristic way the young life of the place, the germ that keeps it fresh, and even dreams at times of throwing off entirely the visible remains of the past.

It may be mentioned, at this point, as a coincidence, even if not showing how Hawthorne insensibly drew together from a hundred nooks and crannies, and formulated and embodied his impressions of this his native place in "The House of the Seven Gables," that the name of Thomas Maule (the builder of the house, and son of the Matthew brought to his death by Colonel Pyncheon) appears in Felt's "Annals of Salem" as that of a sympathizer with the Quakers. He was also author of a book called "Truth Held Forth," published in 1695; and of a later one, the title of which, "The Mauler Mauled," shows that he had humor in him as well as pluck. He seems to have led a long career of independent opinion, not altogether in comfort, however, for in 1669 he was ordered to be whipped for saying that Mr. Higginson preached lies, and that his instruction was "the doctrine of devils"; and his book of "Truth Held Forth," which contained severe reflections on the government for its treatment of the Quakers, was seized and suppressed. It is not improbable that at some time Hawthorne may have read of this person. At all events, he serves as a plausible suggestion of the Maule who so early in the romance utters his prophecy of ill against Colonel Pyncheon, that he "shall have blood to drink."

Another minor coincidence, and yet proper to be noted, is that of the laboring-man Dixey, who appears in the opening of the story with some comments upon Aunt Hepzibah's scheme of the cent-shop, and only comes in once afterward, at the close, to touch upon the subject in a different strain. At first, unseen, but overheard by Miss Pyncheon, he prophesies to a companion, "in a tone as if he were shaking his head," that the cent-shop will fail; and when Clifford and Hepzibah drive off in their carriage, at the end, he remarks sagaciously, "Good business,—good business." It certainly is odd that this subordinate in the romance should find a counterpart in one William Dixy, appointed ensign of the Salem military company which John Hawthorne commanded, in 1645.

The name Pyncheon, also, on which the imaginary Colonel and Judge cast such a doubtful light, was a well-known name in old New England, and became the source of some annoyance to Hawthorne, after he had written the "Seven Gables"; but of this we shall hear more, further on. It is enough, now, to recall these coincidences. I do not suppose that he searched the names out and founded his use of them upon some suggestion already connected with them; indeed, he expressly declared, when remonstrated with on his use of the Pyncheons, that he did not know of any person of that title connected with Salem history of that time; but the circumstance of his using the other names is interesting as showing that many minute facts must have gone to make up the atmosphere of that half-historic and half-imaginative area whereon so many of his short tales and two of the romances were enacted. Maule and Dixey were very likely absorbed into his mind and forgotten; but suddenly when he chanced to need these

characters for the "Seven Gables," they revived and took shape with something of the historic impress still upon them. That their very names should have been reproduced finds explanation in the statement once made by Hawthorne to a friend, that the most vexatious detail of romance-writing, to him, was the finding of suitable names for the *dramatis personae.* Balzac used to look long among the shop-signs of Paris for the precise name needed by a preconceived character, and the absolute invention of such titles is doubtless very rare; few fictionists are gifted with Dickens's fertility in the discovering of names bearing the most forcible and occult relations to the fleshless owners of them. And it is interesting to find that Hawthorne—somewhat as Scott drew from the local repertory of his countrymen's nomenclature—found many of his surnames among those of the settlers of New England. Hooper, Prynne, Felton, Dolliver, Hunnewell, and others belong specially to these and to their descendants. Roger Chillingworth, by the by, recalls the celebrated English divine and controversialist, William; and Bishop Miles Coverdale's name has been transferred, in "Blithedale," from the reign of Edward VI. to the experimental era of Brook Farm.

It has been urged as a singular deficiency of Hawthorne's, that he could not glorify the moral strength and the sweeter qualities of the Puritans and of their lives. But there was nothing in the direction of his genius that called him to this. As well urge against him that he did not write philanthropic pamphlets, or give himself to the inditing of biographies of benevolent men, or compose fictions on the plan of Sir Charles Grandison, devoted to the illumination of praiseworthy characters. It is the same criticism which condemns Dickens for ridiculing certain preachers, and neglecting to provide the antidote in form of a model apostle, contrasted in the same book. This is the criticism which would reduce all fiction to the pattern of the religious tract. Certain men have certain things before them to do; they cannot devote a lifetime to proving in their published works that they appreciate the excellence of other things which they have no time and no supreme command to do. Nothing, then, is more unsafe, than to imply from their silence that they are deficient in particular phases of sympathy. The exposition of the merits of the New England founders has been steadily in progress from their own time to the present; and they have found a worthy monument in the profound and detailed history of Palfrey. All the more reason, why the only man yet born who could fill the darker spaces of our early history with palpitating light of that wide-eyed truth and eternal human consciousness which cast their deep blaze through Hawthorne's books, should not forego his immortal privilege! The eulogy is the least many-sided and perpetual of literary forms, and unless Hawthorne had made himself the eulogist of the Puritans, he would still have had to turn to our gaze the wrongs that, for good or ill, were worked into the tissue of their infant state. But as it is, he has been able to suggest a profounder view than is permitted either to the race of historians or that of philosophers. It does not profess to be a satisfactory statement of the whole, nor is there the least ground for assuming that it does so. Its very absorption in certain phases constitutes its value,—a value unspeakably greater than that of any other presentation of the Puritan life, because it rests upon the insight of a poet who has sounded the darkest depths of human nature. Had Hawthorne passed mutely through life, these gloomy-grounded pictures of Puritanism might have faded from the air like the spectres of things seen in dazzling light, which flit vividly before the eye for a time, then vanish forever.

But in order to his distinctive coloring, no distortion had to be practised; and I do not see why Hawthorne should be reckoned to have had no sight for that which he did not record. With his unique and penetrating touch he marked certain salient and solemn features which had sunk deep into his sensitive imagination, and then filled in the surface with his own profound dramatic emanations. But in his subtle and strong moral insight, his insatiable passion for truth, he surely represented his Puritan ancestry in the most worthy and obviously sympathetic way. No New-Englander, moreover, with any depth of feeling in him, can be entirely wanting in reverence for the nobler traits of his stern forefathers, or in some sort of love for the whole body of which his own progenitors formed a group. Partly for his romantic purposes, and merely as an expedient of art, Hawthorne chose to treat this life at its most picturesque points; and to heighten the elements of terror which he found there was an aesthetic obligation with him. But there is even a subtler cause at work toward this end. The touches of assumed repugnance toward his Puritan forefathers, which appear here and there in his writings, are not only related to his ingrained shyness, which would be cautious of betraying his deeper and truer sentiment about them, but are the ensigns of a proper modesty in discoursing of his own race, his own family, as it were. He shields an actual veneration and a sort of personal attachment for those brave earlier generations under a harmless pretence that he does not think at all too tenderly of them. It is a device frequently and freely practised, and so characteristically American, and especially Hawthornesque, that it should not have been overlooked for even a moment. By these means, too, he takes the attitude of admitting the ancestral errors, and throws himself into an understanding with those who look at New England and the Puritans merely from the outside. Here is a profound resort of art, to prepare a better reception for what he is about to present, by not seeming to insist on an open recognition from his readers of the reigning dignity and the noble qualities in the Puritan colony, which he himself, nevertheless, is always quietly conscious of. And in this way he really secures a broader truth, while reserving the pride of locality and race intact; a broader truth, because to the world at

large the most pronounced feature of the Puritans is their austerity.

But if other reason were wanted to account for his dwelling on the shadows and severities of the Puritans so intently, it might be found in his family history and its aspects to his brooding mind. His own genealogy was the gate which most nearly conducted him into the still and haunted fields of time which those brave but stern religious exiles peopled.

The head of the American branch of the Hathorne, or Hawthorne family, was Major William Hathorne, of Wigcastle, Wilton, Wiltshire, [Footnote: This name appears in the American Note-Books (August 22, 1837) as Wigcastle, Wigton. I cannot find any but the Scotch Wigton, and have substituted the Wilton of Wiltshire as being more probable. Memorials of the family exist in the adjoining county of Somerset. (*A. N. B.*, October, 1836.)] in England, a younger son, who came to America with Winthrop and his company, by the Arbella, arriving in Salem Bay June 12, 1630. He probably went first to Dorchester, having grants of land there, and was made a freeman about 1634, and representative, or one of "the ten men," in 1635. Although a man of note, his name is not affixed to the address sent by Governor Winthrop and several others from Yarmouth, before sailing, to their brethren in the English Church; but this is easily accounted for by the fact that Hathorne was a determined Separatist, while the major part of his fellow-pilgrims still clung to Episcopacy. In 1636, Salem tendered him grants of land if he would remove hither, considering that "it was a public benefit that he should become an inhabitant of that town." He removed accordingly, and, in 1638, he had additional lands granted to him "in consideration of his many employments for towne and countrie." Some of these lands were situated on a pleasant rising ground by the South River, then held to be the most desirable part of the town; and a street running through that portion bears the name of Hathorne to this day. In 1645, he petitioned the General Court that he might be allowed, with others, to form a "company of adventurers" for trading among the French; and in the same year he was appointed captain of a military company, the first regular troop organized in Salem to "advance the military art." From 1636 to 1643 he had been a representative of the people, from Dorchester and Salem; and from 1662 to 1679 he filled the higher office of an assistant. It was in 1667 that he was empowered to receive for the town a tax of twenty pounds of powder per ton for every foreign vessel over twenty tons trading to Salem and Marblehead, thus forestalling his famous descendant in sitting at the receipt of customs. Besides these various activities, he officiated frequently as an attorney at law; and in the Indian campaign of 1676, in Maine, he left no doubt of his efficiency as a military commander. He led a portion of the army of twelve hundred men which the colony had raised, and in September of this year he surprised four hundred Indians at Cocheco. Two hundred of these "were found to have been perfidious," and were sent to Boston, to be sold as slaves, after seven or eight had been put to death. A couple of weeks later, Captain Hathorne sent a despatch: "We catched an Indian Sagamore of Pegwackick and the gun of another; we found him in many lies, and so ordered him to be put to death, and the Cocheco Indians to be his executioners." There was some reason for this severity, for in crossing a river the English had been ambuscaded by the savages. The captain adds: "We have no bread these three days." This early ancestor was always prominent. He had been one of a committee in 1661, who reported concerning the "patent, laws, and privileges and duties to his Majesty" of the colonists, opposing all appeals to the crown as inconsistent with their charter, and maintained the right of their government to defend itself against all attempts at overthrow. Two years later he was charged by Charles's commissioners with seditious words, and apologized for certain "unadvised" expressions; but the committee of 1661 reported at a critical time, and it needed a good deal of stout-heartedness to make the declarations which it did; and on the whole William Hathorne may stand as a sturdy member of the community. He is perhaps the only man of the time who has left a special reputation for eloquence. Eliot speaks of him as "the most eloquent man of the Assembly, a friend of Winthrop, but often opposed to Endicott, who glided with the popular stream; as reputable for his piety as for his political integrity." And Johnson, in his "Wonder-Working Providence," naming the chief props of the state, says: "Yet through the Lord's mercy we still retain among our Democracy the godly Captaine William Hathorn, whom the Lord hath indued with a quick apprehension, strong memory, and Rhetorick, volubility of speech, which hath caused the people to make use of him often in Publick Service, especially when they have had to do with any foreign government." It is instructive to find what ground he took during the Quaker persecutions of 1657 to 1662. Endicott was a forward figure in that long-sustained horror; and if Hathorne naturally gravitated to the other extreme from Endicott, he would be likely, one supposes, to have sympathized with the persecuted. The state was divided in sentiment during those years; but James Cudworth wrote that "he that will not whip and lash, persecute, and punish men that differ in matters of religion, must not sit on the bench nor sustain any office in the commonwealth." Cudworth himself was deposed; and it happens that Hathorne's terms of service, as recorded, seem at first to leave a gap barely wide enough to include this troublesome period. But, in fact, he resumed power as a magistrate just in time to add at least one to the copious list of bloody and distinguishing atrocities that so disfigure New England history.

Sewel relates [Footnote: History of the Quakers, I. 411, 412.] that "Anne Coleman and four of her

friends were whipped through Salem, Boston, and Dedham by order of Wm. Hawthorn, who before he was a magistrate had opposed compulsion for conscience; and when under the government of Cromwell it was proposed to make a law that none shall preach without license, he publicly said at Salem that if ever such a law took place in New England he should look upon it as one of the most abominable actions that were ever committed there, and that it would be as eminent a Token of God's having forsaken New England, as any could be." His famous descendant, alluding to this passage, [Footnote: See "The Custom House," introductory to "The Scarlet Letter."] says that the account of this incident "will last longer, it is to be feared, than any record of his better deeds, though these were many." Yet it should not be overlooked that Hathorne is the only one among the New England persecutors whom Sewel presents to us with any qualifying remark as to a previous more humane temper. Sole, too, in escaping the doom of sudden death which the historian solemnly records in the cases of the rest. So that even if we had not the eminent example of Marcus Aurelius and Sir Thomas More, we might still infer from this that it is no less possible for the man of enlightened ability and culture, than for the ignorant bigot, to find himself, almost of necessity, a chief instrument of religious coercion. Doubtless this energetic Puritan denouncer of persecution never conceived of a fanaticism like that of the Friends, which should so systematically outrage all his deepest sense of decency, order, and piety, and —not content with banishment—should lead its subjects to return and force their deaths, as it were, on the commonwealth; as if a neighbor, under some mistaken zeal, were to repeatedly mix poison with our porridge, until his arrest and death should seem our only defence against murder. Perhaps he was even on the dissenting side, for a time, though there is no record of his saying, like one Edward Wharton of Salem, that the blood of the Quakers was too heavy upon him, and he could not bear it. Wharton received twenty lashes for his sensitiveness, and was fined twenty pounds, and subjected to more torture afterward. But, whatever Hathorne's first feeling, after five years of disturbance, exasperation was added to the responsibility of taking office, and he persecuted. It is easy to see his various justifications, now; yet one cannot wonder that his descendant was oppressed by the act. That he was so cannot be regretted, if only because of the authentic fact that his reading of Sewel inspired one of his most exquisite tales, "The Gentle Boy."

William Hathorne, however,—whatever his taste in persecution,—makes his will peacefully and piously in 1679-80: "*Imprimis*, I give my soul into the hands of Jesus Christ, in whom I hope to bind forevermore my body to the earth in hope of a glorious resurrection with him, whom this vile body shall be made like unto his glorious body; and for the estate God hath given me in this world.... I do dispose of as followeth." Then he bequeaths various sums of money to divers persons, followed by "all my housing and land, orchard and appurtenances lying in Salem," to his son John. Among other items, there is one devising his "farm at Groton" to "Gervice Holwyse my gr. ch. [grandchild] if he can come over and enjoy it." Here, by the way, is another bit of coincidence for the curious. *Gervase Helwyse* is the name of the young man who appears in "Lady Eleanor's Mantle," [Footnote: Twice-Told Tales, Vol. II.] bereft of reason by his love for the proud and fatal heroine of that tale. [Footnote: In the English Note-Books, May 20, 1854, will be found some facts connected with this name, unearthed by Mr. Hawthorne himself. He there tells of the marriage of one *Gervase Elwes*, son of Sir Gervase Elwes, Baronet of Stoke, in Suffolk. This Gervase died before his father; his son died without issue; and thus John Maggott Twining, grandson of the second Gervase through a daughter, came into the baronetcy. This Twining assumed the name of Elwes. "He was the famous miser, and must have had Hawthorne blood in him," says Mr. Hawthorne, "through his grandfather Gervase, whose mother was a Hawthorne." He then refers to William's devise, and says: "My ancestor calls him his *nephew*." The will says, "gr. ch."; and I suppose the mistake occurred through Mr. Hawthorne's not having that document at hand, for reference.] Captain Hathorne must have been well advanced in years when he led his troops against the Indians at Cocheco in 1676; for it was only five years later that he disappeared from history and from this life forever.

His son John inherited, together with housing and land, a good deal of the first Hathorne's various energy and eminence. He was a freeman in 1677, representative from 1683 to 1686, and assistant or counsellor, from 1684 to 1712, except the years of Andros's government. After the deposition of Andros, he was called to join Bradstreet's Council of Safety pending the accession of William of Orange; a magistrate for some years; quartermaster of the Essex companies at first, and afterward, in 1696, the commander of Church's troops, whom he led against St. John. He attacked the enemy's fort there, but, finding his force too weak, drew off, and embarked for Boston. As his father's captaincy had somehow developed into the dignity of major, so John found himself a colonel in 1711. But in 1717 he, too, died. And now there came a change in the fortunes of the Hathorne line. Colonel John, during his magistracy, had presided at the witchcraft trials, and had shown himself severe, bigoted, and unrelenting in his spirit toward the accused persons. Something of this may be seen in Upham's volumes. One woman was brought before him, whose husband has left a pathetic record of her suffering. "She was forced to stand with her arms stretched out. I requested that I might hold one of her hands, but it was declined me; then she desired me to wipe the tears from her eyes, and the sweat from her face, which I did; then she desired that she might lean herself on me, saying she should faint. Justice Hathorne replied she had

strength enough to torment these persons, and she should have strength enough to stand. I repeating something against their cruel proceedings, they commanded me to be silent, or else I should be turned out of the room." [Footnote: Chandler's American Criminal Trials, I. p. 85.] It is not strange that this husband should have exclaimed, that God would take revenge upon his wife's persecutors; and perhaps he was the very man whose curse was said to have fallen upon the justice's posterity.

From this time, at all events, the family lost its commanding position in Salem affairs. Justice Hathorne's son Joseph subsided into the quiet of farm-life. The only notable association with his name is, that he married Sarah Bowditch, a sister of the grandfather of the distinguished mathematician, Nathaniel Bowditch. But it is in the beginning of the eighteenth century that the Hathornes begin to appear as mariners. In the very year of the justice's death, one Captain Ebenezer Hathorne earned the gloomy celebrity attendant on bringing small-pox to Salem, in his brig just arrived from the Barbadoes. Possibly, Justice John may have died from this very infection; and if so, the curse would seem to have worked with a peculiarly malign appropriateness, by making a member of his own family the unwilling instrument of his end. By and by a Captain Benjamin Hathorne is cast away and drowned on the coast, with four other men. Perhaps it was his son, another Benjamin, who, in 1782, being one of the crew of an American privateer, "The Chase," captured by the British, escaped from a prison-ship in the harbor of Charleston, S. C., with six comrades, one of whom was drowned. Thus, gradually, originated the traditional career of the men of this family,—"a gray-headed shipmaster in each generation," as the often-quoted passage puts it, "retiring from the quarter-deck to the homestead, while a boy of fourteen took the hereditary place before the mast." But the most eminent among these hardy skippers is Daniel, the son of farmer Joseph, and grandfather of the author.

Daniel Hathorne lived to be eighty-five, and expired only on April 18, 1796, eight years and a little more before his famous grandson came into the world. Something of the old prowess revived in him, and being a stout seafarer, and by inheritance a lover of independence, he became commander of a privateer during our Revolution; indeed, it is said he commanded several. His guns have made no great noise in history, but their reverberation has left in the air a general tradition of his bravery. The only actual account of his achievements which I have met with is the following ballad, written by the surgeon of his ship, who was perhaps better able than any one else to gauge the valor of his countryman and commander, by the amount of bloodshed on his piratical craft:—

BRIG "FAIR AMERICAN": DANIEL HATHORNE, COMMANDER.

The twenty-second of August, before the close of day,
All hands on board our privateer, we got her under weigh.
We kept the Eastern shore on board for forty leagues or more,
When our departure took for sea, from the Isle of Monhegan
shore.

Bold Hathorne was commander, a man of real worth,
Old England's cruel tyranny induced him to go forth;
She with relentless fury was plundering all the coast,
And thought because her strength was great, our glorious cause
was lost.

Now farewell to America,—farewell our friends and wives,
We trust in Heaven's peculiar care, for to protect their lives,
To prosper our intended cruise upon the raging main,
And to preserve our dearest friends till we return again.

The wind it being leading and bore us on our way,
As far unto the Eastward as the Gulf of Florida,
When we fell in with a British ship hound homeward from the main;
We gave her two bow-chasers, and she returned the same.

We hauled up our courses and prepared for fight;
The contest held four glasses,[*] until the dusk of night;
Then having sprung our mainmast, and had so large a sea,
We dropped astern, and left our chase till the returning day.

[* The time consumed in the emptying of a half-hour glass four times,—two hours.]

Next day we fished our mainmast, the ship still being nigh,
All hands was for engaging, our chance once more to try;
But wind and sea being boisterous, our cannon would not bear;
We thought it quite imprudent, and so we left her there.

We cruised to the Eastward, near the coast of Portuigale:
In longitude of twenty-seven we saw a lofty sail.
We gave her chase, and soon perceived she was a British scow
Standing for fair America with troops for General Howe.

Our captain did inspect her with glasses, and he said:—
"My boys, she means to fight us, but be you not afraid;
All hands repair to quarters, see everything is clear;
We'll give him a broadside, my boys, as soon as she comes near."

She was prepared with nettings, and her men were well secured,
And bore directly for us, and put us close on board,
When the cannons roared like thunder, and the muskets fired amain;
But soon we were alongside, and grappled to her chain.

And now the scene is altered,—the cannon ceased to roar;
We fought with swords and boarding-pikes one glass and something more;
The British pride and glory no longer dared to stay,
But cut the Yankee grappling, and quickly bore away.

Our case was not so desperate, as plainly might appear,
Yet sudden death did enter on board our privateer;
Mahany, Clew, and Clemmans, the valiant and the brave,
Fell glorious in the contest, and met a watery grave!

Ten other men were wounded, among our warlike crew,
With them our noble captain, to whom all praise is due.
To him and all our officers let's give a hearty cheer!
Success to fair America and our good privateer!

This ballad is as long as the cruise, and the rhythm of it seems to show that the writer had not quite got his sea-legs on, in boarding the poetic craft. Especially is he to be commiserated on that unhappy necessity to which the length of the verse compels him, of keeping "the Eastern shore on board for forty leagues," in the first stanza; but it was due to its historic and associative value to give it entire.

Perhaps, after all, it was a shrewd insight that caused the Hathornes to take to the sea. Salem's greatest glory was destined for a term to lie in that direction. Many of these old New England seaports have magnificent recollections of a commercial grandeur hardly to be guessed from their aspect to-day. Castine, Portsmouth, Wiscasset, Newburyport, and the rest,—they controlled the carrying of vast regions, and fortune's wheel whirled amid their wharves and warehouses with a merry and reassuring sound. Each town had its special trade, and kept the monopoly. Portsmouth and Newburyport ruled the trade with Martinique, Guadaloupe, and Porto Rico, sending out fish and bringing back sugar; Gloucester bargained with the West Indies for rum, and brought coffee and dye-stuffs from Surinam; Marblehead had the Bilboa business; and Salem, most opulent of all, usurped the Sumatra, African, East Indian, Brazilian, and Cayenne commerce. By these new avenues over the ocean many men brought home wealth that literally made princes of them, and has left permanent traces in the solid and stately homes they built, still crowded with precious heirlooms, as well as in the refinement nurtured therein, and the thrifty yet generous character they gave to the town. Among these successful merchants was Simon Forrester, who married Nathaniel Hawthorne's great-aunt Rachel, and died in 1817, leaving an immense property. Him Hawthorne speaks of in "The Custom House"; alluding to "old King Derby, old Billy Gray, old Simon Forrester, and many another magnate of his day; whose powdered head, however, was scarcely in the tomb, before his mountain-pile of wealth began to dwindle." But Nathaniel's family neither helped to undermine the heap, nor accumulated a rival one. However good the forecast that his immediate ancestors had made, as to the quickest and broadest road to wealth, they travelled long in the wake of success without ever winning it, themselves. The malediction that fell on Justice Hathorne's head might with some reason have been thought to still hang over his race, as Hawthorne suggests that its "dreary and unprosperous condition ... for many a long year back" would show. Indeed, the tradition of such a curse was kept alive in his family, and perhaps it had its share in developing that sadness and reticence which seem to have belonged to his father.

It is plain from these circumstances how the idea of "The House of the Seven Gables" evolved itself from the history of his own family, with important differences. The person who is cursed, in the romance, uses a special spite toward a single victim, in order to get hold of a property which he bequeaths to his own heirs. Thus a double and treble wrong is done, and the notion of a curse working upon successive generations is subordinate to the conception of the injury which a man entails to his own descendants by forcing on them a stately house founded upon a sin. The parallel of the Hathorne decline in fortune is carried out; but it must be observed that the peculiar separateness and shyness,

which doubtless came to be in some degree a trait of all the Hathornes, is transferred in the book from the family of the accursed to that of Maule, the utterer of the evil prophecy. "As for Matthew Maule's posterity," says the romancer, "to all appearance they were a quiet, honest, well-meaning race of people"; but "they were generally poverty-stricken; always plebeian and obscure; working with unsuccessful diligence at handicrafts; laboring on the wharves, or following the sea as sailors before the mast"; and "so long as any of the race were to be found, they had been marked out from other men—not strikingly, nor as with a sharp line, but with an effect that was felt, rather than spoken of—by an hereditary character of reserve. Their companions, or those who endeavored to become such, grew conscious of a circle round about the Maules, within the sanctity or the spell of which, in spite of an exterior of sufficient frankness and good-fellowship, it was impossible for any man to step." The points of resemblance here may be easily distinguished. In the "American Note-Books" occurs an anecdote which recalls the climax of the romance. It concerns Philip English, who had been tried for witchcraft by John Hathorne, and became his bitter enemy. On his death-bed, he consented to forgive him; "But if I get well," said he, "I'll be damned if I forgive him!" One of English's daughters (he had no sons) afterward married a son of John Hathorne. How masterly is the touch of the artist's crayon in this imaginative creation, based upon the mental and moral anatomy of actual beings! It is a delicate study of the true creative art to follow out this romantic shape, and contrast it with the real creatures and incidents to which it has a sort of likeness. With perfect choice, the artist selects, probably not consciously, but through association, whatever he likes from the real, and deviates from it precisely where he feels this to be fitting; adds a trait here, and transfers another there; and thus completes something having a unity and inspiration of its own, neither a simple reproduction nor an unmixed invention, the most subtile and harmonious product of the creative power. It is in this way that "The House of the Seven Gables" comes to be not merely fancifully a romance typical of Salem, but in the most essentially true way representative of it. Surely no one could have better right to thus embody the characteristics of the town than Hawthorne, whose early ancestors had helped to magnify it and defend it, and whose nearer progenitors had in their fallen fortunes almost foreshadowed the mercantile decline of the long-lived capital. Surely no one can be less open to criticism for illustrating various phases of his townsmen's character and exposing in this book, as elsewhere, though always mildly, the gloomier traits of the founders, than this deep-eyed and gentle man, whose forefathers notably possessed "all the Puritanic traits, both good and evil," and who uses what is as much to the disadvantage of his own blood as to that of others, with such absolute, admirable impartiality.

[Illustration]

III.

BOYHOOD.—COLLEGE DAYS.—FANSHAWE.

1804-1828.

With such antecedents behind him, and such associations awaiting him,
Nathaniel Hawthorne was born, July 4, 1804.

His father, the captain of a trading-vessel, was one of three sons of the privateersman Daniel, and was born in 1776; so that both father and son, it happens, are associated by time of birth with the year and the day that American independence has made honorable and immemorial. The elder Nathaniel wore his surname in one of several fashions that his predecessors had provided,—for they had some eight different ways of writing, though presumably but one of pronouncing it,—and called himself Hathorne. It was not long after the birth of his only boy, second of his three children, however, that he left the name to this male successor, with whom it underwent a restoration to the more picturesque and flowered form of Hawthorne. Nathaniel, the son of Daniel, died in Surinam, in the spring of 1808, of a fever, it is thought, and left his widow stricken with a lifelong grief, his family suddenly overwhelmed with sorrow and solitude. I think I cannot convey the sadness of this more fully than by simply saying it. Yet sombre as the event is, it seems a fit overture to the opening life of this spirit so nobly sad whom we are about to study. The tradition seems to have become established that Captain Nathaniel was inclined to melancholy, and very reticent; also, that though he was an admirable shipmaster, he had a vigorous appetite for reading, and carried many books with him on his long voyages. Those who know the inheritances that come with the Puritan blood will easily understand the sort of dark, underlying deposit of unutterable sadness that often reminds such persons of their austere ancestry; but, in addition to this, the Hathornes had now firmly imbibed the belief that their family was

under a retributive ban for its share in the awful severities of the Quaker and the witchcraft periods. It was not to them the symbolic and picturesque thing that it is to us, but a real overhanging, intermittent oppressiveness, that must often have struck across their actions in a chilling and disastrous way. Their ingrained reticence was in itself, when contrasted with Major Hathorne's fame in oratory, a sort of corroboration of the idea that fate was making reprisals upon them. The captain's children felt this; and the son, when grown to manhood, was said to greatly resemble his father in appearance, as well. Of the Endicotts, who also figured largely in the maritime history of Salem, it is told that in the West Indies the name grew so familiar as being that of the captain of a vessel, that it became generic; and when a new ship arrived, the natives would ask, "Who is the Endicott?" Very likely the Hathornes had as fixed a fame in the ports where they traded. At all events, some forty years after the captain's death at Surinam, a sailor one day stopped Mr. Surveyor Hawthorne on the steps of the Salem Custom House, and asked him if he had not once a relative—an uncle or a father—who died in Surinam at the date given above. He had recognized him by his likeness to the father, of whom Nathaniel probably had no memory at all.

But he inherited much from his mother, too. She has been described by a gentleman who saw her in Maine, as very reserved, "a very pious woman, and a very minute observer of religious festivals," of "feasts, fasts, new moons, and Sabbaths," and perhaps a little inclined to superstition. Such an influence as hers would inevitably foster in the son that strain of reverence, and that especial purity and holiness of thought, which pervade all that he has written. Those who knew her have said also, that the luminous, gray, magnificent eyes that so impressed people in Hawthorne were like hers. She had been Miss Elizabeth Clarke Manning, the daughter of Richard Manning, whose ancestors came to New England about 1680, and sister of Richard and of Robert Manning, a well-known pomologist of the same place. After the death of her husband, this brother Robert came to her assistance, Captain Hathorne having left but little property: he was only thirty-two when he died.

Nathaniel had been born in a solid, old-fashioned little house on Union Street, which very appropriately faced the old shipyard of the town in 1760; and it appears that in the year before his birth, the Custom House of that time had been removed to a spot "opposite the long brick building owned by W. S. Gray, and Benjamin H. Hathorne,"—as if the future Surveyor's association with the revenue were already drawing nearer to him. The widow now moved with her little family to the house of her father, in Herbert Street, the next one eastward from Union. The land belonging to this ran through to Union Street, adjoining the house they had left; and from his top-floor study here, in later years, Hawthorne could look down on the less lofty roof under which he was born. The Herbert Street house, however, was spoken of as being on Union Street, and it is that one which is meant in a passage of the "American Note-Books" (October 25, 1838), which says, "In this dismal chamber FAME was won," as likewise in the longer revery in the same volume, dated October 4, 1840.

"Certainly," the sister of Hawthorne writes to me of him, "no man ever needed less a formal biography." But the earlier portion of his life, of which so little record has been made public, must needs bear so interesting a relation to his later career, that I shall examine it with as much care as I may.

Very few details of his early boyhood have been preserved; but these go to show that his individuality soon appeared. "He was a pleasant child, quite handsome, with golden curls," is almost the first news we have of him; but his mastering sense of beauty soon made itself known. While quite a little fellow, he is reported to have said of a woman who was trying to be kind to him, "Take her away! She is ugly and fat, and has a loud voice!" When still a very young school-boy, he was fond of taking long walks entirely by himself; was seldom or never known to have a companion; and in especial, haunted Legg's Hill, a place some miles from his home. The impression of his mother's loss and loneliness must have taken deep and irremovable hold upon his heart; the wide, bleak, uncomprehended fact that his father would never return, that he should never see him, seems to have sunk into his childish reveries like a cabalistic spell, turning thought and feeling and imagination toward mournful and mysterious things. Before he had passed from his mother's care to that of the schoolmaster, it is known that he would break out from the midst of childish broodings, and exclaim, "There, mother! I is going away to sea, some time"; then, with an ominous shaking of the head, "and I'll never come back again!" The same refrain lurked in his mind when, a little older, he would tell his sisters fantastic tales, and give them imaginary accounts of long journeys, which he should take in future, in the course of which he flew at will through the air; on these occasions he always ended with the same hopeless prophecy of his failing to return. No doubt, also, there was a little spice of boyish mischief in this; and something of the fictionist, for it enabled him to make a strong impression on his audience. He brought out the *dénouement* in such a way as to seem—so one of those who heard him has written—to enjoin upon them "the advice to value him the more while he stayed with" them. This choice of the lugubrious, however, seems to have been native to him; for almost before he could speak distinctly he is reported to have caught up certain lines of "Richard III." which he had heard read; and his favorite among them,

always declaimed on the most unexpected occasions and in his loudest tone, was,—

"Stand back, my Lord, and let the coffin pass!"

Though he has nowhere made allusion to the distant and sudden death of his father, Hawthorne has mentioned an uncle lost at sea, in the "English Notes," [Footnote: June 30, 1854]—a startling passage. "If it is not known how and when a man dies," he says "it makes a ghost of him for many years thereafter, perhaps for centuries. King Arthur is an example; also the Emperor Frederic [Barbarossa] and other famous men who were thought to be alive ages after their disappearance. So with private individuals. I had an uncle John, who went a voyage to sea about the beginning of the War of 1812, and has never returned to this hour. But as long as his mother lived, as many as twenty years, she never gave up the hope of his return, and was constantly hearing stories of persons whose descriptions answered to his. Some people actually affirmed that they had seen him in various parts of the world. Thus, so far as her belief was concerned, he still walked the earth. And even to this day I never see his name, which is no very uncommon one, without thinking that this may be the lost uncle." At the time of that loss Hawthorne was but eight years old; he wrote this memorandum at fifty; and all that time the early impression had remained intact, and the old semi-hallucination about the uncle's being still alive hung about his mind through forty years. When we change the case, and replace the uncle in whom he had no very distinct interest with the father whose decease had so overclouded his mother's life, and thwarted the deep yearnings of his own young heart, we may begin to guess the depth and persistence of the emotions which must have been awakened in him by this awful silence and absence of death, so early thrown across the track of his childish life. I conceive those lonely school-boy walks, overblown by shadow-freighting murmurs of the pine and accompanied by the far-off, muffled roll of the sea, to have been full of questionings too deep for words, too sacred for other companionship than that of uninquisitive Nature;—questionings not even shaped and articulated to his own inner sense.

Yet, whatever half-created, formless world of profound and tender speculations and sad reflections the boy was moulding within himself, this did not master him. The seed, as time went on, came to miraculous issue; but as yet the boy remained, healthily and for the most part happily, a boy still. A lady who, as a child, lived in a house which looked upon the garden of the widow's new abiding-place, used to see him at play there with his sisters, a graceful but sturdy little figure; and a little incident of his school-days, at the same time that it shows how soon he began to take a philosophical view of things, gives a hint of his physical powers. He was put to study under Dr. J. E. Worcester, the famous lexicographer, (who, on graduating at Yale, in 1811, had come to Salem and taken a school there for a few years;) and it is told of him at this time, on the best authority, that he frequently came home with accounts of having fought with a comrade named John Knights.

"But why do you fight with him so often?" asked one of his sisters.

"I can't help it," he said. "John Knights is a boy of very quarrelsome disposition."

Something in the judicial, reproving tone of the reply seems to hint that Hawthorne had taken the measure of his rival, physically as well as mentally, and had found himself more than a match for the poor fellow. All that is known of his bodily strength in maturer boyhood and at college weighs on this side; and Horatio Bridge, [Footnote: See Prefatory Note to The Snow Image.] his classmate and most intimate friend at Bowdoin College, tells me that, though remarkably calm-tempered, any suspicion of disrespect roused him into readiness to give the sort of punishment that his athletic frame warranted.

But one of the most powerful influences acting on this healthy, unsuspected, un-self-suspecting genius must have been that of books. The house in Herbert Street was well provided with them, and he was allowed to make free choice. His selection was seldom, if ever, questioned; and this was well, for he thus drew to himself the mysterious aliment on which his genius throve. Shakespere, Milton, Pope, and Thomson are mentioned among the first authors with whom he made acquaintance on first beginning to read; and "The Castle of Indolence" seems to have been one of his favorite poems while a boy. He is also known to have read, before fourteen, more or less of Rousseau's works, and to have gone through, with great diligence, the whole of "The Newgate Calendar," which latter selection excited a good deal of comment among his family and relatives, but no decisive opposition. A remark of his has come down from that time, that he cared "very little for the history of the world before the fourteenth century"; and he had a judicious shyness of what was considered useful reading. Of the four poets there is of course but little trace in his works; Rousseau, with his love of nature and impressive abundance of emotion, seems to stand more directly related to the future author's development, and "The Newgate Calendar" must have supplied him with the most weighty suggestions for those deep ponderings on sin and crime which almost from the first tinged the pellucid current of his imagination. There is another book, however, early and familiarly known to him, which indisputably affected the bent of his genius in an important degree. This is Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress."

Being a healthy boy, with strong out-of-door instincts planted in him by inheritance from his seafaring

sire, it might have been that he would not have been brought so early to an intimacy with books, but for an accident similar to that which played a part in the boyhoods of Scott and Dickens. When he was nine years old he was struck on the foot by a ball, and made seriously lame. The earliest fragment of his writing now extant is a letter to his uncle Robert Manning, at that time in Raymond, Maine, written from Salem, December 9, 1813. It announces that his foot is no better, and that a new doctor is to be sent for. "May be," the boy writes, "he will do me some good, for Dr. B—— has not, and I don't know as Dr. K—— will." He adds that it is now four weeks since he has been to school, "and I don't know but it will be four weeks longer." This weighing of possibilities, and this sense of the uncertain future, already quaintly show the disposition of the man he is to grow into; though the writing is as characterless as extreme youth, exaggerated distinctness, and copy-books could make it. The little invalid has not yet quite succumbed, however, for the same letter details that he has hopped out into the street once since his lameness began, and been "out in the office and had four cakes." But the trouble was destined to last much longer than even the young seer had projected his gaze. There was some threat of deformity, and it was not until he was nearly twelve that he became quite well. Meantime, his kind schoolmaster, Dr. Worcester (at whose sessions it may have been that Hawthorne read Enfield's "Speaker," the name of which had "a classical sound in his ears," long, long afterward, when he saw the author's tombstone in Liverpool), came to hear him his lessons at home. The good pedagogue does not figure after this in Hawthorne's boyish history; but a copy of Worcester's Dictionary still exists and is in present use, which bears in a tremulous writing on the fly-leaf the legend: "Nathaniel Hawthorne, Esq., with the respects of J. E. Worcester." For a long time, in the worst of his lameness, the gentle boy was forced to lie prostrate, and choosing the floor for his couch, he would read there all day long. He was extremely fond of cats,—a taste which he kept through life; and during this illness, forced to odd resorts for amusement, he knitted a pair of stockings for the cat who reigned in the household at the time. When tired of reading, he diverted himself with constructing houses of books for the same feline pet, building walls for her to leap, and perhaps erecting triumphal arches for her to pass under. In this period he must have taken a considerable range in literature, for his age; and one would almost say that Nature, seeing so rare a spirit in a sound body that kept him sporting and away from reading, had devised a seemingly harsh plan of luring him into his proper element.

It was more likely after this episode than before, that Bunyan took that hold upon him so fraught with consequences. He went every Sunday to his grandmother Hathorne's, and every Sunday he would lay hands upon the book; then, going to a particular three-cornered chair in a particular corner of the room, "he would read it by the hour, without once speaking." I have already suggested the relations of the three minds, Milton, Bunyan, and Hawthorne. The more obvious effect of this reading is the allegorical turn which it gave the boy's thoughts, manifest in many of his shorter productions while a young man; the most curious and complete issue being that of "The Celestial Railroad," in the "Mosses," where Christian's pilgrimage is so deftly parodied in a railroad route to the heavenly goal. Full of keen satire, it does not, as it might at first seem, tend to diminish Bunyan's dignity, but inspires one with a novel sense of it, as one is made to gradually pierce the shams of certain modern cant. But a more profound consequence was the direction of Hawthorne's expanding thought toward sin and its various and occult manifestations. Imagine the impression upon a mind so fine, so exquisitely responsive, and so well prepared for grave revery as Hawthorne's, which a passage like the following would make. In his discourse with Talkative, Faithful says: "A man may cry out against sin, of policy; but he cannot abhor it but by virtue of a godly antipathy. I have heard many cry out against sin in the pulpit, who can abide it well enough in the heart, house, and conversation."

Here is almost the motive and the moral of "The Scarlet Letter." But Hawthorne refined upon it unspeakably, and probed many fathoms deeper, when he perceived that there might be motives far more complex than that of policy, a condition much more subtly counterfeiting the mien of goodness and spirituality. Talkative replies, "You lie at a catch, I perceive,"—meaning that he is sophistical. "No, not I," says Faithful; "I am only for setting things right." Did not this desire of setting things right stir ever afterward in Hawthorne's consciousness? It is not a little singular to trace in Bunyan two or three much more direct links with some of Hawthorne's work. When Christiana at the Palace Beautiful is shown one of the apples that Eve ate of, and Jacob's ladder with some angels ascending upon it, it incites one to turn to that marvellously complete "Virtuoso's Collection," [Footnote: Mosses from an Old Manse, Vol. II.] where Hawthorne has preserved Shelley's skylark and the steed Rosinante, with Hebe's cup and many another impalpable marvel, in the warden-ship of the Wandering Jew. So, too, when we read Great-Heart's analysis of Mr. Fearing, this expression, "He had, I think, a Slough of Despond in his mind, a slough that he carried everywhere with him," we can detect the root of symbolical conceptions like that of "The Bosom Serpent." [Footnote: Mosses from an Old Manse, Vol. II.] I cannot refrain from copying here some passages from this same portion which recall in an exceptional way some of the traits of Hawthorne, enough, at least, to have given them a partially prophetic power over his character. Mr. Great-Heart says of Mr. Fearing: "He desired much to be alone; yet he always loved good talk, and often would get behind the screen to hear it." (So Hawthorne screened himself behind his genial reserve.) "He also loved much to see ancient things, and to be pondering them in his mind."

What follows is not so strictly analogous throughout. Mr. Honest asks Great-Heart why so good a man as Fearing "should be all his days so much in the dark." And he answers, "There are two sorts of reasons for it. One is, the wise God will have it so: some must pipe, and some must weep…. And for my part, I care not at all for that profession which begins not in heaviness of mind. The first string that the musician usually touches is the bass, when he intends to put all in tune. God also plays upon this string first, when he sets the soul in tune for himself. Only there was the imperfection of Mr. Fearing; he could play upon no other music but this, till towards his latter end." Let the reader by no means imagine a moral comparison between Hawthorne and Bunyan's Mr. Fearing. The latter, as his creator says, "was a good man, though much down in spirit"; and Hawthorne, eminent in uprightness, was also overcast by a behest to look for the most part at the darker phases of human thinking and feeling; yet there could not have been the slightest real similarity between him and the excellent but weak-kneed Mr. Fearing, whose life is made heavy by the doubt of his inheritance in the next world. Still, though the causes differ, it could be said of Hawthorne, as of Master Fearing, "Difficulties, lions, or Vanity Fair, he feared not at all; it was only sin, death, and hell that were to him a terror." I mean merely that Hawthorne may have found in this character-sketch—Bunyan's most elaborate one, for the typical subject of which he shows an evident fondness and leniency—something peculiarly fascinating, which may not have been without its shaping influence for him. But the intimate, affectionate, and lasting relation between Bunyan's allegory and our romancer is something to be perfectly assured of. The affinity at once suggests itself, and there are allusions in the "Note-Books" and the works of Hawthorne which recall and sustain it. So late as 1854, he notes that "an American would never understand the passage in Bunyan about Christian and Hopeful going astray along a by-path into the grounds of Giant Despair, from there being no stiles and by-paths in our country." Rarely, too, as Hawthorne quotes from or alludes to other authors, there is a reference to Bunyan in "The Blithedale Romance," and several are found in "The Scarlet Letter": it is in that romance that the most powerful suggestion of kinship between the two imaginations occurs. After Mr. Dimmesdale's interview with Hester, in the wood, he suffers the most freakish temptations to various blasphemy on returning to the town: he meets a deacon, and desires to utter evil suggestions concerning the communion-supper; then a pious and exemplary old dame, fortunately deaf, into whose ear a mad impulse urges him to whisper what then seemed to him an "unanswerable argument against the immortality of the soul," and after muttering some incoherent words, he sees "an expression of divine gratitude and ecstasy that seemed like the *shine of the celestial city* on her face." Then comes the most frightful temptation of all, as he sees approaching him a maiden newly won into his flock. "She was fair and pure as a lily that had bloomed in Paradise. The minister knew well that he himself was enshrined within the stainless sanctity of her heart, which hung its snowy curtains about his image, imparting to religion the warmth of love, and to love a religious purity. Satan, that afternoon, had surely led the poor young girl away from her mother's side, and thrown her into the pathway of this sorely tempted, or—shall we not rather say?—this lost and desperate man. As she drew nigh, the arch-fiend whispered to him to condense into small compass and drop into her tender bosom a germ of evil that would be sure to blossom darkly soon, and bear black fruit betimes." Now, in the Valley of the Shadow of Death, "poor Christian was so confounded, that he did not know his own voice…. Just when he was come over against the mouth of the burning pit, one of the wicked ones got behind him and stepped up softly to him, and, whisperingly, suggested many grievous blasphemies to him, which he verily thought had proceeded from his own mind." I need not enlarge upon the similar drift of these two extracts; still less mark the matured, detailed, and vividly human and dramatic superiority of Hawthorne's use of the element common to both.

For other reading in early boyhood he had Spenser (it is said that the first book which he bought with his own money was "The Faery Queen," for which he kept a fondness all his life), Froissart's "Chronicles," and Clarendon's "History of the Rebellion." The incident of Dr. Johnson's penance in Uttoxeter Market dwelt so intimately in Hawthorne's mind (he has treated it in the "True Stories," and touches very tenderly upon it in "Our Old Home," where he says that he "has always been profoundly impressed" by it), that I fancy a childish impression must have endeared it to him; and Boswell may have been one of his acquisitions at this time. Perhaps Dr. Worcester made the book known to him; and he would not be at a loss to find endless entertainment there.

It was in November, 1813, that the accident at ball disabled him. In June of the same year an event had taken place which must have entered strongly into his heart, as into that of many another Salem boy. Young Lawrence, of the American navy,—who had won honors for himself at Tripoli and in the then prevailing war with Great Britain,—had just been promoted, for gallant achievements off the coast of Brazil, to a captaincy, and put in command of the frigate "Chesapeake," at Boston. A British frigate, the "Shannon," had been cruising for some time in the neighborhood, seeking an encounter with the "Chesapeake," and the valiant Lawrence felt compelled to go out and meet her, though he had only just assumed command, had had no time to discipline his crew (some of whom were disaffected), and was without the proper complement of commissioned officers. Americans know the result; how the "Chesapeake" was shattered and taken in a fifteen minutes' fight off Marblehead, and how Lawrence fell with a mortal wound, uttering those unforgotten words, "Don't give up the ship." The battle was

watched by crowds of people from Salem, who swarmed upon the hillsides to get a glimpse of the result.

When the details at last reached the town, many days afterward, Captain George Crowninshield fitted out a flag of truce, sailed for Halifax with ten shipmasters on board, and obtained the bodies of Lawrence and his lieutenant, Ludlow. Late in August they returned, and the city gave itself to solemnities in honor of the lost heroes, with the martial dignity of processions and the sorrowing sound of dirges. Cannon reverberated around them, and flags drooped above them at half-mast, shorn of their splendor. Joseph Story delivered an eloquent oration over them, and there was mourning in the hearts of every one, mixed with that spiritualized sense of national grandeur and human worth that comes at hours like this. Among the throngs upon the streets that day must have stood the boy Nathaniel Hawthorne; not too young to understand, and imbibing from this spectacle, as from many other sources, that profound love of country, that ingrained, ineradicable American quality, which marked his whole maturity.

I have not found any distinct corroboration of the report that Nathaniel again lost the use of his limbs, before going to Maine to live. In another brief, boyish letter dated "Salem, Monday, July 21, 1818" (all these documents are short, and allude to the writer's inability to find anything more to say), he speaks of wanting to "go to dancing-school a little longer" before removing with his mother to the house which his uncle is building at Raymond. He has also, he says, been to Nahant, which he likes, because "fish are very thick there"; both items seeming to show a proper degree of activity. There has been a tendency among persons who have found nothing to obstruct the play of their fancies, to establish a notion of almost ill-balanced mental precocity in this powerful young genius, who seems to have advanced as well in muscular as in intellectual development.

It was in October, 1818, that Mrs. Hathorne carried her family to Raymond, to occupy the new house, a dwelling so ambitious, gauged by the primitive community thereabouts, that it gained the title of "Manning's Folly." Raymond is in Cumberland County, a little east of Sebago Lake, and the house, which is still standing, mossy and dismantled, is near what has since been called Radoux's Mills. Though built by Robert Manning, it was purchased afterward by his brother Richard, whose widow married Mr. Radoux, the owner of these mills. Richard Manning's will provided for the establishing of a meeting-house in the neighborhood, and his widow transformed the Folly into a Tabernacle; but, the community ceasing to use it after a few years, it has remained untenanted and decaying ever since, enjoying now the fame of being haunted. Lonely as was the region then, it perhaps had a more lively aspect than at present: A clearing probably gave the inmates of the Folly a clear sweep of vision to the lake; and to the northwest, beyond the open fields that still lie there, frown dark pine slopes, ranging and rising away into "forest-crowned hills; while in the far distance every hue of rock and tree, of field and grove, melts into the soft blue of Mount Washington." This weird and woodsy ground of Cumberland became the nurturing soil of Hawthorne for some years. He stayed only one twelvemonth at Sebago Lake, returning to Salem after that for college preparation. But Brunswick, where his academic years were passed, lies less than thirty miles from the home in the woods, and within the same county: doubtless, also, he spent some of his summer vacations at Raymond. The brooding spell of his mother's sorrow was perhaps even deepened in this favorable solitude. I know not whether the faith of women's hearts really finds an easier avenue to such consecration as this of Mrs. Hathorne's, in Salem, than elsewhere. I happen lately to have heard of a widow in that same neighborhood who has remained bereaved and uncomforted for more than seventeen years. With pathetic energy she spends the long days of summer, in long, incessant walks, sorrow-pursued, away from the dwellings of men. But, however this be, I think this divine and pure devotion to a first love, though it may have impregnated Hawthorne's mind too keenly with the mournfulness of mortality, was yet one of the most cogent means of entirely clarifying the fine spirit which he inherited, and that he in part owes to this exquisite example his marvellous, unsurpassed spirituality. A woman thus true to her highest experience and her purest memories, by living in a sacred communion with the dead, annihilates time and is already set in an atmosphere of eternity. Ah, strong and simple soul that knew not how to hide your grief under specious self-comfortings and maxims of convenience, and so bowed in lifelong prostration before the knowledge of your first, unsullied love, be sure the world will sooner or later know how much it owes to such as you!

More than once has Nathaniel Hawthorne touched the delicate fibres of the heart that thrill again in this memorial grief of his mother's; and, incongruous as is the connection of the following passage out of one of the Twice-Told Tales, it is not hard to trace the origin of the sensibility and insight which prompted it: "It is more probably the fact," so it runs, "that while men are able to reflect upon their lost companions as remembrances apart from themselves, women, on the other hand, are *conscious that a portion of their being has gone with the departed, whithersoever he has gone*" [Footnote: "drippings with a Chisel," in Vol. II. of the Twice-Told Tales.] But the most perfect example of his sympathy with this sorrow of widowhood is that brief, concentrated, and seemingly slight tale, "The Wives of the

Dead," [Footnote: See The Snow Image, and other Twice-Told Tales.] than which I know of nothing more touching and true, more exquisitely proportioned and dramatically wrought out among all English tales of the same scope and length. It pictures the emotions of "two young and comely women," the "recent brides of two brothers, a sailor and a landsman; and two successive days had brought tidings of the death of each, by the chances of Canadian warfare and the tempestuous Atlantic." The action occupies the night after the news, and turns upon the fact that each sister is roused, unknown to the other, at different hours, to be told that the report about her husband is false. One cannot give its beauty without the whole, more than one can separate the dewdrop from the morning-glory without losing the effect they make together. It is a complete presentment, in little, of all that dwells in widowhood. One sentence I may remind the reader of, nevertheless: "Her face was turned partly inward to the pillow, and had been hidden there to weep; but a look of motionless contentment was now visible upon it, as if her heart, like a deep lake, had grown calm because its dead had sunk down so far within it." Even as his widowed mother's face looked, to the true-souled boy, when they dwelt there together in the forest of pines, beside the placid lake!

Yet clear and searching as must then have been his perceptions, he had not always formulated them or made them his chief concern. On May 16, 1819 (the first spring after coming to the new abode), he writes to his uncle Robert that "we are all very well"; and "the grass and some of the trees look very green, the roads are very good, there is no snow on Lymington mountains. The fences are all finished, and the garden is laid out and planted.... I have shot a partridge and a henhawk, and caught eighteen large trout out of our brooke. I am sorry you intend to send me to school again." Happy boy! he thinks he has found his vocation: it is, to shoot henhawks and catch trout. But his uncle, fortunately, is otherwise minded, though Nathaniel writes, in the same note: "Mother says she can hardly spare me." The sway of outdoor life must have been very strong over this stalwart boy's temperament. One who saw a great deal of him has related how in the very last year of his life Hawthorne reverted with fondness, perhaps with something of a sick and sinking man's longing for youthful scenes, to these early days at Sebago Lake; "Though it was there," he confessed, "I first got my cursed habits of solitude." "I lived in Maine," he said, "like a bird of the air, so perfect was the freedom I enjoyed." During the moonlight nights of winter he would skate until midnight all alone upon Sebago Lake, with the deep shadows of the icy hills on either hand. When he found himself far away from his home and weary with the exercise of skating, he would sometimes take refuge in a log-cabin, where half a tree would be burning on the broad hearth. He would sit in the ample chimney, and look at the stars through the great aperture through which the flames went roaring up. "Ah," he said, "how well I recall the summer days, also, when with my gun I roamed at will through the woods of Maine!... Everything is beautiful in youth, for all things are allowed to it then!" The same writer mentions the author's passion for the sea, telling how, on the return from England in 1860, Hawthorne was constantly saying in his quiet, earnest way: "I should like to sail on and on forever, and never touch the shore again." I have it from his sister that he used to declare that, had he not been sent to college, he should have become a mariner, like his predecessors. Indeed, he had the fresh air and the salt spray in his blood.

Still it is difficult to believe that by any chance he could have missed carrying out his inborn disposition toward literature. After we have explained all the fostering influences and formative forces that surround and stamp a genius of this sort, we come at last to the inexplicable mystery of that interior impulse which, if it does not find the right influences at first, presses forth, breaks out to right and left and keeps on pushing, until it feels itself at ease. It cannot wholly *make* its own influences, but it fights to the death before it will give up the effort to lay itself open to these; that is, to get into a proper surrounding. The surrounding may be as far as possible from what we should prescribe as the fit one; but the being in whom perception and receptivity exist in that active state which we call genius will adapt itself, and will instinctively discern whether the conditions of life around it can yield a bare nourishment, or whether it must seek other and more fertile conditions. Hawthorne had an ancestry behind him connected with a singular and impressive history, had remarkable parents, and especially a mother pure and lofty in spirit; lived in a suggestive atmosphere of private sorrow and amid a community of much quaintness; he was also enabled to know books at an early age; yet these things only helped, and not produced, his genius. Sometimes they helped by repression, for there was much that was uncongenial in his early life; yet the clairvoyance, the unconscious wisdom, of that interior quality, *genius*, made him feel that the adjustment of his outer and his inner life was such as to give him a chance of unfolding. Had he gone to sea, his awaking power would have come violently into contact with the hostile conditions of sailor-life: he would have revolted against them, and have made his way into literature against head-wind or reluctant tiller-rope alike. It may, of course, be said that this prediction is too easy. But there are evidences of the mastering bent of Hawthorne's mind, which show that it would have ruled in any case.

As we have seen, he returned to Salem in 1819, to school; and on March 7, 1820, he wrote thus to his mother:—

"I have left school, and have begun to fit for College under Benjm. L. Oliver, Lawyer. So you are in great danger of having one learned man in your family. Mr. Oliver thought I could enter College next commencement, but Uncle Robert is afraid I should have to study too hard. I get my lessons at home, and recite them to him [Mr. Oliver] at 7 o'clock in the morning.... Shall you want me to be a Minister, Doctor, or Lawyer? A minister I will not be." This is the first dawn of the question of a career, apparently. Yet he still has a yearning to escape the solution. "I am extremely homesick," he says, in one part of the letter; and at the close he gives way to the sentiment entirely: "O how I wish I was again with you, with nothing to do but to go a gunning. But the happiest days of my life are gone.... After I have got through college, I will come down to learn E—— Latin and Greek." (Is it too fanciful to note that at this stage of the epistle "college" is no longer spelt with a large C?) The signature to this letter shows the boy so amiably that I append it.

"I remain," he says,
"Your
Affectionate
and
Dutiful
son,
and
Most
Obedient
and
Most
Humble
Servant,
and
Most
Respectful
and
Most
Hearty
Well-wisher,
NATHANIEL HATHORNE."

A jesting device this, which the writer, were he now living, would perhaps think too trivial to make known; yet why should we not recall with pleasure the fact that in his boyish days he could make this harmless little play, to throw an unexpected ray of humor and gladness into the lonely heart of his mother, far away in the Maine woods? And with this pleasure, let there be something of honor and reverence for his pure young heart.

In another letter of this period [Footnote: This letter, long in the possession of Miss E. P. Peabody, Mr. Hawthorne's sister-in-law, unfortunately does not exist any longer. The date has thus been forgotten, but the passage is clear in Miss Peabody's recollection.] he had made a long stride towards the final choice, as witness this extract:—

"I do not want to be a doctor and live by men's diseases, nor a minister to live by their sins, nor a lawyer and live by their quarrels. So, I don't see that there is anything left for me but to be an author. How would you like some day to see a whole shelf full of books, written by your son, with 'Hawthorne's Works' printed on their backs?"

But, before going further, it will be well to look at certain "Early Notes," purporting to be Hawthorne's, and published in the Portland "Transcript" at different times in 1871 and 1873. A mystery overhangs them; [Footnote: See Appendix I.] and it has been impossible, up to this time, to procure proof of their genuineness. Most of the persons named in them have, nevertheless, been identified by residents of Cumberland County, who knew them in boyhood, and the internal evidence of authorship seems to make at least some of them Hawthorne's. On the first leaf of the manuscript book, said to contain them, was written (as reported by the discoverer) an inscription, to the effect that the book had been given to Nathaniel Hawthorne by his uncle Richard Manning, "with the advice that he write out his thoughts, some every day, in as good words as he can, upon any and all subjects, as it is one of the best means of his securing for mature years command of thought and language"; and this was dated at Raymond, June 1, 1816. This account, if true, puts the book into the boy's hands at the age of twelve. He did not go to Raymond to live until two years later, but had certainly been there, before, and his Uncle Richard was already living there in 1816. So that the entries may have begun soon after June, of that year, though their mature character makes this improbable. In this case, they must cover more than a year's time. The dates were not given by the furnisher of the extracts, and only one item can be definitely provided with a date. This must have been penned in or after 1819; and yet it seems also

probable that the whole series was written before the author's college days. If genuine, then, they hint the scope and quality of Hawthorne's perceptions during a few years antecedent to his college-course, and—whether his own work or not—they picture the sort of life which he must have seen at Raymond.

"Two kingbirds have built their nest between our house and the mill-pond. The male is more courageous than any creature that I know about. He seems to have taken possession of the territory from the great pond to the small one, and goes out to war with every fish-hawk that flies from one to the other, over his dominion. The fish-hawks must be miserable cowards, to be driven by such a speck of a bird. I have not yet seen one turn to defend himself.

"Swapped pocket knives with Robinson Cook yesterday. Jacob Dingley says that he cheated me, but I think not, for I cut a fishing pole this morning, and did it well; besides, he is a Quaker, and they never cheat."

Richard Manning had married Susan Dingley; this Jacob was probably her nephew. In this allusion to Quakers one might fancy a germ of tolerance which ripened into "The Gentle Boy."

"Captain Britton from Otisfield was at Uncle Richard's today. Not long ago, uncle brought here from Salem a new kind of potatoes called 'Long Reds.' Captain Britton had some for seed, and uncle asked how he liked them. He answered, 'They yield well, grow very long,—one end is very poor, and the other good for nothing.' I laughed about it after he was gone, but uncle looked sour and said there was no wit in his answer, and that the saying was 'stale.' It was new to me, and his way of saying it very funny. Perhaps uncle did not like to hear his favorite potato spoken of in that way, and that if the captain had praised it he would have been called witty."

"Captain Britton promised to bring 'Gulliver's Travels' for me to read, the next time he comes this way, which is every time he goes to Portland. Uncle Richard has not the book in his library.

"This morning the bucket got off the chain, and dropped back into the well. I wanted to go down on the stones and get it. Mother would not consent, for fear the wall might cave in, but hired Samuel Shane to go down. In the goodness of her heart, she thought the son of old Mrs. Shane not quite so valuable as the son of the Widow Hawthorne. God bless her for all her love for me, though it may be some selfish. We are to have a pump in the well, after this mishap.

"Washington Longley has been taking lessons of a drumming master. He was in the grist-mill to day, and practised with two sticks on the half-bushel. I was astonished at the great number of strokes in a second, and if I had not seen that he had but two sticks, should have supposed that he was drumming with twenty."

"Major Berry went past our house with a large drove of sheep yesterday. One, a last spring's lamb, gave out; could go no farther. I saw him down near the bridge. The poor dumb creature looked into my eyes, and I thought I knew just what he would say if he could speak, and so asked Mr. Berry what he would sell him for. 'Just the price of his pelt, and that will bring sixty-five cents,' was the answer. I ran and petitioned mother for the money, which she soon gave me, saying with a smile that she tried to make severe, but could not, that I was 'a great spendthrift.' The lamb is in our orchard now, and he made a bow (without taking off his hat) and thanked me this morning for saving him from the butcher.

"Went yesterday in a sail-boat on the Great Pond, with Mr. Peter White of Windham. He sailed up here from White's Bridge to see Captain Dingley, and invited Joseph Dingley and Mr. Ring to take a boat-ride out to the Dingley Islands and to the Images. He was also kind enough to say that I might go (with my mother's consent), which she gave after much coaxing. Since the loss of my father she dreads to have any one belonging to her go upon the water. It is strange that this beautiful body of water is called a 'Pond.' The geography tells of many in Scotland and Ireland not near so large that are called 'Lakes.' It is not respectful to speak of so noble, deep, and broad a collection of clear water as a 'Pond'; it makes a stranger think of geese, and then of goose-pond. Mr. White, who knows all this region, told us that the streams from thirty-five ponds, large and small, flow into this, and he calls it Great Basin. We landed on one of the small islands that Captain Dingley cleared for a sheep pasture when he first came to Raymond. Mr. Ring said that he had to do it to keep his sheep from the bears and wolves. A growth of trees has started on the island, and makes a grove so fine and pleasant, that I wish almost that our house was there. On the way from the island to the Images Mr. Ring caught a black spotted trout that was almost a whale, and weighed before it was cut open, after we got back to Uncle Richard's store, eighteen and a half pounds. The men said that if it had been weighed as soon as it came out of the water it would have been nineteen pounds. This trout had a droll-looking hooked nose, and they tried to make me believe, that if the line had been in my hands, that I should have been obliged to let go, or have been pulled out of the boat. They were men, and had a right to say so. I am a boy, and have a right to think differently. We landed at the Images, when I crept into the cave and got a drink of cool water. In coming home we sailed over a place, not far from the Images, where Mr. White

has, at some time, let down a line four hundred feet without finding bottom. This seems strange, for he told us, too, that his boat, as it floated, was only two hundred and fifty feet higher than the boats in Portland Harbor, and that if the Great Pond was pumped dry, a man standing on its bottom, just under where we then were, would be more than one hundred and fifty feet lower than the surface of the water at the Portland wharves. Coming up the Dingley Bay, had a good view of Rattlesnake Mountain, and it seemed to me wonderfully beautiful as the almost setting sun threw over its western crags streams of fiery light. If the Indians were very fond of this part of the country, it is easy to see why; beavers, otters, and the finest fish were abundant, and the hills and streams furnished constant variety. I should have made a good Indian, if I had been born in a wigwam. To talk like sailors, we made the old hemlock-stub at the mouth of the Dingley Mill Brook just before sunset, and sent a *boy* ashore with a hawser, and was soon safely moored to a bunch of alders. After we got ashore Mr. White allowed me to fire his long gun at a mark. I did not hit the mark, and am not sure that I saw it at the time the gun went off, but believe, rather, that I was watching for the noise that I was about to make. Mr. Ring said that with practice I could be a gunner, and that now, with a very heavy charge, he thought I could kill a horse at eight paces. Mr. White went to Uncle Richard's for the night, and I went home and amused my mother with telling how pleasantly the day had passed. When I told her what Mr. Ring said about my killing a horse, she said he was making fun of me. I had found that out before.

"Mr. March Gay killed a rattlesnake yesterday not far from his house, that was more than six feet long and had twelve rattles. This morning Mr. Jacob Mitchell killed another near the same place, almost as long. It is supposed that they were a pair, and that the second one was on the track of its mate. If every rattle counts a year, the first one was twelve years old. Eliak Maxfield came down to mill to-day and told me about the snakes.

"Mr. Henry Turner of Otisfield took his axe and went out between Saturday and Moose ponds to look at some pine-trees. A rain had just taken off enough of the snow to lay bare the roots of a part of the trees. Under a large root there seemed to be a cavity, and on examining closely something was exposed very much like long black hair. He cut off the root, saw the nose of a bear, and killed him, pulled out the body; saw another, killed that, and dragged out its carcass, when he found that there was a third one in the den, and that he was thoroughly awake, too; but as soon as the head came in sight it was split open with the axe, so that Mr. Turner, alone with only an axe, killed three bears in less than half an hour, the youngest being a good-sized one, and what hunters call a yearling. This is a pretty great bear story, but probably true, and happened only a few weeks ago; for John Patch, who was here with his father Captain Levi Patch, who lives within two miles of the Saturday Pond, told me so yesterday.

"A young man named Henry Jackson, Jr., was drowned two days ago, up in Crooked River. He and one of his friends were trying which could swim the faster. Jackson was behind but gaining; his friend kicked at him in fun, thinking to hit his shoulder and push him back, but missed, and hit his chin, which caused him to take in water and strangle, and before his friend could help or get help, poor Jackson was (Elder Leach says) beyond the reach of mercy. I read one of the Psalms to my mother this morning, and it plainly declares twenty-six times that 'God's mercy endureth forever.' I never saw Henry Jackson; he was a young man just married. Mother is sad, says that she shall not consent to my swimming any more in the mill-pond with the boys, fearing that in sport my mouth might get kicked open, and then sorrow for a dead son be added to that for a dead father, which she says would break her heart. I love to swim, but I shall not disobey my mother.

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"Fishing from the bridge to-day, I caught an eel two thirds as long as myself. Mr. Watkins tried to make me believe that he thought it a water moccasin snake. Old Mr. Shane said that it was a 'young sea-sarpint sure.' Mr. Ficket, the blacksmith, begged it to take home for its skin, as he said for buskin-strings and flail-strings. So ends my day's fishing.

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"Went over to-day to see Watkins make bricks. I have always thought there was some mystery about it, but I can make them myself. Why did the Israelites complain so much at having to make bricks without straw? I should not use straw if I was a brick-maker; besides, when they are burned in the kiln, the straw will burn out and leave the bricks full of holes.

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"I can, from my chamber window, look across into Aunt Manning's garden, this morning, and see little Betty Tarbox, flitting among the rose-bushes, and in and out of the arbor, like a tiny witch. She will never realize the calamity that came upon her brothers and sisters that terrible night when her father and mother lay within a few rods of each other, in the snow, freezing to death. I love the elf, because of her loss; and still my aunt is much more to her than her own mother, in her poverty, could

have been."

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This little girl was the child of some poor people of the neighborhood who were frozen to death one March night, in 1819. In a letter to his uncle Robert, March 24, 1819, Nathaniel says: "I suppose you have not heard of the death of Mr. Tarbox and his wife, who were froze to death last Wednesday. They were brought out from the Cape on Saturday, and buried from Captain Dingley's on Sunday." This determines the time of writing the last-quoted extract from the journal.

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"This morning I saw at the grist-mill a solemn-faced old horse, hitched to the trough. He had brought for his owner some bags of corn to be ground, who, after carrying them into the mill, walked up to Uncle Richard's store, leaving his half-starved animal in the cold wind with nothing to eat, while the corn was being turned to meal. I felt sorry, and nobody being near, thought it best to have a talk with the old nag, and said, 'Good morning, Mr. Horse, how are you to-day?' 'Good morning, youngster,' said he, just as plain as a horse can speak, and then said, 'I am almost dead, and I wish I was quite. I am hungry, have had no breakfast, and must stand here tied by the head while they are grinding the corn, and until master drinks two or three glasses of rum at the store, then drag him and the meal up the Ben Ham Hill, and home, and am now so weak that I can hardly stand. O dear, I am in a bad way'; and the old creature cried. I almost cried myself. Just then the miller went down stairs to the meal-trough; I heard his feet on the steps, and not thinking much what I was doing, ran into the mill, and taking the four-quart toll-dish nearly full of corn out of the hopper, carried it out and poured it into the trough before the horse, and placed the dish back before the miller came up from below. When I got out, the horse was laughing, but he had to eat slowly, because the bits were in his mouth. I told him that I was sorry, but did not know how to take them out, and should not dare to if I did, for his master might come out and see what I was about. 'Thank you,' said he, 'a luncheon of corn with the bits in is much better than none. The worst of it is, I have to munch so slowly, that master may come before I finish it, and thrash me for eating his corn, and you for the kindness.' I sat down on a stone out of the wind, and waited in trouble, for fear that the miller and the owner of the corn would come and find out what I had done. At last the horse winked and stuck out his upper lip ever so far, and then said, 'The last kernel is gone'; then he laughed a little, then shook one ear, then the other, then shut his eyes as if to take a nap. I jumped up and said: 'How do you feel, old fellow; any better?' He opened his eyes, and looking at me kindly, answered 'very much,' and then blew his nose exceedingly loud, but he did not wipe it. Perhaps he had no wiper. I then asked if his master whipped him much. He opened his eyes, and looking at me kindly, answered, 'Not much lately; he used to till my hide got hardened, but now he has a white-oak goad-stick with an iron brad in its end, with which he jabs my hind quarters and hurts me awfully.' I asked him why he did not kick up, and knock his tormentor out of the wagon. 'I did try once,' said he, 'but am old and was weak, and could only get my heels high enough to break the whiffletree, and besides lost my balance and fell down flat. Master then jumped down, and getting a cudgel struck me over the head, and I thought my troubles were over. This happened just before Mr. Ben Ham's house, and I should have been finished and ready for the crows, if he had not stepped out and told master not to strike again, if he did he would shake his liver out. That saved my life, but I was sorry, though Mr. Ham meant good.' The goad with the iron brad was in the wagon, and snatching it out I struck the end against a stone, and the stabber flew into the mill-pond. 'There,' says I, 'old colt,' as I threw the goad back into the wagon, 'he won't harpoon you again with *that* iron.' The poor old brute knew well enough what I said, for I looked him in the eye and spoke horse language. At that moment the brute that owned the horse came out of the store, and down the hill towards us. I slipped behind a pile of slabs. The meal was put in the wagon, the horse unhitched, the wagon mounted, the goad picked up and a thrust made, but dobbin was in no hurry. Looking at the end of the stick, the man bawled, 'What little devil has had my goad?' and then began striking with all his strength; but his steed only walked, shaking his head as he went across the bridge; and I thought I heard the ancient Equus say as he went, 'Thrash as much as you please, for once you cannot stab.' I went home a little uneasy, not feeling sure that the feeding the man's corn to his horse was not stealing, and thinking that if the miller found it out, he would have me taken down before Squire Longley.

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"Polly Maxfield came riding to mill to-day on horseback. She rode as gracefully as a Trooper. I wish with all my heart that I was as daring a rider, or half so graceful.

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"This morning walked down to the Pulpit Rock Hill, and climbed up into the pulpit. It looks like a rough place to preach from, and does not seem so much like a pulpit when one is in it, as when viewing it from the road below. It is a wild place, and really a curiosity. I brought a book and sat in the rocky

recess, and read for nearly an hour. This is a point on the road known to all teamsters. They have a string of names for reference by which they tell each other where they met fellow-teamsters and where their loads got stuck, and I have learned them from those who stop for drinks at the store. One meets another near our house, and says, 'Where did you meet Bill?' 'Just this side of Small's Brook,' or 'At the top of Gray's Pinch,' 'At the Dry Mill-Pond,' 'Just the other side of Lemmy Jones's,' 'On the long causeway,' 'At Jeems Gowen's,' 'Coming down the Pulpit Rock Hill,' 'Coming down Tarkill Hill.' I have heard these answers till I have them by heart, without having any idea where any of the places are, excepting the one I have seen to-day. While on the bridge near the Pulpit, Mr. West, who lives not far away, came along and asked where I had been. On my telling him, he said that no money would hire him to go up to that pulpit; that the Devil used to preach from it long and long ago; that on a time when hundreds of them were listening to one of his sermons, a great chief laughed in the Devil's face, upon which he stamped his foot, and the ground to the southwest, where they were standing, sunk fifty feet, and every Indian went down out of sight, leaving a swamp to this day. He declared that he once stuck a pole in there, which went down easily several feet, but then struck the skull-bone of an Indian, when instantly all the hassocks and flags began to shake; he heard a yell as from fifty overgrown Pequots; that he left the pole and ran for life. Mr. West also said that no Indian had ever been known to go near that swamp since, but that whenever one came that way, he turned out of the road near the house of Mr. West, and went straight to Thomas Pond, keeping to the eastward of Pulpit Rock, giving it a wide berth. Mr. West talked as though he believed what he said.

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"A pedler named Dominicus Jordan was to-day in Uncle Richard's store, telling a ghost-story. I listened intently, but tried not to seem interested. The story was of a house, the owner of which was suddenly killed. Since his death the west garret-window cannot be kept closed; though the shutters be hasped and nailed at night, they are invariably found open the next morning, and no one can tell when or how the nails were drawn. There is also on the farm an apple-tree, the fruit of which the owner was particularly fond of, but since his death no one has been able to get one of the apples. The tree hangs full nearly every year, but whenever any individual tries to get one, stones come in all directions as if from some secret infernal battery, or hidden catapult, and more than once have those making the attempts been struck. What is more strange, the tree stands in an open field, there being no shelter near from which tricks can be played without exposure. Jordan says that it seems odd to strangers to see that tree loaded with apples when the snow is four feet deep; and, what is a mystery, there are no apples in the spring; no one ever sees the wind blow one off, none are seen on the snow, nor even the vestige of one on the grass under the tree; and that children may play on the grass under and around it while it is in the blossom, and until the fruit is large enough to tempt them, with perfect safety; but the moment one of the apples is sought for, the air is full of flying stones. He further says, that late one starlight night he was passing the house, and looking up saw the phantom walk out of the garret window with cane in hand, making all the motions as if walking on *terra firma*, although what appeared to be his feet were at least six yards from the ground; and so he went walking away on nothing, and when nearly out of sight there was a great flash and an explosion as of twenty field-pieces, then—nothing. This story was told with seeming earnestness, and listened to as though it was believed. How strange it is that almost all persons, old or young, are fond of hearing about the supernatural, though it produces nervousness and fear! I should not be willing to sleep in that garret, though I do not believe a word of the story.

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"The lumbermen from Saccarappa are getting their logs across the Great Pond. Yesterday a strong northwest wind blew a great raft of many thousands over almost to the mouth of the Dingley Brook. Their anchor dragged for more than a mile, but when the boom was within twenty or thirty rods of the shore, it brought up, and held, as I heard some men say who are familiar with such business. All the men and boys went from the mill down to the pond to see the great raft, and I among them. They have a string of logs fastened end to end and surrounding the great body, which keeps them from scattering, and the string is called a boom. A small, strong raft, it may be forty feet square, with an upright windlass in its centre, called a capstan, is fastened to some part of the boom. The small raft is called 'Head Works,' and from it in a yawl-boat is carried the anchor, to which is attached a strong rope half a mile long. The boat is rowed out the whole length of the rope, the anchor thrown over, and the men on the headworks wind up the capstan and so draw along the acres of logs. After we went down to the shore, several of the men came out on the boom nearest to us, and, striking a single log, pushed it under and outside; then one man with a gallon jug slung to his back, taking a pickpole, pushed himself ashore on the small single log,—a feat that seemed almost miraculous to me. This man's name was Reuben Murch, and he seemed to be in no fear of getting soused. This masterly kind of navigation he calls 'cuffing the rigging'; nobody could tell me why he gave it that name. Murch went up to the store, had the jug filled with rum (the supply having run out on the headworks), and made the voyage back

the way he came. His comrades received him with cheers, and after sinking the log and drawing it back under the boom, proceeded to try the contents of the jug, seeming to be well satisfied with the result of his expedition. It turned out that Murch only rode the single log ashore to show his adroitness, for the yawl-boat came round from the headworks, and brought near a dozen men in red shirts to where we were. I was interested listening to their conversation mixed with sharp jokes. Nearly every man had a nickname. Murch was called 'Captain Snarl'; a tall, fierce-looking man, who just filled my idea of a Spanish freebooter, was 'Dr. Coddle.' I think his real name was Wood. The rum seems to make them crazy, for one, who was called 'Rub-a-dub,' pitched 'Dr. Coddle' head and heels into the water. A gentlemanly man named Thompson, who acted as master of ceremonies, or Grand Turk, interfered and put a stop to what was becoming something like a fight. Mr. Thompson said that the wind would go down with the sun, and that they must get ready to start. This morning I went down to look for them, and the raft was almost to Frye's Island.

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"I have read 'Gulliver's Travels,' but do not agree with Captain Britton that it is a witty and uncommonly interesting book; the wit is obscene, and the *lies* too *false*."

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The next and last piece of this note-book was printed two years later than the preceding items, and after the death of the person who professed to own the manuscript, but still with the same degree of mystery, except in the matter of date.

"Day before yesterday Mr. Thomas Little from Windham, Mr. M. P. Sawyer of Portland, Mr. Thomas A. Deblois, a lawyer, Mr. Hanson of Windham, and Enoch White, a boy of about my own age, from White's Bridge, came up to the Dingley Brook in a sail-boat. They were on the way to Muddy River Bog, for a day's sport, fishing, and shooting ducks. Enoch proposed that I should go with them. I needed no urging, but knew how unwillingly my mother would consent. They could wait but a few minutes, and Uncle Richard kindly wrote a note, asking her to be willing to gratify me *this* time.

"She said, 'Yes,' but I was almost sorry, knowing that my day's pleasure would cost *her* one of anxiety. However, I gathered up hooks and lines, with some white salted pork for bait, and with a fabulous number of biscuit, split in the middle, the insides well buttered, then skilfully put together again, and all stowed in sister's large work-bag, and slung over my shoulder. I started, making a wager with Enoch White, as we walked down to the boat, as to which would catch the largest number of fish.

"The air was clear, with just breeze enough to shoot us along pleasantly, without making rough waves. The wind was not exactly after us, though we made but two tacks to reach the mouth of Muddy River. The men praised the grand view, after we got into the Great Bay. We could see the White Hills to the northwest, though Mr. Little said they were eighty miles from us; and grand old Rattlesnake, to the northeast, in its immense jacket of green oak, looked more inviting than I had ever seen it; while Frye's Island, with its close growth of great trees, growing to the very edge of the water, looked like a monstrous green raft, floating to the southeastward. Whichever way the eye turned, something charming appeared. Mr. Little seems to be familiar with every book that has ever been written, and must have a great memory. Among other things, he said:—

"'Gentlemen, do you know that this should be called the sea, instead of
the Great Pond; that ships should be built here and navigate this water?
The surface of the Sea of Galilee, of which we hear so much in the New
Testament, was just about equal to the surface of our sea to-day.'

"And then he went on to give a geographical description of the country about the Sea of Galilee, and draw parallels between places named in the Testament and points in sight. His talk stole my attention until we were fairly at Muddy River mouth.

"Muddy River Bog is quite a curiosity. The river empties into the pond between two small sandy capes or points, only a short distance apart; but after running up a little between them we found the bog to widen to fifty or sixty rods in some places, and to be between two or three miles long. People say that it has no bottom, and that the longest poles that ever grew may be run down into the mud and then pushed down with another a little longer, and this may be repeated until the long poles are all gone.

"Coarse, tall water-grass grows up from the mud over every part, with the exception of a place five or six rods wide, running its whole length, and nearly in the middle, which is called the Channel. One can tell at first sight that it is the place for pickerel and water-snakes.

"Mr. Deblois stated something that I never heard before as a fact in natural history, that the pickerel wages war upon all fish, except the trout, who is too active for him; that he is a piscatorial cannibal; but

that under all circumstances and in all places, he lives on good terms with the water-snake.

"We saw a great many ducks, but they seemed to know that Mr. Sawyer had a gun, and flew on slight notice. At last, as four were flying and seemed to be entirely out of gunshot, he fired, saying he would frighten them, if no more; when, to our surprise, he brought one down. The gun was loaded with ball, and Mr. Deblois told him he could not do it again in a million shots. Mr. Sawyer laughed, saying that he had always been a votary of Chance, and that, as a general thing, she had treated him handsomely.

"We sailed more than a mile up the bog, fishing and trolling for pickerel; and though we saw a great many, not one offered to be caught, but horned pouts were willing, and we caught them till it was no sport. We found a man there who had taken nearly two bushels of pouts. He was on a raft, and had walked from near the foot of Long Pond, in Otisfield. Mr. Little knew him, and, intending to have some fun, said, 'The next time you come to Portland I want half a dozen of your best jewsharps; leave them at my store at Windham Hill. I need them very badly.'

"The man deliberately took from the hook a large pout that he had just pulled up, and, laying his fishing-pole down, began solemnly to explore in his pockets, and brought out six quaint jewsharps carefully tied to pieces of corn-cobs; then he tossed them into our boat to Mr. Little, saying, 'There they are, Tom, and they are as good ones as I ever made; I shall charge you fifty cents for them.' Mr. Little had the worst of the joke; but as the other men began to rally him, he took out the silver and paid the half-dollar; but they laughed at him till he told them, if they would say no more about it, he would give them all the brandy they could drink when they got home.

"Mr. Deblois said he would not be bribed; that he must tell Peter White when he got to Windham Hill.

"Mr. Little said he would not have Peter White know it for a yoke of steers.

"After fishing till all were tired, we landed on a small dry knoll that made out into the bog, to take our luncheon. The men had a variety of eatables, and several bottles that held no eatables. The question was started whether Enoch and I should be invited to drink, and they concluded not to urge us, as we were boys, and under their care. So Mr. Deblois said, 'Boys, anything to eat that is in our baskets is as much yours as ours; help yourselves; but we shall not invite you to drink spirits.'

"We thanked them, and said that we had plenty of our own to eat, and had no relish for spirits, but were very thirsty for water. Mr. Little had been there before, and directed us to a spring of the best of water, that boiled up like a pot from the ground, just at the margin of the bog.

"Before starting to return, the bet between Enoeh and myself had to be settled. By its conditions, the one who caught the largest number of fish was to have all the hooks and lines of the other. I counted my string and found twenty-five. Enoch made twenty-six on his; so I was about turning over the spoils, when Mr. Sawyer said that my string was the largest, and that there was a mistake. So he counted, and made twenty-six on mine, and twenty-five on Enoch's. We counted again, and found it was as he said, and Enoch prepared to pay the bet, when Mr. Sawyer again interfered, saying that Enoch's string was certainly larger than mine, and proposed to count again. This time I had but twenty-four, and Enoch twenty-seven. All the men counted them several times over, until we could not tell which was which, and they never came out twice alike.

"At length Mr. Deblois said solemnly, 'Stop this, Sawyer, you have turned these fish into a pack of cards, and are fooling us all.' The men laughed heartily, and so should I if I had known what the point of the joke was.

"Mr. Deblois said the decision as to our bet would have to go over to the next term. After starting for home, while running down the bog, Mr. Sawyer killed three noble black ducks at one shot, but the gun was not loaded this time with ball. Mr. Hanson struck with his fishing-pole, and killed a monstrous water-snake. Mr. Little measured a stick with his hands, and using it as a rule, declared him to be five feet long. If I thought any such snakes ever went over to Dingley Bay, I never would go into the water there again.

"When we got out of the bog into the open water, we found a lively breeze from the northwest, and they landed me at the Dingley Brook in less than an hour, and then kept on like a great white bird down towards the Cape, and for the outlet. I stood and watched the boat until it was nearly half-way to Frye's Island, loath to lose sight of what had helped me to enjoy the day so much. Taking my fish I walked home, and greeted mother just as the sun went out of sight behind the hills in Baldwin. The fish were worthless, but I thought I must have something to show for the day spent. After exhibiting them to mother and sister, and hearing the comments as to their ugliness, and much speculation as to what their horns were for, I gave them to Mr. Lambard, who said that pouts were the best of fish after they were skinned.

"I have made this account of the expedition to please Uncle Richard, who is an invalid and cannot get out to enjoy such sport, and wished me to describe everything just as it had happened, whether witty or silly, and give my own impressions. He has read my diary, and says that it interested him, which is all the reward I desire. And now I add these lines to keep in remembrance the peculiar satisfaction I received in hearing the conversation, especially of Mr. Deblois and Mr. Little. August, 1818, Raymond."

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These extracts from the Raymond Journal, if they be genuine, as in most respects I believe they must be, will furnish a clew, otherwise wanting, to the distinct turn which the boy's mind took toward authorship after his return to Salem, and on passing the propylon of classical culture. We can also see in them, I think, the beginning of that painstaking accumulation of fact, the effort to be first of all accurate, which is a characteristic of his maturer and authenticated note-books; very significant, too, is the dash of the supernatural and his tone concerning it. A habit of thus preserving impressions, and of communing with himself through the pen, so constant and assiduous as we know it to have been in his later years,—even when mind and time were preoccupied,—must have been formed early, to retain so strong a hold upon him. But there is another reason for supposing that he had begun to compose with care before coming from Raymond to Salem; and this is found in the fact that, in 1820, he began issuing (probably to a very small and intimate circle of subscribers) a neat little weekly paper printed with the pen on sheets of a much-curtailed note size, and written in an excellent style.

The first number, dated Monday, August 21, 1820, opens with the Editor's Address:—

"Our feelings upon sending into the world the first number of the Spectator may be compared to those of a fond Parent, when he beholds a beloved child about to embark on the troubled Ocean of public Life. Perhaps the iron hand of Criticism may crush our humble undertaking, ere it is strengthened by time. Or it may pine in obscurity neglected and forgotten by those, with whose assistance it might become the Pride and Ornament of our Country.... We beg leave farther to remark that in order to carry on any enterprise with spirit MONEY is absolutely necessary. Money, although it is the root of all evil, is also the foundation of everything great and good, and therefore our Subscribers ... will please carefully to remember that the terms are two cents per month."

A little further on there is this allusion to the Scriptural proverb cited above: "We have been informed that this expression is incorrect, and that it is the love of Money which is the 'Root of all Evil.' But money is certainly the cause of the love of Money. Therefore, Money is the deepest 'Root of Evil.'" (Observe, here, the young student's pride of reason, and the consciousness of a gift for casuistry!) Under the head of "Domestic News" occur some remarks on the sea-serpent, the deduction from various rumors about the monster being that "he seems to possess a strange and we think rather unusual faculty of appearing in different shapes to different eyes, so that where one person sees a shark, another beholds a nameless dragon." (Here, too, is the humorously veiled distrust that always lurked beneath his dealings with the marvellous.) In the next columns there is found an advertisement of the Pin Society, which "will commence lending pins to any creditable person, on Wednesday, the 23d instant. No numbers except ten, twenty, and thirty will be lent"; and the rate of interest is to be one pin on every ten per day. This bold financial scheme is also carried on by the editor in person,—a combination which in these days would lay him open to suspicions of unfair dealing. I have seen a little manuscript book containing the remarkable constitution and by-laws of this society, in which there were but two members; and it is really a curious study of whimsical intricacy, the work of a mind perfectly accustomed to solitude and fertile in resources for making monotony various and delightful. It does not surprise one to meet with the characteristic announcement from this editor that he has "concluded not to insert deaths and marriages (except of very distinguished persons) in the Spectator. We can see but little use in thus giving to the world the names of the crowd who are tying the marriage knot, and going down to the silent tomb." There is some poetry at the end of the paper, excellent for a boy, but without the easy inspiration of the really witty prose.

It would seem that this weekly once made a beginning, which was also an end, before nourishing up into the series of which I have synopsized the first issue; for there is another Number One without date, but apparently earlier. This contains some exemplary sentiments "On Solitude," with a touch of what was real profundity in so inexperienced a writer. "Man is naturally a sociable being," he says; "and apart from the world there are no incitements to the pursuit of excellence; there are no rivals to contend with; and therefore there is no improvement.... The heart may be more pure and uncorrupted in solitude than when exposed to the influences of the depravity of the world; but the benefit of virtuous examples is equal to the detriment of vicious ones, and both are equally lost." The "Domestic Intelligence" of this number is as follows: "The lady of Dr. Winthrop Brown, a son and Heir. Mrs. Hathorne's cat, Seven Kittens. We hear that both of the above ladies are in a state of convalescence." Also, "Intentions of Marriage. The beautiful and accomplished Miss Keziah Dingley will shortly be

united to Dominicus Jordan Esq." (The young author appears to have allowed himself in this paragraph the stimulus of a little fiction respecting real persons. Dominicus Jordan is the pedler of the Raymond notes. Who Miss Keziah was I do not know, but from the name I guess her to have been a relative, by appellation at least, through Richard Manning's wife. If Hawthorne did not himself call Miss Dingley aunt, he may very likely have heard her commonly spoken of by that title. Did the old, boyish association perhaps unconsciously supply him with a name for the Indian aunt of "Septimius Felton"?) The next item is "DEATHS. We are sorry to be under the necessity of informing our readers that no deaths of importance have taken place, except that of the publisher of this Paper, who died of Starvation, owing to the slenderness of his patronage." Notwithstanding this discouraging incident, one of the advertisements declares that "Employment will be given to any number of indigent Poets and Authors at this office." But shortly afterward is inserted the announcement that "Nathaniel Hathorne proposes to publish by subscription a new edition of the Miseries of Authors, to which will be added a sequel, containing Facts and Remarks drawn from his own experience."

In Number Two of the new series, the editor speaks of a discourse by Dr. Stoughton, "on Tuesday evening.... With the amount of the contribution which was taken up ... we are unacquainted, as, having no money in our pockets, we departed before it commenced." This issue takes a despondent view of the difficulties that beset editors. There is a clever paragraph of "Domestic News" again. "As we know of no News," it says, "we hope our readers will excuse us for not inserting any. The law which prohibits paying debts when a person has no money will apply in this case." Next we have a very arch dissertation "On Industry": "It has somewhere been remarked that an Author does not write the worse for knowing little or nothing of his subject. We hope the truth of this saying will be manifest in the present article. With the benefits of Industry we are not personally acquainted." The desperate editor winds up his week's budget with a warning to all persons who may be displeased by observations in the Spectator, that he is going to take fencing lessons and practise shooting at a mark. "We also," he adds, "think it advisable to procure a stout oaken cudgel to be the constant companion of our peregrinations." The assumption of idleness in the essay on Industry, just quoted, breaks down entirely in a later number, when the editor—in apologizing for inaccuracies in the printing of his paper—enumerates his different occupations: "In the first place we study Latin and Greek. Secondly we write in the employment of William Manning Esq., [at that time proprietor of an extensive line of stagecoaches]. Thirdly, we are Secretary, Treasurer, and Manager of the 'Pin Society'; Fourthly, we are editor of the Spectator; fifthly, sixthly, and lastly, our own Printers, Printing Press and Types." But the young journalist carried on his labors unabatedly, for the term of some five weeks, and managed to make himself very entertaining. I take from an essay "On Benevolence" a fragment which has a touch of poetry out of his own life. Benevolence, he says, is "to protect the fatherless, and to make the Widow's heart sing for joy." One of the most cherishable effusions is that "On Wealth," in which the venerable writer drops into a charmingly confidential and reminiscent vein. "All men," he begins, "from the highest to the lowest, desire to pursue wealth.... In process of time if we obtain possession" of a sum at first fixed as the ultimatum, "we generally find ourselves as far from being contented as at first.... When I was a boy, I one day made an inroad into a closet, to the secret recesses of which I had often wished to penetrate. I there discovered a quantity of very fine apples. At first I determined to take only one, which I put in my pocket. But those which remained were so very inviting that it was against my conscience to leave them, and I filled my pockets and departed, wishing that they would hold more. But alas! an apple which was unable to find space enough among its companions bounced down upon the floor before all the Family. I was immediately searched, and forced, very unwillingly, to deliver up all my booty." In the same number which contains this composition appears the token of what was doubtless Hawthorne's first recognition in literature. It is a "Communication," of tenor following:—

"Mr. Editor: I have observed in some of your last papers, Essays on Various subjects, and am very much pleased with them, and wish you to continue them. If you will do this, you will oblige

"MARIA LOUISA HATHORNE."

"We hail the above communication," writes the editor with exaggerated gratitude, "as the dawn of a happy day for us." In his next and final issue, though (September, 18, 1820), he satirically evinces his dissatisfaction at the want of a literary fraternity in his native land, through this "Request":—

"As it is part of the plan of the Spectator to criticise home-manufactured publications, we most earnestly desire some of our benevolent Readers to write a book for our special benefit. At present we feel as we were wont to do in the days of our Boyhood, when we possessed a Hatchet, without anything to exercise it upon. We engage to execute the Printing and Binding, and to procure the Paper for the Work, free of all expense to the Author. If this request should be denied us, we must infallibly turn our arms against our own writings, which, as they will not stand the test of criticism, we feel very unwilling to do. We do not wish that the proposed work should be too perfect; the Author will please to make a few blunders for us to exercise our Talents upon."

In these quotations one sees very clearly the increased maturity (though it be only by a year or two) of the lad, since the engrossing of his records at Raymond. We get in these his entire mood, catch gleams of a steady fire of ambition under the light, self-possessed air of assumed indifference, and see how easily already his humor began to play, with that clear and sweet ripeness that warms some of his more famous pages, like late sunshine striking through clusters of mellow and translucent grapes. Yet our grasp of his mental situation at this point would not be complete, without recognition of the graver emotions that sometimes throbbed beneath the surface. The doubt, the hesitancy that sometimes must have weighed upon his lonely, self-reliant spirit with weary movelessness, and all the pain of awakening ambition and departing boyhood, seem to find a symbol in this stanza from the fourth "Spectator":—

"Days of my youth, ye fleet away,
As fades the bright sun's cheering ray,
And scarce my infant hours are gone,
Ere manhood's troubled step comes on.
My infant hours return no more,
And all their happiness is o'er;
The stormy sea of life appears,
A scene of tumult and of tears."

Of the vexations of unfledged manhood the boy of sixteen did not speak without knowledge. Various sorts of pressure from uncongenial sources were now and then brought to bear upon him; there was present always the galling consciousness of depending on others for support, and of being less self-sustaining than approaching manhood made him wish to be. Allusion has been made to his doing writing for his uncle William. "I still continue," he says in a letter of October, 1820, to his mother at Raymond, "to write for Uncle William, and find my salary quite convenient for many purposes." This, to be sure, was a first approach to self-support, and flattering to his sense of proper dignity. But Hawthorne, in character as in genius, had a passion for maturity. An outpouring of his thoughts on this and other matters, directed to his sister, accompanies the letter just cited. Let us read it here as he wrote it more than a half-century ago:—

DEAR SISTER:—I am very angry with you for not sending me some of your poetry, which I consider a great piece of ingratitude. You will not see one line of mine until you return the confidence which I have placed in you. I have bought the 'Lord of the Isles,' and intend either to send or to bring it to you. I like it as well as any of Scott's other poems. I have read Hogg's "Tales," "Caleb Williams," "St. Lean," and "Mandeville." I admire Godwin's novels, and intend to read them all. I shall read the "Abbot," by the author of "Waverley," as soon as I can hire it. I have read all Scott's novels except that. I wish I had not, that I might have the pleasure of reading them again. Next to these I like "Caleb Williams." I have almost given up writing poetry. No man can be a Poet and a book-keeper at the same time. I do find this place most "dismal," and have taken to chewing tobacco with all my might, which, I think, raises my spirits. Say nothing of it in your letters, nor of the "Lord of the Isles." ... I do not think I shall ever go to college. I can scarcely bear the thought of living upon Uncle Robert for four years longer. How happy I should be to be able to say, "I am Lord of myself!" You may cut off this part of my letter, and show the other to Uncle Richard. Do write me some letters in skimmed milk. [The shy spirit finds it thus hard, even thus early, to be under possible surveillance in his epistolary musings, and wants to write invisibly.] I must conclude, as I am in a "monstrous hurry!"

Your affectionate brother, NATH. HATHORNE.

P. S. The most beautiful poetry I think I ever saw begins:—

"She's gone to dwell in Heaven, my lassie,
She's gone to dwell in Heaven:
Ye're ow're pure quo' a voice aboon
For dwalling out of Heaven."

It is not the words, but the thoughts. I hope you have read it, as I know you would admire it.

As to the allusion to college, it is but a single ray let into the obscurity of a season when the sensitive, sturdy, proud young heart must have borne many a vigil of vexatious and bitter revery. And this must not be left out in reckoning the grains and scruples that were compounding themselves into his inner consciousness. But at last he struck a balance, wisely, among his doubts; and in the fall of 1821 he went to Bowdoin to become one of the famous class with Longfellow and Cheever, the memory of which has been enwreathed with the gentle verse of "Morituri Salutamus,"—a fadeless garland. In "Fanshawe," an anonymous work of his youth, Hawthorne has pictured some aspects of the college at Brunswick, under a very slight veil of fiction.

"From the exterior of the collegians," he says, "an accurate observer might pretty safely judge how

long they had been inmates of those classic walls. The brown cheeks and the rustic dress of some would inform him that they had but recently left the plough, to labor in a not less toilsome field. The grave look and the intermingling of garments of a more classic cut would distinguish those who had begun to acquire the polish of their new residence; and the air of superiority, the paler cheek, the less robust form, the spectacles of green, and the dress in general of threadbare black, would designate the highest class, who were understood to have acquired nearly all the science their Alma Mater could bestow, and to be on the point of assuming their stations in the world. There were, it is true, exceptions to this general description. A few young men had found their way hither from the distant seaports; and these were the models of fashion to their rustic companions, over whom they asserted a superiority in exterior accomplishments, which the fresh, though unpolished intellect of the sons of the forest denied them in their literary competitions. A third class, differing widely from both the former, consisted of a few young descendants of the aborigines, to whom an impracticable philanthropy was endeavoring to impart the benefits of civilization.

"If this institution did not offer all the advantages of elder and prouder seminaries, its deficiencies were compensated to its students by the inculcation of regular habits, and of a deep and awful sense of religion, which seldom deserted them in their course through life. The mild and gentle rule … was more destructive to vice than a sterner sway; and though youth is never without its follies, they have seldom been more harmless than they were here. The students, indeed, ignorant of their own bliss, sometimes wished to hasten the time of their entrance on the business of life; but they found, in after years, that many of their happiest remembrances, many of the scenes which they would with least reluctance live over again, referred to the seat of their early studies."

* * * * *

He here divides the honors pleasantly between the forest-bred and city-trained youth, having, from his own experience, an interest in each class. Yet I think he must have sided, in fact, with the country boys. Horatio Bridge, his classmate, and throughout life a more confidential friend than Pierce, was brought up on his father's estate at Bridgton, north of Sebago Lake; and Franklin Pierce, in the class above him, his only other frequent companion, was a native of the New Hampshire hill-lands. He himself, in his outward bearing, perhaps gathered to his person something the look of both the seaport lads and the sturdy mountaineers and woodsmen. He was large and strong (in a letter to his uncle Robert, just before entering college, he gives the measure of his foot, for some new shoes that are to be sent; it is ten inches), but an interior and ruling grace removed all suspicion of heaviness. Being a sea-captain's son, he would naturally make his connections at college with men who had the out-of-doors glow about them; the simple and severe life at Raymond, too, had put him in sympathy with the people rather than with the patricians (although I see that the reminiscences of some of the old dwellers near Raymond describe the widow and her brother Richard as being exclusive and what was there thought "aristocratic"). Hawthorne, Pierce, and Bridge came together in the Athenaean Society, the newer club of the two college literary unions, and the more democratic; and the trio preserved their cordial relations intact for forty years, sometimes amid confusions and misconstructions, or between cross-fires of troublous counter-considerations, with a rare fidelity. Hawthorne held eminent scholarship easily within his grasp, but he and his two cronies seem to have taken their curriculum very easily, though they all came off well in the graduation. Hawthorne was a good Latinist. The venerable Professor Packard has said that his Latin compositions, even in the Freshman year, were remarkable; and Mr. Longfellow tells me that he recalls the graceful and poetic translations which his classmate used to give from the Roman authors. He got no celebrity in Greek, I believe, but he always kept up his liking for the Latin writers. Some years since a Latin theme of his was found, which had been delivered at an exhibition of the Athenaean Society, in December, 1823. [Footnote: See Appendix II.] It shows some niceties of selection, and the style is neat; I even fancy something individual in the choice of the words *sanctior nec beatior*, as applied to the republic, and a distinctly Hawthornesque distinction in the *fulgor tantum fuit sine fervore*; though a relic of this kind should not be examined too closely, and claims the same exemption that one gives to Shelley's school-compelled verses, *In Horologium*.

His English compositions also excited notice. Professor Newman gave them high commendation, and Mr. Bridge speaks of their superiority. But none of them have survived; whether owing to the author's vigilant suppression, or to the accidents of time. It was Hawthorne's habit as a young man to destroy all of his own letters that he could find, on returning home after an absence; and few records of his college life remain. Here is a brief note, however.

BRUNSWICK, August 12, 1823.

MY DEAR UNCLE:—I received your letter in due time, and should have answered it in due season, if I had not been prevented, as L—— conjectures, by laziness. The money was very acceptable to me, and will last me till the end of the term, which is three weeks from next Wednesday. I shall then have finished one half of my college life…. I suppose your farm prospers, and I hope you will have abundance

of fruit, and that I shall come home time enough to eat some of it, which I should prefer to all the pleasure of cultivating it. I have heard that there is a steamboat which runs twice a week between Portland and Boston. If this be the case I should like to come home that way, if mother has no apprehension of the boiler's bursting.

I really have had a great deal to do this term, as, in addition to the usual exercises, we have to write a theme or essay of three or four pages, every fortnight, which employs nearly all my time, so that I hope you will not impute my neglect of writing wholly to laziness....

Your affectionate nephew, NATH. HATHORNE.

This letter, as well as the others here given, shows how much of boyish simplicity surrounded and protected the rare and distinct personality already unfolded in this youth of eighteen. The mixture makes the charm of Hawthorne's youth, as the union of genius and common-sense kept his maturity alive with a steady and wholesome light. I fancy that obligatory culture irked him then, as always, and that he chose his own green lanes toward the advancement of learning. His later writings vouchsafe only two slight glimpses of the college days. In his Life of Franklin Pierce, he recalls Pierce's chairmanship of the Athenaean Society, on the committee of which he himself held a place. "I remember, likewise," he says, "that the only military service of my life was as a private soldier in a college company, of which Pierce was one of the officers. He entered into this latter business, or pastime, with an earnestness with which I could not pretend to compete, and at which, perhaps, he would now be inclined to smile." But much more intimate and delightful is the reminiscence which, in the dedicatory preface of "The Snow Image," addressed to his friend Bridge, he thus calls up. "If anybody is responsible for my being at this day an author, it is yourself. I know not whence your faith came: but, while we were lads together at a country college, gathering blueberries in study hours under those tall academic pines; or watching the great logs as they tumbled along the current of the Androscoggin; or shooting pigeons and gray squirrels in the woods; or bat-fowling in the summer twilight; or catching treats in that shadowy little stream, which, I suppose, is still wandering riverward through the forest,—though you and I will never cast a line in it again,—two idle lads, in short (as we need not fear to acknowledge now), doing a hundred things that the Faculty never heard of, or else it had been the worse for us,—still it was your prognostic of your friend's destiny, that he was to be a writer of fiction." I have asked Mr. Bridge what gave him this impression of Hawthorne, and he tells me that it was an indescribable conviction, aroused by the whole drift of his friend's mind as he saw it. Exquisite indeed must have been that first fleeting aroma of genius; and I would that it might have been then and there imprisoned and perpetuated for our delight. But we must be satisfied with the quick and sympathetic insight with which Hawthorne's friend discovered his true bent. The world owes more, probably, to this early encouragement from a college companion than it can ever estimate.

Nothing in human intercourse, I think, has a more peculiar and unchanging value than the mutual impressions of young men at college: they meet at a moment when the full meaning of life just begins to unfold itself to them, and their fresh imaginations build upon two or three traits the whole character of a comrade, where a maturer man weighs and waits, doubts and trusts, and ends after all with a like or dislike that is only lukewarm. Far on toward the close of life, Hawthorne, in speaking of something told him by an English gentleman respecting a former classmate of the latter's, wrote: "It seemed to be one of those early impressions which a collegian gets of his fellow-students, and which he never gets rid of, whatever the character of the person may turn out to be in after years. I have judged several persons in this way, and still judge them so, though the world has come to very different opinions. Which is right,—the world, which has the man's whole mature life on its side; or his early companion, who has nothing for it but some idle passages of his youth?" The world, doubtless, measures more accurately the intrinsic worth of the man's mature actions; but his essential characteristics, creditable or otherwise, are very likely to be better understood by his classmates. In this, then, we perceive one of the formative effects on Hawthorne's mind of his stay at Brunswick. Those four years of student life gave him a thousand eyes for observing and analyzing character. He learned then, also, to choose men on principles of his own. Always afterward he was singularly independent in selecting friends; often finding them even in unpopular and out-of-the-way persons. The affinity between himself and Bridge was ratified by forty years of close confidence; and Hawthorne never swerved from his early loyalty to Pierce, though his faithfulness gave him severe trials, both public and private, afterward. I am not of those who explain this steadfastness by a theory of early prepossession on Hawthorne's part, blinding him to Pierce's errors or defects. There is ample proof in the correspondence between Bridge and himself, which I have seen, that he constantly and closely scanned his distinguished friend the President's character with his impartial and searching eye for human character, whatsoever its relations to himself. I believe if he had ever found that the original nucleus of honor and of a certain candor which had charmed him in Pierce was gone, he would, provided it seemed his duty, have rejected the friendship. As it was, he saw his old friend and comrade undergoing changes which he himself thought hazardous, saw him criticised in a post where no one ever escaped the severest

criticism, and beheld him return to private life amid unpopularity, founded, as he thought, upon misinterpretation of what was perhaps error, but not dishonesty. Meanwhile he felt that the old "Frank," his brother through Alma Mater, dwelt still within the person of the public man; and though to claim that brotherhood exposed Hawthorne, under the circumstances, to cruel and vulgar insinuations, he saw that duty led him to the side of his friend, not to that of the harsh multitude.

Perhaps his very earliest contribution to light literature was an apocryphal article which he is said to have written when about eighteen or nineteen. Just then there came into notice a voracious insect, gifted with peculiar powers against pear-trees. Knowing that his uncle was especially concerned in fruit culture, Hawthorne wrote, and sent from college to a Boston paper, a careful description of the new destroyer, his habits, and the proper mode of combating him, all drawn from his own imagination. It was printed, so the tale runs; and a package of the papers containing it arrived in Salem just as the author reached there for a brief vacation. Mr. Manning is said to have accepted in good faith the knowledge which the article supplied, but Hawthorne's amusement was not unmixed with consternation at the success of his first essay.

In the two or three letters from him at college which still survive, there is no open avowal of the inner life, which was then the supplier of events for his outwardly monotonous days; not a breath of that strain of revery and fancy which impressed Bridge's mind! One allusion shows that he systematically omitted declamation; and an old term bill of 1824 (the last year of his course) charges him with a fine of twenty cents for neglect of theme! Spur to authorship:—the Faculty surely did its best to develop his genius, and cannot be blamed for any shortcomings. [Footnote: The amount of this bill, for the term ending May 21, 1824, is but $19.62, of which $2.36 is made up of fines. The figures give a backward glimpse at the epoch of cheap living, but show that the disinclination of students to comply with college rules was even then expensive. The "average of damages" is only thirty-three cents, from which I infer that the class was not a destructive one.] Logically, these tendencies away from essay and oratory are alien to minds destined to produce literature; but empirically, they are otherwise. Meantime, we get a sudden light on some of the solid points of character, apart from genius, in this note from the college president, and the student's parallel epistles.

May 29, 1822.

MRS. ELIZABETH C. HATHORNE.

MADAM:——By note of the Executive Government of this college, it is made my duty to request your co-operation with us in the attempt to induce your son faithfully to observe the laws of this institution. He was this day fined fifty cents for playing cards for money, last term. He played at different times. Perhaps he might not have gained, were it not for the influence of a student whom we have dismissed from college. It does not appear that your son has very recently played cards; yet your advice may be beneficial to him. I am, madam,

Very respectfully,

Your obedient, humble servant,

WILLIAM ALLEN, *President*.

The next day after this note was written (on May 30, 1822) the subject of it wrote thus:—

"MY DEAR MOTHER:—I hope you have safely arrived in Salem. I have nothing particular to inform you of, except that all the card-players in college have been found out, and my unfortunate self among the number. One has been dismissed from college, two suspended, and the rest, with myself, have been fined fifty cents each. I believe the President intends to write to the friends of all the delinquents. Should that be the case, you must show the letter to nobody. If I am again detected, I shall have the honor of being suspended; when the President asked what we played for, I thought it proper to inform him it was fifty cents, although it happened to be a quart of wine; but if I had told him of that, he would probably have fined me for having a blow. [It appears that the mild dissipation of wine-drinking in vogue at Bowdoin at that time was called having a "blow;" probably an abbreviation for the common term "blow-out," applied to entertainments.] There was no untruth in the case, as the wine cost fifty cents. I have not played at all this term. I have not drank any kind of spirits or wine this term, and shall not till the last week."

But in a letter to one of his sisters (dated August 5, 1822) a few months afterward, he touches the matter much more vigorously:—

"To quiet your suspicions, I can assure you that I am neither 'dead, absconded, or anything worse.' [The allusion is to some reproach for a long silence on his part.] I have involved myself in no 'foolish

scrape,' as you say all my friends suppose; but ever since my misfortune I have been as steady as a sign-post, and as sober as a deacon, have been in no 'blows' this term, nor drank any kind of 'wine or strong drink.' So that your comparison of me to the 'prodigious son' will hold good in nothing, except that I shall probably return penniless, for I have had no money this six weeks.... The President's message is not so severe as I expected. I perceive that he thinks I have been led away by the wicked ones, in which, however, he is greatly mistaken. I was full as willing to play as the person he suspects of having enticed me, and would have been influenced by no one. I have a great mind to commence playing again, merely to show him that I scorn to be seduced by another into anything wrong."

I cannot but emphasize with my own words the manly, clear-headed attitude of the young student in these remarks. He has evidently made up his mind to test the value of card-playing for wine, and thinks himself—as his will be the injury, if any—the best judge of the wisdom of that experiment. A weaker spirit, too, a person who knew himself less thoroughly, would have taken shelter under the President's charitable theory with thanksgiving; but Hawthorne's perfectly simple moral sense and ingrained manhood would not let him forget that self-respect lives by truth alone. In this same letter he touches lesser affairs:—

"I have not read the two novels you mention. I began some time ago to read Hume's 'History of England,' but found it so abominably dull that I have given up the undertaking until some future time. I can procure books of all sorts from the library of the Athenaean Society, of which I am a member. The library consists of about eight hundred volumes, among which is Rees's Cyclopaedia [this work was completed in 1819], and many other valuable works.... Our class will be examined on Tuesday for admittance to our Sophomore year. If any of us are found deficient, we shall be degraded to the Freshman class again; from which misfortune may Heaven defend me."

But the young Freshman's trepidation, if he really felt any, was soon soothed; he passed on successfully through his course. Not only did he graduate well, but he had also, as we shall see, begun to prepare himself for his career. Here is a letter which gives, in a fragmentary way, his mood at graduation:—

"BRUNSWICK, July 14, 1825.

"MY DEAR SISTER:—.... I am not very well pleased with Mr. Dike's report of me. The family had before conceived much too high an opinion of my talents, and had probably formed expectations which I shall never realize. I have thought much upon the subject, and have finally come to the conclusion that I shall never make a distinguished figure in the world, and all I hope or wish is to plod along with the multitude. I do not say this for the purpose of drawing any flattery from you, but merely to set mother and the rest of you right upon a point where your partiality has led you astray. I did hope that Uncle Robert's opinion of me was nearer to the truth, as his deportment toward me never expressed a very high estimation of my abilities."

Mr. Dike was a relative, who had probably gone back to Salem, after seeing the young man at Brunswick, with a eulogy on his lips. Hawthorne's modesty held too delicate a poise to bear a hint of praise, before he had yet been put to the test or accomplished anything decisive. In some ways this modesty and shyness may have postponed his success as an author; yet it was this same delicate admixture which precipitated and made perfect the mysterious solution in which his genius lay. The wish "to plod along with the multitude," seemingly unambitious, is only a veil. The hearts that burn most undyingly with hope of achievement in art, often throw off this vapor of discontent; they feel a prophetic thrill of that nameless suffering through which every seeker of truth must pass, and they long beforehand for rest, for the sweet obscurity of the ungifted.

Another part of this letter shows the writer's standing at college:—

"Did the President write to you about my part? He called me to his study, and informed me that, though my rank in the class entitled me to a part, yet it was contrary to the law to give me one, on account of my neglect of declamation. As he inquired mother's name and residence, I suppose that he intended to write to her on the subject. If so, you will send me a copy of the letter. I am perfectly satisfied with this arrangement, as it is a sufficient testimonial to my scholarship, while it saves me the mortification of making my appearance in public at Commencement. Perhaps the family may not be so much pleased by it. Tell me what are their sentiments on the subject.

"I shall return home in three weeks from next Wednesday."

Here the dim record of his collegiate days ceases, leaving him on the threshold of the world, a fair scholar, a budding genius, strong, young, and true, yet hesitant; halting for years, as if gathering all his shy-souled courage, before entering that arena that was to echo such long applause of him. Yet doubt not that the purpose to do some great thing was already a part of his life, together with that longing for

recognition which every young poet, in the sweet uncertain certainty of beginning, feels that he must some day deserve. Were not these words, which I find in "Fanshawe," drawn from the author's knowledge of his own heart?

"He called up the years that, even at his early age, he had spent in solitary study,—in conversation with the dead,—while he had scorned to mingle with the living world, or to be actuated by any of its motives. Fanshawe had hitherto deemed himself unconnected with the world, unconcerned in its feelings, and uninfluenced by it in any of his pursuits. In this respect he probably deceived himself. If his inmost heart could have been laid open, there would have been discovered that dream of undying fame, which, dream as it is, is more powerful than a thousand realities."

Already, while at Bowdoin, Hawthorne had begun to write verses, and perhaps to print some of them anonymously in the newspapers. From some forgotten poem of his on the sea, a single stanza has drifted down to us, like a bit of beach-wood, the relic of a bark too frail to last. It is this:—

"The ocean hath its silent caves,
Deep, quiet, and alone;
Though there be fury on the waves,
Beneath them there is none."

If one lets the lines ring in his ears a little, the true Hawthornesque murmur and half-mournful cadence become clear. I am told, by the way, that when the Atlantic cable was to be laid, some one quoted this to a near relative of the writer's, not remembering the name of the author, but thinking it conclusive proof that the ocean depths would receive the cable securely. Another piece is preserved complete, and much more nearly does the writer justice:—

"MOONLIGHT.

"We are beneath the dark blue sky,
And the moon is shining bright;
O, what can lift the soul so high
As the glow of a summer night;
When all the gay are hushed to sleep
And they that mourn forget to weep,
Beneath that gentle light!

"Is there no holier, happier land
Among those distant spheres,
Where we may meet that shadow band,
The dead of other years?
Where all the day the moonbeams rest,
And where at length the souls are blest
Of those who dwell in tears?

"O, if the happy ever leave
The bowers of bliss on high,
To cheer the hearts of those that grieve,
And wipe the tear-drop dry;
It is when moonlight sheds its ray,
More pure and beautiful than day,
And earth is like the sky."

At a time when the taste and manner of Pope in poetry still held such strong rule over readers as it did in the first quarter of the century, these simple stanzas would not have been unworthy of praise for a certain independence; but there is something besides in the refined touch and the plaintive undertone that belong to Hawthorne's individuality. This gentle and musical poem, it is curious to remember, was written at the very period when Longfellow was singing his first fresh carols, full of a vigorous pleasure in the beauty and inspiration of nature, with a rising and a dying fall for April and Autumn, and the Winter Woods. One can easily fancy that in these two lines from "Sunrise on the Hills":—

"Where, answering to the sudden shot, thin smoke
Through thick-leaved branches from the dingle broke,"

it was the fire of Hawthorne's fowling-piece in the woods that attracted the young poet, from his lookout above. But Longfellow had felt in the rhythm of these earliest poems the tide-flow of his future, and Hawthorne had as yet hardly found his appropriate element.

In 1828, however, three years after graduating, he published an anonymous prose romance called "Fanshawe," much more nearly approaching a novel than his later books. It was issued at Boston, by Marsh and Capen; but so successful was Hawthorne in his attempt to exterminate the edition, that not half a dozen copies are now known to be extant. We have seen that he read and admired Godwin and Scott, as a boy. "Kenilworth," "The Pirate," "The Fortunes of Nigel," "Peveril of the Peak," "Quentin Durward," and others of Scott's novel; had appeared while Hawthorne was at Bowdoin; and the author of "Waverley" had become the autocrat of fiction. In addition to this, there is an inbred analogy between New England and Scotland. In the history and character of the people of each country are seen the influence of Calvin, and of a common-school system. Popular education was ingrafted upon the policy of both states at about the same period, and in both it has had the same result, making of the farming-class a body of energetic, thrifty, intelligent, and aspiring people. Scotland and New England alike owe some of their best as well as their least attractive traits to bitter climate and a parsimonious soil; and the rural population of either is pushed into emigration by the scanty harvests at home. It is not a little singular that the Yankee and the canny Scot should each stand as a butt for the wit of his neighbors, while each has a shrewdness all his own. The Scotch, it is true, are said to be unusually impervious to a joke, while our Down-Easters are perhaps the most recondite and many-sided of American humorists. And, though many of the conditions of the two regions are alike, the temperaments of the two races are of course largely dissimilar. The most salient distinction, perhaps, is that of the Scotch being a musical and dancing nation; something from which the New-Englanders are fatally far removed. As if to link him with his Puritan ancestry and stamp him beyond mistake as a Pilgrim and not a Covenanter, Hawthorne was by nature formed with little ear for music. It seems strange that a man who could inform the verses on "Moonlight," just quoted, with so delicate a melody, and never admitted an ill-timed strain or jarring cadence into his pure, symphonious prose, should scarcely be able to distinguish one tune from another. Yet such was the case. But this was owing merely to the absence of the *musical* instinct. He would listen with rapture to the unaccompanied voice; and I have been always much touched by a little incident recorded in the "English Note-Books": "There is a woman who has several times passed through this Hanover Street in which we live, stopping occasionally to sing songs under the windows; and last evening ... she came and sang 'Kathleen O'Moore' richly and sweetly. Her voice rose up out of the dim, chill street, and made our hearts throb in unison with it as we sat in our comfortable drawing-room. I never heard a voice that touched me more deeply. Somebody told her to go away, and she stopped like a nightingale suddenly shot." Hawthorne goes on to speak with wonder of the waste of such a voice, "making even an unsusceptible heart vibrate like a harp-string"; and it is pleasant to know that Mrs. Hawthorne had the woman called within, from the street. So that his soul was open to sound. But the unmusicalness of New England, less marked now than formerly, is only a symbol, perhaps,—grievous that it should be so!—of the superior temperance of our race. For, by one of those strange oversights that human nature is guilty of, Scotland, in opening the door for song and dance and all the merry crew of mirth, seems to admit quite freely two vagabonds that have no business there, Squalor and Drunkenness. Yet notwithstanding this grave unlikeness between the two peoples, Hawthorne seems to have found a connecting clew, albeit unwittingly, when he remarked, as he did, on his first visit to Glasgow, that in spite of the poorer classes there excelling even those of Liverpool in filth and drunkenness, "they are a better looking people than the English (and this is true of all classes), more intelligent of aspect, with more regular, features." There is certainly one quality linking the two nations together which has not yet been commented on, in relation to Hawthorne; and this is the natural growth of the weird in the popular mind, both here and in Scotland. It is not needful to enter into this at all at length. In the chapter on Salem I have suggested some of the immediate factors of the weird element in Hawthorne's fiction; but it deserves remark that only Scott and Hawthorne, besides George Sand, among modern novelists, have used the supernatural with real skill and force; and Hawthorne has certainly infused it into his work by a more subtle and sympathetic gift than even the magic-loving Scotch romancer owned. After this digressive prelude, the reader will be ready to hear me announce that "Fanshawe" was a faint reflection from the young Salem recluse's mind of certain rays thrown across the Atlantic from Abbotsford. But this needs qualification.

Hawthorne indeed admired Scott, when a youth; and after he had returned from abroad, in 1860, he fulfilled a tender purpose, formed on a visit to Abbotsford, of re-reading all the Waverley novels. Yet he had long before arrived at a ripe, unprejudiced judgment concerning him. The exact impression of his feeling appears in that delightfully humorous whimsey, "P.'s Correspondence," which contains the essence of the best criticism. [Footnote: See Mosses from an Old Manse, Vol. II.] In allusion to Abbotsford, Scott, he says, "whether in verse, prose, or architecture, could achieve but one thing, although that one in infinite variety." And he adds: "For my part, I can hardly regret that Sir Walter Scott had lost his consciousness of outward things before his works went out of vogue. It was good that he should forget his fame, rather than that fame should first have forgotten him. Were he still a writer, and as brilliant a one as ever, he could no longer maintain anything like the same position in literature. The world, nowadays, requires a more earnest purpose, a deeper moral, and a closer and homelier truth than he was qualified to supply it with. Yet who can be to the present generation even what Scott

has been to the past?" Now, in "Fanshawe" there is something that reminds one of Sir Walter; but the very resemblance makes the essential unlikeness more apparent.

The scene of the tale is laid at Harley College, "in an ancient, though not very populous settlement in a retired corner of one of the New England States." This, no doubt, is a reproduction of Bowdoin. Mr. Longfellow tells me that the descriptions of the seminary and of the country around it strongly suggest the Brunswick College. The President of Harley is a Dr. Melmoth, an amiable and simple old delver in learning, in a general way recalling Dominie Sampson, whose vigorous spouse rules him somewhat severely: their little bickerings supply a strain of farce indigenous to Scott's fictions, but quite unlike anything in Hawthorne's later work. A young lady, named Ellen Langton, daughter of an old friend of Dr. Melmoth's, is sent to Harley, to stay under his guardianship. Ellen is somewhat vaguely sketched, in the style of Scott's heroines; but this sentence ends with a trace of the young writer's quality: "If pen could give an adequate idea of Ellen Langton's beauty, it would achieve what pencil ... never could; for though the dark eyes might be painted, the pure and pleasant thoughts that peeped through them could only be seen and felt." This maiden the doctor once took into his study, to begin a course of modern languages with her; but she "having discovered an old romance among his heavy folios, contrived by the sweet charm of her voice to engage his attention," and quite beguiled him from severer studies. Naturally, she inthralls two young students at the college: one of whom is Edward Wolcott, a wealthy, handsome, generous, healthy young fellow from one of the seaport towns; and the other, Fanshawe, the hero, who is a poor but ambitious recluse, already passing into a decline through overmuch devotion to books and meditation. Fanshawe, though the deeper nature of the two, and intensely moved by his new passion, perceiving that a union between himself and Ellen could not be a happy one, resigns the hope of it from the beginning. But circumstances bring him into intimate relation with her. The real action of the book, after the preliminaries, takes up only some three days, and turns upon the attempt of a man named Butler to entice Ellen away under his protection, then marry her, and secure the fortune to which she is heiress. This scheme is partly frustrated by circumstances, and Butler's purpose towards Ellen then becomes a much more sinister one. From this she is rescued by Fanshawe; and, knowing that he loves her, but is concealing his passion, she gives him the opportunity and the right to claim her hand. For a moment, the rush of desire and hope is so great that he hesitates; then he refuses to take advantage of her generosity, and parts with her for the last time. Ellen becomes engaged to Wolcott, who had won her heart from the first; and Fanshawe, sinking into rapid consumption, dies before his class graduates. It is easy to see how the sources of emotion thus opened attracted Hawthorne. The noble and refined nature of Fanshawe, and the mingled craftiness, remorse, and ferocity of Butler, are crude embodiments of the same characteristics which he afterward treated in modified forms. They are the two poles, the extremes,—both of them remote and chilly,—of good and evil, from which the writer withdrew, after exploring them, into more temperate regions. The movement of these persons is visionary, and their personality faint. But I have marked a few characteristic portions of the book which suggest its tone.

When the young lady's flight with the stranger actually takes place, young Wolcott and President Melmoth ride together in the pursuit, and at this point there occurs a dialogue which is certainly as laughable and is better condensed than most similar passages in Scott, whom it strongly recalls. A hint of Cervantes appears in it, too, which makes it not out of place to mention that Hawthorne studied "Don Quixote" in the original, soon after leaving college.

* * * * *

"'Alas, youth! these are strange times,' observed the President, 'when a doctor of divinity and an undergraduate set forth like a knight-errant and his squire, in search of a stray damsel. Methinks I am an epitome of the church militant, or a new species of polemical divinity. Pray Heaven, however, there be no encounter in store for us; for I utterly forgot to provide myself with weapons.'

"'I took some thought for that matter, reverend knight,' replied Edward, whose imagination was highly tickled by Dr. Melmoth's chivalrous comparison.

"'Ay, I see that you have girded on a sword,' said the divine. 'But wherewith shall I defend myself?—my hand being empty except of this golden-headed staff, the gift of Mr. Langton.'

"'One of those, if you will accept it,' answered Edward, exhibiting a brace of pistols, 'will serve to begin the conflict, before you join the battle hand to hand.'

"'Nay, I shall find little safety in meddling with that deadly instrument, since I know not accurately from which end proceeds the bullet,' said Dr. Melmoth. 'But were it not better, seeing we are so well provided with artillery, to betake ourselves, in the event of an encounter, to some stone-wall or other place of strength?'

"'If I may presume to advise,' said the squire, 'you, as being most valiant and experienced, should ride

forward, lance in hand (your long staff serving for a lance), while I annoy the enemy from afar.'

"'Like Teucer behind the shield of Ajax,' interrupted Dr. Melmoth, 'or David with his stone and sling. No, no, young man; I have left unfinished in my study a learned treatise, important not only to the present age, but to posterity, for whose sakes I must take heed to my safety. But lo! who rides yonder?'"

* * * * *

In one place only does the author give full rein to his tragic power; but this is a vigorous burst, and remarkable also for its sure and trenchant analysis. During his escape with Ellen, Butler is moved to stop at a lonely hut inhabited by his mother, where he finds her dying; and, torn by the sight of her suffering while she raves and yearns for his presence, he makes himself known to her.

* * * * *

"At that unforgotten voice, the darkness burst away at once from her soul. She arose in bed, her eyes and her whole countenance beaming with joy, and threw her arms about his neck. A multitude of words seem struggling for utterance; but they gave place to a low moaning sound, and then to the silence of death. The one moment of happiness, that recompensed years of sorrow, had been her last.... As he [Butler] looked, the expression of enthusiastic joy that parting life had left upon the features faded gradually away, and the countenance, though no longer wild, assumed the sadness which it had worn through a long course of grief and pain. On beholding this natural consequence of death, the thought perhaps occurred to him that her soul, no longer dependent on the imperfect means of intercourse possessed by mortals, had communed with his own, and become acquainted with all its guilt and misery. He started from the bedside and covered his face with his hands, as if to hide it from those dead eyes.... But his deep repentance for the misery he had brought upon his parent did not produce in him a resolution to do wrong no more. The sudden consciousness of accumulated guilt made him desperate. He felt as if no one had thenceforth a claim to justice or compassion at his hands, when his neglect and cruelty had poisoned his mother's life, and hastened her death."

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What separates this story from the rest of Hawthorne's works is an intricate plot, with passages of open humor, and a rather melodramatic tone in the conclusion. These are the result in part of the prevalent fashion of romance, and in part of a desire to produce effects not quite consonant with his native bent. The choice of the title, "Fanshawe," too, seems to show a deference to the then prevalent taste for brief and quaint-sounding names; and the motto, "Wilt thou go on with me?" from Southey, placed on his title-page, together with quotations at the heads of chapters, belongs to a past fashion. Fanshawe and Butler are powerful conceptions, but they are so purely embodiments of passion as to assume an air of unreality. Butler is like an evil wraith, and Fanshawe is as evanescent as a sad cloud in the sky, touched with the first pale light of morning. Fanshawe, with his pure heart and high resolves, represents that constant aspiration toward lofty moral truth which marked Hawthorne's own mind, and Butler is a crude example of the sinful spirit which he afterward analyzed under many forms. The verbal style has few marks of the maturer mould afterward impressed on it, except that there is the preference always noticeable in Hawthorne for Latin wording. Two or three phrases, however, show all the limpidness and ease for which he gained fame subsequently. For instance, when Fanshawe is first surprised by his love for Ellen, he returns to his room to study: "The books were around him which had hitherto been to him like those fabled volumes of magic, from which the reader could not turn away his eye, till death were the consequence of his studies." This, too, is a pretty description of Ellen: "Terror had at first blanched her as white as a lily.... Shame next bore sway; and her blushing countenance, covered by her slender white fingers, might fantastically be compared to a variegated rose, with its alternate stripes of white and red." Its restraint is perhaps the most remarkable trait of the novel; for though this comes of timidity, it shows that Hawthorne, whether this be to his advantage or not, was not of the order of young genius which begins with tumid and excessive exhibition of power. His early acquaintance with books, breeding a respect for literary form, his shy, considerate modes of dealing with any intellectual problem or question requiring judgment, and the formal taste of the period in letters, probably conspired to this end.

IV.

TWILIGHT OF THE TWICE-TOLD TALES.

1828-1838.

We have now reached the point where the concealed foundations of Hawthorne's life terminate, and the final structure begins to appear above the surface, like the topmost portion of a coral island slowly rising from the depths of a solitary ocean.

When he left college, his friends Cilley and Pierce entered into law, the gateway to politics; Bridge returned to his father's estate at Bridgton, to engage later in a large enterprise there; and other classmates took up various activities in the midst of other men; but for Hawthorne no very clear path presented itself. Literature had not yet attained, in the United States, the rank of a distinct and powerful profession. Fifteen years before, Brockden Brown had died prematurely after a hapless struggle, worn out with overwork,—the first man who had undertaken to live by writing in this country since its colonization. "The North American Review," indeed, in Boston, was laying the corner-stone of a vigorous periodical literature; and in this year of 1825 William Cullen Bryant had gone to New York to edit "The New York Review," after publishing at Cambridge his first volume of poetry, "The Ages." Irving was an author of recent but established fame, who was drawing chiefly from the rich supplies of European manners, legend, and history; while Cooper, in his pleasant Pioneer-land beside Otsego Lake, had begun to make clear his claim to a wide domain of native and national fiction. But to a young man of reserved temper, having few or no friends directly connected with publication, and living in a sombre, old-fashioned town, isolated as all like towns were before the era of railroads, the avenue to publicity and a definite literary career was dark and devious enough.

I suppose it was after his venture of "Fanshawe," that he set about the composition of some shorter stories which he called "Seven Tales of my Native Land." [Footnote: The motto prefixed to these was, "We are seven."] His sister, to whom he read these, has told me that they were very beautiful, but no definite recollection of them remains to her, except that some of them related to witchcraft, and some to the sea, being stories of pirates and privateers. In one of these latter were certain verses, beginning,—

"The pirates of the sea, they were a fearful race."

Hawthorne has described in "The Devil in Manuscript," while depicting a young author about to destroy his manuscript, his own vexations in trying to find a publisher for these attempts. "They have been offered to some seventeen booksellers. It would make you stare to read their answers.... One man publishes nothing but school-books; another has five novels already under examination; ... another gentleman is just giving up business on purpose, I verily believe, to escape publishing my book.... In short, of all the seventeen booksellers, only one has vouchsafed even to read my tales; and he—a literary dabbler himself, I should judge—has the impertinence to criticise them, proposing what he calls vast improvements, and concluding ... that he will not be concerned on any terms.... But there does seem to be one honest man among these seventeen unrighteous ones; and he tells me fairly that no American publisher will meddle with an American work, seldom if by a known writer, and never if by a new one, unless at the writer's risk." He indeed had the most discouraging sort of search for a publisher; but at last a young printer of Salem promised to undertake the work. His name was Ferdinand Andrews; and he was at one time half-owner with Caleb Cushing of an establishment from which they issued "The Salem Gazette," in 1822, the same journal in which Hawthorne published various papers at a later date, when Mr. Caleb Foote was its editor. Andrews was ambitious, and evidently appreciative of his young townsman's genius; but he delayed issuing the "Seven Tales" so long that the author, exasperated, recalled the manuscript. Andrews, waiting only for better business prospects, was loath to let them go; but Hawthorne insisted, and at last the publisher sent word, "Mr. Hawthorne's manuscript awaits his orders." The writer received it and burned it, to the chagrin of Andrews, who had hoped to bring out many works by the same hand.

This, at the time, must have been an incident of incalculable and depressing importance to Hawthorne, and the intense emotion it caused may be guessed from the utterances of the young writer in the sketch just alluded to, though he has there veiled the affair in a light film of sarcasm. The hero of that scene is called Oberon, one of the feigned names which Hawthorne himself used at times in contributing to periodicals. "'What is more potent than fire!' said he, in his gloomiest tone. 'Even thought, invisible and incorporeal as it is, cannot escape it.... All that I had accomplished, all that I planned for future years, has perished by one common ruin, and left only this heap of embers! The deed has been my fate. And what remains? A weary and aimless life; a long repentance of this hour; and at last an obscure grave, where they will bury and forget me!'" There is also an allusion to the tales founded on witchcraft: "I could believe, if I chose," says Oberon, "that there is a devil in this pile of blotted papers. You have read them, and know what I mean,—that conception in which I endeavored to embody the character of a fiend, as represented in our traditions and the written records of witchcraft.

O, I have a horror of what was created in my own brain, and shudder at the manuscripts in which I gave that dark idea a sort of material existence!' You remember how the hellish thing used to suck away the happiness of those who ... subjected themselves to his power." This is curious, as showing the point from which Hawthorne had resolved to treat the theme. He had instinctively perceived that the only way to make the witchcraft delusion available in fiction was to accept the witch as a fact, an actual being, and expend his art upon developing the abnormal character; while other writers, who have attempted to use the subject for romantic ends, have uniformly taken the historical view, and sought to extract their pathos from the effect of the delusion on innocent persons. The historical view is that of intelligent criticism; but Hawthorne's effort was the harbinger and token of an original imagination.

After the publication of "Fanshawe" and the destruction of his "Seven Tales," Hawthorne found himself advanced not so much as by a single footstep on the road to fame. "Fame!" he exclaims, in meditation; "some very humble persons in a town may be said to possess it,—as the penny-post, the town-crier, the constable,—and they are known to everybody; while many richer, more intellectual, worthier persons are unknown by the majority of their fellow-citizens." But the fame that he desired was, I think, only that which is the recognition by the public that a man is on the way to truth. An outside acknowledgment of this is invaluable even to the least vain of authors, because it assures him that, in following his own inner impulse through every doubt and discouragement, he has not been pursuing a chimera, and gives him new heart for the highest enterprises of which he is capable. To attain this, amid the peculiar surroundings of his life, was difficult enough. At that time, Salem society was more peculiarly constituted than it has been in later years. A strong circle of wealthy families maintained rigorously the distinctions of class; their entertainments were splendid, their manners magnificent, and the fame of the beautiful women born amongst them has been confirmed by a long succession reaching into the present day. They prescribed certain fashions, customs, punctilios, to disregard which was social exile for the offending party; and they were divided even among themselves, I am told, by the most inveterate jealousies. It is said that certain people would almost have endured the thumb-screw rather than meet and speak to others. There seems to be good authority for believing that Hawthorne could have entered this circle, had he so chosen. He had relatives who took an active part within it; and it appears that there was a disposition among some of the fashionable coterie to show him particular favor, and that advances were made by them with the wish to draw him out. But one can conceive that it would not be acceptable to him to meet them on any but terms of entire equality. The want of ample supplies of money, which was one of the results of the fallen fortunes of his family, made this impossible; those who held sway were of older date in the place than some of the Hawthornes, and, like many another long-established stock, they had a conviction that, whatever their outward circumstances might be, a certain intrinsic superiority remained theirs. They were, like the lady of Hawthorne blood mentioned in the "American Note-Books," "proud of being proud." The Hawthornes, it was said, were as unlike other people as the Jews were to Gentiles; and the deep-rooted reserve which enveloped Hawthorne himself was a distinct family trait. So that, feeling himself to be in an unfair position, he doubtless found in these facts enough to cause him acute irritation of that sort which only very young or very proud and shrinking men can know. Besides this, the altered circumstances of his line, and his years in Maine, had brought him acquainted with humbler phases of life, and had doubtless developed in him a sympathy with simpler and less lofty people than these magnates. His father had been a Democrat, and loyalty to his memory, as well as the very pride just spoken of, conspired to lead him to that unpopular side. This set up another barrier between himself and the rich and powerful Whigs, for political feeling was almost inconceivably more bitter then than now. Thus there arose within him an unquiet, ill-defined, comfortless antipathy that must have tortured him with wearisome distress; and certainly shut him out from the sympathy and appreciation which, if all the conditions had been different, might have been given him by sincere and competent admirers. So little known among his own townsfolk, it is not to be wondered at that no encouraging answer reached him from more distant communities.

In his own home there was the faith which only love can give, but outside of it a chill drove his hopes and ardors back upon himself and turned them into despairs. His relatives, having seen him educated by the aid of his uncle, and now arrived at maturity, expected him to take his share in practical affairs. But the very means adopted to train him for a career had settled his choice of one in a direction perhaps not wholly expected; all cares and gains of ordinary traffic seemed sordid and alien to him. Yet a young man just beginning his career, with no solid proof of his own ability acquired, cannot but be sensitive to criticism from those who have gained a right to comment by their own special successes. As he watched these slow and dreary years pass by, from his graduation in 1825 to the time when he first came fully before the public in 1837, he must often have been dragged down by terrible fears that perhaps the fairest period of life was being wasted, losing forever the chance of fruition. "I sat down by the wayside of life," he wrote, long after, "like a man under enchantment, and a shrubbery sprang up around me, and the bushes grew to be saplings, and the saplings became trees, until no exit appeared possible, through the entangling depths of my obscurity." Judge in what a silence and solitary self-communing the time must have passed, to leave a thought like this: "To think, as the sun goes down,

what events have happened in the course of the day,—events of ordinary occurrence; as, the clocks have struck, the dead have been buried." Or this: "A recluse like myself, or a prisoner, to measure time by the progress of sunshine through his chamber." His Note-Books show how the sense of unreality vexed and pursued him; and how the sadness and solemnity of life returned upon him again and again; and how he clothed these dark visitants of his brain with the colors of imagination, and turned them away from him in the guise of miraculous fantasies. He talks with himself of writing "the journal of a human heart for a single day, in ordinary circumstances. The lights and shadows that flit across it, its internal vicissitudes." But this is almost precisely what his printed Note-Books have revealed to us. Only now and then do we get precisely the thought that is passing through his mind at the moment; it more often throws upon the page a reflected image,—some strange and subtle hint for a story, the germs of delicate fabrics long afterward matured, some merry or sad conceit, some tender yet piercing inference,—like the shadows of clouds passing quickly across a clear sky, and casting momentary glooms, and glances of light, on the ground below. These journals do not begin until a date seven years after "Fanshawe" was published; but it is safe to assume that they mirror pretty closely the general complexion of the intervening years.

His mode of life during this period was fitted to nurture his imagination, but must have put the endurance of his nerves to the severest test. The statement that for several years "he never saw the sun," is entirely an error; but it is true that he seldom chose to walk in the town except at night, and it is said that he was extremely fond of going to fires if they occurred after dark. In summer he was up shortly after sunrise, and would go down to bathe in the sea. The morning was chiefly given to study, the afternoon to writing, and in the evening he would take long walks, exploring the coast from Gloucester to Marblehead and Lynn,—a range of many miles. Or perhaps he would pace the streets of the town, unseen but observing, gathering material for something in the vein of his delicious "Night Sketches." "After a time," he writes, "the visions vanish, and will not appear again at my bidding. Then, it being nightfall, a gloomy sense of unreality depresses my spirits, and impels me to venture out before the clock shall strike bedtime, to satisfy myself that the world is not made of such shadowy materials as have busied me throughout the day. A dreamer may dwell so long among fantasies, that the things without him will seem as unreal as those within." Or, if he chose a later hour, he might go abroad to people the deserted thoroughfares with wilder phantoms. Sometimes he took the day for his rambles, wandering perhaps over Endicott's ancient Orchard Farm and among the antique houses and grassy cellars of old Salem village, the witchcraft ground; or losing himself among the pines of Montserrat and in the silence of the Great Pastures, or strolling along the beaches to talk with old sailors and fishermen. His tramps along the Manchester and Beverly shores or from Marblehead to Nahant were productive of such delicate tracings as "Footprints by the Sea-shore," or the dream-autobiography of "The Village Uncle." "Grudge me not the day," he says, in the former sketch, "that has been spent in seclusion, which yet was not solitude, since the great sea has been my companion, and the little sea-birds my friends, and the wind has told me his secrets, and airy shapes have flitted around my hermitage. Such companionship works an effect upon a man's character, as if he had been admitted to the society of creatures that are not mortal." This touches the inmost secret of those lonely, youthful years, which moulded the pure-hearted muser with ethereal, unsuspected fingers. Elsewhere, Hawthorne has given another glimpse into his interior life at this time: "This scene came into my fancy as I walked along a hilly road, on a starlight October evening; in the pure and bracing air I became all soul, and felt as if I could climb the sky, and run a race along the Milky Way. Here is another tale in which I wrapped myself during a dark and dreary night-ride in the month of March, till the rattling of the wheels and the voices of my companions seemed like faint sounds of a dream, and my visions a bright reality. That scribbled page describes shadows which I summoned to my bedside at midnight; they would not depart when I bade them; the gray dawn came, and found me wide awake and feverish, the victim of my own enchantments!" Susan, the imaginary wife in "The Village Uncle," is said to have had a prototype in the daughter of a Salem fisherman, whose wit and charm gave Hawthorne frequent amusement; and I suppose that not seldom he reaped delightful suggestions from his meetings with frank, unconscious, and individual people of tastes and life unlike his own. I have heard it told with a polite, self-satisfied scorn, that he was in the habit of visiting now and then a tavern patronized by 'longshore-men and nautical veterans, to listen to their talk. I can well believe it, for it is this sort of intercourse that a person of manly genius, with a republican fellow-feeling for the unrenowned, most covets. How well he gives the tone of these old sea-dogs, when he writes: "The blast will put in its word among their hoarse voices, and be understood by all of them!" It was this constant searching among the common types of men, and his ready sympathy with them, refined as it was hearty, that stored his mind with a variety of accurate impressions which afterward surprised observers, in a man of habits so retired.

His uncles, the Mannings, were connected with extensive stage-coach lines at this time, and Hawthorne seems to have used these as antennae to bring himself in contact with new and nutritive regions and people. A letter, probably written in 1830, which I do not feel at liberty to quote entire, tells something of a trip that he took with Samuel Manning through a part of Connecticut and the

Connecticut valley. The extracts that follow give a glimpse of the fresh and alert interest he felt about everything; and I regard them as very important in showing the obverse of that impression of unhealthy solitude which has been so generally received from accounts of Hawthorne hitherto published.

"We did not leave New Haven till last Saturday ... and we were forced to halt for the night at Cheshire, a village about fifteen miles from New Haven. The next day being Sunday, we made a Sabbath day's journey of seventeen miles, and put up at Farmington. As we were wearied with rapid travelling, we found it impossible to attend divine service, which was (of course) very grievous to us both. In the evening, however, I went to a Bible class with a very polite and agreeable gentleman, whom I afterward discovered to be a strolling tailor of very questionable habits.... We are now at Deerfield (though I believe my letter is dated Greenfield) ... with our faces northward; nor shall I marvel much if your Uncle Sam pushes on to Canada, unless we should meet with two or three bad taverns in succession....

"I meet with many marvellous adventures. At New Haven I observed a gentleman staring at me with great earnestness, after which he went into the bar-room, I suppose to inquire who I might be. Finally, he came up to me and said that as I bore a striking resemblance to a family of Stanburys, he was induced to inquire if I was connected with them. I was sorry to be obliged to answer in the negative. At another place they took me for a lawyer in search of a place to settle, and strongly recommended their own village. Moreover, I heard some of the students at Yale College conjecturing that I was an Englishman, and to-day, as I was standing without my coat at the door of a tavern, a man came up to me, and asked me for some oats for his horse."

It was during this trip, I have small doubt, that he found the scenery, and perhaps the persons, for that pretty interlude, "The Seven Vagabonds." The story is placed not far from Stamford, and the conjurer in it says, "I am taking a trip northward, this warm weather, across the Connecticut first, and then up through Vermont, and may be into Canada before the fall." The narrator himself queries by what right he came among these wanderers, and furnishes himself an answer which suggests that side of his nature most apt to appear in these journeys: "The free mind that preferred its own folly to another's wisdom; the open spirit that found companions everywhere; above all, the restless impulse that had so often made me wretched in the midst of enjoyments: these were my claims to be of their society." "If there be a faculty," he also writes, "which I possess more perfectly than most men, it is that of throwing myself mentally into situations foreign to my own, and detecting with a cheerful eye the desirableness of each." There is also one letter of 1831, sent back during an expedition in New Hampshire, which supplies the genesis of another Twice-Told Tale, "The Canterbury Pilgrims."

"I walked to the Shaker village yesterday [he says], and was shown over the establishment, and dined there with a squire and a doctor, also of the world's people. On my arrival, the first thing I saw was a jolly old Shaker carrying an immense decanter of their superb cider; and as soon as I told him my business, he turned out a tumblerful and gave me. It was as much as a common head could clearly carry. Our dining-room was well furnished, the dinner excellent, and the table attended by a middle-aged Shaker lady, good looking and cheerful.... This establishment is immensely rich. Their land extends two or three miles along the road, and there are streets of great houses painted yellow and tipt with red.... On the whole, they lead a good and comfortable life, and, if it were not for their ridiculous ceremonies, a man could not do a wiser thing than to join them. Those whom I conversed with were intelligent, and appeared happy. I spoke to them about becoming a member of their society, but have come to no decision on that point.

"We have had a pleasant journey enough.... I make innumerable acquaintances, and sit down on the doorsteps with judges, generals, and all the potentates of the land, discoursing about the Salem murder [that of Mr. White], the cow-skinning of Isaac Hill, the price of hay, and the value of horse-flesh. The country is very uneven, and your Uncle Sam groans bitterly whenever we come to the foot of a low hill; though this ought to make me groan rather than him, as I have to get out and trudge every one of them."

The "Clippings with a Chisel" point to some further wanderings, to Martha's Vineyard; and an uncollected sketch reveals the fact that he had been to Niagara. It was probably then that he visited Ticonderoga; [Footnote: A brief sketch of the fortress is included in The Snow Image volume of the Works.] but not till some years later that he saw New York. With these exceptions, and a trip to Washington before going to Liverpool in 1853, every day of his life up to that date was passed within New England. In "The Toll-Gatherer's Day" one sees the young observer at work upon the details of an ordinary scene near home. The "small square edifice which stands between shore and shore in the midst of a long bridge," spanning an arm of the sea, refers undoubtedly to the bridge from Salem to Beverly. But how lightly his spirit hovers over the stream of actual life, scarcely touching it before springing up again, like a sea-bird on the crest of a wave! Nothing could be more accurate and polished than his descriptions and his presentation of the actual facts; but his fancy rises resilient from these to

some dreamy, far-seeing perception or gentle moral inference. The visible human pageant is only of value to him as it suggests the viewless host of heavenly shapes that hang above it like an idealizing mirage. His attitude at this time recalls a suggestion of his own in "Sights from a Steeple": "The most desirable mode of existence might be that of a spiritualized Paul Pry, hovering invisible round man and woman, witnessing their deeds, searching into their hearts, borrowing brightness from their felicity, and shade from their sorrow, and retaining no emotion peculiar to himself." He had the longing which every creative mind must feel, to mix with other beings and share to the utmost the possibilities of human weal or woe, suppressing his own experience so far as to make himself a transparent medium for the emotions of mankind; but he still lacked a definite connection with the multifarious drama of human fellowship; he could not catch his cue and play his answering part, and therefore gave voice to a constantly murmurous, moralizing "aside." He delights to let the current of action flow around him and beside him; he warms his heart in it; but when he again withdraws by himself, it is with him as with the old toll-gatherer at close of day, "mingling reveries of Heaven with remembrances of earth, the whole procession of mortal travellers, all the dusty pilgrimage which he has witnessed, seems like a flitting show of phantoms for his thoughtful soul to muse upon."

"What would a man do," he asks himself, in his journal, "if he were compelled to live always in the sultry heat of society, and could never bathe himself in cool solitude?" As yet, this bracing influence of quietude, so essential to his well-being, fascinates him, and he cannot shake off its influence so far as to enter actively and for personal interests into any of the common pursuits even of the man who makes a business of literature. Yet nothing impresses him more than the fact that every one carries a solitude with him, wherever he goes, like a shadow. Twice, with an interval of three years between, this idea recurs in the form of a hint for romance. "Two lovers or other persons, on the most private business, to appoint a meeting in what they supposed to be a place of the utmost solitude, and to find it thronged with people." The idea implied is, that this would in fact be the completest privacy they could have wished. "The situation of a man in the midst of a crowd, yet as completely in the power of another, life and all, as if they two were in the deepest solitude." This contradiction between the *apparent* openness that must rule one's conduct among men, and the real secrecy that may coexist with it, even when one is most exposed to the gaze of others, excites in his mind a whole train of thought based on the falsity of appearances. If a man can be outwardly open and inwardly reserved in a good sense, he can be so in a bad sense; so, too, he may have the external air of great excellence and purity, while internally he is foul and unfaithful. This discovery strikes our perfectly sincere and true-hearted recluse with intense and endless horror. He tests it, by turning it innumerable ways, and imagining all sorts of situations in which such contradictions of appearance and reality might be illustrated. At one time, he conceives of a friend who should be true by day, and false at night. At another he suggests: "Our body to be possessed by two different spirits, so that half the visage shall express one mood, and the other half another." "A man living a wicked life in one place and simultaneously a virtuous and religious one in another." Then he perceives that this same uncertainty and contradiction affects the lightest and seemingly most harmless things in the world. "The world is so sad and solemn," he muses, "that things meant in jest are liable, by an overpowering influence, to become dreadful earnest." And then he applies this, as in the following: "A virtuous but giddy girl to attempt to play a trick on a man. He sees what she is about, and contrives matters so that she throws herself completely into his power, and is ruined,—all in jest." Likewise, the most desirable things, by this same law of contradiction, often prove the least satisfactory. Thus: "A person or family long desires some particular good. At last it comes in such profusion as to be the great pest of their lives." And this is equally true, he finds, whether the desired thing be sought in order to gratify a pure instinct or a wrong and revengeful one. "As an instance, merely, suppose a woman sues her lover for breach of promise, and gets the money by instalments, through a long series of years. At last, when the miserable victim were utterly trodden down, the triumpher would have become a very devil of evil passions,—they having overgrown his whole nature; so that a far greater evil would have come upon himself than on his victim." This theme of self-punished revenge, as we know, was afterward thoroughly wrought out in "The Scarlet Letter." Another form in which the thought of this pervading falsehood in earthly affairs comes to him is the frightful fancy of people being poisoned by communion-wine. Thus does the insincerity and corruption of man, the lie that is hidden in nearly every life and almost every act, rise and thrust itself before him, whichever way he turns, like a serpent in his path. He is in the position of the father confessor of whom he at one time thinks, and of "his reflections on character, and the contrast of the inward man with the outward, as he looks around his congregation, all whose secret sins are known to him." But Hawthorne does not let this hissing serpent either rout him or poison him. He is determined to visit the ways of life, to find the exit of the maze, and so tries every opening, unalarmed. The serpent is in all: it proves to be a deathless, large-coiled hydra, encircling the young explorer's virgin soul, as it does that of every pure aspirer, and trying to drive him back on himself, with a sting in his heart that shall curse him with a life-long venom. It does, indeed, force him to recoil, but not with any mortal wound. He retires in profound sorrow, acknowledging that earth holds nothing perfect, that his dream of ideal beings leading an ideal life, which, in spite of the knowledge of evil, he has been cherishing for so many years, is a dream to be fulfilled in the hereafter alone. He confesses to himself that "there is evil in every

human heart, which may remain latent, perhaps, through the whole of life; but circumstances may rouse it to activity." It is not a new discovery; but from the force with which it strikes him, we may guess the strength of his aspiration, the fine temper of his faith in the good and the beautiful. To be driven to this dismal conclusion is for him a source of inexpressible dismay, because he had trusted so deeply in the possibility of reaching some brighter truth. No; not a new discovery;—but one who approaches it with so much sensibility *feels* it to be new, with all the fervor which the most absolute novelty could rouse. This is the deepest and the true originality, to possess such intensity of feeling that the oldest truth, when approached by our own methods, shall be full of a primitive impressiveness.

But, in the midst of the depression born of his immense sorrow over sin, Hawthorne found compensations. First, in the query which he puts so briefly: "The good deeds in an evil life,—the generous, noble, and excellent actions done by people habitually wicked,—to ask what is to become of them." This is the motive which has furnished novelists for the last half-century with their most stirring and pathetic effects. It is a sort of escape, a safety-valve for the hot fire of controversy on the soul's fate, and offers in its pertinent indefiniteness a vast solace to those who are trying to balance the bewildering account of virtue with sin. Hawthorne found that here was a partial solution of the problem, and he enlarged upon it, toward the end of his life, in "The Marble Faun." But it was a second and deeper thought that furnished him the chief compensation. In one of the "Twice-Told Tales," "Fancy's Show-Box," he deals with the question, how far the mere thought of sin, the incipient desire to commit it, may injure the soul. After first strongly picturing the reality of certain sinful impulses in a man's mind, which had never been carried out,—"A scheme of guilt," he argues, taking up the other side, "till it be put in execution, greatly resembles a train of incidents in a projected tale.... Thus a novel-writer, or a dramatist, in creating the villain of romance, and fitting him with evil deeds, and the villain of actual life in projecting crimes that will be perpetrated, may almost meet each other half-way between reality and fancy. It is not until the crime is accomplished that guilt clinches its gripe upon the heart, and claims it for its own. Then, and not before, sin is actually felt and acknowledged, and, if unaccompanied by repentance, grows a thousand-fold more virulent by its self-consciousness. Be it considered, also, that men often overestimate their capacity for evil. At a distance, while its attendant circumstances do not press upon their notice, its results are dimly seen, they can bear to contemplate it.... In truth, there is no such thing in man's nature as a settled and full resolve, either for good or evil, except at the very moment of execution. Let us hope, therefore, that all the dreadful consequences of sin will not be incurred, unless the act have set its seal upon the thought. Yet ... *man must not disclaim his brotherhood, even with the guiltiest*, since, though his hand be clean, his heart has surely been polluted by the flitting phantoms of iniquity." That is, purity is too spotless a thing to exist in absolute perfection in a human being, who must often feel at least the dark flush of passionate thoughts falling upon him, however blameless of life he may be. From this lofty conception of purity comes that equally noble humility of always feeling "his brotherhood, even with the guiltiest." What more logical issue from the Christian idea, what more exquisitely tender rendering of it than this? "Let the whole world be cleansed, or not a man or woman of us can be clean!" was his exclamation, many years later, in that English workhouse which he describes in a heart-rending chapter of "Our Old Home" called "Outside Glimpses of English Poverty." And it was then that he revealed the vast depth and the reality of his human sympathy toward the wretched and loathsome little foundling child that silently sued to him for kindness, till he took it up and caressed it as tenderly as if he had been its father.

Armed with these two perceptions, of the good that still persists in evil persons, and the deep charity which every one must feel towards even the most abject fellow-being, Hawthorne moves forth again to trace the maze; and lo, the serpent drops down, cowering. He has found a charm that robs sin and crime of their deadly hurt, and can handle them without danger. It is said by some that Hawthorne treats wrong and corruption too shrinkingly, and his mood of never-lessened and acute sensibility touching them is contrasted with that of "virile" writers like Balzac and George Sand. But these incline to make a menagerie of life, thrusting their heads into the very lion's mouth, or boldly embracing the snake of sin. They are indeed superior in strong dramatic and realistic effects; but, unvicious as may be their aim, they are not filled with a robust morality: they deliberately choose unclean elements to heighten the interest,—albeit using such elements with magnificent strength and skill. Let us be grateful that Hawthorne does not so covet the applause of the clever club-man or of the unconscious vulgarian, as to junket about in caravan, carrying the passions with him in gaudy cages, and feeding them with raw flesh; grateful that he never loses the archangelic light of pure, divine, dispassionate wrath, in piercing the dragon!

We see now how, in this early term of probation, he was finding a philosophy and an unsectarian religiousness, which ever stirred below the clear surface of his language like the bubbling spring at bottom of a forest pool. It has been thought that Hawthorne developed late. But the most striking thing about the "Twice-Told Tales" and the first entries in the "American Note-Books" is their evidence of a calm and mellow maturity. These stories are like the simple but well-devised theme which a musician prepares as the basis of a whole composition: they show the several tendencies which underlie all the

subsequent works. First, there are the scenes from New England history,—"Endicott and the Red Cross," "The Maypole of Merry Mount," "The Gray Champion," the "Tales of the Province House."

Then we have the psychological vein, in "The Prophetic Pictures," "The Minister's Black Veil," "Dr. Heidegger," "Fancy's Show-Box"; and along with this the current of delicate essay-writing, as in "The Haunted Mind," and "Sunday at Home." "Little Annie's Ramble," again, foreshadows his charming children's tales. It is rather remarkable that he should thus have sounded, though faintly, the whole diapason in his first works. Moreover, he had already at this time attained a style at once flowing and large in its outline, and masterly in its minuteness.

But this maturity was not won without deep suffering and long-deferred hope.

If actual contact with men resulted in such grave and sorrowful reflection as we have traced, how drearily trying must have been the climaxes of solitary thought after a long session of seclusion! And much the larger portion of his time was consumed amid an absolute silence, a privacy unbroken by intimate confidences and rife with exhausting and depressing reactions from intense imagination and other severe intellectual exercise. Not only must the repression of this period have amounted at times to positive anguish, but there was also the perplexing perception that his life's fairest possibilities were still barren. "Every individual has a place in the world, and is important to it in some respects, whether he chooses to be so or not." So runs one of the extracts from the "American Note-Books"; and now and then we get from the same source a glimpse of the haunting sense that he is missing his fit relation to the rest of the race, the question whether his pursuit was not in some way futile like all the human pursuits he had noticed,—whether it was not to be nipped by the same perversity and contradiction that seemed to affect all things mundane. Here is one of his proposed plots, which turns an inner light upon his own frame of mind: "Various good and desirable things to be presented to a young man, and offered to his acceptance,—as a friend, a wife, a fortune; but he to refuse them all, suspecting that it is merely a delusion. Yet all to be real, and he to be told so when too late." Is this not, in brief, what he conceives may yet be the story of his own career? Another occurs, in the same relation: "A man tries to be happy in love; he cannot sincerely give his heart, and the affair seems all a dream. In domestic life the same; in politics, a seeming patriot: but still he is sincere, and all seems like a theatre." These items are the merest indicia of a whole history of complex emotions, which made this epoch one of continuous though silent and unseen struggle. In a Preface prefixed to the tales, in 1851, the author wrote: "They are the memorials of very tranquil and not unhappy years." Tranquil they of course were; and to the happy and successful man of forty-seven, the vexing moods and dragging loneliness of that earlier period would seem "not unhappy," because he could then see all the good it had contained. I cannot agree with Edwin Whipple, who says of them, "There was audible to the delicate ear a faint and muffled growl of personal discontent, which showed they were not mere exercises of penetrating imaginative analysis, but had in them the morbid vitality of a despondent mood." For this applies to only one of the number, "The Ambitious Guest." Nor do I find in them the "misanthropy" which he defines at some length. On the contrary, they are, as the author says, "his attempts to open an intercourse with the world," incited by an eager sympathy, but also restrained by a stern perception of right and wrong.

Yet I am inclined to adhere to the grave view of his inner life just sketched. When his friend Miss Peabody first penetrated his retirement, his pent-up sympathies flowed forth in a way that showed how they had longed for relief. He returned constantly to the discussion of his peculiar mode of living, as if there could be no understanding between himself and another, until this had been cleared up and set aside. Among other things, he spoke of a dream by which he was beset, that he was walking abroad, and that all the houses were mirrors which reflected him a thousand times and overwhelmed him with mortification. This gives a peculiar insight into his sensitive condition.

The noiseless, uneventful weeks slipped by, each day disguising itself in exact semblance of its fellow, like a file of mischievous maskers. Hawthorne sat in his little room under the eaves reading, studying, voicelessly communing with himself through his own journal, or—mastered by some wild suggestion or mysterious speculation—feeling his way through the twilight of dreams, into the dusky chambers of that house of thought whose haunted interior none but himself ever visited. He had little communication with even the members of his family. Frequently his meals were brought and left at his locked door, and it was not often that the four inmates of the old Herbert Street mansion met in family circle. He never read his stories aloud to his mother and sisters, as might be imagined from the picture which Mr. Fields draws of the young author reciting his new productions to his listening family; though, when they met, he sometimes read older literature to them. It was the custom in this household for the several members to remain very much by themselves; the three ladies were perhaps nearly as rigorous recluses as himself; and, speaking of the isolation which reigned among them, Hawthorne once said, "We do not even *live* at our house!" But still the presence of this near and gentle feminine element is not to be underrated as forming a very great compensation in the cold and difficult morning of Hawthorne's life.

If the week-day could not lure him from his sad retreat, neither could the Sunday. He had the right to a pew in the First Church, which his family had held since 1640, but he seldom went to service there after coming from college. His religion was supplied from sources not always opened to the common scrutiny, and it never chanced that he found it essential to join any church.

The chief resource against disappointment, the offset to the pain of so much lonely living and dark-veined meditation was, of course, the writing of tales. Never was a man's mind more truly a kingdom to him. This was the fascination that carried him through the weary waiting-time. Yet even that pleasure had a reverse side, to which the fictitious Oberon has no doubt given voice in these words: "You cannot conceive what an effect the composition of these tales has had upon me. I have become ambitious of a bubble, and careless of solid reputation. I am surrounding myself with shadows, which bewilder me by aping the realities of life. They have drawn me aside from the beaten path of the world, and led me into a strange sort of solitude ... where nobody wished for what I do, nor thinks or feels as I do." Alluding to this season of early obscurity to a friend who had done much to break it up, he once said, "I was like a person talking to himself in a dark room." To make his own reflection in a mirror the subject of a story was one of his projects then formed, which he carried out in the "Mosses." With that image of the dark room, and this suggested reflection in the mirror, we can rehabilitate the scene of which the broken lights and trembling shadows are strewn through the "Twice-Told Tales." Sober and weighty the penumbrous atmosphere in which the young creator sits; but how calm, thoughtful, and beautiful the dim vision of his face, lit by the sheltered radiance of ethereal fancies! Behind his own form we catch the movement of mysterious shapes,—men and women wearing aspects of joy or anger, calm or passionate, gentle and pitiable, or stern, splendid, and forbidding. It is not quite a natural twilight in which we behold these things; rather the awesome shadowiness of a partial eclipse; but gleams of the healthiest sunshine withal mingle in the prevailing tint, bringing reassurance, and receiving again a rarer value from the contrast. There are but few among the stories of this series afterward brought together by the author which are open to the charge of morbidness. In "The White Old Maid" an indefinable horror, giving the tale a certain shapelessness, crowds out the compensating brightness which in most cases is not wanting; perhaps, too, "The Ambitious Guest" leaves one with too hopeless a downfall at the end; and "The Wedding Knell" cannot escape a suspicion of disagreeable gloom. But these extremes are not frequent. The wonder is that Hawthorne's mind could so often and so airily soar above the shadows that at this time hung about him; that he should nearly always suggest a philosophy so complete, so gently wholesome, and so penetrating as that which he mixes with even the bitterest distillations of his dreams. Nor is the sadness of his tone disordered or destructive, more than it is selfish; he does not inculcate despair, nor protest against life and fate, nor indulge in gloomy or weak self-pity. The only direct exposition of his own case is contained in a sketch, "The Journal of a Solitary Man," not reprinted during his life. One extract from this I will make, because it sums up, though more plaintively than was his wont, Hawthorne's view of his own life at this epoch:—

"It is hard to die without one's happiness; to none more so than myself, whose early resolution it had been to partake largely of the joys of life, but never to be burdened with its cares. Vain philosophy! The very hardships of the poorest laborer, whose whole existence seems one long toil, has something preferable to my best pleasures. Merely skimming the surface of life, I know nothing by my own experience of its deep and warm realities, ... so that few mortals, even the humblest and weakest, have been such ineffectual shadows in the world, or die so utterly as I must. Even a young man's bliss has not been mine. With a thousand vagrant fantasies, I have never truly loved, and perhaps shall be doomed to loneliness throughout the eternal future, because, here on earth, my soul has never married itself to the soul of woman."

The touch about avoiding the cares of life is no doubt merely metaphorical; but the self-imposed doom of eternal loneliness reveals the excess of sombreness in which he clothed his condition to his own perception. One may say that the adverse factors in his problem at this time were purely imaginary; that a little resolution and determined activity would have shaken off the incubus: but this is to lose sight of the gist of the matter. The situation in itself,—the indeterminateness and repression of it, and the denial of any satisfaction to his warm and various sympathies, and his capacity for affection and responsibility,—must be allowed to have been intensely wearing. Hawthorne believed himself to possess a strongly social nature, which was cramped, chilled, and to some extent permanently restrained by this long seclusion at the beginning of his career. This alone might furnish just cause for bitterness against the fate that chained him. It was not a matter of option; for he knew that his battle must be fought through as he had begun it, and until 1836 no slightest loophole of escape into action presented itself. It lay before him to act out the tragedy of isolation which is the lot of every artist in America still, though greatly mitigated by the devotion of our first generation of national writers. If he had quitted his post sooner, and had tried by force to mould his genius according to theory, he might have utterly distorted or stunted its growth. All that he could as yet do for himself was to preserve a certain repose and harmony in the midst of uncertainty and delay; and for this he formed four wise precepts: "To break off customs; to shake off spirits ill disposed; to meditate on youth; to do nothing

against one's genius." [Footnote: American Note-Books, Vol. I.] Thus he kept himself fresh and flexible, hopeful, ready for emergency. But that I have not exaggerated the severity and import of his long vigil, let this revery of his show, written at Liverpool, in 1855: "I think I have been happier this Christmas than ever before,—by my own fireside, and with my wife and children about me; more content to enjoy what I have, less anxious for anything beyond it in this life. My early life was perhaps a good preparation for the declining half of life; it having been such a blank that any thereafter would compare favorably with it. For a long, long while I have been occasionally visited with a singular dream; and I have an impression that I have dreamed it ever since I have been in England. It is, that I am still at college,—or, sometimes, even at school,—and there is a sense that I have been there unconscionably long, and have quite failed to make such progress as my contemporaries have done; and I seem to meet some of them with a feeling of shame and depression that broods over me as I think of it, even when awake. This dream, recurring all through these twenty or thirty years, must be one of the effects of that heavy seclusion in which I shut myself up for twelve years after leaving college, when everybody moved onward, and left me behind." Experiences which leave effects like this must bite their way into the heart and soul with a fearful energy! This precursive solitude had tinged his very life-blood, and woven itself into the secret tissues of his brain. Yet, patiently absorbing it, he wrote late in life to a friend: "I am disposed to thank God for the gloom and chill of my early life, in the hope that my share of adversity came then, when I bore it alone." It was under such a guise that the test of his genius and character came to him. Every great mind meets once in life with a huge opposition that must somehow be made to succumb, before its own energies can know their full strength, gain a settled footing, and make a roadway to move forward upon. Often these obstacles are viewless to others, and the combat is unsuspected; the site of many a Penuel remains untraced; but none the less these are the pivots on which entire personal histories turn. Hawthorne's comparatively passive endurance was of infinitely greater worth than any active irruption into the outer world would have been. It is obvious that we owe to the innumerable devious wanderings and obscure sufferings of his mind, under the influences just reviewed, something of his sure and subtle touch in feeling out the details of morbid moods; for though his mind remained perfectly healthy, it had acquired acute sympathy with all hidden tragedies of heart and brain.

But another and larger purpose was not less well served by this probation. The ability of American life to produce a genius in some sense exactly responding to its most distinctive qualities had yet to be demonstrated; and this could only be done by some one who would stake life and success on the issue, for it needed that a soul and brain of the highest endowment should be set apart solely for the experiment, even to the ruin of it if required, before the truth could be ascertained. Hawthorne, the slowly produced and complex result of a line of New-Englanders who carried American history in their very limbs, seemed providentially offered for the trial. It was well that temperament and circumstance drew him into a charmed circle of reserve from the first; well, also, that he was further matured at a simple and rural college pervaded by a homely American tone; still more fortunate was it that nothing called him away to connect him with European culture, on graduating. To interpret this was the honorable office of his classmate Longfellow, who, with as much ease as dignity and charm, has filled the gap between the two half-worlds. The experiment to be tried was, simply, whether with books and men at his command, and isolated from the immediate influence of Europe, this American could evolve any new quality for the enrichment of literature. The conditions were strictly carried out; even after he began to come in contact with men, in the intervals of his retirement, he saw only pure American types. A foreigner must have been a rare bird in Salem, in those days; for the maritime element which might have brought him was still American. Hawthorne, as we have seen, and as his Note-Books show, pushed through the farming regions and made acquaintance with the men of the soil; and probably the first alien of whom he got at all a close view was the Monsieur S—— whom he found at Bridge's, on his visit to the latter, in 1837, described at length in the Note-Books. So much did Hawthorne study from these types, and so closely, that he might, had his genius directed, have written the most homely and realistic novels of New England life from the material which he picked up quite by the way. But though he did not translate his observations thus, the originality which he was continuously ripening amid such influences was radically affected by them. They established a broad, irrepressible republican sentiment in his mind; they assisted his natural, manly independence and simplicity to assert themselves unaffectedly in letters; and they had not a little to do, I suspect, with fostering his strong turn for examining with perfect freedom and a certain refined shrewdness into everything that came before him, without accepting prescribed opinions. The most characteristic way, perhaps, in which this American nurture acted was by contrast; for the universal matter-of-fact tone which he found among his fellow-citizens was an incessant spur to him to maintain a counteracting idealism. Thus, singularly enough, the most salient feature of the new American product was its apparent denial of the national trait of practical sagacity. It is not to be supposed that Hawthorne adhered consciously to the aim of asserting the American nature in fiction. These things can be done only half consciously, at the most. Perhaps it is well that the mind on which so much depends should not be burdened with all the added anxiety of knowing how much is expected from it by the ages. Therefore, we owe the triumphant assertion of the American quality in this novel genius to Hawthorne's quiet, unfaltering, brave

endurance of the weight that was laid upon him, unassisted by the certainty with which we now perceive that a great end was being served by it. But, although unaware of this end at the time, he afterward saw some of the significance of his youth. Writing in 1840, he speaks thus of his old room in Union Street:—

"This claims to be called a haunted chamber, for thousands upon thousands of visions have appeared to me in it; and some few of them have become visible to the world. If ever I should have a biographer, he ought to make great mention of this chamber in my memoirs, because so much of my lonely youth was wasted here, and *here my mind and character were formed*; and here I have been glad and hopeful, and here I have been despondent.... And now I begin to understand why I was imprisoned so many years in this lonely chamber, and why I could never break through the viewless bolts and bars; for if I had sooner made my escape into the world, I should have grown hard and rough, and my heart might have become callous by rude encounters with the multitude.... But living in solitude till the fulness of time, I still kept the dew of my youth and the freshness of my heart."

Yes, and more than this, Hawthorne! It was a young nation's faith in its future which—unsuspected by any then, but always to be remembered henceforth—had found a worthy answer and after-type in this faithful and hopeful heart of yours! Thus was it that the young poet who, in the sense we have observed, stood for old New England, absorbed into himself also the atmosphere of the United States. The plant that rooted in the past had put forth a flower which drew color and perfume from to-day. In such wise did Hawthorne prove to be the unique American in fiction.

I have examined the librarian's books at the Salem Athenaeum, which indicate a part of the reading that the writer of the "Twice-Told Tales" went through. The lists from the beginning of 1830 to 1838 include nearly four hundred volumes taken out by him, besides a quantity of bound magazines. This gives no account of his dealings with books in the previous five years, when he was not a shareholder in the Athenaeum, nor does it, of course, let us know anything of what he obtained from other sources. When Miss E. P. Peabody made his acquaintance, in 1836-37, he had, for example, read all of Balzac that had then appeared; and there is no record of this in the library lists. These lists alone, then, giving four hundred volumes in seven years, supply him with one volume a week,—not, on the whole, a meagre rate, when we consider the volumes of magazines, the possible sources outside of the library, and the numberless hours required for literary experiment. I do not fancy that he plodded through books; but rather that he read with the easy energy of a vigorous, original mind, though he also knew the taste of severe study. "Bees," he observes in one place, "are sometimes drowned (or suffocated) in the honey which they collect. So some writers are lost in their collected learning." He did not find it necessary to mount upon a pyramid of all learning previous to his epoch, in order to get the highest standpoint for his own survey of mankind. Neither was he "a man of parts," precisely; being in himself a distinct whole. His choice of reading was ruled by a fastidious need. He was fond of travels for a rainy day, and knew Mandeville; but at other times he took up books which seem to lie quite aside from his known purposes. [Footnote: See Appendix III.] Voltaire appears to have attracted him constantly; he read him in the original, together with Rousseau. At one time he examined Pascal, at another he read something of Corneille and a part of Racine. Of the English dramatists, he seems at this time to have tried only Massinger; "Inchbald's Theatre" also occurs. The local American histories took his attention pretty often, and he perused a variety of biography,—"Lives of the Philosophers," "Plutarch's Lives," biographies of Mohammed, Pitt, Jefferson, Goldsmith, Coleridge, Shelley, and Keats, Baxter, Heber, Sir William Temple, and others. Brewster's "Natural Magic" and Sir Walter Scott's essay on "Demonology and Witchcraft" are books that one would naturally expect him to read; and he had already begun to make acquaintance with the English State Trials, for which he always had a great liking. "Colquhoun on the Police" would seem not entirely foreign to one who mentally pursued so many malefactors; but it is a little surprising that he should have found himself interested in "Babbage on the Economy of Machinery." He dipped, also, into botany and zoölogy; turned over several volumes of Bayle's "Critical Dictionary," read Mrs. Jameson, and the "London Encyclopaedia of Architecture"; and was entertained by Dunlap's "History of the Arts of Design in America." It was from this last that he drew the plot of "The Prophetic Pictures," in the "Twice-Told Tales." Some Boston newspapers of the years 1739 to 1783 evidently furnished the material for an article called "Old News," reprinted in "The Snow Image." Hawthorne seems never to have talked much about reading: 'tis imaginable that he was as shy in his choice of books and his discussion of them, as in his intercourse with men; and there is no more ground for believing that he did not like books, than that he cared nothing for men and women. Life is made up, for such a mind, of men, women, and books; Hawthorne accepted all three estates.

Gradually, from the midst of the young author's obscurity, there issued an attraction which made the world wish to know more of him. One by one, the quiet essays and mournful-seeming stories came forth, like drops from a slow-distilling spring. The public knew nothing of the internal movement which had opened this slight fountain, nor suspected the dark concamerations through which the current made its way to the surface. The smallest mountain rill often has a thunder-storm at its back; but the

average reader of that day thought he had done quite enough, when he guessed that the new writer was a timid young man fabling under a feigned name, excellent in his limited way, who would be a great deal better if he could come out of seclusion and make himself more like other people.

The first contributions were made to the "Salem Gazette" and the "New England Magazine"; then his attempts extended to the "Boston Token and Atlantic Souvenir," edited by S. G. Goodrich; and later, to other periodicals. Mr. Goodrich wrote to his young contributor (October, 1831): "I am gratified to find that all whose opinion I have heard agree with me as to the merit of the various pieces from your pen." But for none of these early performances did Hawthorne receive any considerable sum of money. And though his writings began at once to attract an audience, he had slight knowledge of it. Three young ladies—of whom his future sister-in-law, Miss Peabody, was one—were among the first admirers; and though Hawthorne baffled his readers and perhaps retarded his own notoriety by assuming different names in print, [Footnote: Among these were "Oberon" and "Ashley Allen Royce," or "The Rev. A. A. Royce." The latter was used by him in the Democratic Review, so late as March, 1840.] they traced his contributions assiduously, cut them out of magazines, and preserved them. But they could not discover his personal identity. One of them who lived in Salem used constantly to wonder, in driving about town, whether the author of her favorite tales could be living in this or in that house; for it was known that he was a Salem resident. Miss Peabody, who had in girlhood known something of the Hathorne family (the name was still written either way, I am told), was misled by the new spelling, and by the prevalent idea that Nathaniel Hawthorne was an assumed name. This trio were especially moved by "The Gentle Boy" when it appeared, and Miss Peabody was on the point of addressing "The Author of 'The Gentle Boy,'" at Salem, to tell him of the pleasure he had given. When afterward told of this, Hawthorne said, "I wish you had! It would have been an era in my life." Soon after, the Peabodys returned to Salem, and she learned from some one that the new romancer was the son of the Widow Hathorne. Now it so chanced that her family had long ago occupied a house on Union Street, looking off into the garden of the old Manning family mansion; and she remembered no son, though a vague image came back to her of a strong and graceful boy's form dancing across the garden, at play, years before. Her mind therefore fastened upon one of the sisters, who, she knew, had shown great facility in writing: indeed, Hawthorne used at one time to say that it was she who should have been the follower of literature. Full of this conception, she went to carry her burden of gratitude to the author, and after delays and difficulties, made her way into the retired and little-visited mansion. It was the other sister into whose presence she came, and to her she began pouring out the reason of her intrusion, delivering at once her praises of the elder Miss Hathorne's fictions.

"My brother's, you mean," was the response.

"It *is* your brother, then." And Miss Peabody added: "If your brother can write like that, he has no right to be idle."

"My brother never is idle," answered Miss Louisa, quietly.

Thus began an acquaintance which helped to free Hawthorne from the spell of solitude, and led directly to the richest experiences of his life. Old habits, however, were not immediately to be broken, and months passed without any response being made to the first call. Then at last came a copy of the "Twice-Told Tales," fresh from the press. But it was not until the establishment of the "Democratic Review," a year or two later, that occasion offered for a renewal of relations. Hawthorne was too shy to act upon the first invitation. Miss Peabody, finally, addressing him by letter, to inquire concerning the new periodical, for which he had been engaged as a contributor, asked him to come with both his sisters on the evening of the same day. Entirely to her surprise, they came. She herself opened the door, and there before her, between his sisters, stood a splendidly handsome youth, tall and strong, with no appearance whatever of timidity, but, instead, an almost fierce determination making his face stern. This was his resource for carrying off the extreme inward tremor which he really felt. His hostess brought out Plaxmau's designs for Dante, just received from Professor Felton of Harvard, [Footnote: The book may have been Felton's Homer with Flaxman's drawings, issued in 1833.] and the party made an evening's entertainment out of them.

The news of this triumph, imparted to a friend of Miss Peabody's, led to an immediate invitation of Hawthorne to dinner at another house, for the next day. He accepted this, also, and on returning homeward, stopped at the "Salem Gazette" office, full of the excitement of his new experiences, announcing to Mr. Foote, the editor, that he was getting dissipated. He told of the evening with Miss Peabody, where he said he had had a delightful time, and of the dinner just achieved. "And I've had a delightful time there, too!" he added. Mr. Foote, perceiving an emergency, at once asked the young writer to come to his own house for an evening. Hawthorne, thoroughly aroused, consented. When the evening came, several ladies who had been invited assembled before the author arrived; and among them Miss Peabody. When he reached the place he stopped short at the drawing-room threshold, startled by the presence of strangers, and stood perfectly motionless, but with the look of a sylvan

creature on the point of fleeing away. His assumed brusquerie no longer availed him; he was stricken with dismay; his face lost color, and took on a warm paleness. All this was in a moment; but the daughter of the house moved forward, and he was drawn within. Even then, though he assumed a calm demeanor, his agitation was very great: he stood by a table, and, taking up some small object that lay upon it, he found his hand trembling so that he was forced to put it down again.

While friends were slowly penetrating his reserve in this way, he was approached in another by Mr. Goodrich, who induced him to go to Boston, there to edit the "American Magazine of Useful and Entertaining Knowledge." This work, which only continued from 1834 to September, 1837, was managed by several gentlemen under the name of the Bewick Company. One of these was Bowen, of Charlestown, an engraver; another was Goodrich, who also, I think, had some connection with the American Stationers' Company. The Bewick Company took its name from Thomas Bewick, the English restorer of the art of wood-engraving, and the magazine was to do his memory honor by its admirable illustrations. But, in fact, it never did any one honor, nor brought any one profit. It was a penny popular affair, containing condensed information about innumerable subjects, no fiction, and little poetry. The woodcuts were of the crudest and most frightful sort. It passed through the hands of several editors and several publishers. Hawthorne was engaged at a salary of five hundred dollars a year; but it appears that he got next to nothing, and that he did not stay in the position long. There is little in its pages to recall the identity of the editor; but in one place he quotes as follows from Lord Bacon: "The ointment which witches use is made of the fat of children digged from their graves, and of the juices of smallage, cinquefoil, and wolf's-bane, mingled with the meal of fine wheat," and hopes that none of his readers will try to compound it. In the tale of "Young Goodman Brown," when Goody Cloyse says, "I was all anointed with the juice of small-age and cinquefoil and wolf's-bane," and the Devil continues, "'Mingled with fine wheat and the fat of a new-born babe,'—'Ah, your worship knows the recipe,' cried the old lady, cackling aloud." A few scraps of correspondence, mostly undated, which I have looked over, give one a new view of him in the bustle and vexation of this brief editorial experience. He sends off frequent and hurried missives to one of his sisters, who did some of the condensing and compiling which was a part of the business. "I make nothing," he says, in one, "of writing a history or biography before dinner." At another time, he is in haste for a Life of Jefferson, but warns his correspondent to "see that it contains nothing heterodox." At the end of one of the briefest messages, he finds time to speak of the cat at home. Perhaps with a memory of the days when he built book-houses, he had taken two names of the deepest dye from Milton and Bunyan for two of his favorite cats, whom he called Beelzebub and Apollyon. "Pull Beelzebub's tail for me," he writes. But the following from Boston, February 15, 1836, gives the more serious side of the situation:—

"I came here trusting to Goodrich's positive promise to pay me forty-five dollars as soon as I arrived; and he has kept promising from one day to another, till I do not see that he means to pay at all. I have now broke off all intercourse with him, and never think of going near him ... I don't feel at all obliged to him about the editorship, for he is a stockholder and director in the Bewick Company; ... and I defy them to get another to do for a thousand dollars what I do for five hundred."

Goodrich afterward sent his editor a small sum; and the relations between them were resumed.. A letter of May 5, in the same year, contains these allusions:—

"I saw Mr. Goodrich yesterday.... He wants me to undertake a Universal History, to contain about as much as fifty or sixty pages of the magazine. [These were large pages.] If you are willing to write any part of it, ... I shall agree to do it. If necessary I will come home by and by, and concoct the plan of it with you. It need not be superior in profundity and polish to the middling magazine articles.... I shall have nearly a dozen articles in The Token,—mostly quite short."

The historical project is, of course, that which resulted in the famous "Peter Parley" work. "Our pay as historians of the universe," says a letter written six days later, "will be about one hundred dollars, the whole of which you may have. It is a poor compensation, but better than the Token; because the writing is so much less difficult." He afterward carried out the design, or a large part of it, and the book has since sold by millions, for the benefit of others. There are various little particulars in this ingenious abridgment which recall Hawthorne, especially if one is familiar with his "Grandfather's Chair" and "True Stories" for children; though the book has probably undergone some changes in successive editions. This passage about George IV. is, however, remembered as being his: "Even when he was quite an old man, this king cared as much about dress as any young coxcomb. He had a great deal of taste in such matters, and it is a pity that he was a king, for he might otherwise have been an excellent tailor."

Up to this time (May 12) he had received only twenty dollars for four months' editorial labor. "And, as you may well suppose," he says, "I have undergone very grievous vexations. Unless they pay me the whole amount shortly, I shall return to Salem, and stay there till they do." It seems a currish fate that puts such men into the grasp of paltry and sordid cares like these! But there is something deeper to be

felt than dissatisfaction at the author-publisher's feeble though annoying scheme of harnessing in this rare poet to be his unpaid yet paying hack. This deeper something is the pathos of such possibilities, and the spectacle of so renowned and strong-winged a genius consenting thus to take his share of worldly struggle; perfectly conscious that it is wholly beneath his plane, but accepting it as a proper part of the mortal lot; scornful, but industrious and enduring. You who have conceived of Hawthorne as a soft-marrowed dweller in the dusk, fostering his own shyness and fearing to take the rubs of common men, pray look well at all this. And you, also, who discourse about the conditions essential to the development of genius, about the *milieu* and the *moment*, and try to prove America a vacuum which the Muse abhors, will do well to consider the phenomenon. "It is a poor compensation, yet better than the Token"; so he wrote, knowing that his unmatched tales were being coined for even a less reward than mere daily bread. He took the conditions that were about him, and gave them a dignity by his own fine perseverance. It is this inspired industry, this calm facing of the worst and making it the best, which has formed the history of all art. You talk of the ages, and choose this or that era as the only fit one. You long for a cosey niche in the past; but genius crowds time and eternity into the present, and says to you, "Make your own century!"

Meanwhile, if he received no solid gain from his exertions, Hawthorne was winning a reputation. In January he had written home: "My worshipful self is a very famous man in London, the 'Athenaeum' having noticed all my articles in the last Token, with long extracts." This refers to the 'Athenaeum' for November 7, 1835, which mentioned "The Wedding Knell" and "The Minister's Black Veil" as being stories "each of which has singularity enough to recommend it to the reader," and gave three columns to a long extract from "The Maypole of Merry Mount"; the notice being no doubt the work of the critic Chorley, who afterward met Hawthorne in England. Thus encouraged, he thought of collecting his tales and publishing them in volume form, connected by the conception of a travelling story-teller, whose shiftings of fortune were to form the interludes and links between the separate stories. A portion of this, prefatory to "Dr. Heidegger's Experiment," has been published in the "Mosses," with the heading of "Passages from a Relinquished Work." Goodrich was not disposed to lavish upon his young beneficiary the expense of bringing out a book for him, and the plan of reprinting the tales with this framework around them was given up. The next year Bridge came to Goodrich and insisted on having a simple collection issued, himself taking the pecuniary risk. In this way the "Twice-Told Tales" were first brought collectively before the world; and for the second time this faithful comrade of Hawthorne laid posterity under obligation to himself. It was not till long afterward, however, that Hawthorne knew of his friend's interposition in the affair.

Mr. Bridge had not then entered the navy, and was engaged in a great enterprise on the Androscoggin; nothing less than an attempt to dam up that river and apply the water-power to some mills. In July of 1837, Hawthorne went to visit him at Bridgton, and has described his impressions fully in the Note-Books. It was probably his longest absence from Salem since graduating at Bowdoin. "My circumstances cannot long continue as they are," he writes; "and Bridge, too, stands between high prosperity and utter ruin."

The change in his own circumstances which Hawthorne looked for did not come through his book. It sold some six or seven hundred copies in a short time, but was received quietly, [Footnote: Some of the sketches were reprinted in England; and "A Rill from the Town Pump" was circulated in pamphlet form by a London bookseller, without the author's name, as a temperance tract.] though Longfellow, then lately established in his Harvard professorship, and known as the author of "Outre-Mer," greeted it with enthusiasm in the "North American Review," which wielded a great influence in literary affairs.

On March 7, 1837, Hawthorne sent this note to his former classmate, to announce the new volume.

"The agent of the American Stationer's Company will send you a copy of a book entitled 'Twice-Told Tales,'—of which, as a classmate, I venture to request your acceptance. We were not, it is true, so well acquainted at college, that I can plead an absolute right to inflict my 'twice-told' tediousness upon you; but I have often regretted that we were not better known to each other, and have been glad of your success in literature and in more important matters." Returning to the tales, he adds: "I should like to flatter myself that they would repay you some part of the pleasure which I have derived from your own 'Outre-Mer.'

"Your obedient servant,

"NATH. HAWTHORNE."

Longfellow replied warmly, and in June Hawthorne wrote again, a long letter picturing his mood with a fulness that shows how keenly he had felt the honest sympathy of the poet.

"Not to burden you with my correspondence," he said, "I have delayed a rejoinder to your very kind

and cordial letter, until now. It gratifies me that you have occasionally felt an interest in my situation; but your quotation from Jean Paul about the 'lark's nest' makes me smile. You would have been much nearer the truth if you had pictured me as dwelling in an owl's nest; for mine is about as dismal, and like the owl I seldom venture abroad till after dusk. By some witchcraft or other—for I really cannot assign any reasonable why and wherefore—I have been carried apart from the main current of life, and find it impossible to get back again. Since we last met, which you remember was in Sawtell's room, where you read a farewell poem to the relics of the class,—ever since that time I have secluded myself from society; and yet I never meant any such thing, nor dreamed what sort of life I was going to lead. I have made a captive of myself, and put me into a dungeon, and now I cannot find the key to let myself out,—and if the door were open, I should be almost afraid to come out. You tell me that you have met with troubles and changes. I know not what these may have been, but I can assure you that trouble is the next best thing to enjoyment, and that there is no fate in this world so horrible as to have no share in either its joys or sorrows. For the last ten years, I have not lived, but only dreamed of living. It may be true that there have been some unsubstantial pleasures here in the shade, which I might have missed in the sunshine, but you cannot conceive how utterly devoid of satisfaction all my retrospects are. I have laid up no treasure of pleasant remembrances against old age; but there is some comfort in thinking that future years can hardly fail to be more varied and therefore more tolerable than the past.

"You give me more credit than I deserve, in supposing that I have led a studious life. I have indeed turned over a good many books, but in so desultory a way that it cannot be called study, nor has it left me the fruits of study. As to my literary efforts, I do not think much of them, neither is it worth while to be ashamed of them. They would have been better, I trust, if written under more favorable circumstances. I have had no external excitement,—no consciousness that the public would like what I wrote, nor much hope nor a passionate desire that they should do so. Nevertheless, having nothing else to be ambitious of, I have been considerably interested in literature; and if my writings had made any decided impression, I should have been stimulated to greater exertions; but there has been no warmth of approbation, so that I have always written with benumbed fingers. I have another great difficulty in the lack of materials; for I have seen so little of the world that I have nothing but thin air to concoct my stories of, and it is not easy to give a lifelike semblance to such shadowy stuff. Sometimes through a peep-hole I have caught a glimpse of the real world, and the two or three articles in which I have portrayed these glimpses please me better than the others.

"I have now, or shall soon have, a sharper spur to exertion, which I lacked at an earlier period; for I see little prospect but that I shall have to scribble for a living. But this troubles me much less than you would suppose. I can turn my pen to all sorts of drudgery, such as children's books, etc., and by and by I shall get some editorship that will answer my purpose. Frank Pierce, who was with us at college, offered me his influence to obtain an office in the Exploring Expedition [Commodore Wilkes's]; but I believe that he was mistaken in supposing that a vacancy existed. If such a post were attainable, I should certainly accept it; for, though fixed so long to one spot, I have always had a desire to run round the world.... I intend in a week or two to come out of my owl's nest, and not return till late in the summer,—employing the interval in making a tour somewhere in New England. You who have the dust of distant countries on your 'sandal-shoon' cannot imagine how much enjoyment I shall have in this little excursion....

"Yours sincerely,

"NATH. HAWTHORNE."

A few days later the quarterly, containing Longfellow's review of the book, appeared; and the note of thanks which Hawthorne sent is full of an exultation strongly in contrast with the pensive tone of the letter just given.

SALEM, June 19th, 1837.

DEAR LONGFELLOW:—I have to-day received, and read with huge delight, your review of 'Hawthorne's Twice-Told Tales.' I frankly own that I was not without hopes that you would do this kind office for the book; though I could not have anticipated how very kindly it would be done. Whether or no the public will agree to the praise which you bestow on me, there are at least five persons who think you the most sagacious critic on earth, viz., my mother and two sisters, my old maiden aunt, and finally the strongest believer of the whole five, my own self. If I doubt the sincerity and correctness of any of my critics, it shall be of those who censure me. Hard would be the lot of a poor scribbler, if he may not have this privilege....

Very sincerely yours,

NATH. HAWTHORNE.

That "Evangeline" was written upon a theme suggested to Hawthorne (by a friend who had heard it from a French Canadian [Footnote: See American Note-Books, October 24,1839]) and by him made over to the poet, has already been made public. Hawthorne wrote, on its appearance:——

"I have read 'Evangeline' with more pleasure than it would be decorous to express. It cannot fail, I think, to prove the most triumphant of all your successes."

Nevertheless, he gave vent to some of his admiration in a notice of the work which he wrote for "The Salem Advertiser," a Democratic paper.

"The story of Evangeline and her lover," he there says, "is as poetical as the fable of the Odyssey, besides that it comes to the heart as a fact that has actually taken place in human life." He speaks of "its pathos all illuminated with beauty,——so that the impression of the poem is nowhere dismal nor despondent, and glows with the purest sunshine where we might the least expect it, on the pauper's death-bed.... The story is told with the simplicity of high and exquisite art, which causes it to flow onward as naturally as the current of a stream. Evangeline's wanderings give occasion to many pictures both of northern and southern scenery and life: but these do not appear as if brought in designedly, to adorn the tale; they seem to throw their beauty inevitably into the calm mirror of its bosom as it flows past them.... By this work of his maturity he has placed himself on a higher eminence than he had yet attained, and beyond the reach of envy. Let him stand, then, at the head of our list of native poets, until some one else shall break up the rude soil of our American life, as he has done, and produce from it a lovelier and nobler flower than this poem of Evangeline!"

Longfellow's characteristic kindly reply was as follows:——

"MY DEAR HAWTHORNE:——I have been waiting and waiting in the hope of seeing you in Cambridge.... I have been meditating upon your letter, and pondering with friendly admiration your review of 'Evangeline,' in connection with the subject of which, that is to say, the Acadians, a literary project arises in my mind for you to execute. Perhaps I can pay you back in part your own generous gift, by giving you a theme for story, in return for a theme for song. It is neither more nor less than the history of the Acadians, *after* their expulsion as well as before. Felton has been making some researches in the State archives, and offers to resign the documents into your hands.

"Pray come and see me about it without delay. Come so as to pass a night with us, if possible, this week; if not a day and night.

"Ever sincerely yours,

"HENRY W. LONGFELLOW." There is nothing in our literary annals more unique and delightful than this history of Longfellow's warm recognition of his old classmate, and the mutual courtesies to which it led. One is reminded by it of the William Tell episode between Goethe and Schiller, though it was in this case only the theme and nothing of material that was transferred.

An author now almost forgotten, Charles Fenno Hoffman, also published in "The American Monthly Magazine," [Footnote: For March, 1838.] which he was editing, a kindly review, which, however, underestimated the strength of the new genius, as it was at first the general habit to do. "Minds like Hawthorne's," he said, "seem to be the only ones suited to an American climate.... Never can a nation be impregnated with the literary spirit by minor authors alone.... Yet men like Hawthorne are not without their use.".... In this same number of the magazine, by the way, was printed Hawthorne's "Threefold Destiny," under the pseudonyme of Ashley Allen Royce; and the song of Faith Egerton, afterward omitted, is thus given:——

"O, man can seek the downward glance,
And each kind word,——affection's spell,——
Eye, voice, its value can enhance;
For eye may speak, and tongue can tell.

"But woman's love, it waits the while
To echo to another's tone;
To linger on another's smile,
Ere dare to answer with its own."

These versicles, though they might easily be passed over as commonplace, hold a peculiar inner radiance that perhaps issued from the dawn of a lifelong happiness for Hawthorne at this period.

V.

AT BOSTON AND BROOK FARM.

1838-1842.

Hawthorne's mood at this time was one of profound dissatisfaction at his elimination from the active life of the world. "I am tired of being an ornament," he said, with great emphasis, to a friend. "I want a little piece of land that I can call my own, big enough to stand upon, big enough to be buried in. I want to have something to do with this material world." And, striking his hand vigorously on a table that stood by: "If I could only make tables," he declared, "I should feel myself more of a man." He was now thirty-four, and the long restraint and aloofness of the last thirteen years, with the gathering consciousness that he labored under unjust reproach of inaction, and the sense of loss in being denied his share in affairs, had become intolerable. It was now, also, that a new phase of being was opened to him. He had become engaged to Miss Sophia Peabody, a sister of his friend.

President Van Buren had been two years in office, and Mr. Bancroft, the historian, was Collector of the port of Boston. One evening the latter was speaking, in a circle of Whig friends, of the splendid things which the Democratic administration was doing for literary men. "But there's Hawthorne," suggested a lady who was present.

"You've done nothing for him." "He won't take anything," was the answer: "he has been offered places." In fact, Hawthorne's friends in political life had urged him to enter politics, and he had at one time been tendered a post of some sort in the West Indies, but refused it because he would not live in a slaveholding community. "I happen to know," said the lady, "that he would be very glad of employment." The result was that a commission for a small post in the Boston Custom House came, soon after, to the young author. On going down from Salem to inquire further about it, he received another and a better appointment as weigher and gauger, with a salary, I think, of twelve hundred a year. Just before entering the Collector's office, he noticed a man leaving it who wore a very dejected air; and, connecting this with the change in his own appointment, he imagined this person to be the just-ejected weigher. Speaking of this afterward, he said: "I don't believe in rotation in office. It is not good for the human being." But he took his place, writing to Longfellow (January 12, 1839):

"I have no reason to doubt my capacity to fulfil the duties; for I don't know what they are. They tell me that a considerable portion of my time will be unoccupied, the which I mean to employ in sketches of my new experience, under some such titles as follows: 'Scenes in Dock,' 'Voyages at Anchor,' 'Nibblings of a Wharf Rat,' 'Trials of a Tide-Waiter,' 'Romance of the Revenue Service,' together with an ethical work in two volumes, on the subject of Duties, the first volume to treat of moral and religious duties, and the second of duties imposed by the Revenue Laws, which I begin to consider the most important class."

Two years later, when Harrison and Tyler carried the election for the Whigs, he suffered the fate of his predecessor. And here I may offer an opinion as to Hawthorne's connection with the Democratic party. When asked why he belonged to it, he answered that he lived in a democratic country. "But we are all republicans alike," was the objection to his defence. "Well," he said, "I don't understand history till it's a hundred years old, and meantime it's safe to belong to the Democratic party." Still, Hawthorne was, so far as it comported with his less transient aims, a careful observer of public affairs; and mere badinage, like that just quoted, must not be taken as really covering the ground of his choice in politics. A man of such deep insight, accustomed to bring it to bear upon everything impartially, was not to be influenced by any blind and accidental preference in these questions; albeit his actual performance of political duties was slight. I think he recognized the human strength of the Democratic, as opposed to the theorizing and intellectual force of the Republican party. It is a curious fact, that with us the party of culture should be the radical party, upholding ideas even at the expense of personal liberty; and the party of ignorance that of order, the conservating force, careful of personal liberty even to a fault! Hawthorne, feeling perhaps that ideas work too rapidly here, ranged himself on the side that offered the greater resistance to them.

This term of service in Boston was of course irksome to Hawthorne, and entirely suspended literary endeavors for the time. Yet "my life only is a burden," he writes, "in the same way that it is to every toilsome man.... But from henceforth forever I shall be entitled to call the sons of toil my brethren, and shall know how to sympathize with them, seeing that I likewise have risen at the dawn, and borne the fervor of the midday sun, nor turned my heavy footsteps homeward till eventide." He need not always have made the employment so severe, but the wages of the wharf laborers depended on the number of hours they worked in a day, and Hawthorne used to make it a point in all weathers, to get to the wharf at the earliest possible hour, solely for their benefit. For the rest, he felt a vast benefit from his new

intercourse with men; there could not have been a better maturing agency for him at this time; and the interval served as an apt introduction to the Brook Farm episode.

That this least gregarious of men should have been drawn into a socialistic community, seems at first inexplicable enough; but in reality it was the most logical step he could have taken. He had thoroughly tried seclusion, and had met and conquered by himself the first realization of what the world actually is. Next, he entered into the performance of definite duties and the receipt of gain, and watched the operation of these two conditions on himself and those about him; an experiment that taught him the evils of the system, and the necessity of burying his better energies so long as he took part in affairs. This raised doubts, of course, as to how he was to fit himself into the frame of things; and while he mused upon some more generous arrangement of society, and its conflicting interests, a scheme was started which plainly proposed to settle the problem. Fourier had only just passed away; the spread of his ideas was in its highest momentum. On the other hand, the study of German philosophy, and the new dissent of Emerson, had carried men's thoughts to the very central springs of intellectual law, while in Boston the writing and preaching of Channing roused a practical radicalism, and called for a better application of Christianity to affairs. The era of the Transcendentalists had come. The Chardon Street meetings—assemblages of ardent theorists and "come-outers" of every type, who, while their sessions lasted, held society in their hands and moulded it like clay—were a rude manifestation of the same deep current. In the midst of these influences, Mr. Ripley, an enthusiastic student of philosophy, received an inspiration to establish a modified socialistic community on our own soil. The Industrial Association which he proposed at West Roxbury was wisely planned with direct reference to the emergencies of American life; it had no affinity with the erratic views of Enfantin and the Saint Simonists, nor did it in the least tend toward the mistakes of Robert Owen regarding the relation of the sexes; though it agreed with Fourier and Owen both, as I understand, in respect of labor. In a better and freer sense than has usually been the case with such attempts, the design sprang out of one man's mind and fell properly under his control. His simple object was to distribute labor in such a way as to give all men time for culture, and to free their minds from the debasing influence of a merely selfish competition. It was a practical, orderly, noble effort to apply Christianity directly to human customs and institutions. "A few men and women of like views and feelings," one of his sympathizers has said, "grouped themselves around him, not as their master, but as their friend and brother, and the community at Brook Farm was instituted." At various times Charles Dana, Pratt, the young Brownson, Horace Sumner (a younger brother of Charles), George William Curtis, and his brother Burrill Curtis were there. The place was a kind of granary of true grit. People who found their own honesty too heavy a burden to carry successfully through the rough jostlings of society, flocked thither. "They were mostly individuals" says Hawthorne, "who had gone through such an experience as to disgust them with ordinary pursuits, but who were not yet so old, nor had suffered so deeply, as to lose their faith in the better time to come."

To men like Hawthorne, however little they may noise the fact abroad, the rotten but tenacious timbers of the social order shake beneath the lightest tread. But he knew that the only wise method is to begin repairing within the edifice, keeping the old associations, and losing nothing of value while gaining everything new that is desirable. Because Brook Farm seemed to adopt this principle, he went there. Some of the meetings of the associators were held at Miss E. P. Peabody's, in Boston, and the proceedings were related to him. Mr. Ripley did not at first know who was the "distinguished literary gentleman" announced as willing to join the company; and when told that it was Hawthorne, he felt as if a miracle had befallen, or "as if," he tells me, "the heavens would presently be filled with angels, and we should see Jacob's ladder before us. But we never came any nearer to having *that*, than our old ladder in the barn, from floor to hayloft." For his personal benefit, Hawthorne had two ends in view, connected with Brook Farm: one, to find a suitable and economical home after marriage; the other, to secure a mode of life thoroughly balanced and healthy, which should successfully distribute the sum of his life's labor between body and brain. He hoped to secure leisure for writing by perhaps six hours of daily service; but he found nearly sixteen needful. "He worked like a dragon," says Mr. Ripley.

The productive industry of the association was agriculture; the leading aim, teaching; and in some cases there were classes made up of men, women, children, whom ignorance put on the same plane. Several buildings accommodated the members: the largest, in which the public table was spread and the cooking done, being called The Hive; another, The Pilgrim House; a smaller one, The Nest; and still another was known as The Cottage. In The Eyrie, Mr. and Mrs. Ripley lived, and here a great part of the associators would gather in the evenings. Of a summer night, when the moon was full, they lit no lamps, but sat grouped in the light and shadow, while sundry of the younger men sang old ballads, or joined Tom Moore's songs to operatic airs. On other nights, there would be an original essay or poem read aloud, or else a play of Shakespere, with the parts distributed to different members; and, these amusements failing, some interesting discussion was likely to take their place. Occasionally, in the dramatic season, large delegations from the farm would drive into Boston in carriages and wagons to the opera or the play. Sometimes, too, the young women sang as they washed the dishes, in The Hive;

and the youthful yeomen of the society came in and helped them with their work. The men wore blouses of a checked or plaided stuff, belted at the waist, with a broad collar folding down about the throat, and rough straw hats; the women, usually, simple calico gowns, and hats,—which were then an innovation in feminine attire. In the season of wood-wanderings, they would trim their hats with wreaths of barberry or hop-vine, ground-pine, or whatever offered,—a suggestion of the future Priscilla of "Blithedale." Some families and students came to the farm as boarders, paying for their provision in household or field labor, or by teaching; a method which added nothing to the funds of the establishment, and in this way rather embarrassed it. A great deal of individual liberty was allowed. People could eat in private or public; and it has been said by those who were there that the unconventional life permitted absolute privacy at any time. Every one was quite unfettered, too, in the sphere of religious worship. When a member wished to be absent, another would generally contrive to take his work for the interval; and a general good-will seems to have prevailed. Still, I imagine there must have been a temporary and uncertain air about the enterprise, much of the time; and the more intimate unions of some among the members who were congenial, gave rise to intermittent jealousies in those who found no special circle. "In this way it was very much like any small town of the same number of inhabitants," says one of my informants. Indeed, though every one who shared in the Brook Farm attempt seems grateful for what it taught of the dignity and the real fellowship of labor, I find a general belief in such persons that it could not long have continued at its best. The system of compensating all kinds of service, skilled or otherwise, according to the time used, excited—as some have thought—much dissatisfaction even among the generous and enlightened people who made up the society. "I thought I could see some incipient difficulties working in the system," writes a lady who was there in 1841. "Questions already arose as to how much individual freedom could be allowed, if it conflicted with the best interests of the whole. Those who came there were the results of another system of things which still gave a salutary cheek to the more radical tendencies; but the second generation there could hardly have shown equal, certainly not the same, character." A confirmation of this augury is the fact that the cast of the community became decidedly more Fourieristic before it disbanded; and it is not impossible that another generation might have decolorized and seriously deformed human existence among them. Theories and opinions were very openly talked over, and practical details as well; and though this must have had its charm, yet it would also touch uncomfortably on a given temperament, or jar upon a peculiar mood. In such enterprises there must always be a slight inclination to establish a conformity to certain freedoms which really become oppressions. Shyness was not held essential to a regenerated state of things, and was perhaps too much disregarded; as also was illness, an emergency not clearly provided for, which had to be met by individual effort and self-sacrifice, after the selfish and old-established fashion of the world. How this atmosphere affected Hawthorne he has hinted in his romance founded on some aspects of community life: "Though fond of society, I was so constituted as to need these occasional retirements, even in a life like that of Blithedale, which was itself characterized by a remoteness from the world. Unless renewed by a yet further withdrawal towards the inner circle of self-communion, I lost the better part of my individuality. My thoughts became of little worth, and my sensibilities grew as arid as a tuft of moss ... crumbling in the sunshine, after long expectance of a shower." A fellow-toiler came upon him suddenly, one day, lying in a green hollow some distance from the farm, with his hands under his head and his face shaded by his hat. "How came you out here?" asked his friend. "Too much of a party up there," was his answer, as he pointed toward the community buildings. It has also been told that at leisure times he would sit silently, hour after hour, in the broad old-fashioned hall of The Hive, where he "could listen almost unseen to the chat and merriment of the young people," himself almost always holding a book before him, but seldom turning the leaves.

One sees in his letters of this time [Footnote: American Note-Books, Vol. I.] how the life wore upon him; and his journal apparently ceased during the whole bucolic experience. How joyously his mind begins to disport itself again with fancies, the moment he leaves the association, even temporarily! And in 1842, as soon as he is fairly quit of it, the old darkling or waywardly gleaming stream of thought and imagination flows freshly, untamably forward. Hawthorne remained with the Brook Farm community nearly a twelvemonth, a small part of which time was spent in Boston. Some of the letters which his sisters wrote him show a delightful solicitude reigning at home, during the period of his experiment.

"What is the use," says one, "of burning your brains out in the sun, if you can do anything better with them?... I am bent upon coming to see you, this summer. Do not you remember how we used to go a-fishing together in Raymond? Your mention of wild flowers and pickerel has given me a longing for the woods and waters again."

Then, in August,

"C—— A——," writes his sister Louisa, "told me the other day that he heard you were to do the travelling in Europe for the community."

This design, if it existed, might well have found a place in the Dialogues of the Unborn which

Hawthorne once meant to write; for this was his only summer at Brook Farm. "A summer of toil, of interest, of something that was not pleasure, but which went deep into my heart, and there became a rich experience," he writes, in "Blithedale." "I found myself looking forward to years, if not to a lifetime, to be spent on the same system." This was, in fact, his attitude; for, after passing the winter at the farm as a boarder, and then absenting himself a little while, he returned in the spring to look over the ground and perhaps select a house-site, just before his marriage, but came to an adverse decision. This no doubt accorded with perceptions which he was not called upon to make public; but because he was a writer of fiction there seems to have arisen a tacit agreement, in some quarters, to call him insincere in his connection with this socialistic enterprise. He had not much to gain by leaving the community; for he had put into its treasury a thousand dollars, about the whole of his savings from the custom-house stipend, and had next to nothing to establish a home with elsewhere, while a niche in the temple of the reformers would have cost him nothing but labor. The length of his stay was by no means uncommonly short, for there was always a transient contingent at Brook Farm, many of whom remained but a few weeks. A devoted but not a wealthy disciple, who had given six thousand dollars for the building of the Pilgrim House, and hoped to end his days within it, retired forever after a very short sojourn, not dissuaded from the theory, but convinced that the practical application was foredoomed to disaster. And, in truth, though a manful effort was made, with good pecuniary success for a time, ten years brought the final hour of failure to this millennial plan.

Very few people who were at Brook Farm seem to have known or even to have seen Hawthorne there, though he was elected chairman of the Finance Committee just before leaving, and I am told that his handsome presence, his quiet sympathy, his literary reputation, and his hearty participation in labor commanded a kind of reverence from some of the members. Next to his friend George P. Bradford, one of the workers and teachers in the community, his most frequent associates were a certain Rev. Warren Burton, author of a curious little book called "Scenery-Shower," designed to develop a proper taste for landscape; and one Frank Farley, who had been a pioneer in the West, a man of singular experiences and of an original turn, who was subject to mental derangement at times. The latter visited him at the Old Manse, afterward, when Hawthorne was alone there, and entered actively into his makeshift housekeeping.

President Pierce, on one occasion, speaking to an acquaintance about Hawthorne, said: "He is enthusiastic when he speaks of the aims and self-sacrifice of some of the Brook Farm people; but when I questioned him whether he would like to live and die in a community like that, he confessed he was not suited to it, but said he had learned a great deal from it. 'What, for instance?' 'Why, marketing, for one thing. I didn't know anything about it practically, and I rode into Boston once or twice with the men who took in things to sell, and saw how it was done.'" The things of deepest moment which he learned were not to be stated fully in conversation; but I suppose readers would draw the same inference from this whimsical climax of Hawthorne's as that which has been found in "The Blithedale Romance"; namely, that he looked on his socialistic life as the merest jesting matter. Such, I think, is the general opinion; and a socialistic writer, Mr. Noyes, of the Oneida Community, has indignantly cried out against the book, as a "poetico-sneering romance." This study of human character, which would keep its value in any state of society that preserved its reflective faculty intact and sane, to be belittled to the record of a brief experiment! Hawthorne indeed, speaking in the prefatory third person of his own aim, says: "His whole treatment of the affair is altogether incidental to the main purpose of the romance; nor does he put forward the slightest pretensions to illustrate a theory, or elicit a conclusion, favorable or otherwise, in respect to socialism." And though he has told the story autobiographically, it is through a character whom we ought by no means to identify with Hawthorne in his whole mood. I have taken the liberty of applying to Hawthorne's own experience two passages from Coverdale's account, because they picture something known to be the case; and a careful sympathy will find no difficulty in distinguishing how much is real and how much assumed. Coverdale, being merely the medium for impressions of the other characters, is necessarily light and diaphanous, and Hawthorne, finding it more convenient, and an advantage to the lifelikeness of the story, does not attempt to hold him up in the air all the time, but lets him down now and then, and assumes the part himself. The allusions to the community scheme are few, and most of them are in the deepest way sympathetic. Precisely because the hopes of the socialists were so unduly high, he values them and still is glad of them, though they have fallen to ruin. "In my own behalf, I rejoice that I could once think better of the world than it deserved. It is a mistake into which men seldom fall twice in a lifetime; or, if so, the rarer and higher is the nature that can thus magnanimously persist in error." Where is the sneer concealed in this serious and comprehensive utterance? There is a class of two-pronged minds, which seize a pair of facts eagerly, and let the truth drop out of sight between them. For these it is enough that Hawthorne made some use of his Brook Farm memories in a romance, and then wrote that romance in the first person, with a few dashes of humor.

Another critic, acting on a conventional idea as to Hawthorne's "cold, self-removed observation," quotes to his disadvantage this paragraph in a letter from Brook Farm: "Nothing here is settled.... My

mind will not be abstracted. I must observe and think and feel, and content myself with catching glimpses of things which may be wrought out hereafter. Perhaps it will be quite as well that I find myself unable to set seriously about literary occupation for the present." This is offered as showing that Hawthorne went to the community—unconsciously, admits our critic, but still in obedience to some curious, chilly "dictate of his nature"—for the simple purpose of getting fresh impressions, to work up into fiction. But no one joined the society expecting to give up his entire individuality, and it was a special part of the design that each should take such share of the labor as was for his own and the general good, and follow his own tastes entirely as to ideal pursuits. A singular prerogative this, which every one who writes about Hawthorne lays claim to, that he may be construed as a man who, at bottom, had no other motive in life than to make himself uneasy by withdrawing from hearty communion with people, in order to pry upon them intellectually! He speaks of "that quality of the intellect and the heart which impelled me (often against my own will, and to the detriment of my own comfort) to live in other lives, and to endeavor—*by generous sympathies, by delicate intuitions*, by taking note of things too slight for record, and by bringing my human spirit into manifold accordance with the companions God had assigned me—to learn the secret which was hidden even from themselves"; and this is cited as evidence of "his cold inquisitiveness, his incredulity, his determination to worm out the inmost secrets of all associated with him." Such distortion is amazing. The few poets who search constantly for truth are certainly impelled to get at the inmost of everything. But what, in Heaven's name, is the motive? Does any one seriously suppose it to be for the amusement of making stories out of it? The holding up to one's self the stern and secret realities of life is no such pleasing pursuit. These men are driven to it by the divine impulse which has made them seers and recorders.

As for Hawthorne, he hoped and loved and planned with the same rich human faith that fills the heart of every manly genius; and if discouraging truth made him suffer, it was all the more because his ideals —and at first his trust in their realization—were so generous and so high. Two of his observations as to Brook Farm, transferred to the "The Blithedale Romance," show the wisdom on which his withdrawal was based. The first relates to himself: "No sagacious man will long retain his sagacity, if he live exclusively among reformers and progressive people, without periodically returning to the settled system of things, to correct himself by a new observation from that old standpoint." He had too much imagination to feel safe in giving free rein to it, in a special direction of theoretic conduct; he also remembered that, as the old system of things was full of error, it was possible that a new one might become so in new ways, unless watched. The second observation touches the real weakness of the Brook Farm institution: "It struck me as rather odd, that one of the first questions raised, after our separation from the greedy, struggling, self-seeking world, should relate to the possibility of getting the advantage over the outside barbarians in their own field of labor. But to own the truth, I very soon became sensible that, *as regarded society at large, we stood in a position of new hostility rather than new brotherhood.*" And, in fact, the real good which Mr. Ripley's attempt did, was to implant the co-operative idea in the minds of men who have gone out into the world to effect its gradual application on a grander scale. It is by introducing it into one branch of social energy after another that the regenerative agency of to-day can alone be made effectual. The leaders of that community have been broad-minded, and recognize this truth. None of them, however, have ever taken the trouble to formulate it as Hawthorne did, on perceiving it some years in advance.

The jocose tone, it maybe added, seems to have been a characteristic part of the Brook Farm experiment, despite the sober earnest and rapt enthusiasm that accompanied it. The members had their laughing allusions, and talked—in a strain of self-ridicule precisely similar to Coverdale's—of having bands of music to play for the field-laborers, who should plough in tune. This merely proves that they were people who kept their wits whole, and had the humor that comes with refinement; while it illustrates by the way the naturalness of the tone Hawthorne has given to Coverdale.

The Priscilla of Blithedale was evidently founded upon the little seamstress whom he describes in the Note-Books as coming out to the farm, and Old Moodie's spectre can be discerned in a brief memorandum of a man seen (at Parker's old bar-room in Court Square) in 1850. It has been thought that Zenobia was drawn from Margaret Fuller, or from a lady at Brook Farm, or perhaps from both: a gentleman who was there says that he traces in her a partial likeness to several women. It is as well to remember that Hawthorne distinctly negatived the idea that he wrote with any one that he knew before his mind; and he illustrated it, to one of his most intimate friends, by saying that sometimes in the course of composition it would suddenly occur to him, that the character he was describing resembled in some point one or more persons of his acquaintance. Thus, I suppose that when the character of Priscilla had developed itself in his imagination, he found he could give her a greater reality by associating her with the seamstress alluded to; and that the plaintive old man at Parker's offered himself as a good figure to prop up the web-work of pure invention which was the history of Zenobia's and Priscilla's father. There is a conviction in the minds of all readers, dearer to them than truth, that novelists simply sit down and describe their own acquaintances, using a few clumsy disguises to make the thing tolerable. When they do take a hint from real persons the character becomes quite a different

thing to them from the actual prototype. It was not even so definite as this with Hawthorne. Yet no doubt, his own atmosphere being peculiar, the contrast between that and the atmosphere of those he met stimulated his imagination; so that, without his actually seeing a given trait in another person, the meeting might have the effect of *suggesting* it. Then he would brood over this suggestion till it became a reality, a person, to his mind; and thus his characters were conceived independently in a region somewhere between himself and the people who had awakened speculation in his mind.

He had a very sure instinct as to when a piece of reality might be transferred to his fiction with advantage. Mr. Curtis has told the story of a young woman of Concord, a farmer's daughter, who had had her aspirations roused by education until the conflict between these and the hard and barren life she was born to, made her thoroughly miserable and morbid; and one summer's evening she sought relief in the quiet, homely stream that flowed by the Old Manse, and found the end of earthly troubles in its oozy depths. Hawthorne was roused by Curtis himself coming beneath his window (precisely as Coverdale comes to summon Hollingsworth), and with one other they went out on the river, to find the poor girl's body. "The man," writes his friend, "whom the villagers had only seen at morning as a musing spectre in the garden, now appeared among them at night to devote his strong arm and steady heart to their service."

By this dark memory is the powerful climax of "The Blithedale Romance" bound to the sphere of a reality as dread.

VI.

THE OLD MANSE.

1842-1846.

There is a Providence in the lives of men who act sincerely, which makes each step lead, with the best result, to the next phase of their careers. By his participation in the excellent endeavor at Brook Farm, Hawthorne had prepared himself to enjoy to the full his idyllic retirement at the Old Manse, in Concord. "For now, being happy," he says, "I felt as if there were no question to be put."

Hawthorne was married in July, 1842, and went at once to this his first home. Just before going to Brook Farm he had written "Grandfather's Chair," the first part of a series of sketches of New England history for children, which was published by Miss Peabody in Boston, and Wiley and Putnam in New York; but the continuation was interrupted by his stay at the farm. In 1842 he wrote a second portion, and also some biographical stories, all of which gained an immediate success. He also resumed his contributions to the "Democratic Review," the most brilliant periodical of the time, in which Whittier, Longfellow, Lowell, Poe, and other noted authors made their appearance. It was published at Washington, and afterward at New York, and made considerable pretensions to a national character. Hawthorne had been engaged as a contributor, at a fair rate, in 1838, and his articles had his name appended (not always Hie practice at that time) in a way that shows the high estimation into which he had already grown. "John Inglefield's Thanksgiving," "The Celestial Railroad," "The Procession of Life," "Fire Worship," "Buds and Bird Voices," and "Roger Malvin's Burial," all appeared in the "Democratic" in 1843. "Rappaccini's Daughter" and other tales followed in the next year; and in 1845 the second volume of "Twice-Told Tales" was brought out at Boston. During the same year Hawthorne edited the "African Journals" of his friend Bridge, then an officer in the navy, who had just completed a cruise. The editor's name evidently carried great weight, even then. "The mere announcement, 'edited by Nathaniel Hawthorne,'" said one of the critics, "is enough to entitle this book to a place among the American classics." I dwell upon this, because an attempt has been made to spread the idea that Hawthorne up to the time of writing "The Scarlet Letter" was still obscure and discouraged, and that only then, by a timely burst of appreciation in certain quarters, was he rescued from oblivion. The truth is, that he had won himself an excellent position, was popular, and was himself aware by this time of the honor in which he was held. Even when he found that the small profits of literature were forcing him into office again, he wrote to Bridge: "It is rather singular that I should need an office: for nobody's scribblings seem to be more acceptable than mine." The explanation of this lies in the wretchedly dependent state of native authorship at that time. The law of copyright had not then attained to even the refined injustice which it has now reached. "I continue," he wrote, in 1844, "to scribble tales with good success so far as regards empty praise, some notes of which, pleasant enough to my ears, have come from across the Atlantic. But the pamphlet and piratical system has so broken up all regular literature, that I am forced to work hard for small gains."

Besides the labors already enumerated, he edited for the "Democratic" some "Papers of an old Dartmoor Prisoner" (probably some one of his "sea-dog" acquaintance in Salem). He was in demand among the publishers. A letter from Evert Duyckinck (New York, October 2, 1845), who was then in the employ of Wiley and Putnam, publishers of the "African Cruiser," says of that book: "The English notices are bounteous in praise. No American book in a long time has been so well noticed." The same firm were now eager to bring out his recent tales, and were also, as appears in the following from Duyckinck, urging the prosecution of another scheme: "I hope you will not think me a troublesome fellow," he writes, "if I drop you another line with the vociferous cry, MSS.! MSS.! Mr. Wiley's American series is athirst for the volumes of tales; and how stands the prospect for the History of Witchcraft, I whilom spoke of?" The History Hawthorne wisely eschewed; but early in 1846 the "Mosses from an Old Manse" was issued at New York, in two volumes. This attracted at once a great deal of praise, and it certainly shows a wider range and fuller maturity than the first book of "Twice-Told Tales"; yet I doubt whether the stories of this group have taken such intimate hold of any body of readers as those, although recommending themselves to a larger audience. Hawthorne's life at the Old Manse was assuredly one of the brightest epochs of his career: an unalloyed happiness had come to him, he was full of the delight of first possession in his home, a new and ample companionship was his, and the quiet course of the days, with their openings into healthful outdoor exercise, made a perfect balance between creation and recreation. The house in which he dwelt was itself a little island of the past, standing intact above the flood of events; all around was a mild, cultivated country, broken into gentle variety of "hills to live with," and touched with just enough wildness to keep him from tiring of it: the stream that flowed by his orchard was for him an enchanted river. He renewed the pleasant sports of boyhood with it, fishing and boating in summer, and in winter whistling over its clear, black ice, on rapid skates. In the more genial months, the garden gave him pleasant employment; and in his journal-musings, the thought gratifies him that he has come into a primitive relation with nature, and that the two occupants of the Manse are in good faith a new Adam and Eve, so far as the happiness of that immemorial pair remained unbroken. The charm of these experiences has all been distilled into the descriptive chapter which prefaces the "Mosses"; and such more personal aspects of it as could not be mixed in that vintage have been gathered, like forgotten clusters of the harvest, into the Note-Books. It remains to comment, here, on the contrast between the peaceful character of these first years at Concord and the increased sombreness of some of the visions there recorded.

The reason of this is, that Hawthorne's genius had now waxed to a stature which made its emanations less immediately dependent on his actual mood. I am far from assuming an exact autobiographical value for the "Twice-Told Tales"; a theory which the writer himself condemned. But they, as he has also said, require "to be read in the clear brown twilight atmosphere in which they were written"; while the "Mosses" are the work of a man who has learned to know the world, and the atmosphere in which they were composed seems almost dissonant with the tone of some of them. "The Birthmark," "The Bosom Serpent," "Rappaccini's Daughter," and that terrible and lurid parable of "Young Goodman Brown," are made up of such horror as Hawthorne has seldom expressed elsewhere. "The Procession of Life" is a fainter vibration of the same chord of awfulness. Such concentration of frightful truth do these most graceful and exquisitely wrought creations contain, that the intensity becomes almost poisonous. What is the meaning of this added revelation of evil? The genius of Hawthorne was one which used without stint that costliest of all elements in production,—time; the brooding propensity was indispensable to him; and, accordingly, as some of these conceptions had occurred to him a good while before the carrying out, they received great and almost excessive elaboration. The reality of sin, the pervasiveness of evil, had been but slightly insisted upon in the earlier tales: in this series, the idea bursts up like a long-buried fire, with earth-shaking strength, and the pits of Hell seem yawning beneath us. Dismal, too, is the story of "Roger Malvin's Burial," and dreary "The Christmas Banquet," with its assembly of the supremely wretched. In "Earth's Holocaust" we get the first result of Hawthorne's insight into the demonianism of reformatory schemers who forget that the centre of every true reform is the heart. And, incidentally, this marks out the way to "The Scarlet Letter" on the one hand, and "The Blithedale Romance" on the other, in which the same theme assumes two widely different phases. Thus we find the poet seeking more and more certainly the central fountain of moral suggestion from which he drew his best inspirations. The least pleasing quality of the work is, I think, its overcharged allegorical burden. Some of the most perfect of all his tales are here, but their very perfection makes one recoil the more at the supremacy of their purely intellectual interest. One feels a certain chagrin, too, on finishing them, as if the completeness of embodiment had given the central idea a shade of too great obviousness. Hawthorne is most enjoyable and most true to himself when he offers us the chalice of poetry filled to the very brim with the clear liquid of moral truth. But, at first, there seems to have been a conflict between his aesthetic and his ethical impulse. Coleridge distinguishes the symbolical from the allegorical, by calling it a part of some whole which it represents. "Allegory cannot be other than spoken consciously; whereas in the symbol it is very possible that the general truth represented may be working unconsciously in the writer's mind.... The advantage of symbolical writing over allegory is that it presumes no disjunction of faculties, but simple predominance." Now in the "Allegories of the Heart," collected in the "Mosses," there is sometimes an extreme consciousness of the idea to be illustrated;

and though the ideas are in a measure symbolical, yet they are on the whole too disintegrating in their effect to leave the artistic result quite generous and satisfying. Allegory itself, as an echo of one's thought, is often agreeable, and pleases through surprise; yet it is apt to be confusing, and smothers the poetic harmony. In his romances, Hawthorne escapes into a hugely significant, symbolic sphere which relieves the reader of this partial vexation. "The Celestial Railroad," of course, must be excepted from censure, being the sober parody of a famous work, and in itself a masterly satirical allegory. And in two cases, "Drowne's Wooden Image," and "The Artist of the Beautiful," we find the most perfect imaginable symbolism. In one, the story of Pygmalion compressed and Yankeefied, yet rendered additionally lovely by its homeliness; and the essence of all artistic life, in the other, presented in a form that cannot be surpassed. "Mrs. Bullfrog" is a sketch which is ludicrously puzzling, until one recalls Hawthorne's explanation: "The story was written as a mere experiment in that style; it did not come from any depth within me,—neither my heart nor mind had anything to do with it." [Footnote: American Note-Books, Vol. II.] It is valuable, in this light, as a distinct boundary-mark in one direction. But the essay vein which had produced some of the clearest watered gems in the "Twice-Told Tales," begins in the "Mosses" to yield increase of brilliance and beauty; and we here find, with the gathering strength of imagination,—the enlarged power for bringing the most unreal things quite into the circle of realities,—a compensating richness in describing the simply natural, as in "Buds and Bird Voices," "Fire Worship," "The Old Apple-Dealer."

Everything in these two volumes illustrates forcibly the brevity, the absolutely right proportion of language to idea, which from the first had marked Hawthorne with one trait, at least, quite unlike any displayed by the writers with whom he was compared, and entirely foreign to the mood of the present century. This *sense of form*, the highest and last attribute of a creative writer, provided it comes as the result of a deep necessity of his genius, and not as a mere acquirement of art, is a quality that has not been enough noticed in him; doubtless because it is not enough looked for anywhere by the majority of critics and readers, in these days of adulteration and of rapid manufacture out of shoddy and short-fibred stuffs. We demand a given measure of reading, good or bad, and producers of it are in great part paid for length: so that with much using of thin and shapeless literature, we have forgotten how good is that which is solid and has form. But, having attained this perfection in the short story, Hawthorne thereafter abandoned it for a larger mould.

The "Mosses," as I have said, gained him many admirers. In them he for the first time touched somewhat upon the tendencies of the current epoch, and took an entirely independent stand among the philosophers of New England. Yet, for a while, there was the oddest misconception of his attitude by those at a distance. A Whig magazine, pleased by his manly and open conservatism, felt convinced that he must be a Whig, though he was, at the moment of the announcement, taking office under a Democratic President. On the other hand, a writer in "The Church Review" of New Haven, whom we shall presently see more of, was incited to a tilt against him as a rabid New England theorist, the outcome, of phalansteries, a subverter of marriage and of all other holy things. In like manner, while Hawthorne was casting now and then a keen dart at the Transcendentalists, and falling asleep over "The Dial" (as his journals betray), Edgar Poe, a literary *Erinaceus*, wellnigh exhausted his supply of quills upon the author, as belonging to a school toward which he felt peculiar acerbity. "Let him mend his pen," cried Poe, in his most high-pitched strain of personal abuse, "get a bottle of visible ink, hang (if possible) the editor of 'The Dial,' cut Mr. Alcott, and throw out of the window to the pigs all his odd numbers of the 'North American Review.'" This paper of Poe's is a laughable and pathetic case of his professedly punctilious analysis covering the most bitter attacks, with traces of what looks like envy, and others of a resistless impulse to sympathize with a literary brother as against the average mind. He begins with a discussion of originality and peculiarity: "In one sense, to be peculiar is to be original," he says, but the true originality is "not the uniform but the continuous peculiarity, ... giving its own hue to everything it touches," and touching everything. From this flimsy and very uncertain principle, which seems to make two different things out of the same thing, he goes on to conclude that, "the fact is, if Mr. Hawthorne were really original, he could not fail of making himself felt by the public. But the fact is, he is *not* original in any sense." He then attempts to show that Hawthorne's peculiarity is derivative, and selects Tieck as the source of this idiosyncrasy. Perhaps his insinuation may be the origin of Hawthorne's effort to read some of the German author, while at the Old Manse,—an attempt given up in great fatigue. Presently, the unhappy critic brings up his favorite charge of plagiarism; and it happens, as usual, that the writer borrowed from is Poe himself! The similarity which he discovers is between "Howe's Masquerade" and "William Wilson," and is based upon fancied resemblances of situation, which have not the least foundation in the facts, and upon the occurrence in both stories of the phrase, "Villain, unmuffle yourself!" In the latter half of his review, written a little later, Mr. Poe takes quite another tack:—

"Of Mr. Hawthorne's tales we would say emphatically that they belong to the highest region of art,—an art subservient to genius of a very lofty order. We had supposed, with good reason for so supposing, that he had been thrust into his present position by one of the impudent *cliques* who beset our

literature; ... but we have been most agreeably mistaken.... Mr. Hawthorne's distinctive trait is invention, creation, imagination, originality,—a trait which, in the literature of fiction, is positively worth all the rest. But the nature of the originality ... is but imperfectly understood.... The inventive or original mind as frequently displays itself in novelty of *tone* as in novelty of matter. Mr. Hawthorne is original in *all* points."

This, certainly, is making generous amends; but before he leaves the subject, the assertion is repeated, that "he is peculiar, and *not* original."

Though an extravagant instance, this tourney of Poe's represents pretty well the want of understanding with which Hawthorne was still received by many readers. His point of view once seized upon, nothing could be more clear and simple than his own exposition of refined and evasive truths; but the keen edge of his perception remained quite invisible to some. Of the "Twice-Told Tales" Hawthorne himself wrote:—

"The sketches are not, it is hardly necessary to say, profound; but it is rather more remarkable that they so seldom, if ever, show any design on the writer's part to make them so.... Every sentence, so far as it embodies thought or sensibility, may be understood and felt by anybody who will give himself the trouble to read it, and will take up the book in a proper mood."

But it was hard for people to find that mood, because in fact the Tales *were* profound. Their language was clear as crystal; but all the more dazzlingly shone through the crystal that new light of Hawthorne's gaze.

After nearly four years, Hawthorne's tenancy of the Manse came to an end, and he returned to Salem, with some prospect of an office there from the new Democratic government of Polk. It is said that President Tyler had at one time actually appointed him to the Salem post-office, but was induced to withdraw his name. There were local factions that kept the matter in abeyance. The choice, in any case, lay between the Naval Office and the surveyorship, and Bridge urged Hawthorne's appointment to the latter. "Whichever it be," wrote Hawthorne, "it is to you that I shall owe it, among so many other solid kindnesses. I have as true friends as any man has, but you have been the friend in need and the friend indeed." At this time he was seriously in want of some profitable employment, for he had received almost nothing from the magazine. It was the period of credit, and debts were hard to collect. His journal at the Old Manse refers to the same trouble. I have been told that, besides losing the value of many of his contributions to the "Democratic," through the failure of the magazine, he had advanced money to the publishers, which was never repaid; but this has not been corroborated, and as he had lost nearly everything at Brook Farm, it is a little doubtful. At length, he was installed as surveyor in the Salem Custom-House, where he hoped soon to begin writing at ease.

VII.

THE SCARLET LETTER.

1846-1850.

The literary result of the four years which Hawthorne now, after long absence, spent in his native town, was the first romance which gave him world-wide fame. But the intention of beginning to write soon was not easy of fulfilment in the new surroundings.

"Literature, its exertions and objects, were now of little moment in my regard," he says, in "The Custom-House." "I cared not at this period for books; they were apart from me.... A gift, a faculty, if it had not departed, was suspended and inanimate within me."

Readers of that charming sketch will remember the account of the author's finding a veritable Puritan scarlet letter in an unfinished upper room of the public building in which he labored at this time, and how he was urged by the ghost of a former surveyor, who had written an account of the badge and its wearer, to make the matter public. The discovery of these materials is narrated with such reassuring accuracy, that probably a large number of people still suppose this to have been the origin of "The Scarlet Letter." But there is no knowledge among those immediately connected with Hawthorne of any actual relic having been found; nor, of course, is it likely that anything besides the manuscript memorandum should have been preserved. But I do not know that he saw even this. The papers of Mr. Poe were probably a pure invention of the author's.

A strange coincidence came to light the year after the publication of the romance. A letter from Leutze, the painter, was printed in the Art Union Bulletin, running thus:—

"I was struck, when some years ago in the Schwarzwald (in an old castle), with one picture in the portrait-gallery; it has haunted me ever since. It was not the beauty or finish that charmed me; it was something strange in the figures, the immense contrast between the child and what was supposed to be her gouvernante in the garb of some severe order; the child, a girl, was said to be the ancestress of the family, a princess of some foreign land. No sooner had I read 'The Scarlet Letter' than it burst clearly upon me that the picture could represent no one else than Hester Prynne and little Pearl. I hurried to see it again, and found my suppositions corroborated, for the formerly inexplicable embroidery on the breast of the woman, which I supposed was the token of her order, assumed the form of the letter; and though partially hidden by the locks of the girl and the flowers in her hair, I set to work upon it at once, and made as close a copy of it, with all its quaintness, as was possible to me, which I shall send you soon. How Hester Prynne ever came to be painted, I can't imagine; it must certainly have been a freak of little Pearl. Strange enough, the castle is named Perlenburg, the Castle of Pearls, or Pearl Castle, as you please."

A more extraordinary incident in its way than this discovery, if it be trustworthy, could hardly be conceived; but I am not aware that it has been verified.

The germ of the story in Hawthorne's mind is given below. The name Pearl, it will be remembered, occurs in the Note-Books, as an original and isolated suggestion "for a girl, in a story."

In "Endicott and the Red Cross," one of the twice-told series printed many years before, there is a description of "a young woman, with no mean share of beauty, whose doom it was to wear the letter A on the breast of her gown, in the eyes of all the world and her own children. Sporting with her infamy, the lost and desperate creature had embroidered the fatal token in scarlet cloth, with golden thread and the nicest art of needlework." A friend asked Hawthorne if he had documentary evidence for this particular punishment, and he replied that he had actually seen it mentioned in the town records of Boston, though with no attendant details. [Footnote: I may here transcribe, as a further authority, which Hawthorne may or may not have seen, one of the laws of Plymouth Colony, enacted in 1658, about the period in which the events of "The Scarlet Letter" are placed. "It is enacted by the Court and the Authoritie thereof that whosoeuer shall committ Adultery shal bee seuerly Punished by whipping two seueral times viz: once whiles the Court is in being att which they are convicted of the fact, and the second time as the Court shall order, and likewise to were two Capitall letters viz: A D cut cut in Cloth and sewed on their vpermost garments on their arme or backe; and if at any time they shal bee taken without said letters, whiles they are in the Gou'ment soe worne, to be forthwith Taken and publicly whipt."] This friend said to another at the time: "We shall hear of that letter again, for it evidently has made a profound impression on Hawthorne's mind." Returning to Salem, where his historical stories and sketches had mainly been written, he reverted naturally to the old themes; and this one doubtless took possession of him soon after his entrance on his customs duties. But these disabled him from following it out at once. When the indefatigable Whigs got hold of the government again, Hawthorne's literary faculty came into power also, for he was turned out of office. In the winter of 1849, therefore, he got to work on his first regular romance. In his Preface to the "Mosses" he had formally renounced the short story; but "The Scarlet Letter" proved so highly wrought a tragedy that he had fears of its effect upon the public, if presented alone.

"In the present case I have some doubts about the expediency, [he wrote to Mr. Fields, the junior partner of his new publisher, Ticknor,] because, if the book is made up entirely of 'The Scarlet Letter,' it will be too sombre. I found it impossible to relieve the shadows of the story with so much light as I would gladly have thrown in. Keeping so close to its point as the tale does, and diversified no otherwise than by turning different sides of the same dark idea to the reader's eye, it will weary very many people, and disgust some. Is it safe, then, to stake the book entirely on this one chance?"

His plan was to add some of the pieces afterward printed with the "The Snow Image," and entitle the whole "Old Time Legends, together with Sketches Experimental and Ideal." But this was abandoned. On the 4th of February, 1850, he writes to Bridge:—

"I finished my book only yesterday: one end being in the press at Boston, while the other was in my head here at Salem; so that, as you see, the story is at least fourteen miles long....

"My book, the publisher tells me, will not be out before April. He speaks of it in tremendous terms of approbation; so does Mrs. Hawthorne, to whom I read the conclusion last night. [Footnote: This recalls an allusion in the English Note-Books (September 14, 1855): "Speaking of Thackeray, I cannot but wonder at his coolness in respect to his own pathos, and compare it with my emotions when I read the last scene of The Scarlet Letter to my wife just after writing it,—tried to read it, rather, for my voice

swelled and heaved, as if I were tossed up and down on an ocean as it subsides after a storm. But I was in a very nervous state, then, having gone through a great diversity of emotion while writing it, for many months."] It broke her heart, and sent her to bed with a grievous headache,—which I look upon as a triumphant success. Judging from its effect on her and the publisher, I may calculate on what bowlers calls a 'ten-strike.' But I do not make any such calculation."

Now that the author had strongly taken hold of one of the most tangible and terrible of subjects, the public no longer held back. "The Scarlet Letter" met with instant acceptance, and the first edition of five thousand copies was exhausted in ten days. On the old ground of Salem and in the region of New England history where he had won his first triumphs, Hawthorne, no longer the centre of a small public, received the applause of a widespread audience throughout this country, and speedily in Europe too. His old friend, "The London Athenaeum," received "The Scarlet Letter" with very high, though careful praise. But at the same time with this new and wide recognition, an assault was made on the author which it is quite worth while to record here. This was an article in "The Church Review" (an Episcopal quarterly published at New Haven), [Footnote: In the number for January, 1851.] written, I am told, by a then young man who has since reached a high place in the ecclesiastical body to which he belongs. The reviewer, in this case, had in a previous article discussed the question of literary schools in America. Speaking of the origin of the term "Lake School," he pronounced the epithet *Lakers* "the mere blunder of superficial wit and raillery." But that did not prevent him from creating the absurd title of "Bay writers," which he applied to all the writers about Boston, baptizing them in the profane waters of Massachusetts Bay. "The Church Review" was in the habit of devoting a good deal of its attention to criticism of the Puritan movement which founded New England. Accordingly, "It is time," announced this logician, in opening his batteries on Hawthorne, "that the literary world should learn that Churchmen are, in a very large proportion, their readers and book-buyers, and that the tastes and principles of Churchmen have as good a right to be respected as those of Puritans and Socialists." Yet, inconsistently enough, he declared that Bay writers could not have grown to the stature of authors at all, unless they had first shaken off the Puritan religion, and adopted "a religion of indifference and unbelief." Thus, though attacking them as Puritans and Socialists (this phrase was aimed at Brook Farm), he denied that they were Puritans at all. Clear understanding of anything from a writer with so much of the boomerang in his mind was not to be expected. But neither would one easily guess the revolting vulgarity with which he was about to view "The Scarlet Letter." He could discover in it nothing but a deliberate attempt to attract readers by pandering to the basest taste. He imagines that Hawthorne "selects the intrigue of an adulterous minister, as the groundwork of his ideal" of Puritan times, and asks, "Is the French era actually begun in our literature?" Yet, being in some points, or professing to be, an admirer of the author, "We are glad," he says, "that 'The Scarlet Letter' is, after all, little more than an experiment, and need not be regarded as a step necessarily fatal." And in order to save Mr. Hawthorne, and stem the tide of corruption, he is willing to point out his error. Nevertheless, he is somewhat at a loss to know where to puncture the heart of the offence, for "there is a provoking concealment of the author's motive," he confesses, "from the beginning to the end of the story. We wonder what he would be at: whether he is making fun of all religion, or only giving a fair hint of the essential sensualism of enthusiasm. But, in short, we are astonished at the kind of incident he has selected for romance." The phraseology, he finds, is not offensive: but this is eminently diabolical, for "the romance never hints the shocking words that belong to its things, but, like Mephistopheles, hints that the arch-fiend himself is a very tolerable sort of person, if nobody would call him Mr. Devil." Where, within the covers of the book, could the deluded man have found this doctrine urged? Only once, faintly, and then in the words of one of the chief sinners.

"Shelley himself," says the austere critic, airing his literature, "never imagined a more dissolute conversation than that in which the polluted minister comforts himself with the thought, that the revenge of the injured husband is worse than his own sin in instigating it. 'Thou and I never did so, Hester,' he suggests; and she responds, 'Never, never! What we did had a consecration of its own.'"

And these wretched and distorted consolations of two erring and condemned souls, the righteous Churchman, with not very commendable taste, seizes upon as the moral of the book, leaving aside the terrible retribution which overtakes and blasts them so soon after their vain plan of flight and happiness. Not for a moment does Hawthorne defend their excuses for themselves. Of Hester:—

"Shame, Despair, Solitude! These [he says] had been her teachers,—stern and wild ones,—and they had made her strong, but taught her much amiss."

And what she urges on behalf of herself and Dimmesdale must, of course, by any pure-minded reader, be included among the errors thus taken into her mind.

"The minister, on the other hand, had never gone through an experience calculated to lead him beyond the scope of generally received laws; although, in a single instance, he had so fearfully transgressed one of the most sacred of them.... Were such a man once more to fall, what plea could be

urged in extenuation of his crime? *None*; unless it avail him somewhat, that he was broken down by long and exquisite suffering; that his mind was darkened and confused by the very remorse which harrowed it."

But that these partial excuses are futile, the writer goes on to show, in this solemn declaration:—

"And be the stern and sad truth spoken, that the breach which guilt has once made into the human soul is never, in this mortal state, repaired. It may be watched and guarded.... But there is still the ruined wall, and near it the stealthy tread of the foe that would win over again his unforgotten triumph."

How Mr. Dimmesdale yielded to this stealthy foe is then described; but it is also shown how Roger Chillingworth, the personified retribution of the two sinners, fastens himself to them in all their movements, and will be with them in any flight, however distant.

"'Hadst thou sought the whole earth over,' said he, looking darkly at the clergyman, 'there was no one place so secret, no high place nor lowly place, where thou couldst have escaped me.'"

And it was precisely because Hawthorne would leave no specious turn of the hypocrisy of sin unrevealed, that he carried us through this delusive mutual consolation of the guilty pair, and showed us their empty hope, founded on wrong-doing, powdered to dust at the moment of fulfilment.

But the reverend critic, by some dark and prurient affinity of his imagination, saw nothing of the awful truths so clearly though briefly expressed, and finally came to the conclusion that the moral of the whole fiction was "that the Gospel has not set the relations of man and woman where they should be, and that a new gospel is needed to supersede the Seventh Commandment, and the bond of matrimony."

"The lady's frailty, [writes the reviewer,] is philosophized into a natural and necessary result of the Scriptural law of marriage, which by holding her irrevocably to her vows, as plighted to a dried-up old book-worm, ... is viewed as making her heart an easy victim.... The sin of her seducer, too, seems to be considered as lying, not so much in the deed itself, as in his long concealment of it; and in fact the whole moral of the tale is given in the words, 'Be true, he true!' as if sincerity in sin were a virtue, and as if 'Be clean, he clean!' were not the more fitting conclusion."

But this moral of cleanliness was one so obvious that Hawthorne probably never dreamed of any one's requiring it to be emphasized. In fact, it is the starting-point, the very foundation, of the tragedy. The tale is a massive argument for repentance, which is the flinging aside of concealment, and the open and truthful acknowledgment of sin. In the Puritan mode of dealing with sin, Hawthorne found the whole problem of repentance and confession presented in the most drastic, concentrated, and startling form; for the Puritans carried out in the severest style a practical illustration of the consequences of moral offence. Since men and women would not voluntarily continue in active remorse and public admission of wrong-doing, these governors and priests determined to try the effect of visible symbols in keeping the conscience alive. People were set before the public gaze, in the stocks, whipped in public at the whipping-post, and imprisoned in the pillory. Malefactors had their ears cropped; scolding women had to wear a forked twig on the tongue; other criminals to carry a halter constantly around the neck. But that this was only a hellish device, after all; that the inflictors of such punishment were arrogating too much to themselves, and shared the office of the fiend; that, moreover, this compulsion of a dumb outward truthfulness would never build up the real inner truth of the soul;—all this Hawthorne perceived and endeavored to portray in a form which should be as a parable, applying its morality to the men and women of to-day, all the more persuasively because of its indirectness. As a study of a system of social discipline never before so expounded, it claimed the deepest attention. And never was the capacity of sinning men and women for self-delusion more wonderfully illustrated than in this romance. The only avenue of escape from such delusion was shown to be self-analysis; that is, the conscientious view of one's self which keeps the right or wrong of one's conduct always clearly visible. Hester was on the whole the truest of the three persons in the drama, and the advantages of this comparative trueness are constantly made manifest. She in a measure conquers evil and partly atones for her wrong, by the good which she is able to do among her fellow-beings,—as much compensation as can rightfully be hoped for a woman who has once been so essentially corrupted as she. Dimmesdale, too, retains so much of native truth that he never allows his conscience to slumber for a moment, and plies the scourge of remorse upon himself continually. To this extent he is better than Chillingworth, who, in order to take into his own hands the retribution that belongs to Heaven, deliberately adopts falsity for his guide, and becomes a monster of deceit, taking a wicked joy in that which ought to have awakened an endless, piteous horror in him instead, and have led to new contemplation and study of virtue. But Dimmesdale, though not coolly and maliciously false, stops short of open confession, and in this submits himself to the most occult and corrosive influence of his own sin. For him, the single righteousness possible consisted in abject acknowledgment. Once announcing that he had fallen, and

was unworthy, he might have taken his place on the lower moral plane; and, equally resigning the hope of public honor and of happiness with Hester, he could have lent his crippled energies to the doing of some limited good. The shock to the general belief in probity would have been great; but the discovery that the worst had been made known, that the minister was strong enough to condemn himself, and descend from the place he no longer was fit for, would have restored the public mind again, by showing it that a deeper probity possible than that which it wanted to see sustained. This is the lesson of the tragedy, that nothing is so destructive as the morality of mere appearances. Not that sincerity in sin is a virtue, but that it is better than sin and falsehood combined. And if anything were wanting, at first, to make this clear, there certainly is not a particle of obscurity left by the glare of the catastrophe, when the clergyman rejects Hester's hope that he and she may meet after death, and spend their immortal life together, and says that God has proved his mercy most of all by the afflictions he has laid upon him.

As to the new truth which Hester hoped would be revealed, it could have been no other than that ultimate lifting up of the race into a plane of the utmost human truthfulness, which every one who believes in the working of all things for good, looks forward to with vague longing, but with most certain faith. How far the Puritan organization was from this state of applied truth, the romance shows. Nearly every note in the range of Puritan sympathies is touched by the poet, as he goes on. The still unspoiled tenderness of the young matron who cannot but feel something of mercifulness toward Hester is overruled by the harsh exultation of other women in her open shame. We have the noble and spotless character of Winthrop dimly suggested by the mention of his death on the night of Dimmesdale's vigil at the pillory; but much more distinct appears the mild and saintly Wilson, who, nevertheless, is utterly incompetent to deal with the problem of a woman's lost morality. Governor Bellingham is the stern, unflinching, manly upholder of the state and its ferocious sanctions; yet in the very house with him dwells Mistress Hibbins, the witch-lady, revelling in the secret knowledge of widespread sin. Thus we are led to a fuller comprehension of Chillingworth's attitude as an exponent of the whole Puritan idea of spiritual government; and in his diabolical absorption and gloating interest in sin, we behold an exaggerated—but logically exaggerated—spectre of the Puritan attempt to precipitate and personally supervise the punishments of eternity on this side of death.

Dr. George B. Loring, of Salem, wrote at the time an excellent reply to this article in "The Church Review," though he recognized, as all readers of general intelligence must, that the author of it did not by any means represent the real enlightenment of the clergy and laity for whom he undertook to be a mouthpiece.

Considered as a work of art, "The Scarlet Letter" is perhaps not so excellent as the author's subsequent books. It may not unjustly be called a novel without a plot, so far as this touches the adroit succession of incidents and the interdependence of parts, which we call "plot." Passion and motive and character, having been brought together in given relations, begin to work toward a logical issue; but the individual chapters stand before us rather as isolated pictures, with intervals between, than as the closely conjoined links of a drama gathering momentum as it grows. There is succession and acceleration, indeed, in the movement of the story, but this is not quite so evident as is the hand which checks each portion and holds it perfectly still, long enough to describe it completely. The author does not, like a playwright, reflect the action swiftly while it passes, but rather arrests it and studies it, then lets it go by. It may be that this is simply the distinction between the dramatist's and the novelist's method; but probably we must allow it to be something more than that, and must attribute it to the peculiar leisure which qualifies all Hawthorne's fictions, at times enhancing their effect, but also protracting the impression a little too much, at times. Yet the general conception, and the mode of drawing out the story and of illustrating the characters, is dramatic in a high degree. The author's exegesis of the moods of his persons is brief, suggestive, restrained; and, notwithstanding the weight of moral meaning which the whole work carries, it is impossible to determine how much the movement of events is affected by his own will, or by that imperious perception of the necessary outcome of certain passions and temperaments, which influences novelists of the higher order.

As a demonstration of power, it seems to me that this first extended romance was not outdone by its successors; yet there is a harshness in its tone, a want of mitigation, which causes it to strike crudely on the aesthetic sense by comparison with those mellower productions. This was no doubt fortunate for its immediate success. Hawthorne's faith in pure beauty was so absolute as to erect at first a barrier between himself and the less devout reading public. If in his earlier tales he had not so transfused tragedy with the suave repleteness of his sense of beauty, he might have snatched a speedier popular recognition. It is curious to speculate what might have been the result, had he written "The House of the Seven Gables" before "The Scarlet Letter." Deep as is the tragic element in the former, it seems quite likely that its greater gentleness of incident and happier tone would have kept the world from discovering the writer's real measure, for a while longer. But "The Scarlet Letter" burst with such force close to its ears, that the indolent public awoke in good earnest, and never forgot, though it speedily forgave the shock.

There was another smaller but attendant explosion. Hawthorne's prefatory chapter on the Custom-House incensed some of his fellow-citizens of Salem, terribly. There seems to have been a general civic clamor against him, on account of it, though it would be hard to find any rational justification therefor. In reference to the affair, Hawthorne wrote at the time:—

"As to the Salem people, I really thought I had been exceedingly good-natured in my treatment of them. They certainly do not deserve good usage at my hands, after permitting me ... to be deliberately lied down, not merely once, but at two separate attacks, and on two false indictments, without hardly a voice being raised on my behalf."

This refers to political machinations of the party opposed to Hawthorne as an official: they had pledged themselves, it was understood, not to ask for his ejection, and afterward set to work to oust him without cause. There is reason to believe that Hawthorne felt acute exasperation at these unpleasant episodes for a time. But the annoyance came upon him when he was worn out with the excitement of composing "The Scarlet Letter"; and this ebullition of local hostility must moreover have been especially offensive at a moment when the public everywhere else was receiving him with acclaim as a person whose genius entitled him to enthusiastic recognition. Hawthorne had generous admirers and sincere friends in Salem, and his feeling was, I suppose, in great measure the culmination of that smouldering disagreement which had harassed him in earlier years, and had lurked in his heart in spite of the constant mild affection which he maintained toward the town.

But the connection between Hawthorne and Salem was now to be finally broken off. He longed for change, for the country, and for the recreation that the Old Manse garden had given him. "I should not long stand such a life of bodily inactivity and mental exertion as I have led for the last few months," he wrote to Bridge. "Here I hardly go out once a week." On this account, and because of his difficulty in writing while in office, he did not so much regret losing his place. One of the plans proposed at this time was that he should rent or buy the Sparhawk house, a famous old colonial mansion on Goose Creek, at Kittery, in Maine, which was then to be disposed of in some way. Hawthorne, I think, would have found much that was suggestive and agreeable in the neighborhood. After his return from abroad, he made a visit to the quaint and stately little city of Portsmouth, and dined at one of the most beautiful old houses in New England, the ancient residence of Governor Langdon, then occupied by the Rev. Dr. Burroughs. A memorial of that visit remains, in this bright note from his host:—

PORTSMOUTH, September, 1860.

MR. HAWTHORNE.

MY DEAR SIR:—There are no Mosses on our "Old Manse," there is no Romance at our Blithedale; and this is no "Scarlet Letter." But you can give us a "Twice-Told Tale," if you will for the second time be our guest to-morrow at dinner, at half past two o'clock.

Very truly yours,

CHARLES BURROUGHS.

But, at present, Hawthorne's decision led him to Berkshire.

VIII.

LENOX AND CONCORD: PRODUCTIVE PERIOD.

1850-1853.

In the early summer, after the publication of "The Scarlet Letter," Hawthorne removed from Salem to Lenox, in Berkshire, where himself and his family were ensconced in a small red house near the Stockbridge Bowl. It was far from a comfortable residence; but he had no means of obtaining a better one. Meantime, he could do what he was sent into the world to do, so long as he had the mere wherewithal to live.

He was much interested in Herman Melville, at this time living in Pittsfield. There was even talk of their writing something together, as I judge from some correspondence; though this was abandoned.

Between this summer of 1850 and June, 1853, Hawthorne wrote "The House of the Seven Gables," "The Blithedale Romance," "The Wonder-Book for Boys and Girls," and "Tanglewood Tales," besides the story of "The Snow Image" in the volume to which this supplies the title; and his short "Life of Franklin Pierce." The previous paucity of encouragements to literature, and the deterring effect of official duties and of the Brook Farm attempt, were now removed, and his pen showed that it could pour a full current if only left free to do so.

The industry and energy of this period are the more remarkable because he could seldom accomplish anything in the way of composition during the warm months. "The House of the Seven Gables" was under way by September, 1850.

"I shan't have the new story ready," he writes to his publisher on the 1st of October, "by November, for I am never good for anything in the literary way till after the first autumnal frost, which has somewhat such an effect on my imagination that it does on the foliage here about me,—multiplying and brightening its hues; though they are likely to be sober and shabby enough after all."

The strain of reflection upon the work in hand which he indulged one month later is so important as to merit dwelling upon.

"I write diligently, but not so rapidly as I had hoped. I find the book requires more care and thought than 'The Scarlet Letter'; also I have to wait oftener for a mood. 'The Scarlet Letter' being all in one tone, I had only to get my pitch, and could then go on interminably. Many passages of this book ought to be finished with the minuteness of a Dutch picture, in order to give them their proper effect. Sometimes, when tired of it, it strikes me that the whole is an absurdity, from beginning to end; but the fact is, in writing a romance, a man is always, or always ought to be, careering on, the utmost verge of a precipitous absurdity, and the skill lies in coming as close as possible, without actually tumbling over. My prevailing idea is, that the book ought to succeed better than 'The Scarlet Letter,' though I have no idea that it will."

By the 12th of January, 1851, he was able to write: "My 'House of the Seven Gables' is, so to speak, finished; only I am hammering away a little at the roof, and doing up a few odd jobs that were left incomplete"; and at the end of that month, he despatched the manuscript to Boston, still retaining his preference for it over the preceding work.

"It has met with extraordinary success from that portion of the public to whose judgment it has been submitted, viz. from my wife. I likewise prefer it to 'The Scarlet Letter'; but an author's opinion of his book just after completing it is worth little or nothing, he being then in the hot or cold fit of a fever, and certain to rate it too high or too low.

"It has undoubtedly one disadvantage, in being brought so close to the present time; whereby its romantic improbabilities become more glaring."

He also wrote to Bridge, in July, after listening to the critics, and giving his own opinion time to mature:—

"I think it a work more characteristic of my mind, and more proper and natural for me to write, than 'The Scarlet Letter,'—but, for that very reason, less likely to interest the public. Nevertheless, it appears to have sold better than the former, and I think is move sure of retaining the ground that it acquires. Mrs. Kemble writes that both works are popular in England, and advises me to take out my copyright there."

His opinion of the superiority of the fresh production to his first great romance is no doubt one that critics will coincide with as regards artistic completeness; though his fear that it would not succeed so well was not confirmed, because, as I have suggested, he had begun to acquire that momentum of public favor which sets in after its first immense inertia has once been overcome. Acting on the reports from England, he made a suggestion to his publisher; and though this at first met with discouragement, ten months later £200 were received from a London house for "The Blithedale Romance." English editions of his works had already become numerous. But Hawthorne began now to receive a more ethereal and not less welcome kind of tribute from abroad, that of praise from the makers and markers of literature. The critics welcomed him to a high place; authors wrote to him, urging him to cross the sea; and Miss Mitford—of whom he said, "Her sketches, long ago as I read them, are as sweet in my memory as the scent of new hay"—sent special messages expressive of her pleasure.

When the "Blithedale Romance" had come out, Mr. Hawthorne sent Miss Mitford a copy, and she wrote in reply this cordial and delightful note:—

SWALLOWFIELD, August 6,1852.

At the risk of troubling you, dear Mr. Hawthorne, I write again to tell you how much I thank you for the precious volume enriched by your handwriting, which, for its own sake and for yours, I shall treasure carefully so long as I live. The story has your mark upon it,—the fine tragic construction unmatched amongst living authors, the passion of the concluding scenes, the subtle analysis of jealousy, the exquisite finish of style. I must tell you what one of the cleverest men whom I have ever known, an Irish barrister, the juvenile correspondent of Miss Edgeworth, says of your style: "His English is the richest and most intense essence of the language I know of; his words conveying not only a meaning, but more than they appear to mean. They point onward or upward or downward, as the case may be, and we cannot help following them with the eyes of imagination, sometimes smiling, sometimes weeping, sometimes shuddering, as if we were victims of the mesmeric influence he is so fond of bringing to bear upon his characters. Three of the most perfect Englishmen of our day are Americans,—Irving, Prescott, and this great new writer, Mr. Hawthorne." So far my friend Mr. Hockey. I forget, dear Mr. Hawthorne, whether I told you that the writer of whose works you remind me, not by imitation, but by resemblance, is the great French novelist, Balzac. Do you know his books? He is untranslated and untranslatable, and it requires the greatest familiarity with French literature to relish him thoroughly.... I doubt if he be much known amongst you; at least I have never seen him alluded to in American literature. He has, of course, the low morality of a Frenchman, but, being what he is, Mrs. Browning and I used to discuss his personages like living people, and regarded his death as a great personal calamity to both.

I am expecting Mrs. Browning here in a few days, not being well enough to meet her in London.... How I wish, dear Mr. Hawthorne, that you were here to meet them! The day will come, I hope. It would be good for your books to look at Europe, and all of Europe that knows our tongue would rejoice to look at you.

Ever your obliged and affectionate friend,

M. R. MITFORD.

I must transcribe here, too, part of a letter from Herman Melville, who, in the midst of his epistle, suddenly assumes the tone of a reviewer, and discourses as follows, under the heading, "*The House of the Seven Gables: A Romance. By Nathaniel Hawthorne*. 16_mo. pp._ 344."

"The contents of this book do not belie its clustering romantic title. With great enjoyment we spent almost an hour in each separate gable. This book is like a fine old chamber, abundantly but still judiciously furnished with precisely that sort of furniture best fitted to furnish it. There are rich hangings, whereon are braided scenes from tragedies. There is old china with rare devices, set about on the carved beaufet; there are long and indolent lounges to throw yourself upon; there is an admirable sideboard, plentifully stored with good viands; there is a smell of old wine in the pantry; and finally, in one corner, there is a dark little black-letter volume in golden clasps, entitled *Hawthorne: A Problem*....

"We think the book for pleasantness of running interest surpasses the other work of the author. The curtains are now drawn; the sun comes in more; genialities peep out more. Were we to particularize what has most struck us in the deeper passages, we should point out the scene where Clifford, for a minute, would fain throw himself from the window, to join the procession; or the scene where the Judge is left seated in his ancestral chair.

"Clifford is full of an awful truth throughout. He is conceived in the finest, truest spirit. He is no caricature. He is Clifford. And here we would say, that did the circumstances permit, we should like nothing better than to devote an elaborate and careful paper to the full consideration and analysis of the purpose and significance of what so strongly characterizes all of this author's writing. There is a certain tragic phase of humanity, which, in our opinion, was never more powerfully embodied than by Hawthorne: we mean the tragicalness of human thought in its own unbiased, native, and profound workings. We think that into no recorded mind has the intense feeling of the whole truth ever entered more deeply than into this man's. By whole truth, we mean the apprehension of the absolute condition of present things as they strike the eye of the man who fears them not, though they do their worst to him."

This really profound analysis, Mr. Mellville professes to extract from the "Pittsfield Secret Review," of which I wish further numbers could be found.

But chief among the prizes of this season were letters from his friends Lowell and Holmes. The latter's I insert, because it admirably illustrates the cordial relation which has always distinguished the famous writers of New England,—no pleasant illusion of distance, but a notable and praiseworthy reality.

BOSTON, April 9, 1851.

MY DEAR SIR:—I have been confined to my chamber and almost to my bed, for some days since I received your note; and in the mean time I have received what was even more welcome, the new Romance "from the Author." While I was too ill to read, my wife read it to me, so that you have been playing physician to my heartaches and headaches at once, with the magnetism of your imagination.

I think we have no romancer but yourself, nor have had any for this long time. I had become so set in this feeling, that but for your last two stories I should have given up hoping, and believed that all we were to look for in the way of spontaneous growth were such languid, lifeless, sexless creations as in the view of certain people constitute the chief triumphs of a sister art as manifested among us.

But there is rich red blood in Hester, and the flavor of the sweet-fern and the bayberry are not truer to the soil than the native sweetness of our little Phoebe! The Yankee mind has for the most part budded and flowered in pots of English earth, but you have fairly raised yours as a seedling in the natural soil. My criticism has to stop here; the moment a fresh mind takes in the elements of the common life about us and transfigures them, I am contented to enjoy and admire, and let others analyze. Otherwise I should be tempted to display my appreciating sagacity in pointing out a hundred touches, transcriptions of nature, of character, of sentiment, true as the daguerreotype, free as crayon sketching, which arrested me even in the midst of the palpitating story. Only one word, then, this: that the solid reality and homely truthfulness of the actual and present part of the story are blended with its weird and ghostly shadows with consummate skill and effect; this was perhaps the special difficulty of the story.

I don't want to refuse anything you ask me to do. I shall come up, I trust, about the 1st of June. I would look over the MS. in question, as a duty, with as much pleasure as many other duties afford. To say the truth, I have as great a dread of the *Homo Caudatus* Linn., Anglicé, the Being with a Tale, male or female, as any can have.

"If foes they write, if friends they read me dead,"

said poor Hepzibah's old exploded poet. Still, if it must be, I will stipulate to read a quantity not exceeding fifty-six pounds avoirdupois by weight or eighteen reams by measure or "tale,"—provided there is no locomotion in the case. The idea of visiting Albany does not enter into my intentions. I do not know who would serve as a third or a second member of the committee; Miss Sedgwick, if the Salic law does not prevail in Berkshire, is the most natural person to do it. But the real truth is, the little Albaneses want to see the author of "The Scarlet Letter," and don't care a sixpence who else is on the committee. That is what they are up to. So if you want two dummies, on the classical condition *not to leave the country except in case of invasion*, absentees, voters by proxy, potential but not personally present bottle-holders, I will add my name to those of Latimer, Ridley, and Co. as a Martyr in the cause of Human Progress.

Believe me, my dear sir,

Yours very sincerely,

O. W. Holmes.

Hawthorne's interest in Dr. Holmes's works was also very great, and one of the last books which he read at all was "Elsie Venner," which he had taken up for a second time shortly before his death.

Amid all the variety of thoughtful and thoughtless praise, or of other comment on the new romance, he began to feel that necessity for abstracting his attention entirely from what was said of his work in current publications, which forces itself upon every creative mind attempting to secure some centre of repose in a chattering and unprivate age like the present. This feeling he imparted to Bridge, and it also appears in one or two published letters. At the same time, it must be remembered how careful a consideration he gave to criticism; and he wrote of Edwin Whipple's reviewing of the "Seven Gables":—

"Whipple's notices have done more than pleased me, for they have helped me to see my book. Much of the censure I recognize as just; I wish I could feel the praise to be so fully deserved. Being better (which I insist it is) than 'The Scarlet Letter,' I have never expected it to be so popular."

In this same letter occurs the following:—

"—— ——, Esq., of Boston, has written to me, complaining that I have made his grandfather infamous! It seems there was actually a Pyncheon (or Pynchon, as he spells it) family resident in Salem, and that their representative, at the period of the Revolution, was a certain Judge Pynchon, a Tory and a refugee. This was Mr. ——'s grandfather, and (at least, so he dutifully describes him) the most

exemplary old gentleman in the world. There are several touches in my account of the Pyncheons which, he says, make it probable that I had this actual family in my eye, and he considers himself infinitely wronged and aggrieved, and thinks it monstrous that the 'virtuous dead' cannot be suffered to rest quietly in their graves."

The matter here alluded to threatened to give Hawthorne almost as much inconvenience as the tribulation which followed the appearance of "The Custom-House." One of the complainants in this case, though objecting to the use of the name Pyncheon, "respectfully suggests," with an ill-timed passion for accuracy, that it should in future editions be printed with the *e* left out, because this was the proper mode in use by the family.

There has been some slight controversy as to the original of the visionary mansion described in this romance. Mr. Hawthorne himself said distinctly that he had no particular house in mind, and it is also a fact that none is recalled which fulfils all the conditions of that of the "Seven Gables." Nevertheless, one party has maintained that the old Philip English house, pulled down many years since, was the veritable model; and others support the Ingersoll house, which still stands. The Curwin, called the "Witch House," appears, by an antique painting from which photographs have been made, to have had the requisite number of peaks at a remote date; but one side of the structure being perforce left out of the picture, there is room for a doubt. [Footnote: It is from one of these photographs that the cut in the new edition of Hawthorne's Works has been developed.]

In "The House of the Seven Gables" Hawthorne attained a connection of parts and a masterly gradation of tones which did not belong, in the same fulness, to "The Scarlet Letter." There is, besides, a larger range of character, in this second work, and a much more nicely detailed and reticulated portrayal of the individuals. Hepzibah is a painting on ivory, yet with all the warmth of a real being. Very noticeable is the delicate veneration and tenderness for her with which the author seems to inspire us, notwithstanding the fact that he has almost nothing definite to say of her except what tends to throw a light ridicule. She is continually contrasted with the exquisite freshness, ready grace, and beauty of Phoebe, and subjected to unfavorable comparisons in the mind of Clifford, whose half-obliterated but still exact aesthetic perception casts silent reproach upon her. Yet, in spite of this, she becomes in a measure endeared to us. In the grace, and agreeableness too, with which Hawthorne manages to surround this ungifted spinster, we find a unit of measure for the beauty with which he has invested the more frightful and tragic elements of the story. It is this triumph of beauty without destroying the unbeautiful, that gives the romance its peculiar artistic virtue. Judge Pyncheon is an almost unqualified discomfort to the reader, yet he is entirely held within bounds by the prevailing charm of the author's style, and by the ingenious manner in which the pleasanter elements of the other characters are applied. At times the strong emphasis given to his evil nature makes one suspect that the villain is too deeply dyed; but the question of equity here involved is one of the most intricate with which novelists have to deal at all. The well-defined opposition between good and bad forces has always been a necessity to man, in myths, religions, and drama. Heal life furnishes the most absolute extremes of possession by the angel or the fiend; and Shakespere has not scrupled to use one of these ultimate possibilities in the person of Iago. Yet Hawthorne was too acutely conscious of the downward bent in every heart, to let the Judge's pronounced iniquity stand without giving a glimpse of incipient evil in another quarter. This occurs in the temptation which besets Holgrave, when he finds that he possesses the same mesmeric sway over Phoebe, the latest Pyncheon offshoot, as that which his ancestor Matthew Maule exercised over Alice Pyncheon. The momentary mood which brings before him the absolute power which might be his over this fair girl, opens a whole new vista of wrong, in which the retribution would have been transferred from the shoulders of the Pyncheons to those of the Maules. Had Holgrave yielded then, he might have damned his own posterity, as Colonel Pyncheon had *his*. Thus, even in the hero of the piece, we are made aware of possibilities as malicious and destructive as those hereditary faults grown to such rank maturity in the Judge; and this may be said to offer a middle ground between the side of justice and attractiveness, and the side of injustice and repulsiveness, on which the personages are respectively ranged.

The conception of a misdeed operating through several generations, and righted at last solely by the over-toppling of unrestrained malevolence on the one hand, and on the other by the force of upright character in the wronged family, was a novel one at the time; this graphic depicture of the past at work upon the present has anticipated a great deal of the history and criticism of the following twenty-five years, in its close conjunction of antecedent influences and cumulative effects.

As a discovery of native sources of picturesque fiction, this second romance was not less remarkable than the one which preceded it. The theme furnished by the imaginary Pyncheon family ranges from the tragic in the Judge, through the picturesquely pathetic in Clifford, to a grotesque cast of pathos and humor in Hepzibah. Thence we are led to another vein of simple, fun-breeding characterization in Uncle Venner and Ned Higgins. The exquisite perception which draws old Uncle Venner in such wholesome colors, tones him up to just one degree of sunniness above the dubious light in which

Hepzibah stands, so that he may soften the contrast of broad humor presented by little Ned Higgins, the "First Customer." I cannot but regret that Hawthorne did not give freer scope to his delicious faculty for the humorous, exemplified in the "Seven Gables." If he had let his genius career as forcibly in this direction as it does in another, when burdened with the black weight of the dead Judge Pyncheon, he might have secured as wide an acceptance for the book as Dickens, with so much more melodrama and so much less art, could gain for less perfect works. Hawthorne's concentration upon the tragic element, and comparative neglect of the other, was in one sense an advantage; but if in the case under discussion he had given more bulk and saliency to the humorous quality, he might also have been more likely to avoid a fault which creeps in, immediately after that marvellous chapter chanted like an unholy requiem over the lifeless Judge. This is the sudden culmination of the passion of Holgrave for Phoebe, just at the moment when he has admitted her to the house where Death and himself were keeping vigil. The revulsion, here, is too violent, and seems to throw a dank and deathly exhalation into the midst of the sweetness which the mutual disclosure of love should have spread around itself. There is need of an enharmonic change, at this point; and it might have been effected, perhaps, by a slower passage from gloom to gladness just here, and a more frequent play of the brighter mood throughout the book. But the tragic predilection seems ultimately to gain the day over the comic, in every great creative mind, and it was so strong with Hawthorne, that instead of giving greater play to humor in later fictions, it curtailed it more and more, from the production of the "Seven Gables" onward.

Mr. Curtis has shown me a letter written soon after the publication of the new book, which, as it gives another instance of the writer's keen enjoyment of other men's work, and ends with a glimpse of the life at Lenox, I will copy at length:—

LENOX, April 29,1851.

MY DEAR HOWADJI:—I ought to be ashamed (and so I really am) of not having sooner responded to your note of more than a month ago, accompanied as it was by the admirable "Nile Notes." The fact is, I have been waiting to find myself in an eminently epistolary mood, so that I might pay my thanks and compliments in a style not unworthy of the occasion. But the moment has not yet come, and doubtless never will; and now I have delayed so long, that America and England seem to have anticipated me in their congratulations.

I read the book aloud to my wife, and both she and I have felt that we never knew anything of the Nile before. There is something beyond descriptive power in it. You make me feel almost as if we had been there ourselves. And then you are such a luxurious traveller.... The fragrance of your chibonque was a marvellous blessing to me. It cannot be concealed that I felt a little alarm, as I penetrated the depths of those chapters about the dancing-girls, lest they might result in something not altogether accordant with our New England morality; and even now I hardly know whether we escaped the peril, or were utterly overwhelmed by it. But at any rate, those passages are gorgeous in the utmost degree. However, I suppose you are weary of praise; and as I have nothing else to inflict, I may as well stop here.

S—— and the children and I are plodding onward in good health, and in a fair medium state of prosperity; and on the whole, we are quite the happiest family to be found anywhere. We live in the ugliest little old red farm-house you ever saw....

What shall you write next? For of course you are an author forever. I am glad, for the sake of the public, but not particularly so for your own.

Very soon after the issue of the "Seven Gables," another lighter literary project was put into execution.

"I mean [he had announced on the 23d of May] to write within six weeks or two months next ensuing, a book of stories made up of classical myths. The subjects are: The Story of Midas, with his Golden Touch; Pandora's Box; The Adventure of Hercules in Quest of the Golden Apples; Bellerophon and the Chimera; Baucis and Philemon; Perseus and Medusa."

The "Wonder-Book" was begun on the first of June, and finished by the middle of July; so that the intention of writing it within six weeks was strictly carried out: certainly a rapid achievement, considering the excellent proportion and finish bestowed upon the book. It is a minor work, but a remarkable one; not its least important trait being the perfect simplicity of its style and scope, which, nevertheless, omits nothing essential, and preserves a thorough elegance. Its peculiar excellences come out still more distinctly when contrasted with Charles Kingsley's "The Heroes; or, Greek Fairy Tales," published in England five years after the appearance of the "Wonder-Book" here. The fresher play of Hawthorne's mind with those old subjects is seen in nothing more agreeably than in the graceful Introduction and interludes which he has thrown around the mythological tales, like the tendrils of a

vine curling over a sculptured capital. This midsummer task—it was very uncommon for him to write in the hot season—perhaps had something to do with further unsettling Hawthorne's health, which at this time was not good. The somewhat sluggish atmosphere of the far inland valley did not suit his sea-braced temperament; and so, instead of renting Mrs. Kemble's country place, as he had thought of doing, he decided to leave Berkshire with the birds; but not to go southward. Moving to West Newton, near Boston, he remained there for the winter, writing "Blithedale," which was put forth in 1852.

The special characteristic of "The Blithedale Romance" seems to me to be its appearance of unlabored ease, and a consequent breeziness of effect distinguishing its atmosphere from that of any of the other romances. The style is admirably finished, and yet there is no part of the book that gives the same impression of almost unnecessary polish which occasionally intervenes between one's admiration and the "Seven Gables." On this score, "Blithedale" is certainly the most consummate of the four completed romances. And as Hawthorne has nowhere given us more robust and splendid characterization than that of Zenobia and Hollingsworth, the work also takes high rank on this ground. The shadows, which seemed partly dispersed in the "Seven Gables," gather again in this succeeding story; but, on the other hand, it is not so jarringly terrible as "The Scarlet Letter." From this it is saved partly by the sylvan surrounding and the pleasant changes of scene. In comparing it with the other works, I find that it lets itself be best defined as a mean between extremes; so that it ought to have the credit of being the most evenly attempered of all. The theme is certainly as deep as that of the earlier ones, and more tangible to the general reader than that of "The Marble Faun"; it is also more novel than that of "The Scarlet Letter" or even the "Seven Gables," and has an attractive air of growing simply and naturally out of a phenomenon extremely common in New England, namely, the man who is dominated and blinded by a theory. And the way in which Hollingsworth, through this very prepossession and absorption, is brought to the ruin of his own scheme, and has to concentrate his charity for criminals upon himself as the first criminal needing reformation, is very masterly. Yet, in discussing the relative positions of these four works. I am not sure that we can reach any decision more stable than that of mere preference.

There is a train of thought suggested in "Blithedale" which receives only partial illustration in that story, touching the possible identity of love and hate. It had evidently engaged Hawthorne from a very early period, and would have made rich material for an entire romance, or for several treating different phases of it. Perhaps he would have followed out the suggestion, but for the intervention of so many years of unproductiveness in the height of his powers, and his subsequent too early death.

It was while at West Newton, just before coming to the Wayside, that he wrote a note in response to an invitation to attend the memorial meeting at New York, in honor of the novelist, Cooper, which should be read for its cordial admiration of a literary brother, and for the tender thought of the closing sentence.

To Rev. R. W. Griswold.

February 20,1852.

Dear Sir:—I greatly regret that circumstances render it impossible for me to be present on the occasion of Mr. Bryant's discourse in honor of James Fenimore Cooper. No man has a better right to be present than myself, if many years of most sincere and unwavering admiration of Mr. Cooper's writings can establish a claim. It is gratifying to observe the earnestness with which the literary men of our country unite in paying honor to the deceased; and it may not be too much to hope that, in the eyes of the public at large, American literature may henceforth acquire a weight and value which have not heretofore been conceded to it: time and death have begun to hallow it.

Very respectfully yours,

Nathaniel Hawthorne.

Early in the summer of 1852 he went to Concord again, where he had bought a small house, there to establish his permanent home. Mr. Curtis was at this time writing some chapters for a book on "The Homes of American Authors," among which was to be included the new abode of Hawthorne. The project called forth from the romancer this letter:—

CONCORD, July 14, 1852.

MY HEAR HOWADJI:—I think (and am glad to think) that you will find it necessary to come hither in order to write your Concord Sketches; and as for my old house, you will understand it better after spending a day or two in it. Before Mr. Alcott took it in hand, it was a mean-looking affair, with two peaked gables; no suggestiveness about it and no venerableness, although from the style of its construction it seems to have survived beyond its first century. He added a porch in front, and a central

peak, and a piazza at each end, and painted it a rusty olive hue, and invested the whole with a modest picturesqueness; all which improvements, together with its situation at the foot of a wooded hill, make it a place that one notices and remembers for a few moments after passing it. Mr. Alcott expended a good deal of taste and some money (to no great purpose) in forming the hillside behind the house into terraces, and building arbors and summer-houses of rough stems and branches and trees, on a system of his own. They must have been very pretty in their day, and are so still, although much decayed, and shattered more and more by every breeze that blows. The hillside is covered chiefly with locust-trees, which come into luxuriant blossom in the month of June, and look and smell very sweetly, intermixed with a few young elms and some white-pines and infant oaks,—the whole forming rather a thicket than a wood. Nevertheless, there is some very good shade to be found there. I spend delectable hours there in the hottest part of the day, stretched out at my lazy length, with a book in my hand or an unwritten book in my thoughts. There is almost always a breeze stirring along the sides or brow of the hill.

From the hill-top there is a good view along the extensive level surfaces and gentle, hilly outlines, covered with wood, that characterize the scenery of Concord. We have not so much as a gleam of lake or river in the prospect; if there were, it would add greatly to the value of the place in my estimation.

The house stands within ten or fifteen feet of the old Boston road (along which the British marched and retreated), divided from it by a fence, and some trees and shrubbery of Mr. Alcott's setting out. Whereupon I have called it "The Wayside," which I think a better name and more morally suggestive than that which, as Mr. Alcott has since told me, he bestowed on it,—"The Hillside." In front of the house, on the opposite side of the road, I have eight acres of land,—the only valuable portion of the place in a farmer's eye, and which are capable of being made very fertile. On the hither side, my territory extends some little distance over the brow of the hill, and is absolutely good for nothing, in a productive point of view, though very good for many other purposes.

I know nothing of the history of the house, except Thoreau's telling me that it was inhabited a generation or two ago by a man who believed he should never die. [Footnote: This is the first intimation of the story of Septimius Felton, so far as local setting is concerned. The scenery of that romance was obviously taken from the Wayside and its hill.] I believe, however, he is dead; at least, I hope so; else he may probably appear and dispute my title to his residence....

I asked Ticknor to send a copy of "The Blithedale Romance" to you. Do not read it as if it had anything to do with Brook Farm (which essentially it has not), but merely for its own story and character. Truly yours,

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE.

The Wayside was, perhaps, so named in remembrance of the time when its owner had "sat down by the wayside like a man under enchantment." It characterized well, too, his mental attitude in maturity; though the spell that held him now was charged with happiness. The house itself was small, but the proprietor might have carved on his lintel the legend over Ariosto's door, *Parva, sed apta mihi*. In October, 1852, he wrote to Bridge that he intended to begin a new romance within a day or two, which he should make "more genial" than the last. What design this was cannot now be even conjectured. Hawthorne had written, in the preceding year, "I find that my facility of labor increases with the demand for it"; and he always felt that an unlimited reserve of invention and imagination awaited his drafts upon it, so that he could produce as many books as he might have time for writing. But circumstances again called him away from ideal occupations. Just as he was preparing to write the "Tanglewood Tales," as a sequel to the "Wonder-Book," General Pierce, the Democratic nominee for President, urged him to write his biography, as a "campaign" measure. "I have consented to do so," wrote Hawthorne, to his publisher; "somewhat reluctantly, however, for Pierce has now reached that altitude where a man careful of his personal dignity will begin to think of cutting his acquaintance. But I seek nothing from him, and therefore need not be ashamed to tell the truth of an old friend." To Bridge, after the book was out, he wrote much more confidentially and strongly. "I tried to persuade Pierce that I could not perform it as well as many others; but he thought differently, and of course, after a friendship of thirty years, it was impossible to refuse my best efforts in his behalf, at the great pinch of his life." In this letter, also, he states that before undertaking the work, he resolved to "accept no office" from Pierce; though he raises the query whether this be not "rather folly than heroism." In discussing this point, he says, touching Pierce:—

"He certainly owes me something; for the biography has cost me hundreds of friends here at the North, who had a purer regard for me than Frank Pierce or any other politician ever gained, and who drop off from me like autumn leaves, in consequence of what I say on the slavery question. But they were my real sentiments, and I do not now regret that they are on record."

These have to do with Hawthorne's attitude during the war. Speaking of Pierce's indorsement of the

Compromise, both as it bore hard on Northern views and exacted concessions from the South thought by it to be more than reciprocal, he says:—

"It was impossible for him not to take his stand as the unshaken advocate of Union, and of the mutual steps of compromise which that great object unquestionably demanded. The fiercest, the least scrupulous, and the most consistent of those who battle against slavery recognize the same fact that he does. They see that merely human wisdom and human efforts cannot subvert it, except by tearing to pieces the Constitution, breaking the pledges which it sanctions, and severing into distracted fragments that common country which Providence brought into one nation, through a continued miracle of almost two hundred years, from the first settlement of the American wilderness until the Revolution."

He predicted, too, the evils of forcible abolition being certain, and the good only a contingency, that the negroes would suffer aggravated injuries from the very process designed to better their state. It is useless here to enter into the question of degrees of right and wrong on either side, in the struggle which had already become formidable before Pierce's election; but one can see how sincerely, and with what generous motives, a man like Hawthorne would feel that the Union must be maintained peacefully. Without questioning the undoubted grandeur of achievement which we sanely fell upon through the insane fit of civil war, we may recognize a deep patriotism consistent with humanity which forced itself to dissent from the noble action of the fighters, because it could not share in any triumph, however glorious, that rested on the shedding of brothers' blood. It was this kind of humanity that found shelter in the heart of Hawthorne.

Unwelcome as was the task, he wrote the biography of Pierce, in friendship, but in good faith also, even seeing the elements of greatness in his old classmate, which might yet lead him to a career. [Footnote: As a literary performance, the book is of course but slightly characteristic; and being distasteful to the author, it is even dry. Yet there is a great deal of simple dignity about it. The Whig journals belabored it manfully, and exhausted the resources of those formidable weapons, italics and small capitals, in the attempt to throw a ridiculous light on the facts most creditable to Pierce. Hawthorne came in for a share of the abuse too. One newspaper called the book his "new romance"; another made him out a worthy disciple of Simonides, who was the first poet to write for money. The other party, of course, took quite another view of the work. A letter to Hawthorne from his elder sister bears well upon his fidelity. "Mr. D—— has bought your Life of Pierce, but he will not be convinced that you have told the precise truth. I assure him that it is just what I have always heard you say."] He had not much hope of his friend's election, but when that occurred, the question of office, which he had already mooted, was definitely brought before him. When Pierce learned that he positively would not take an office, because to do so now might compromise him, he was extremely troubled. He had looked forward to giving Hawthorne some one of the prizes in his hand, if he should be elected. But the service he had exacted from his friend threatened to deprive Hawthorne of the very benefit which Pierce had been most anxious he should receive. At last, Mr. Ticknor, Hawthorne's publisher, was made the agent of Pierce's arguments, and to them he added personal considerations which were certainly not without weight. Literature gave but a bare subsistence, and Hawthorne was no longer young, having passed his forty-ninth year. His books were not likely, it seemed, to fill the breach that would be made in the fortunes of his family, were he to be suddenly removed. This, Mr. Ticknor urged, in addition to the friendly obligation which Pierce ought to be allowed to repay. Hawthorne, as we have seen, had always wished to travel, and the prospect of some years in Europe was an alluring one: the decision was made, to take the Liverpool consulship.

The appointment was well received, though many persons professed surprise that Hawthorne could accept it. One gentleman in public life, however, who knew how unjust current judgments may often be, was not of this number, as appears from his note below.—

SENATE CHAMBER, March 26, 1853.

MY DEAR HAWTHORNE:—"Good! good!" I exclaimed aloud on the floor of the
Senate as your nomination was announced.

"Good! good!" I now write to you, on its confirmation. Nothing could be more grateful to me. Before you go, I hope to see you.

Ever yours,

CHARLES SUMNER.

IX.

ENGLAND AND ITALY.

1853-1860.

It is very instructive to trace the contact of Hawthorne's mind with Europe, as exhibited in his "English Note-Books" and "French and Italian Note-Books." But in these records three things are especially observable. He goes to Europe as unperturbed, with an individual mood as easily sustained, as he would enter Boston or New York. He carries no preconception of what may be the most admirable way of looking at it. There has never been a more complete and charming presentment of a multitude of ingenuous impressions common to many travellers of widely differing endowment than here, at the same time that you have always before you the finished writer and the possible romancer, who suddenly and without warning flashes over his pages of quiet description a far, fleeting light of delicious imagination. It is as if two brothers, one a dreamer, and one a well-developed, intellectual, but slightly stoical and even shrewd American, dealing exclusively in common-sense, had gone abroad together, agreeing to write their opinions in the same book and in a style of perfect homogeneity. Sometimes one has the blank sheet to himself, sometimes the other; and occasionally they con each other's paragraphs, and the second modifies the ideas of the first. It is interesting to note their twofold inspection of Westminster Hall, for example. The understanding twin examines it methodically, finding its length to be eighty paces, and its effect "the ideal of an immense barn." The reasoning and imagining one interposes to this, "be it not irreverently spoken"; and also conjures up this splendid vision: "I wonder it does not occur to modern ingenuity to make a scenic representation, in this very hall, of the ancient trials for life or death, pomps, feasts, coronations, and every great historic incident … that has occurred here. The whole world cannot show another hall such as this, so tapestried with recollections." But in any case it is always apparent that the thought is colored by a New World nurture. From this freshness of view there proceeded one result, the searching, unembarrassed, yet sympathetic and, as we may say, cordial criticism of England in "Our Old Home." But it also gave rise to the second notable quality, that exquisite apprehension of the real meaning of things European, both institutions and popular manners and the varied products of art. At times, Hawthorne seems to have been born for the one end of adding this final grace of definition which he so deftly attaches to the monuments of that older civilization. He brings a perception so keen and an innate sympathy so true for everything beautiful or significant, that the mere flowing out of this fine intellectual atmosphere upon the objects before him invests them with a quality which we feel to be theirs, even while we know that it could not have become *ours* without his aid. A breath of New England air touches the cathedral windows of the Old World, and—I had almost said—bedims them with a film of evanescent frost-work; yet, as that lingers, we suddenly discern through the veil a charm, a legendary fascination in their deep-gemmed gorgeousness, which, although we have felt it and read of it before, we never seized till now. I speak, of course, from the American point of view; though in a great measure the effect upon foreign readers may be similar. But I fancy a special appropriateness for us in the peculiar mixture of estimation and enthusiasm which forms the medium through which Hawthorne looks at the spectacle of transatlantic life and its surroundings. He visits the British Museum, and encounters only disappointment at the mutilated sculptures of the Parthenon; but out of this confession, which is truth, slowly arises the higher truth of that airy yet profound response with which he greets the multiform mute company of marble or painted shapes that form the real population of Rome.

Even there, he has much dissent to make, still; and we may not find it at all essential or beneficial to follow each of his deviations ourselves. But however we may differ with him, it is impossible not to feel sure that within this circle of contradictions, of preference for new frames and of his friend Thompson's pictures to all but a very few of the old masters', somewhere within there is a perfectly trustworthy aesthetic sensibility which grasps the "unwritten rules of taste," the inmost truth of all art. This inmost secret is, however we may turn it, a matter of paradox, and the moment it professes to be explained, that moment are the gates of the penetralia shut upon us. The evasiveness and the protest, then, with which Hawthorne discourses to himself as he wanders through the galleries of Europe, are the trembling of the needle, perfectly steadfast to the polar opposites of truth, yet quivering as with a fear that it may be unsettled by some artificial influence from its deep office of inner constancy. And as if, in this singular world, all truth must turn to paradox at the touch of an index finger, that almost faulty abstention from assuming the European tone which has made Hawthorne the traveller appear to certain readers a little crude,—that very air of being the uncritical and slightly puzzled American is precisely the source of his most delightful accuracies of interpretation.

The third greatest distinction of his foreign observation is its entire freedom from specialism. Perhaps this cannot be made to appear more clearly than in the contrast presented by his "English Note-Books" and "Our Old Home" to Emerson's "English Traits," and Taine's "Notes on England." The latter writer is

an acute, alert, industrious, and picturesque comparer of his own and a neighboring country, and is accompanied by a light battery of literary and pictorial criticism, detached from his heavier home armament. Emerson, on the other hand, gives us probably the most masterly and startling analysis of a people which has ever been offered in the same slight bulk, unsurpassed, too, in brilliancy and penetration of statement. But the "English Traits" is as clear, fixed, and accurate as a machinist's plan, and perhaps a little too rigidly defined. Hawthorne's review of England, though not comparable to Emerson's work for analysis, has this advantage, that its outline is more flexible and leaves room for many individual discriminations to which it supplies an easily harmonized groundwork. Emerson and Taine give us their impressions of a foreign land: Hawthorne causes us to inhale its very atmosphere, and makes the country ours for the time being, rather than an alien area which we scrutinize in passing. Yet here and there he partakes of the very qualities that are dominant with Emerson and Taine. "Every Englishman runs to 'The Times' with his little grievance, as a child runs to his mother," is as epigrammatic as anything in "English Traits"; [Footnote: No one, I think, has so well defined our relation to the English as Hawthorne, in a casual phrase from one of his printed letters: "We stand in the light of posterity to them, and have the privileges of posterity." This, on London, ought to become proverbial: "London is like the grave in one respect,—any man can make himself at home there; and whenever a man finds himself homeless elsewhere, he had better die, or go to London."] and there is a tendency in his pages to present the national character in a concrete form, as the French writer gives it. But, in addition, Hawthorne is an artist and a man of humor; and renders human character with a force and fineness which give it its true value as being, after all, far weightier and dearer to us than the most important or famous of congealed *results* of character. Withal a wide and keen observer and a hospitable entertainer of opinions, he does not force these upon us as final. Coming and going at ease, they leave a mysterious sense of greater wisdom with us, an indefinable residue of refined truth.

It is a natural question, why did not Hawthorne write an English romance, as well, or rather than an Italian one? More than half his stay abroad was north of the Channel, and one would infer that there could have been no lack of suggestion there. "My ancestor left England," he wrote, "in 1630. I return in 1853. I sometimes feel as if I myself had been absent these two hundred and twenty-three years, leaving England just emerging from the feudal system, and finding it, on my return, on the verge of republicanism." Herein lay a source of romantic possibilities from which he certainly meant to derive a story. But the greater part of his four years in England was spent in Liverpool, where his consular duties suppressed fiction-making. [Footnote: And it was not till he reached the villa of Montauto at Florence that he could write:—

"It is pleasant to feel at last that I am really away from America,—a satisfaction that I never enjoyed as long as I stayed in Liverpool, where it seemed to me that the quintessence of nasal and hand-shaking Yankee-dom was continually filtered and sublimated through my consulate, on the way outward and homeward. I first got acquainted with my own countrymen there. At Rome, too, it was not much better. But here in Florence, and in the summer-time, and in this secluded villa, I have escaped out of all my old tracks, and am really remote."]

Hawthorne's genius was extremely susceptible to every influence about it. One might liken its quality to that of a violin which owes its fine properties to the tempering of time and atmosphere, and transmits through its strings the very thrill of sunshine that has sunk into its wood. His utterances are modulated by the very changes of the air. In one of his letters from Florence he wrote:—

"Speaking of romances, I have planned two, one or both of which I could have ready for the press in a few months if I were either in England or America. But I find this Italian atmosphere not favorable to the close toil of composition, although it is a very good air to dream in. I must breathe the fogs of old England or the east-winds of Massachusetts, in order to put me into working trim."

But though England might be his workshop for books dreamed of in Italy, yet the aspect of English life seems much more fittingly represented by his less excursively imaginative side, as in "Our Old Home," than in a romance. Perhaps this is too ingenious a consolation; but I believe we may much better spare the possible English romance, than we could have foregone the actual Italian one.

In "The Marble Faun" Hawthorne's genius took a more daring and impressive range than ever before, and showed conclusively—what, without this testimony, would most likely have been questioned, or even by some denied—that his previous works had given the arc of a circle which no English or American writer of prose fiction besides himself has even begun to span. It is not alone that he plucks from a prehistoric time—"a period when man's affinity with nature was more strict, and his fellowship with every living thing more intimate and dear"—this conception of Donatello, the fresh, free, sylvan man untouched by sin or crime. Donatello must rank with a class of poetic creations which has nearly become extinct among modern writers: he belongs to the world of Caliban, Puck, and Ariel. But besides this unique creation, the book reveals regions of thought wide, ruin-scarred, and verdurously fair as the Campagna itself, winning the mind back through history to the primitive purity of man and of

Christianity. I recoil from any attempt at adequate analysis of this marvellous production, for it is one of those works of art which are also works of nature, and will present to each thoughtful reader a new set of meanings, according to his individuality, insight, or experience. The most obvious part of the theme is that which is represented in the title, the study of the Faun's nature; and this embraces the whole question of sin and crime, their origin and distinction. But it is not the case, as has been assumed, that in this study the author takes the position of advocate to a theory that sin was requisite to the development of soul in man. For, though he shows that remorse developed in Donatello "a more definite and nobler individuality," he also reminds us that "sometimes the instruction comes without the sorrow, and oftener the sorrow teaches no lesson that abides with us"; and he illustrates this in the exquisite height of spirituality to which Hilda has attained through sinlessness. He is not, I say, the advocate of a theory: this charge has been made by self-confident critics, who saw only the one idea,—that of a Beneficence which has so handled sin, that, instead of destroying man, "it has really become an instrument most effective in the education of intellect and soul." This idea is several times urged by Miriam and Kenyon, but quickly rejected each time; first by Kenyon, and then by Hilda; so that, while it is suggested, it is also shown to be one which human nature cannot trust itself to dwell upon. But the real function of the author is that of a profound religious teacher. The "Romance of Monte Beni" is, as Miriam plainly says, the story of the fall of man repeated. It takes us with fearless originality to the source of all religious problems, affirming,—as one interpreter [Footnote: See an unsigned article, "The Genius of Hawthorne," in the Atlantic Monthly for September, 1868.] has said,—"the inherent freedom of man," and illustrating how he may choose the good or the evil. Donatello is the ideal of the childlike nature on the threshold of history who has lived without choosing either, up to the time when his love and defence of Miriam involve him in crime. Father Antonio, "the spectre of the catacombs," and Miriam's persecutor, is the outcome of a continual choice of evil and of utter degradation. These two extremes, more widely asunder than Prospero and Caliban, Hawthorne has linked together in his immense grasp of the inmost laws of life, and with a miraculous nicety of artistic skill. Then comes Donatello's fall, illustrating the genesis of sin from crime, in accordance with the Biblical story of Cain; and this precipitates an examination, not only of the result upon Donatello himself, but of the degree in which others, even the most guiltless, are involved. There is first the reaction upon and inculpation of Miriam, whose glance had confirmed Donatello's murderous intent; only a glance, yet enough to involve her in the doom of change and separation—of sin in short—which falls upon the Faun. And in Hilda's case, it is the simple consciousness of another's guilt, which is "almost the same as if she had participated" in it. The mutual relations of these persons, who are made to represent the whole of society, afford matter for infinite meditation, the artistic and moral abstract of which the author has given.

But with this main theme is joined a very marvellous and intricate study of the psychology of Beatrice Cenci's story, in a new form. Miriam is a different woman placed in the same circumstances which made the Cenci tragedy. In the "French and Italian Note-Books," Hawthorne describes the look he caught sight of in Guido's picture,—that "of a being unhumanized by some terrible fate, and gazing out of a remote and inaccessible region, where she was frightened to be alone, but where no human sympathy could reach her." It was of this single insight that both Miriam and Hilda were born to his mind. He reproduces this description, slightly modified, in the romance (Vol. I. Chap. XXIII.): "It was the intimate consciousness of her father's guilt that threw its shadow over her, and frightened her into" this region. Now, in the chapter called "Beatrice," quite early in the story, he brings out between Miriam and Hilda a discussion of Beatrice and her history. It is evident, from the emphasis given by the chapter-title, that this subject is very deeply related to the theme of the romance; and no theory can explain Miriam's passionate utterances about the copy of Guido's portrait, except that which supposes her own situation to be that of Beatrice. This chapter is full of the strongest hints of the fact. Miriam's sudden resemblance to the picture, at the instant when she so yearns to grasp the secret of Beatrice's view of her own guilt or innocence; her ardent defence of Beatrice's course, as "the best virtue possible under the circumstances," when Hilda condemns it; her suggestion that, after all, only a woman could have painted the poor girl's thoughts upon her face, and that *she herself* has "a great mind to undertake a copy," giving it "what it lacks";—all these things point clearly. But there is a mass of inferential evidence, besides; many veiled allusions and approaches to a revelation, as well as that very marked description of the sketches in which Miriam has portrayed in various moods a "woman acting the part of a revengeful mischief towards man," and the hint, in the description of her portrait of herself, that "she might ripen to be what Judith was, when she vanquished Holofernes with her beauty, and slew him for too much adoring it." There is no need to pursue the proof further: readers will easily find it on re-examining the book. But what is most interesting, is to observe how Hawthorne has imagined two women of natures so widely opposed as Hilda and Miriam under a similar pressure of questionable blood-guiltiness. With Miriam, it is a guilt which has for excuse that it was the only resort against an unnatural depravity in Father Antonio. But as if to emphasize the indelibleness of blood-stains, however justly inflicted, we have as a foil to Miriam the white sensitiveness of Hilda's conscience, which makes her—though perfectly free from even the indirect responsibility of Miriam—believe herself actually infected. In both cases, it is the shadow of crime which weighs upon the soul;

but Miriam, in exactly the position of Beatrice Cenci, is a more complex and deep-colored nature than she; and Hilda, differently affected by the same question of conscience, is a vastly spiritualized image of the historic sufferer. Miriam, after the avenging of her nameless wrong, doubts, as Beatrice must have done, whether there be any guilt in such avengement; but being of so different a temperament, and having before her eyes the effect of this murder upon the hitherto sinless Faun, the reality of her responsibility is brought home to her. The clear conscience of Hilda confirms it. Thus by taking two extremes on either side of Beatrice,—one, a woman less simply and ethereally organized, and the other one who is only indirectly connected with wrong or crime,—Hawthorne seems to extract from the problem of Beatrice all its most subtle significance. He does not coldly condemn Beatrice; but by re-combining the elements of her case, he succeeds in magnifying into startling distinctness the whole awful knot of crime and its consequence, which lies inextricably tangled up within it. How different from Shelley's use of the theme! There is certainly nothing in the "Marble Faun" to equal the impassioned expression of wrong, and the piercing outcry against the shallow but awful errors of human justice, which uplift Shelley's drama. But Shelley stops, on the one side, with this climax:—

"O plead
With famine or wind-walking pestilence,
Blind lightning or the deaf sea, not with man!"

And on the side of the moral question, he leaves us with Beatrice's characterization of the parricide,

"Which is, or is not, what men call a crime."

Hawthorne, on the contrary, starts from this latter doubt. "The foremost result of a broken law," he says, "is ever an ecstatic freedom." But instead of pausing to give this his whole weight, as Shelley does, he distinctly pronounces the murder of Miriam's degraded father to be crime, and proceeds to inquire how Miriam and Donatello may work out their purification. So that if the first part of the romance is the Fall of Man repeated, the second part is the proem to a new Paradise Regained; and the seclusion of the sculptor and the Faun, and their journey together to Perugia, seasoned with Kenyon's noble and pure-hearted advice, compose a sort of seven-times-refined Pilgrim's Progress. Apt culmination of a genius whose relations to Milton and Bunyan we found to be so suggestive! The chief means which Kenyon offers for regeneration is that Miriam and the Faun shall abandon any hope of mutual joy, and consecrate themselves to the alleviation of misery in the world. Having by violence and crime thrust one evil out of life, they are now by patience and benevolence to endeavor to exorcise others. At the same time, remarking that Providence has infinitely varied ways of dealing with any deed, Hawthorne leaves a possibility of happiness for the two penitents, which may become theirs as "a wayside flower, springing along a path that leads to higher ends." But he also shows, in Donatello's final delivering of himself up to justice, the wisdom of some definite judgment and perhaps punishment bestowed by society. Thus, avenues of thought are opened to us on every side, which we are at liberty to follow out; but we are not forced, as a mere theorist would compel us, to pursue any particular one to the exclusion of the others. In all we may find our way to some mystic monument of eternal law, or pluck garlands from some new-budded bough of moral truth. The romance is like a portal of ebony inlaid with ivory,—another gate of dreams,—swinging softly open into regions of illimitable wisdom. But some pause on the threshold, unused to such large liberty; and these cry out, in the words of a well-known critic, "It begins in mystery, and ends in mist."

Though the book was very successful, few readers grasped the profounder portions. It is a vast exemplar of the author's consummate charm as a simple storyteller, however, that he exercised a brilliant fascination over all readers, notwithstanding the heavy burden of uncomprehended truths which they were obliged to carry with them. Some critics complain of the extent to which Roman scenery and the artistic life in Rome have been introduced; but, to my mind, there is scarcely a word wasted in the two volumes. The "vague sense of ponderous remembrances" pressing down and crowding out the present moment till "our individual affairs are but half as real here as elsewhere," is essential to the perspective of the whole; and nothing but this rich picturesqueness and variety could avail to balance the depth of tragedy which has to be encountered; so that the nicety of art is unquestionable. It is strange, indeed, that this great modern religious romance should thus have become also the ideal representative of ruined Rome—the home of ruined religions—in its aesthetic aspects. But one instance of appreciation must be recorded here, as giving the highest pitch of that delightful literary fellowship which Hawthorne seems constantly to have enjoyed in England. His friend John Lothrop Motley, the historian, wrote thus of "The Marble Faun," from Walton-on-Thames, March 29, 1860:—

"Everything that you have ever written, I believe, I have read many times, and I am particularly vain of having admired 'Sights from a Steeple,' when I first read it in the Boston 'Token,' several hundred years ago, when we were both younger than we are now; of having detected and cherished, at a later day, an old Apple-Dealer, whom, I believe, you have unhandsomely thrust out of your presence, now

that you are grown so great. But the 'Romance of Monte Beni' has the additional charm for me, that it is the first book of yours that I have read since I had the privilege of making your personal acquaintance. My memory goes back at once to those walks (alas, not too frequent) we used to take along the Tiber, or in the Campagna; ... and it is delightful to get hold of the book now, and know that it is impossible for you any longer, after waving your wand as you occasionally did then, indicating where the treasure was hidden, to sink it again beyond plummet's sound.

"I admire the book exceedingly.... It is one which, for the first reading, at least, I didn't like to hear aloud.... If I were composing an article for a review, of course, I should feel obliged to show cause for my admiration; but I am only obeying an impulse. Permit me to say, however, that your style seems, if possible, more perfect than ever. Where, O where is the godmother who gave you to talk pearls and diamonds?... Believe me, I don't say to you half what I say behind your back; and I have said a dozen times that nobody can write English but you. With regard to the story, which has been somewhat criticised, I can only say that to me it is quite satisfactory. I like those shadowy, weird, fantastic, Hawthornesque shapes flitting through the golden gloom, which is the atmosphere of the book. I like the misty way in which the story is indicated rather than revealed; the outlines are quite definite enough from the beginning to the end to those who have imagination enough to follow you in your airy flights; and to those who complain, I suppose that nothing less than an illustrated edition, with a large gallows on the last page, with Donatello in the most pensile of attitudes,—his ears revealed through a white nightcap,—would be satisfactory. I beg your pardon for such profanation, but it really moves my spleen that people should wish to bring down the volatile figures of your romance to the level of an every-day romance.... The way in which the two victims dance through the Carnival on the last day is very striking. It is like a Greek tragedy in its effect, without being in the least Greek."

To this Hawthorne replied from Bath (April 1, 1860); and Mr. Motley has kindly sent me a copy of the letter.

MY DEAR MOTLEY:—You are certainly that Gentle Reader for whom all my books were exclusively written. Nobody else (my wife excepted, who speaks so near me that I cannot tell her voice from my own) has ever said exactly what I loved to hear. It is most satisfactory to be hit upon the raw, to be shot straight through the heart. It is not the quantity of your praise that I care so much about (though I gather it all up most carefully, lavish as you are of it), but the kind, for you take the book precisely as I meant it; and if your note had come a few days sooner, I believe I would have printed it in a postscript which I have added to the second edition, because it explains better than I found possible to do the way in which my romance ought to be taken.... Now don't suppose that I fancy the book to be a tenth part as good as you say it is. You work out my imperfect efforts, and half make the book with your warm imagination; and see what I myself saw, but could only hint at. Well, the romance is a success, even if it never finds another reader.

We spent the winter in Leamington, whither we had come from the sea-coast in October. I am sorry to say that it was another winter of sorrow and anxiety.... [The allusion here is to illness in the family, of which there had also been a protracted case in Rome]. I have engaged our passages for June 16th.... Mrs. Hawthorne and the children will probably remain in Bath till the eve of our departure; but I intend to pay one more visit of a week or two to London, and shall certainly come and see you. I wonder at your lack of recognition of my social propensities. I take so much delight in my friends, that a little intercourse goes a great way, and illuminates my life before and after....

Your friend,

NATH. HAWTHORNE.

These seven years in Europe formed, outwardly, the most opulently happy part of Hawthorne's life. Before he left America, although he had been writing—with several interruptions—for twenty-four years, he had only just reached a meagre prosperity. I have touched upon the petty clamor which his Custom-House pictures aroused, and the offensive political attacks following the Life of Pierce. These disagreeables, scattered along the way, added to the weary delay that had attended his first efforts, made the enthusiastic personal welcome with which he everywhere met in England, and the charm of highly organized society, with its powerful artistic classes centred upon great capitals there and in Italy, a very captivating contrast. Still there were drawbacks. The most serious one was the change in the consular service made during his term at Liverpool. The consulate there was considered the most lucrative post in the President's gift, at the time of his appointment. But, to begin with, Pierce allowed the previous incumbent to resign prospectively, so that Hawthorne lost entirely the first five months of his tenure. These were very valuable months, and after the new consul came into office the dull season set in, reducing his fees materially. Business continued bad so long, that even up to 1855 little more than a living could be made in the consulate. In February of that year a bill was passed by Congress, remodelling the diplomatic and consular system, and fixing the salary of the Liverpool consul at $7,500,

—less than half the amount of the best annual income from it before that time. The position was one of importance, and involved an expensive mode of life; so that even before this bill went into operation, though practising "as stern an economy," he wrote home, "as ever I did in my life," Hawthorne could save but little; and the effect of it would have been not only to prevent his accomplishing what he took the office for, but even to have imposed loss upon him. For, in addition to social demands, the mere necessary office expenses (including the pay of three clerks) were very large, amounting to some thousands yearly; and the needs of unfortunate fellow-citizens, to whom Hawthorne could not bring himself to be indifferent, carried off a good portion of his income. As he says, "If the government chooses to starve the consul, a good many will starve with him." The most irritating thing about the new law was that it merely cut down the consular fees, without bringing the government anything; for the fees came from business that a notary-public could perform, and the consul would naturally decline to take it upon himself when his interest in it was removed. Fortunately, the President was given some discretion about the date of reappointment, and allowed the old commission to continue for a time. Meanwhile, Hawthorne was obliged, in anticipation of the new rule, to alter his mode of life materially. He now planned to give up the place in the autumn of 1855, and go to Italy; but this was not carried out till two years later.

Italy charmed him wholly, and he longed to make it his home. There had not been want of unjust criticism of him in America, while at Liverpool. When some shipwrecked steamer passengers were thrown upon his hands, for whom he provided extra-officially, on Mr. Buchanan's (then minister) refusing to have anything to do with the matter, a newspaper rumor was started at home that Mr. Hawthorne would do nothing for them until ordered to by Mr. Buchanan.

"It sickens me," he wrote at that time, "to look back to America. I am sick to death of the continual fuss and tumult and excitement and bad blood which we keep up about political topics. If it were not for my children, I should probably never return."

And on the eve of sailing, he wrote to another friend:—

"I shall go home, I fear, with a heavy heart, not expecting to be very well contented there."

But his sense of duty, stronger than that of many Americans under similar circumstances, was rigorously obeyed. We shall see what sort of reward this fidelity to country won from public opinion at home.

X.

THE LAST ROMANCE.

1860-1863.

There are in the "English Note-Books" several dismal and pathetic records of tragic cases of brutality or murder on shipboard, which it was Hawthorne's duty as consul to investigate. These things, as one might have divined they would, made a very strong and deep impression upon him; and he tried strenuously to interest the United States government in bettering the state of the marine by new laws. But though this evil was and is still quite as monstrous as that of slavery, there was no means of mixing up prejudice and jealousy with the reform, to help it along, and he could effect nothing. He resolved, on returning home, to write some articles—perhaps a volume—exposing the horrors so calmly overlooked; but the slavery agitation, absorbing everybody, perhaps discouraged him: the scheme was never carried out. It is a pity; for, aside from the weight which so eminent a name might have given to a good cause, the work would have clearly proven the quick, responsive, practical nature of his humanity—a quality which some persons have seen fit to deny him—in a case where no question of conflicting rights divided his sense of duty.

He came to America in June, 1860. For several years the mutterings of rising war between the States had been growing louder. In June of 1856 he had written to Bridge, expressing great hope that all would yet turn out well. But so rapidly did the horizon blacken, that later in the same year he declared that "an actual fissure" seemed to him to be opening between the two sections of the country. In January, 1857:—

"I regret that you think so doubtfully of the prospects of the Union; for I should like well enough to hold on to the old thing. And yet I must confess that I sympathize to a large extent with the Northern

feeling, and think it is about time for us to make a stand. If compelled to choose, I go for the North. New England is quite as large a lump of earth as my heart can really take in.... However, I have no kindred with nor leaning toward the Abolitionists."

He felt, no doubt, that the vital principle of The Union from the beginning had been compromise, mutual concession, and if it was to be severed, preferred that it should be peacefully. Still, his moods and wishes varied as did those of many careful watchers at that time; and he saw too clearly the arguments on either side to hold fixedly to one course. In the December after his return, secession began; and for more than a year following he could not fix his attention upon literary matters. He wrote little, not even his journal, as Mrs. Hawthorne has told us, until 1862. Accustomed to respond accurately to every influence about him, with that sensitized exterior of receptive imagination which overlay the fixed substance of personal character,—so that, as we have seen, even a change of climate left its impress on his productions,—it was not strange that the emotions of horror and pain, the passion of hate, the splendid heroism which charged the whole atmosphere about him, now, should absorb his whole sensibility, and paralyze his imagination. It was no time for quiet observation or creative revery. A new era had broken upon us, ushered by the wild din of trumpet and cannon, and battle-cry; an era which was to form new men, and shape a new generation. He must pause and listen to the agonies of this birth, striving vainly to absorb the commotion into himself and to let it subside into clear visions of the future. No hope! He could not pierce the war-smoke to any horizon of better things. He who had schooled himself so unceasingly to feel with utmost intensity the responsibility of each soul for any violence or crime of others, could not cancel the fact of multitudinous murder by any hypothesis of prospective benefit. Thus, in the midst of that magnificent turbulence, he was like the central quiet of a whirlpool: all the fierce currents met there, and seemed to pause,—but only seemed. Full of sympathy as he was for his fellows, and agitated at times by the same warlike impulses, he could not give himself rein as they did, nor dared to raise any encouraging strain in his writing, as others felt that they might freely do. His Puritan sense of justice, refined by descent and wedded to mercy, compelled him to weigh all carefully, to debate long and compassionately. But meantime the popular sense of justice—that same New England sentiment, of which his own was a development—cared nothing for these fine considerations, and Hawthorne was generally condemned by it as being warped by his old Democratic alliances into what was called treason. Nevertheless, he was glad to be in his native land, and suffer bitter criticism here,—if that were all that could be granted,—rather than to remain an unmolested exile.

An article which he contributed to the "Atlantic Monthly" in July, 1862, gives a faint inkling of his state of mind at this time; but nothing illustrates more clearly, either, the reserve which he always claimed lay behind his seemingly most frank expressions in print. For he there gives the idea of something like coldness in his attitude touching the whole great tragedy. But those who saw him daily, and knew his real mood, have remembered how deeply his heart was shaken by it. Fortunately, there are one or two epistolary proofs of the degree in which his sympathy with his own side of the struggle sometimes mastered him. He used to say that he only regretted that his son was too young and himself too old to admit of either of them entering the army; and just after the first battle of Bull Run he wrote to Mr. Lowell, at Cambridge, declining an invitation:—

THE WAYSIDE, CONCORD, July 23, 1861.

DEAR LOWELL:—I am to start, in two or three days, on an excursion with——, who has something the matter with him, and seems to need sea-air and change. If I alone were concerned, ... I would most gladly put off my trip till after your dinner; but, as the case stands, I am compelled to decline. Speaking of dinner, last evening's news will dull the edge of many a Northern appetite; but if it puts all of us into the same grim and bloody humor that it does me, the South had better have suffered ten defeats than won this victory.

Sincerely yours,

NATH. HAWTHORNE.

And to another friend, in October:—

"For my part, I don't hope (nor, indeed, wish) to see the Union restored as it was; amputation seems to me much the better plan.... I would fight to the death for the Northern slave States, and let the rest go.... I have not found it possible to occupy my mind with its usual trash and nonsense during these anxious times; but as the autumn advances, I find myself sitting down at my desk and blotting successive sheets of paper as of yore."

He had now begun, I suppose, the "Romance of Immortality," or "Septimius Felton," which has been posthumously printed, but had been abandoned by him for another treatment of the same theme, called

"The Dolliver Romance." This last, of which two chapters appeared, was left unfinished at his death. Of "Septimius" I shall not attempt an analysis: it contains several related and concentric circles of meaning, to survey which would require too much space. The subject had been one of the earliest themes of meditation with Hawthorne, and he wrote as with a fountain-pen in which was locked the fluid thought of a lifetime. One of the less obvious aspects of the book is the typification in Septimius's case of that endless struggle which is the lot of every man inspired by an ideal aim. The poet and the painter are, equally with Septimius, seekers after immortality, though of a more ethereal kind; and his morbidness and exaggeration serve to excite in us a tenderness and pity over him, assisting the reception of truth. These relate mainly to the temptation of the artist to effect a severance of ordinary, active human relations. (Sad to think what bitter cause the author had to brood upon this, the fault attributed to himself!) The poet, the creator in whatever art, must maintain his own circle of serene air, shutting out from it the flat reverberations of common life; but if he fail to live generously toward his fellows,—if he cannot make the light of every day supply the nimbus in which he hopes to appear shining to posterity,—then he will fall into the treacherous pit of selfishness where Septimius's soul lies smothered. But this set of meanings runs imperceptibly into others, for the book is much like the cabalistic manuscript described in its pages: now it is blurred over with deceptive sameness, and again it brims with multifarious beauties like those that swim within the golden depth of Tieck's enchanted goblet. The ultimate and most insistent moral is perhaps that which brings it into comparison with Goethe's "Faust"; this, namely, that, in order to defraud Nature of her dues, we must enter into compact with the Devil. Both Faust and Septimius study magic in their separate ways, with the hope of securing results denied to their kind by a common destiny; but Faust proves infinitely the meaner of the two, since he desires only to restore his youth, that he may engage in the mere mad joy of a lusty existence for a few years, while Septimius seeks some mode, however austere and cheerless, of prolonging his life through centuries of world-wide beneficence. Yet the satanically refined egoism which lays hold of Septimius is the same spirit incarnated in Goethe's Mephistopheles,—*der Geist der stets verneint*. To Faust he denies the existence of good in anything, primarily the good of that universal knowledge to the acquisition of which he has devoted his life, but through this scepticism mining his faith in all besides. To Septimius he denies the worth of so brief a life as ours, and the good of living to whatever end seems for the hour most needful and noble. Septimius might perhaps be described as Faust at an earlier stage of development than that in which Goethe represents him. [Footnote: Indeed, these words, applied by Mephistopheles to Faust, suit Septimius equally well:—

"Ihm hat das Schicksal einen Geist gegeben
Der ungebändigt immer vorwarts dringt
Und dessen übereiltes Streben
Der Erde Freuden überspringt."]

As a further point of resemblance between the two cases, it may be noticed that the false dreams of both are dispelled by the exorcising touch of a woman. Both have fallen into error through perceiving only half of the truth which has hovered glimmering before them; these errors originate in the exclusively masculine mood, the asceticism, which has prevailed in their minds. It will be observed that, in the first relation of Rose to Septimius, Hawthorne takes pains to contrast with this mood, delicately but strongly, the woman's gentle conservatism and wisely practical tendency to be satisfied with life, which make her influence so admirable a poising force to man. The subsequent alteration of the situation, by which he makes her the half-sister of his hero, is owing, as Mr. Higginson has pointed out, to the fact "that a heroine must be supplied who corresponds to the idea in the lover's soul; like Helena in the second part of Faust." [Footnote: A phase of character rich in interest, but which I can only mention, in passing, is presented in the person of Sybil Dacy, who here occupies very much the same place, in some regards, as Roger Chillingworth in "The Scarlet Letter." The movement of the story largely depends on a subtle scheme of revenge undertaken by her, as that of "The Scarlet Letter" hangs upon the mode of retribution sought by the physician; but her malice is directed, characteristically, against the slayer of the young officer who had despoiled her of her honor, and, again characteristically, she is unable to consummate her plan, from the very tenderness of her feminine heart, which leads her first to half sympathize with his dreams, then pity him for the deceit she practised on him, and at last to rather love than hate him.]

But there is a suitable difference between the working of the womanly element in "Faust" and in Hawthorne's romance. In the former instance it is through the gratification of his infernal desire that the hero is awakened from his trance of error and restored to remorse; while Septimius's failure to accomplish his intended destiny appears to be owing to the inability of his aspiring nature to accommodate itself to that code of "moral dietetics" which is to assist his strange project. "Kiss no woman if her lips be red; look not upon her if she be very fair," is the maxim taught him. "If thou love her, all is over, and thy whole past and remaining labor and pains will be in vain." How pathetic a situation this, how much more terrible than that of Faust, when he has reached the turning-point in his career! A nature which could accept an earthly immortality on these terms, for the sake of his fellows,

must indeed have been a hard and chilly one. But there is still too much of the heart in it, to admit of being satisfied with so cruel an abstraction. On the verge of success, as he supposes, with the long-sought drink standing ready for his lips, Septimius nevertheless seeks a companion. Half unawares, he has fallen in love with Sybil, and thenceforth, though in a way he had not anticipated, "all is over." Yet, saved from death by the poison in which he had hoped to find the spring of endless life, his fate appears admirably fitting. There is no picture of Mephisto hurrying him off to an apparently irrevocable doom. The wrongs he has committed against himself, his friends, humanity,—these, indeed, remain, and are remembered. He has undoubtedly fallen from his first purity and earnestness, and must hereafter be content to live a life of mere conventional comfort, full of mere conventional goodness, conventional charities, in that substantial English home of his. Could anything be more perfectly compensatory?

Nothing is more noticeable than the way in which, while so many symbolisms spring up out of the story, the hero's half-crazed and bewildered atmosphere is the one which we really accept, until the reading is ended. By this means we are enabled to live through the whole immortal future which he projects for himself, though he never in reality achieves any of it. This forcing of the infinite into the finite, we are again indebted to Mr. Higginson for emphasizing as "one of the very greatest triumphs in all literature." "A hundred separate tragedies," he says, "would be easier to depict than this which combines so many in one."

But notice the growth of the romance in Hawthorne's mind. "Dr. Heidegger's Experiment," in which several people are restored to youth for an hour by a life-elixir, was published before 1837. In 1840 we have this entry in the journal: "If a man were sure of living forever here, he would not care about his offspring." A few years afterward, in "A Virtuoso's Collection," the elixir vitae is introduced, "in an antique sepulchral urn," but the narrator refuses to quaff it. "'No; I desire not an earthly immortality,' said I. 'Were man to live longer on the earth, the spiritual would die out of him.... There is a celestial something within us, that requires, after a certain time, the atmosphere of heaven to preserve it from ruin.'" But the revolt against death, and then the reactionary meditation upon it, and final reverence for it, must, from the circumstances of his youngest years, have been very early familiar to Hawthorne; and in the course of these meditations, the conception of deathlessness must often have floated before him. The tradition as to the former owner of the Wayside, who had thought he should never die (alluded to in the letter to Curtis, in 1852 [Footnote: See ante, p. 244.]), brought it definitely home to him. He had in 1837 thought of this: "A person to spend all his life and splendid talents, in trying to achieve something totally impossible,—as, to make a conquest over nature"; but the knowledge of an actual person who had expected to live forever gave the scattered elements coherence. The way in which other suggestions came into the plan is exceedingly curious. The idea of a bloody footstep appears in the Note-Books in 1850: "The print in blood of a naked foot to be traced through the street of a town." By a singular corroboration, he encountered five years afterward in England an actual bloody footprint, or a mark held to be such, at Smithell's Hall in Lancashire. ("English Note-Books," Vol. I. April 7, and August 25, 1855.) The parting request of his hostess there was that he "should write a ghost-story for her house," and he observes that "the legend is a good one." Only five days after first hearing it he makes a note thus: "In my Romance, the original emigrant to America may have carried away with him a family secret, by which it was in his power, had he so chosen, to have brought about the ruin of the family. This secret he transmitted to his American progeny, by whom it is inherited throughout all the intermediate generations. At last the hero of my Romance comes to England, and finds that, by means of this secret, he still has it in his power to procure the downfall of the family." This clearly refers to something already rapidly taking shape in his mind, and recalls at once the antique chest containing family papers, and the estate in England waiting for an heir, of "Septimius." Could he have already connected the two things, the bloody footstep and this Anglo-American interest? The next piece of history comes in the shape of a manuscript book in journal form, written in 1858, after Hawthorne had left the consulate, and containing what must have been the earliest sketch of the story, as he then conceived it. It begins abruptly, and proceeds uncertainly, at the rate of a few pages each day, for about a month. Detached passages of narration alternate with abstracts of the proposed plot, and analysis of the characters. The chief interest seems to lie in the project which a young American has formed, during a visit to England, of tracing out and proving his inherited right to an old manor-house formerly the property of his ancestors. This old hall possesses the peculiarity of the bloody footstep, and with this some mystery is connected, which the writer himself does not yet seem to have discovered. He takes a characteristic pleasure in waiting for this suggestive footstep to track the lurking interest of his story to its lair, and lingers on the threshold of the tale, gazing upon it, indulging himself with that tantalizing pleasure of vague anticipation in which he hopes to envelop the good reader. The perusal of this singular journal, in which the transactions recorded are but day-dreams, is absorbing beyond description. But though at times he seems to be rapidly approaching the heart of the story, yet at every point the subtle darkness and coming terror of the theme seem to baffle the author, and he retires, to await a more favorable moment. At its conclusion, though he appears now to have formed a clear picture enough of what his persons are to do, there is still wanting the underlying thought, which he at moments dimly feels but cannot bring to light, and without which he is unable to

fuse the materials into readiness for the mould.

Our only information as to the course of the story between April, 1858, and the time of writing "Septimius," must be gathered from a sketch found among the author's papers, the date of which it is not possible to determine with precision, though both its matter and form indicate that it must have been written subsequently to the journal above mentioned. Herein are curiously mingled certain features of both "Septimius" and the "Dolliver Romance." So far as is consistent with the essential privacy of the manuscript, I shall give a general outline of its contents. It consists of two sections, in the second of which a lapse of some years is implied. In the first of these chapters, for they hardly exceed that limit, the most prominent figure is that of a singular, morose old man, who inhabits a house overlooking a New England graveyard. But though his situation resembles in this particular that of Grandsir Dolliver, his characteristics resemble more those of Dr. Portsoaken. He is constantly accompanied, too, by brandy-and-water and a cloud-compelling pipe; and his study, like the doctor's chamber in "Septimius," is tapestried with spider-webs; a particularly virulent spider which dangles over his head, as he sits at his writing-desk, being made to assume the aspect of a devilish familiar. On the other hand, his is a far richer and less debased nature than that of Portsoaken. Hawthorne appears subsequently to have divided him, straining off from the rank sediments which settle into the character of Dr. Portsoaken the clear sweetness of good Grandsir Dolliver. This "grim doctor," as he is almost invariably styled in the manuscript, seems to have originated in Hawthorne's knowledge of a Mr. Kirkup, painter, spiritualist and antiquarian, of Florence, [Footnote: French and Italian Note-Books, Vol. II.] who also probably stood as a model for Grandsir Dolliver. Not that either of these personages is copied from Mr. Kirkup; but the personality and surroundings of this quaint old gentleman had some sort of affinity with the author's idea, which led him to maintain a certain likeness between him and his own fictitious persons. As in the case of the Florentine antiquary, a little girl dwells in the house of the doctor, her chief playmate being, like that of Mr. Kirkup's adopted daughter, a very beautiful Persian kitten. There is much about her like Pansie, of the "Dolliver" fragment, but she is still only dimly brought out. The boy is described as of superior nature, but strangely addicted to revery. Though his traits are but slightly indicated, he suggests in general the character of Septimius, and may very easily have grown into him, at a later period. At first he is much neglected by the doctor, but afterwards, by resolute and manly behavior in questioning his mysterious guardian as to his own origin, and the connection subsisting between them, he secures greater consideration. The doctor gradually hints to him the fact of his descent from an old English family, and frequent mention is made of the ancestral hall, the threshold of which is stained by the imprint of a bloody footstep marking the scene of some dark tragedy, which, in the superstitious haze thrown over it by time, assumes various and uncertain forms. At different times two strangers are introduced, who appear to have some obscure knowledge of, and connection with, the ghastly footstep; and, finally, a headstone is discovered in the neighboring cemetery, marking the spot where an old man had been buried many years since, and engraved with the likeness of a foot. The grave has been recently opened to admit a new occupant, and the children, in playing about it, discover a little silver key, which the doctor, so soon as it is shown him, pockets, with the declaration that it is of no value. After this, the boy's education is taken in hand by his being sent to school; but presently the doctor sickens of life, and characteristically resolving to abandon brandy-drinking, and die, does so accordingly. Mention has previously been made of certain papers which he had kept in a secret place, and these the youth now secures. The second part describes his advent into England. He soon makes his way to the old hall, but just as his connection with it and its inmates begins, the manuscript terminates.

It will be noticed that in this fragment the scene is at first laid in New England, whereas the journalized sketch opened the drama in England. From this I infer that the former was written after the return to this country. "The Marble Faun" appropriated the author's attention, after the sketch of 1858; and in this, which was probably written just before the commencement of the war, he had not yet clearly struck the key-note of the story. When he recurred to it, in the autumn of 1861, on beginning to "blot successive sheets as of yore," it was at last with the definite design of uniting the legend of the deathless man with the legend of Smithell's Hall. It is as if, having left England, he could no longer write an English romance, but must give the book mainly an American coloring again. There is a pathetic interest, too, in his thus wavering between the two countries, which now so nearly equally divided his affections, and striving to unite the Wayside with the far-off English manor. Under the new design, everything began to fall into place. The deathless man was made the hero; the English inheritance became an inferior motive-power, on which, however, the romantic action depends; the family papers and the silver key came well to hand for the elucidation of the plot; the bloody footstep gained a new and deep significance; and a "purple everlasting flower," presented in 1854 to Mrs. Hawthorne by the gardener of Eaton Hall, blossomed out, with supernatural splendor, as a central point in the design. The scene being in Concord, and the time of writing that of war, the Revolutionary association was natural. But the public phase of that epoch could not assume an important place: it was sunk into the background, forming merely a lurid field on which the figures of this most solemn and terrific of all Hawthorne's works stand out in portentous relief. One singular result of the historic

location, however, is the use that was now made of that tradition which Lowell had told him at the Old Manse, concerning a boy who was chopping wood on the April morning of the famous fight, and found a wounded British soldier on the field, whom he killed with his axe. "Oftentimes, as an intellectual and moral exercise, I have sought to follow that poor youth through his subsequent career, and observe how his soul was tortured by the blood-stain.... This one circumstance has borne more fruit for me than all that history tells us of the fight." Thus had he written, fourteen years before; and now that sombre study furnished him with the psychology of the death-scene in the beginning of "Septimius."

But the romance, even in this form, was again abandoned, as we learn from the prefatory note to Pierce in "Our Old Home," written in July, 1863. He there speaks of it as an "abortive project, utterly thrown aside," which "will never now be accomplished." In November of that year, "The Dolliver Romance" was announced for serial publication; and in the first page of the isolated opening scene, published in July, 1864, occurs the mention of a certain potent cordial, from which the good doctor had received great invigoration, and which we may well suppose was destined to tincture the whole story. Another point from which a connection with "Septimius Felton" may perhaps be traced is the passing mention of Grandsir Dolliver's grandson Cornelius, by whom this cordial had been compounded, he having displayed a great efficiency with powerful drugs. Recalling that the author describes many nostrums as having been attributed to Septimius, which he had perhaps chanced upon in his unsuccessful attempts to distil the elixir of life, we may fairly conjecture this posthumous character of Cornelius, this mere memory, to be the remains of Septimius, who, it would seem, was to have been buried by the author under the splendid monument of a still more highly wrought and more aspiring form of the romance. The only remaining portions of this latest form have been printed, and are lull of a silvery and resonant promise. Unquestionably it was to have been as much a "Romance of Immortality" as "Septimius"; and the exquisite contrast of the child Pansie—who promised to be the author's most captivating feminine creation—with the aged man, would no doubt have given us a theme of celestial loveliness, as compared with the forbidding and remorseless mournfulness of the preliminary work. In the manuscript sketch for "Septimius" there is a note referring to a description in the "English Note-Books" of two pine-trees at Lowood, on Windermere, "quite dead and dry, although they have the aspect of dark, rich life. But this is caused by the verdure of two great ivy-vines which have twisted round them like gigantic snakes, ... throttling the life out of them, ... and one feels that they have *stolen the life* that belonged to the pines." This does not seem to have been used; but the necessity of some life being stolen in order to add to any other life more than its share, is an idea that very clearly appears in the romance. In "Dolliver" the same strain of feeling would probably have reappeared; but it would there perhaps have been beautified, softened, expiated by the mutual love of Pansie and the grandsire; each wishing to live forever, for the other. Even in "Septimius" we can discern Hawthorne standing upon the wayside hill-top, and, through the turbid medium of the unhappy hero, tenderly diffusing the essence of his own concluding thoughts on art and existence. Like Mozart, writing what he felt to be a requiem for his own death, like Mozart, too, throwing down the pen in midmost of the melody, leaving the strain unfinished, he labors on, prescient of the overhanging doom. Genial and tender at times, amidst their sadness, his reveries are nevertheless darkened by the shadow of coming death; and it is not until the opening of "The Dolliver Romance" that the darkness breaks away. Then, indeed, we feel once more the dewy freshness of the long-past prime, with a radiance unearthly fair, besides, of some new, undreamed-of morning. He who has gone down into the dark valley appears for a brief space with the light of the heavenly city on his countenance. Ah, prophet, who spoke but now so sadly, what is this new message that we see brightening on your lips? Will it solve the riddle of sin and beauty, at last? We listen intently; we seem to lean out a little way from earth.

Only an eddying silence! And yet the air seems even now alive with his last words.

XI.

PERSONALITY.

What has thus far been developed in this essay, concerning Hawthorne's personality, though incidental, has, I hope, served the end in view,—that of suggesting a large, healthy nature, capable of the most profound thought and the most graceful and humorous mental play. The details of his early life already given show how soon the inborn honor of his nature began to shine. The small irregularities in his college course have seemed to me to bring him nearer and to endear him, without in any way impairing the dignity and beauty of character which prevailed in him from the beginning. It is good to know that he shared the average human history in these harmless peccadilloes; for they never hurt his integrity,

and they are reminders of that old but welcome truth, that the greatest men do not need a constant diet of great circumstances. He had many difficulties to deal with, as unpicturesque and harassing as any we have to encounter in our daily courses,—a thing which people are curiously prone to forget in the case of eminent authors. The way in which he dealt with these throws back light on himself. We discover how well the high qualities of genius were matched by those of character.

Fragmentary anecdotes have a value, but so relative that to attempt to construct the subject's character out of them is hazardous. Conceptions of a man derived only from such matter remind one of Charles Lamb's ghosts, formed of the particles which, every seven years, are replaced throughout the body by new ones. Likewise, the grossest errors have been committed through the assumption that particular passages in Hawthorne's writings apply directly and unqualifiedly to himself. There is so much imagination interfused with them, that only a reverent and careful imagination can apply them aright. Nor are private letters to be interpreted in any other way than as the talk of the hour, very inadequately representative, and often—unless read in many lights—positively untrue, to the writer. It gives an entirely false notion, for example, to accept as a trait of character this modest covering up of a noble sentiment, which occurs in a letter refusing to withdraw the dedication of "Our Old Home" to Pierce, in the time of the latter's unpopularity:—

"Nevertheless, I have no fancy for making myself a martyr when it is honorably and conscientiously possible to avoid it; and I always measure out my heroism very accurately according to the exigencies of the occasion, and should be the last man in the world to throw away a bit of it needlessly."

Such a passage ought never to have been printed without some modifying word; for it has been execrably misused. "I have often felt," Hawthorne says, "that words may be a thick and darksome veil of mystery between the soul and the truth which it seeks." What injustice, then, that he should be judged by a literal construction of words quickly chosen for the transient embodiment of a mood!

The first and most common opinion about the man Hawthorne is, that he must have been extremely gloomy, because his mind nourished so many grave thoughts and solemn fancies. But this merely proves that, as he himself says, when people think he is pouring himself out in a tale or an essay, he is merely telling what is common to human nature, not what is peculiar to himself. "I sympathize with them, not they with me." He sympathizes in the special direction of our darker side. A creative mind of the higher order holds the thread which guides it surely through life's labyrinths; but all the more on this account its attention is called to the erratic movement of other travellers around it. The genius who has the clew begins, therefore, to study these errors and to describe them for our behoof. It is a great mistake to suppose that the abnormal or preposterous phases which he describes are the fruit of *self*-study,—personal traits disguised in fiction; yet this is what has often been affirmed of Hawthorne. We don't think of attributing to Dickens the multiform oddities which he pictures with such power, it being manifestly absurd to do so. As Dickens raises the laugh against them, we at once perceive that they are outside of himself. Hawthorne is so serious, that we are absorbed in the sober earnest of the thing, and forget to apply the rule in his case. Dickens's distinct aim is to excite us with something uncommon; Hawthorne's, to show us that the elements of all tragedies lie within our individual natures; therefore we begin to attribute in undue measure to *his* individual nature all the abnormal conditions that he has shown to be potential in any of us. But in truth he was a perfectly healthy person.

"You are, intellectually speaking, quite a puzzle to me," his friend George Hillard wrote to him, once. "How comes it that, with so thoroughly healthy an organization as you have, you have such a taste for the morbid anatomy of the human heart, and such a knowledge of it, too? I should fancy, from your books, that you were burdened with some secret sorrow, that you had some blue chamber in your soul, into which you hardly dared to enter yourself; but when I see you, you give me the impression of a man as healthy as Adam in Paradise."

This very healthiness was his qualification for his office. By virtue of his mental integrity and absolute moral purity, he was able to handle unhurt all disintegrated and sinful forms of character; and when souls in trouble, persons with moral doubts to solve and criminals wrote to him for counsel, they recognized the healing touch of one whose pitying immaculateness could make them well.

She who knew best his habitual tone through a sympathy such as has rarely been given to any man, who lived with him a life so exquisitely fair and high, that to speak of it publicly is almost irreverent, has written:—

"He had the inevitable pensiveness and gravity of a person who possessed what a friend has called his 'awful power of insight'; but his mood was always cheerful and equal, and his mind peculiarly healthful, and the airy splendor of his wit and humor was the light of his home. He saw too far to be despondent, though his vivid sympathies and shaping imagination often made him sad in behalf of others. He also perceived morbidness wherever it existed instantly, as if by the illumination of his own steady cheer."

His closest friends, too, speak with delight of his genial warmth and ease in converse with them. He could seldom talk freely with more than two or three, however, on account of his constitutional shyness, and perhaps of a peculiarly concentrative cast of mind; though he possessed a ready adaptability. "I talk with everybody: to Mrs. T—— good sense; to Mary, good sense, with a mixture of fun; to Mrs. G——, sentiment, romance, and nonsense." [Footnote: American Note-Books, 1837.] A gentleman who was with him at Brook farm, and knew him well, tells me that his presence was very attractive, and that he inspired great esteem among all at the farm by his personal qualities. On a walking trip to Wachusett, which they once made together, Hawthorne showed a great interest in sitting in the bar-rooms of country taverns, to listen to the talk of the attendant farmers and villagers. The manner in which he was approached had a great deal to do with his response. If treated simply and wisely, he would answer cordially; but he was entirely dismayed, as a rule, by those who made demonstrations of admiration or awe. "Why do they treat me so?" he asked a friend, in one case of this sort. "Why, they're afraid of you." "But I tremble at *them*," he said. "They think," she explained, "that you're imagining all sorts of terrible things." "Heavens!" he answered; "if they only knew what I *do* think about." At one time, when he was visiting this same friend, he was obliged to return some calls, and his companion in the midst of conversation left him to continue it. He had previously asked his hostess, in assumed terror, what he should talk about, and she advised "climate." Accordingly, he turned to the naval officer whom he was calling upon, and asked him if he had ever been to the Sandwich Islands. "The man started," he said, on returning, "as if he had been struck. He had evidently been there and committed some terrible crime, which my allusion recalled. I had made a frightful mess of it. B—— led me away to the door." This woful account was, of course, an imaginary and symbolical representation of the terrors which enforced conversation caused him; the good officer's surprise at the abrupt introduction of a new subject had supplied him with the ludicrous suggestion. Mr. Curtis has given an account of his demeanor on another occasion:—

"I had driven up with some friends to an aesthetic tea at Mr. Emerson's. It was in the winter, and a great wood-fire blazed upon the hospitable hearth. There were various men and women of note assembled; and I, who listened attentively to all the fine things that were said, was for some time scarcely aware of a man who sat upon the edge of the circle, a little withdrawn, his head slightly thrown forward upon his breast, and his black eyes ['black' is an error] clearly burning under his black brow. As I drifted down the stream of talk, this person, who sat silent as a shadow, looked to me as Webster might have looked had he been a poet,—a kind of poetic Webster. He rose and walked to the window, and stood there quietly for a long time, watching the dead-white landscape. No appeal was made to him, nobody looked after him; the conversation flowed steadily on, as if every one understood that his silence was to be respected. It was the same thing at table. In vain the silent man imbibed aesthetic tea. Whatever fancies it inspired did not flower at his lips. But there was a light in his eye which assured me nothing was lost. So supreme was his silence, that it presently engrossed me, to the exclusion of everything else. There was very brilliant discourse, but this silence was much more poetic and fascinating. Fine things were said by the philosophers, but much finer things were implied by the dumbness of this gentleman with heavy brows and black hair. When he presently rose and went, Emerson, with the 'slow, wise smile' that breaks over his face like day over the sky, said, 'Hawthorne rides well his horse of the night.'"

He was not a lover of argumentation. "His principle seemed to be, if a man cannot understand without talking to him, it is useless to talk, because it is immaterial whether such a man understands or not." And the same writer says:——

"His own sympathy was so broad and sure, that, although nothing had been said for hours, his companion knew that not a thing had escaped his eye, nor a single pulse of beauty in the day, or scene, or society, failed to thrill his heart. In this way his silence was most social. Everything seemed to have been said."

I am told that in his own home, though he was often silent, it was never with sadness except in seasons of great illness in the house, the prevailing effect of his manner being usually that of a cheerful and almost humorous calm. Mr. Curtis gives perhaps one of the best descriptions of his aspect, when he speaks of his "glimmering smile"; and of his atmosphere, when he says that at Emerson's house it seemed always morning, but at Hawthorne's you passed into

"A land in which it seemed always afternoon."

Hawthorne's personal appearance is said by those who knew him to have been always very impressive. He was tall and strongly built, with beautiful and lustrous gray-blue eyes, and luxuriant dark brown hair of great softness, which grew far back from his forehead, as in the early engraved portrait of him. His skin had a peculiar fineness and delicacy, giving unusual softness to his complexion. After his Italian sojourn he altered much, his hair having begun to whiten, and a thick dark

mustache being permitted to grow, so that a wit described him as looking like a "boned pirate." When it became imperative to shake off his reticence, he seems to have had the power of impressing as much by speech as he had before done by silence. It was the same abundant, ardent, but self-contained and perfectly balanced nature that informed either phase. How commanding was this nature may be judged from the fact related of him by an acquaintance, that rude people jostling him in a crowd would give way at once "at the sound of his low and almost irresolute voice." The occasions on which he gave full vent to his indignation at anything were very rare; but when these came, he manifested a strength of sway only to be described as regal. Without the least violence, he brought a searching sternness to bear that was utterly overwhelming, carrying as it did the weight of perfect self-control. Something even of the eloquent gift of old Colonel Hathorne seemed to be locked within him, like a precious heirloom rarely shown; for in England, where his position called for speech-making, he acquitted himself with brilliant honor. But the effort which this compelled was no doubt quite commensurate with the success. He never shrank, notwithstanding, from effort, when obligation to others put in a plea. A member of his family has told me that, when talking to any one not congenial to him, the effect of the contact was so strong as to cause an almost physical contraction of his whole stalwart frame, though so slight as to be perceptible only to eyes that knew his habitual and informal aspects; yet he would have sunk through the floor rather than betray his sensations to the person causing them. Mr. Curtis, too, records the amusement with which he watched Hawthorne paddling on the Concord River with a friend whose want of skill caused the boat continually to veer the wrong way, and the silent generosity with which he put forth his whole strength to neutralize the error, rather than mortify his companion by an explanation. His considerateness was always delicate and alert, and has left in his family a reverence for qualities that have certainly never been surpassed and not often equalled in sweetness.

He was simple in his habits, and fond of being out of doors, but not—after his college days—as a sportsman. While living beside the Concord, he rowed frequently, with a dreamy devotion to the pastime, and was fond of fishing; swimming, too, he enjoyed. But his chief exercise was walking; he had a vast capacity for it, and was, I think, never even seen upon horseback. At Brook Farm he "belabored the rugged furrows" with a will; and at the Old Manse he presided over his garden in a paradisiacal sort of way. Books in every form he was always eager for, sometimes, as has been reported, satisfying himself with an old almanac or newspaper, over which he would brood as deeply as over richly stored volumes of classic literature. At other times he was fastidious in his choice, and threw aside many books before he found the right one for the hour. [Footnote: He would attach himself to a book or a poem apparently by some law perceptible only to himself, perhaps often giving an interest by his own genius. A poem On Solitude, in Dryden's Miscellany, was at one time a special favorite with him.

It begins:—

"O Solitude, my sweetest choice,
Places devoted to the Night,
Remote from Tumult and from Noise,
How you my restless thoughts delight!"

And the last stanza has these lines:—

"O, how I solitude adore,
That element of noblest wit,
Where I have learned Apollo's lore,
Without the pains to study it."]

An impression has been set afloat that he cared nothing for books in themselves, but this is incorrect. He never had the means to accumulate a library of any size, but he had a passion for books.

"There yet lingers with me a superstitious reverence for literature of all kinds," he writes in "The Old Manse." "A bound volume has a charm in my eyes similar to what scraps of manuscript possess for the good Mussulman; ... every new book or antique one may contain the 'open sesame,'—the spell to disclose treasures hidden in some unsuspected cave of Truth."

When he lived at the Wayside, and would occasionally bring home a small package of books from Boston, these furnished him fresh pleasure for many days. He would carry some favorite of them with him everywhere, from room to room or to his hill-top. He was, as we have seen, a cordial admirer of other writers, seldom vexing himself with a critical review of their merits and defects, but applying to them instead the test of his own catholic capacity for enjoyment. The deliberate tone in which he judges his own works, in his letters, shows how little his mind was impressed by the greatness of their fame and of the genius found in them. There could not have been a more modest author, though he did not weakly underrate his work. "Recognition," he once said to Mr. Howells, "makes a man very modest."

An attempt has also been made to show that he had little interest in animals, partly based, ludicrous

as it may seem, on his bringing them into only one of his books. In his American journals, however, there is abundant evidence of his acute sympathy in this direction; at the Old Manse he fried fish for his dog Leo, when he says he should not have done it for himself; and in the Trosachs he finds a moment for pitying some little lambs startled by the approach of his party. [Footnote: English Note-Books (May, 1856).] I have already mentioned his fondness for cats. It has further been said that he did not enjoy wild nature, because in the "English Note-Books" there is no outgushing of ecstatic description. But in fact he had the keenest enjoyment of it. He could not enter into the spectacle when hurrying through strange regions. Among the English lakes he writes:—

"To say the truth, I was weary of fine scenery, and it seemed to me that I had eaten a score of mountains and quaffed as many lakes, all in the space of two or three days, and the natural consequence was a surfeit.

"I doubt if anybody ever does really see a mountain, who goes for the set and sole purpose of seeing it. Nature will not let herself be seen in such cases. You must patiently bide her time; and by and by, at some unforeseen moment, she will quietly and suddenly unveil herself and for a brief space allow you to look right into the heart of her mystery. But if you call out to her peremptorily, 'Nature! unveil yourself this very moment!' she only draws her veil the closer; and you may look with all your eyes, and imagine that you see all that she can show, and yet see nothing."

But this was because his sensibility was so great that he drew from little things a larger pleasure than many feel when excited by grand ones; and knowing this deeper phase, he could not be content with the hasty admiration on which tourists flatter themselves. The beauty of a scene which he could absorb in peace was never lost upon him. Every year the recurrent changes of season filled him with untold pleasure; and in the spring, Mrs. Hawthorne has been heard to say, he would walk with her in continuous silence, his heart full of the awe and delight with which the miracle of buds and new verdure inspired him. Nothing could be more accurate or sensitive than the brief descriptions of nature in his works. But there is nothing sentimental about them; partly owing to the Anglo-Saxon instinct which caused him to seek precise and detailed statement first of all, and partly because of a certain classic, awe-inspired reserve, like that of Horace and Virgil.

There was a commendable indolence in his character. It was not a constitutional weakness, overcoming will, but the instinctive precaution of a man whose errand it was to rise to great emergencies of exertion. He always waited for an adequate mood, before writing. But these intervals, of course, were richly productive of revery which afterward entered into the creative moments. He would sometimes become deeply abstracted in imagination; and while he was writing "The Scarlet Letter" it is related by a trustworthy person that, sitting in the room where his wife was doing some sewing, he unconsciously took up a part of the work and cut it into minute fragments with the scissors, without being aware that he had done so. At some previous time, he had in the same way gradually chipped off with a knife portions of a table, until the entire folding-leaf was worn away by the process. The opinion was sometimes advanced by him that without a certain mixture of uncongenial labor he might not have done so much with the pen; but in this he perhaps underestimated the leisure in his blood, which was one of the elements of his power. Men of smaller calibre are hollowed out by the fire of ideas, and decay too quickly; but this trait preserved him from such a fate. Combined with his far-reaching foresight, it may have had something to do with his comparative withdrawal from practical affairs other than those which necessity connected him with. Of Holgrave he writes:—

"His error lay in supposing that this age more than any past or future one is destined to see the garments of antiquity exchanged for a new suit, instead of gradually renewing themselves by patchwork; ... and more than all, in fancying that it mattered anything to the great end in view whether he himself should contend for it or against it."

The implied opinion of the author, here, is not that of a fatalist, but of an optimist (if we must connect him with any "ism") who has a very profound faith in Providence; not in any "special providence," but in that operation of divine laws through unexpected agencies and conflicting events, which is very gradually approximating human affairs to a state of truthfulness. Hawthorne was one of the great believers of his generation; but his faith expressed itself in the negative way of showing how fragile are the ordinary objects of reverence in the world, how subject the best of us are to the undermining influence of very great sin; and, on the other hand, how many traits of good there are, by consequence, even in the worst of us. This, however, is a mere skeleton statement: the noblest element in his mood is that he believes with his heart. A good interpreter has said that he *feels* with his *brain*, and *thinks* with his *heart*, to show the completeness with which he mingled the two elements in his meditations on existence. A warm, pure, living sympathy pervaded all his analysis of mankind, without which that analysis would have taken no hold upon us. It is a crude view which reckons him to have been wanting in moral enthusiasm: he had not that kind which can crush out sympathy with suffering, for the sake of carrying out an idea. Perhaps in some cases this was a fault; but one cannot dwell on the mistaken side

of such a phase, when it possesses another side so full of beneficent aid to humanity. And it must be remembered that with all this susceptibility, he was not a suffering poet, like Shelley, but distinctly an endurer. His moral enthusiasm was deeper than that of any scheme or system.

His distaste for society has been declared to proceed from the fact that, when he once became interested in people, he could no longer chemically resolve them into material for romance. But this assumption is also erroneous; for Hawthorne, if he felt it needful, could bring to bear upon his best friends the same qualitative measuring skill that he exercised on any one. I do not doubt that he knew where to place his friends and acquaintance in the scale of relative excellence. All of us who have not an equal analytic power with his own can at least reverence his discretion so far as to believe that he had stand-points not open to every one, from which he took views often more essentially just than if he had assumed a more sweeping estimate. In other cases, where he bestowed more friendship and confidence than the object of them especially deserved, he no doubt sought the simple pleasure of accepting what circumstances offered him. He was not a suspicious person; although, in fear of being fooled by his fancy, he cultivated what he often spoke of to a friend as "morose common-sense," deeming it a desirable alloy. There was even, in many relations, an unquestioning trust on his part; for he might well be called

"As the greatest only are,
In his simplicity sublime."

The connection between Pierce and himself involved too many considerations to make it possible to pass them with indifference; and he perhaps condemned certain public acts of the President, while feeling it to be utter disloyalty to an old friend to discuss these mistakes with any one. As to other slighter connections, it is very likely he did not take the trouble that might have saved him from being imposed upon.

But it is impossible to define Hawthorne's personality precisely. A poet's whole effort is to indirectly express this, by expressing the effect of things upon him; and we may read much of Hawthorne in his books, if we have the skill. But it is very clear that he put only a part of himself into them; that part which best served the inexorable law of his genius for treating life in a given light. For the rest, his two chapters on "The Custom-House" and "The Old Manse" show us something of his mode of taking daily affairs. But his real and inmost character was a mystery even to himself, and this, because he felt so profoundly the impossibility of sounding to the bottom any human heart. "A cloudy veil stretches over the abyss of my nature," he writes, at one time. "I have, however, no love of secrecy or darkness." At another time: "Lights and shadows are continually flitting across my inward sky, and I know neither whence they come nor whither they go; nor do I look too closely into them." A mind so conscious as his of the slight reality of appearances would be dissatisfied with the few tangible qualities which are all of himself that a man can discern: at the same time he would hesitate to probe the deeper self assiduously, for fear of turning his searching gaze too intently within, and thus becoming morbid. In other persons, however, he could perceive a contour, and pursue his study of investigation from without inward,—a more healthy method. His *instinctive* knowledge of himself, being brought into play, would of course aid him. Incidentally, then, something of himself comes to light in his investigation of others. And it is perhaps this inability to define their own natures, except by a roundabout method, which is the creative impulse of all great novelists and dramatists. I doubt whether many of the famous delineators of character could give us a very distinct account of their own individualities; and if they did, it would probably make them out the most uninteresting of beings. It would certainly be divested of the special charm of their other writing. Imagine Dickens clearly accounting for himself and his peculiar traits: would he be able to excite even a smile? How much of his own delicious personality could Thackeray have described without losing the zest of his other portraitures? Hawthorne has given a kind of picture of himself in Coverdale, and was sometimes called after that character by his friends; but I suspect he has adroitly constructed Coverdale out of the *appearance* which he knew himself to make in the eyes of associates. I do not mean that Hawthorne had not a very decisive personality; for indeed he had. But the essence of the person cannot be compressed into a few brief paragraphs, and must be slowly drawn in as a pervasive elixir from his works, his letters, his note-books. In the latter he has given as much definition of his interior self as we are likely to get, for no one else can continue the broken jottings that he has left, and extend them into outlines. We shall not greatly err if we treat the hidden depths of his spirit with as much reverence as he himself used in scrutinizing them. Curiously enough, many of those who have studied this most careful and delicate of definers have embraced the madness of attempting to bind him down in unhesitating, absolute statements. He who mastered words so completely that he learned to despise their obscurity, has been made the victim of easy epithets and a few conventional phrases. But none can ever be said to know Hawthorne who do not leave large allowances for the unknowable.

XII.

POE, IRVING, HAWTHORNE.

The names of Poe, Irving, and Hawthorne have been so often connected without due discrimination, that it is imperative to consider here the actual relation between the three men. Inquiry might naturally be roused by the circumstance that, although Hawthorne has freely been likened to Irving in some quarters, and in others to Poe, the latter two are never supposed to hold anything in common. Indeed, they might aptly be cited in illustration of the widely opposed tendencies already developed in our brief national literature. Two things equal to the same thing are equal to each other; and if Poe and Irving were each equal to Hawthorne, there would be some similarity between them. But it is evident that they are not like quantities; and we must conclude that they have been unconsciously used by critics, in trying to find a unit of measure to gauge the greatest of the triad with.

Undoubtedly there are resemblances in Hawthorne to both Poe and Irving. Hawthorne and Irving represent a dignity and roundedness of diction which is one of the old-fashioned merits in English writing; and because they especially, among eminent authors of the century, have stood for this quality, they have been supposed to stand close together. But Irving's speech is not so much an organic part of his genius as a preconceived method of expression which has a considerable share in modifying his thought. It is rather a manner than a style. On the other hand, it would be hard to find a style growing so naturally and strongly out of elemental attributes as Hawthorne's, so deftly waiting upon the slightest movement of idea, at once disclosing and lightly veiling the informing thought,—like the most delicate sculptured marble drapery. The radical differences of the two men were also obscured in the beginning by the fact that Hawthorne did not for some time exhibit that massive power of hewing out individual character which afterward had full swing in his romances, and by a certain kinship of fancy in his lighter efforts, with Irving's. "The Art of Book-Making" and "The Mutability of Literature" are not far removed from some of Hawthorne's conceits. And "The Vision of the Fountain" and "The Village Uncle" might have issued in their soft meditativeness from Geoffrey Crayon's own repertory, except that they are moulded with a so much more subtile art than his, and with an instinct of proportion so much more sure. But even in the earlier tales, taken all together, Hawthorne ranks higher than Irving in the heraldry of genius: he has more quarterings in his shield. Not only does he excel the other in brief essay, depending only on endogenous forces, whereas Irving is always adorning his paragraphs with that herb-o'-grace, quotation, but he also greatly surpasses him in the construction of his stories; and finally, his psychological analysis and symbolic imagination place him beyond rivalry. It is a brilliant instance of the more ideal mind asserting its commanding power, by admirable achievements in the inferior styles,—so that even in those he was at once ranked with the most famous practiser of them,—and then quietly reaching out and grasping a higher order of truths, which no one had even thought of competing for. I suppose it is not assumed for a moment that "Wolfert's Roost," the "Tales of a Traveller," the story of "Rip Van Winkle," the "Legend of Sleepy Hollow," and the picturesque but evanescent tales of "The Alhambra" can be brought into discussion on the same terms with Hawthorne's romances, as works of art; and they assuredly cannot be as studies of character, for of this they have next to nothing. The only phases of character which Irving has any success in dealing with are those of credulity and prejudice. The legendary tendency of the two men has perhaps confused some readers. Both were lovers of association, and turned naturally to the past for materials: the New-Yorker found delightful sources of tradition or of ludicrous invention in the past of that city, where his family held a long-established and estimable footing; and the New-Englander, as we have seen, drew also through the channel of descent from the dark tarn of Puritan experience. But Irving turned his back upon everything else when he entered the tapestried chamber of the past, while Hawthorne sought that vantage-ground only to secure a more impressive view of humanity. There is one gift of Irving's which won him an easier as well as a wider triumph than that which awaited Hawthorne; and this is his ability to take the simple story-teller's tone, devoid of double meanings. Poe, also, had the passion for narrative in and for itself, but in him it was disturbed by a diseased mind, and resulted in a horrid fascination instead of cheerful attraction. Hawthorne, to be sure, possessed the gift of the *raconteur*; but in general he was at once seer and teller, and the higher exertions of his imagination were always in the peculiarly symbolic atmosphere we are wont to associate with him. Irving's contented disposition in this regard is certainly very charming; there are often moods in which it is a great relief to turn to it; and he has in so far the advantage over the other two. He pitches for us the tone of average cultured minds in his time and locality; and in reading him we have a comfortable sense of reality, than which nothing in fiction is more reassuring. This is almost entirely absent from the spell with which Hawthorne holds us; and here, indeed, we touch the latter's most decided limitation as a writer of fiction; for although his magnificently portrayed characters do not want reality, an atmosphere of ghostliness surrounds them, warning us that we must not look to find life there as we see it elsewhere. There is a Northern legend of a man who lay down to sleep, and a thin smoke was

seen to issue from his nostrils, traverse the ground, cross a rivulet, and journey on, finally returning to the place whence it came. When he awoke, he described an imaginary excursion of his own, following exactly the course which the smoke had taken. This indirect contact might furnish a partially true type of Hawthorne's mysterious intercourse with the world through his books.

It would be a mistake, however, to attribute this difference to the greater strength of Irving's humor,—a trait, always much lauded in him. It is without doubt a good quality. This mild, sweet radiance of an uncontaminated and well-bred spirit is not a common thing in literature. But I cannot fall in with the judgment that calls it "freer and far more joyous" than Addison's. Both in style and in humor Irving has caught something of the grace of "The Spectator"; but as in the style he frequently falls short, writing feeble or jarring sentences, so in humor I cannot see how he is to be brought at all on a level with Addison, who is primarily a grave, stately, scholarly mind, but all the deeper on that account in the lustre of his humorous displays. Addison, too, had somewhat of the poet in him, and was capable of tragedy as well as of neat satire and compact characterization. But if we looked for a pithy embodiment of the difference between Irving and Hawthorne, we might call the former a "polite writer," and the latter a profound poet: as, indeed, I have called him in this essay, though with no intent to confuse the term with that given to poets who speak in verse. Pathos is the great touchstone of humor, and Irving's pathos is always a lamentable failure. Is it not very significant, that he should have made so little of the story of Rip Van Winkle? In his sketch, which has won so wide a fame and given a lasting association to the Kaatskills, there is not a suspicion of the immense pathos which the skill of an industrious playwright and the genius of that rare actor, Mr. Jefferson, have since developed from the tale. The Dame Van Winkle that we now know is the creation of Mr. Boucicault; to him it is we owe that vigorous character,—a scold, a tyrant to her husband, but nevertheless full of relentful womanliness, and by the justice of her cause exciting our sympathy almost as much as Rip himself does. In the story, she wears an aspect of singular causelessness, and Rip's devotion to the drinking-can is barely hinted: the marvellous tenderness, too, and joyful sorrow of his return after the twenty years' sleep, are apparently not even suspected by the writer. It is the simple wonder and picturesqueness of the situation that charm him; and while in the drama we are moved to the bottom of our hearts by the humorous tragicalness it casts over the spectacle of conflicting passions, the only outcome of the written tale is a passing reflection on the woe of being henpecked. "And it is a common wish of all henpecked husbands in the neighborhood, when life hangs heavy on their hands, that they might have a quieting draught out of Rip Van Winkle's flagon." To be sure, there is a hidden moral here, of the folly of driving men to drunkenness; but it is so much obscured as to suggest that this was of small moment in the writer's mind. Such a moral, in any case, must necessarily have been very delicately advanced, in order not to becloud the artistic atmosphere; but a person of searching dramatic genius would have found means to emphasize it without injury to art, just as it has been done on the stage. Imagine what divine vibrations of emotion Hawthorne would have smitten out of this theme, had he been the originator of it. Certainly we should, as the case stands, have missed the whole immortal figment, had not Irving given it to us in germ; the fact that our playwright and our master comedian have made it so much greater and more beautiful does not annul that primary service; but, looking at the matter historically, we must admit that Irving's share in the credit is that of the first projector of a scientific improvement, and the latter sort of person always has to forego a great part of his fame in favor of the one who consummates the discovery. I am willing to believe that there was a peculiar advantage in Irving's treatment; namely, that he secured for his story a quicker and more general acceptance than might have been granted to something more profound; but this does not alter the critical judgment that we have to pass upon it. If Irving had grasped the tragic sphere at all, he would have shone more splendidly in the comic. But the literary part of him, at least, never passed into the shade: it somehow contrived to be always on that side of the earth which was towards the sun. Observe, now, the vital office of humor in Hawthorne's thought. It gleams out upon us from behind many of the gravest of his conceptions, like the silver side of a dark leaf turning in the wind. Wherever the concretion of guilt is most adamantine, there he lets his fine slender jet of humor play like a lambent fire, until the dark mass crumbles, and the choragos of the tragedy begins his mournful yet hopeful chant among the ruins. This may be verified in the "Seven Gables," "Blithedale," and "The Marble Faun"; not in "The Scarlet Letter," for that does not present Hawthorne's genius in its widest action. In one place he speaks of "the tragic power of laughter,"—a discrimination which involves the whole deep originality of his mind. It is not irrelevant here to remark that at the most affecting portions of the play "Rip Van Winkle," the majority of the audience always laugh; this, though irritating to a thoughtful listener, is really an involuntary tribute to the marvellous wisdom and perfection with which Jefferson mingles pathos and humor. Again Hawthorne: "Human destinies look *ominous* without some perceptible intermixture of the sable or the gray." And, elsewhere: "There is *something more awful in happiness than in sorrow*, the latter being earthly and finite, the former composed of the substance and texture of eternity, so that spirits still embodied may well tremble at it." These thoughts could never have occurred to Irving with the same intensity. Now, from all this we gather inference as to the deep sources of Hawthorne's humor. I sometimes think that Thalia was the daughter, and not the sister, of Melpomene. As to actual exhibition of humor, Hawthorne's is made a diffusive medium to temper the rays of tragedy with, and never appears in such unmixed form

as that of Irving. So that even though we must confess a smaller mental calibre in the latter, we may gladly grant him a superiority in his special mood of fun. An excellent English critic, Leslie Stephen, lately wrote: "Poe is a kind of Hawthorne and *delirium tremens*." This announcement, however, betrays a singular misapprehension. When Hawthorne's tales first appeared, they were almost invariably taken to bear an intimate and direct relation to the author's own moods; while Poe's were supposed to be daring flights of pure imagination, or ingenious attempts to prove theories held by the writer, but were not charged directly to his own experience. Time has shown that the converse was the case. The psychical conditions described by Hawthorne had only the remotest connection with any mood of his own; they were mainly translations, into the language of genius, of certain impressions and observations drawn from the world around him. After his death, the Note-Books caused a general rustle of surprise, revealing as they did the simple, wholesome nature of this strange imaginer; yet though he there speaks—surely without prejudice, because without the least knowledge that the world would ever hear him—of "the objectivity" of his fictions, critics have not yet wholly learned how far apart from himself these creations were. The observation of some mental habit in men, or law of intercourse between human beings, would strongly present itself to him; and in order to get a concise embodiment, his genius planned some powerful situation to illustrate it with; or, at another time it might be that a strange incident, like that of Mr. Moody, suggesting "The Minister's Black Veil," or a singular physiological fact like that on which "The Bosom Serpent" is based, would call out his imagination to run a race with reality and outstrip it in touching the goal of truth. But, the conception once formed, the whole fictitious fabric would become entirely removed from *himself*, except so far as it touched him very incidentally; and this expulsion of the idea from himself, so that it acquires a life and movement of its own, and can be contemplated by the artist from the outside, is the very distinction between deeply creative and merely inventive genius. Poe's was of the latter sort. He possessed a wild, arbitrary imagination, that sometimes leaped frantically high; but his impressiveness is always that of a nightmare, always completely morbid. What we know of Poe's life leads inevitably to the conclusion that this quality, if it did not spring from disease, was at least largely owing to it. For a time, it was the fashion to make a moral question of Poe's unfortunate obliquities; but a more humane tendency reduces it to a scientific problem. Poe suffered great disaster at the hands of his unjust biographer; yet he was a worse enemy to himself than any one else could be. The fine enamel of his genius is all corroded by the deadly acid of his passions. The imperfections of his temperament have pierced his poetry and prose, shattered their structure, and blurred their beauty. Only four or five of his poems —"The Raven," "Ligeia," the earlier of the two addressed "To Helen," and the sonnet to his wife—escape being flawed by some fit of haste, some ungovernable error of taste, some hopeless, unaccountable break in their beauty. In criticism, Poe initiated a fearless and agile movement; he had an acute instinct in questions of literary form, amounting to a passion, as all his instincts and perceptions did; he had also the knack of finding clever reasons, good or bad, for all his opinions. These things are essential to a critic's equipment, and it was good service in Poe to exemplify them. Yet here, too, the undermining processes of his thoroughly unsound mind subverted the better qualities, vitiated his judgments with incredible jealousies and conflicting impulses, and withered the most that he wrote in this direction into something very like rubbish. We have seen, for example, how his attempt to dispassionately examine Hawthorne resulted. Sooner or later, too, he ran his own pen full against his rigid criteria for others. It is suggestive to find that the holder of such exacting doctrine about beauty, the man also of whom pre-eminently it may be said, as Baudelaire wrote of him, "Chance and the incomprehensible were his two great enemies," should so completely fail to reach even the unmoral perfection which he assigned as the highest attainable. Professing himself the special apostle of the beautiful in art, he nevertheless forces upon us continually the most loathsome hideousness and the most debasing and unbeautiful horror. This passionate, unhelmed, errant search for beauty was in fact not so much a normal and intelligent desire, as an attempt to escape from interior discord; and it was the discord which found expression, accordingly, instead of the sense of beauty,—except (as has been said) in fragments. Whatever the cause, his brain had a rift of ruin in it, from the start, and though his delicate touch often stole a new grace from classic antiquity, it was the frangibility, the quick decay, the fall of all lovely and noble things, that excited and engaged him. "I have imbibed the shadows of fallen columns," he says in one of his tales, "at Balbec, and Tadmor, and Persepolis, until my very soul has become a ruin." Always beauty and grace are with him most poetic in their overthrow, and it is the shadow of ruined grandeur that he receives, instead of the still living light so fair upon them, or the green growth clinging around them. Hawthorne, too, wandered much amid human ruin, but it was not with delight in the mere fact of decay; rather with grieving over it, and the hope to learn how much of life was still left in the wreck, and how future structures might be made stronger by studying the sources of failure. One of the least thoughtful remarks which I have heard touching Hawthorne was this, that his books could not live because they dealt with the "sick side" of human nature. As if great poets ever refrained from dealing with it! The tenure of fame depends on whether the writer has himself become infected with sickness. With Hawthorne this is most certainly not the case, for the morbid phases which he studied were entirely outside of himself. Poe, on the other hand, pictured his own half-maniacal moods and diseased fancies. There is absolutely no study of character in his stories,

no dramatic separateness of being. He looks only for fixed and inert human quantities, with which he may juggle at will. He did not possess insight; and the analytic quality of which he was so proud was merely a sort of mathematical ingenuity of calculation, in which, however, he was extraordinarily keen. As a mere potency, dissociated from qualities, Poe must be rated almost highest among American poets, and high among prosaists; no one else offers so much pungency, such impetuous and frightful energy crowded into such small compartments. Yet it would be difficult to find a poetic fury less allied to sane human life than that which informs his tales. It is not the *representation* of semi-insanity that he gives: he himself is its *representative*. Instead of commanding it, and bringing it into some sort of healthy relation with us, he is swayed and carried away by it. His genius flourished upon him like a destructive flame, and the ashes that it left, are like a deadly powdered poison. Clifford Pyncheon in the "Seven Gables" is Poe himself, deprived of the ability to act: in both are found the same consummate fastidiousness, the same abnormal egotism. And it is worth attention that when Clifford is aroused to sudden action by Judge Pyncheon's death, the coruscating play of his intellect is almost precisely that brilliant but defective kind of ratiocination which Poe so delights to display. It is crazy wildness, with a surface appearance of accurate and refined logic. In this fact, that Hawthorne—the calm, ardent, healthy master of imagination—is able to create the disordered type that Poe *is*, we shall find by how much the former is greater than the latter.

A recent writer has raised distinctly the medical question as to Poe. He calls him "the mad man of letters *par excellence*," and by an ingenious investigation seems to establish it as probable that Poe was the victim of a form of epilepsy. But in demonstrating this, he attempts to make it part of a theory that all men of genius are more or less given over to this same "veiled epilepsy." And here he goes beyond the necessities of the case, and takes up an untenable position. There is a morbid and shattering susceptibility connected with some genius; but that tremulous, constantly readjusted sensitiveness which indicates the perfect equilibrium of health in other minds must not be confounded with it. Such is the condition of the highest genius alone; of men like Shakespere and Hawthorne, who, however dissimilar their temperaments, grasp the two spheres of mind and character, the sane and the insane, and hold them perfectly reconciled by their gentle yet unsparing insight. A case like Poe's, where actual mental decay exists in so advanced a stage and gives to his productions a sharper and more dazzling effect than would have been theirs without it, is probably more unique, but it is certainly less admirable, less original in the true sense, than an instance of healthier endowment like Hawthorne. On the side of art, it is impossible to bring Poe into any competition with Hawthorne: although we have ranked him high in poetry and prose, regarded simply as a dynamic substance, it must be confessed that his prose has nothing which can be called style, nor even a manner like Irving's very agreeable one. His feeling for form manifests itself in various ways, yet he constantly violates proportion for the sake of getting off one of his pseudo-philosophical disquisitions; and, notwithstanding many successful hits in expression, and a specious but misleading assumption of fervid accuracy in phraseology, his language is loose, promiscuous, and altogether tiresome.

Poe, Irving, and Hawthorne have one marked literary condition in common: each shows a double side. With Poe the antithesis is between poetry and criticism; Irving, having been brought up by Fiction as a foster-mother, is eventually turned over to his rightful guardian, History; and Hawthorne rests his hand from ideal design, in elaborating quiet pictures of reality. In each case there is more or less seeming irreconcilement between the two phases found in combination; but the opposition is rather more distinct in Hawthorne, and the grasp with which it is controlled by him is stronger than that of either Poe or Irving,—again a result pronouncing him the master.

There is still another issue on which comparison must be made. The question of nationality will for some time to come be an interesting one in any discussion of American authors. The American character is so relative, that it is only by a long series of contrasts, a careful study of the registering-plate of literature, that we shall come to the point of defining it. American quality in literature is not like Greek, German, French, English quality: those are each unified, and their component elements stoutly enough welded together to make what may be called a positive impression; but *our* distinctions are relative. The nearest and most important means that we have for measuring them is that of comparison with England; and anything strikingly original in American genius is found to be permanent in proportion as it maintains a certain relation to English literature, not quite easy to define. It is not one of hostility, for the best American minds thus far have had the sincerest kindliness toward the mother country; it involves, however, the claiming of separate standards of judgment. The primary division, both in the case of the New England Pilgrims and in that of our Revolutionary patriots, was based on clearer perceptions of certain truths on the part of the cisatlantic English; and this claiming of separate standards in literature is a continuation of that historic attitude. We are making a perpetual minority report on the rest of the world, sure that in time our voice will be an authoritative one. The attitude being a relative and not very positively predicable one, a singular integrity of judgment is required in sustaining it. Of this Poe exhibits nothing. It was a part of the ingrained rebellion in him, that he revolted against the moneyed mediocracy of this country,—a position in which he deserves

much sympathy,—and perhaps this underlies his want of deep literary identification with the national character in general. But more probably his genius was a detonating agent which could have been convulsed into its meet activity anywhere, and had nothing to do with a soil. It is significant that he was taken up by a group of men in Paris, headed by Baudelaire and assisted by Théophile Gautier, as a sort of private demigod of art; and I believe he stands in high esteem with the Rossetti-Morris family of English poets. Irving, on the other hand, comes directly upon the ground of difference between the American and the English genius, but it is with the colors of a neutral. Irving's position was peculiar. He went to Europe young, and ripened his genius under other suns than those that imbrowned the hills of his native Hudson. He had won success enough through "Salmagundi" and "Knickerbocker's History" to give him the importance of an accredited literary ambassador from the Republic, in treating with a foreign audience; and he really did us excellent service abroad. This alone secures him an important place in our literary history. Particularly wise and dignified is the tone of his short chapter called "English Writers on America"; and this sentence from it might long have served in our days of fairer fame as a popular motto: "We have but to live on, and every day we live a whole volume of refutation." His friendship with Scott, also, was a delightful addition to the amenities of literature, and shall remain a goodly and refreshing memory to us always. Yet what he accomplished in this way for American literature at large, Irving compensated for with some loss of his own dignity. It cannot be denied that the success of "The Sketch-Book" led to an overdoing of his part in "Bracebridge Hall." "Salmagundi" was the first step in the path of palpable imitation of Addison's "Spectator"; in "The Sketch-Book," though taking some charming departures, the writer made a more refined attempt to produce the same order of effects so perfectly attained by the suave Queen Anne master; and in "Bracebridge Hall" the recollection of the Sir Roger de Coverley papers becomes positively annoying. It is not that the style of Addison is precisely reproduced, of course, but the general resemblance in manner is as close as it could well have been without direct and conscious copying, the memory of Addisonian methods is too apparent. Irving's real genius, which occasionally in his other writings emits delicious flashes, does not often assert itself in this work; and though he has the knack of using the dry point of Addison's humor, he doesn't achieve what etchers call "the burr" that ought to result from its use. Addison, too, stings his lines in with true aquafortis precision, and Irving's sketches are to his as pen-and-ink drawing to the real etching. But it was not only this lack of literary independence that belittled Irving's dignity. He had become so well satisfied with his post of mediator between the writers of the two nations, that it became paramount with him to preserve the good-will he had won in England, and this appears in the cautious and *almost* obsequious mien of "Bracebridge." One may trace it also, with amused pain, in his correspondence with Paulding,—honest, pathetic Paulding, a rabid miso-Briton who burned to write something truly American, and couldn't; whom Drake laughingly hails as

"The bard of the backwoods,
The poet of cabbages, log-huts, and gin."

Irving was vexedly concerned at the violent outbreaks of his old coadjutor, directed against the British; yet, though they were foolish, they showed real pluck. But if we need other proof of the attitude which Irving was distinctly recognized to have taken up, we may turn to a page on which "The Edinburgh Review," unusually amiable toward him at first, thus vented its tyrannical displeasure at his excessive complaisance: "He gasped for British popularity [it said]: he came, and found it. He was received, caressed, applauded, made giddy: natural politeness owed him some return, for he imitated, admired, deferred to us.... It was plain he thought of nothing else, and was ready to sacrifice everything to obtain a smile or a look of approbation." In a less savage fashion we, too, may admit the not very pleasant truth here enunciated with such unjust extremeness. An interval of nearly forty years lies between the date of the "Sketch-Book" and "Bracebridge" and that of "Our Old Home"; the difference in tone fully corresponds to the lapse of time.

In the use of native material, of course, Irving was a pioneer, along with Cooper, and was in this quite different from Poe, who had no aptitude in that way. "Knickerbocker's History of New York" is too farcical to take a high position on this score, though it undoubtedly had a beneficial effect in stirring up pride and interest in local antiquities; but "Rip Van Winkle" and "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" were valuable acquisitions so far as they went. Would that they had been wrought out with a more masterly touch; and would that Irving had penetrated further in this direction! But, though these Hudson legends will long keep his fame renewed, it will perhaps be chiefly as a historian that he will be prized. His pleasant compilation on Goldsmith, his "Mahomet," "Columbus," and "Conquest of Granada," though not too profound, fill an enviable niche in popular esteem; and his mellow and stately narrative of Washington's life is a work of enduring excellence. But these lie outside of our present discussion. Nor need we compare his achievements in native fiction with Hawthorne's, after the review we have been making of the latter's relation to New England.

Poe and Irving and Hawthorne have all met with acceptance in other countries, and their works have been translated into several languages. Irving has exercised no perceptible influence on literature at

home or abroad; Poe has entered more or less into the workings of a school in England and a group in France. Hawthorne's position on the Continent has perhaps not been so much one of conquest as of receiving an abstract admiration; but he has taken much stronger hold of the Anglo-Saxon mind than either of the others, and it is probable that his share in inspiring noble literature in America will—as it has already begun to show itself an important one—become vastly greater in future. It is impossible, as we have seen, to fix an absolute ratio between these writers. Irving has a more human quality than Poe, but Poe is beyond dispute the more original of the two. Each, again, has something which Hawthorne does not possess. But, if we must attempt at all to reduce so intricate a problem to exact terms, the mutual position of the three may be stated in the equation, Poe *plus* Irving *plus* an unknown quantity equals Hawthorne.

XIII.

THE LOSS AND THE GAIN.

The suddenness with which Hawthorne faded away and died, when at the zenith of his fame, is no less strange and sad and visionary now than it was a poignant anguish then. He returned from Europe somewhat lingeringly, as we have seen, knowing too well the difference between the regions he was quitting and the thinner, sharper, and more wasting atmosphere of a country where every one who has anything to give is constantly drawn upon from every side, and has less resource for intellectual replenishment than in other lands. His seven years in England and Italy had, on the whole, been a period of high prosperity, of warm and gratifying recognition, of varied and delightful literary encounter, in addition to the pleasure of sojourning among so many new and suggestive scenes. And when he found himself once more on the old ground, with the old struggle for subsistence staring him steadily in the face again, it is not difficult to conceive how a certain degree of depression would follow. Just as this reaction had set in, the breaking out of civil war threw upon Hawthorne, before he had time to brace himself for the shock, an immense burden of sorrowing sympathy. The conflict of feelings which it excited on the public side has been sketched; and that alone should have been enough to make the years of strife a time of continuous gloom and anxiety to him; but it would be losing sight of a very large element in his distress, not to add that he mourned over the multitude of private griefs which were the harvest of battle as acutely as if they had all been his own losses. His intense imagination burned them too deeply into his heart. How can we call this weakness, which involved such strength of manly tenderness and sympathy? "Hawthorne's life was shortened by the war," Mr. Lowell says. Expressing this view once, to a friend, who had served long in the Union army, I was met with entire understanding. He told me that his own father, a stanch Unionist, though not in military service, was as certainly brought to his death by the war as any of the thousands who fell in battle. In how wide and touchingly humane a sense may one apply to Hawthorne Marvell's line on Cromwell's death,—

"To Love and Grief the fatal writ was signed!"

His decline was gradual, and semi-conscious, as if from the first he foresaw that he could not outlive these trials. In April, 1862, he visited Washington, and wrote the article "Chiefly about War Matters" already alluded to. He has left this glimpse of himself at that time:—

"I stay here only while Leutze finishes a portrait, which I think will be the best ever painted of the same unworthy subject. One charm it must needs have,—an aspect of immortal jollity and well-to-do-ness; for Leutze, when the sitting begins, gives me a first-rate cigar, and when he sees me getting tired, he brings out a bottle of splendid champagne; and we quaffed and smoked yesterday, in a blessed state of mutual good-will, for three hours and a half, during which the picture made a really miraculous progress. Leutze is the best of fellows."

The trip was taken to benefit his health, which had already begun to give way; and though he wrote thus cheerily, he was by no means well. In another published note there is this postscript:—

"My hair really is not so white as this photograph, which I enclose, makes me. The sun seems to take an infernal pleasure in making me venerable,—as if I were as old as himself."

He had already, as we know, begun to meditate upon "The Dolliver Romance," trudging to and fro upon his hill-top, which was called, at home, "the mount of vision." But before proceeding with that, he began the series of essays composing "Our Old Home," not yet feeling strong enough for the more trying exertion of fiction. But the preparation of these, charming as they are, brought no exhilaration to

his mind. "I am delighted," he writes to his publisher, "at what you tell me about the kind appreciation of my articles, for I feel rather gloomy about them myself.... I cannot come to Boston to spend more than a day, just at present. It would suit me better to come for a visit when the spring of next year is a little advanced, and if you renew your hospitable proposition then, I shall probably be glad to accept it; though I have now been a hermit so long, that the thought affects me somewhat as it would to invite a lobster or a crab to step out of his shell."

His whole tone with regard to "Our Old Home" seems to have been one of fatigue and discouragement. He had, besides, to deal with the harassing question of the dedication to Franklin Pierce, which he solved in this manly and admirable letter to his publisher:—

"I thank you for your note of the 15th instant, and have delayed my reply thus long in order to ponder deeply on your advice, smoke cigars over it, and see what it might be possible for me to do towards taking it. I find that it would be a piece of poltroonery in me to withdraw either the dedication or the dedicatory letter. My long and intimate personal relations with Pierce render the dedication altogether proper, especially as regards this book, which would have had no existence without his kindness; and if he is so exceedingly unpopular that his name is enough to sink the volume, there is so much the more need that an old friend should stand by him. I cannot, merely on account of pecuniary profit or literary reputation, go back from what I have deliberately felt and thought it right to do; and if I were to tear out the dedication, I should never look at the volume again without remorse and shame. As for the literary public, it must accept my book precisely as I think fit to give it, or let it alone."

By this time, the energy requisite for carrying on the Romance had sunk still lower, so that he wrote:—

"I can't tell you when to expect an instalment of the Romance, if ever. There is something preternatural in my reluctance to begin. I linger at the threshold, and have a perception of very disagreeable phantasms to be encountered if I enter. I wish God had given me the faculty of writing a sunshiny book."

And, a little later:—

"I don't see much probability of my having the first chapter of the Romance ready so soon as you want it. There are two or three chapters ready to be written, but I am not yet robust enough to begin, and I feel as if I should never carry it through."

His inability to work has been illustrated in the numerous bulletins of this period published by Mr. Fields: they show him at times despondent, as in the extracts above, then again in a state of semi-resolution. At another time there is mixed presentiment and humor in his report.

"I am not quite up to writing yet, but shall make an effort as soon as I see any hope of success. You ought to be thankful that (like most other broken-down authors) I do not pester you with decrepit pages, and insist upon your accepting them as full of the old spirit and vigor. That trouble, perhaps, still awaits you, after I shall have reached a further stage of decay. Seriously, my mind has, for the present, lost its temper and its fine edge, and I have an instinct that I had better kept quiet. Perhaps I shall have a new spirit of vigor, if I wait quietly for it; perhaps not."

But over all these last notes there hangs a melancholy shadow that makes the flickering humor even sadder than the awesome conviction that he has done with writing. How singular the mingled mood of that last letter, in which he grimly jests upon the breaking-down of his literary faculty! Here he announces, finally: "I hardly know what to say to the public about this abortive Romance, though I know pretty well what the case will be. I shall never finish it." Yet the cause was not so much the loss of literary power, as the physical exhaustion that had already worn him away beyond recovery. He longed for England; and possibly if he could have gone thither, the voyage, the milder climate, and the sense of rest that he would have felt there, might have restored him. He had friends in this country, however, who made attempts to break up the disastrous condition into which he had so unexpectedly come. In May of 1863, when "Our Old Home" was printing, he received from his friend Mr. Lowell this most charming invitation to come to Cambridge:—

MY DEAR HAWTHORNE:—I hope you have not forgotten that during "anniversary week" you were to make me a little anniversary by a visit? I have been looking forward to it *ever* so long. My plan is that you come on Friday, so as to attend the election-meeting of our club, and then stay over Sunday, and Monday, and Tuesday, which is the last day of my holidays. How will that do? I am glad to hear your book is going through the press, and you will be nearer your proof-sheets here. I have pencils of all colors for correcting in all moods of mind,—red for sanguine moments when one thinks there is some use in writing at all, blue for a modest depression, and black for times when one is satisfied there is no longer an intelligent public nor one reader of taste left in the world. You shall have a room to yourself,

nearly as high and quite as easy of access as your tower, and I pledge myself that my crows, cat-birds, orioles, chimbley-swallows, and squirrels shall present you with the freedom of their city in a hollow walnut, so soon as you arrive.

Now will you write and say when you are to be expected? I assure you I have looked forward to your coming as one of my chiefest spring pleasures, ranking it with the advent of the birds.

Always cordially yours,

J. R. LOWELL.

"I have smoked a cigar over your kind invitation," wrote Hawthorne, in answer, "and mean to come. There is a little bit of business weighing upon me (literary business of course, an article for the magazine and for my volume, which I ought to have begun and finished long ago), but I hope to smash it in a day or two, and will meet you at the club on Saturday. I shall have very great pleasure in the visit."

But, at the last moment, he was obliged to give it up, being detained by a cold. And there seemed indeed a fatality which interfered with all attempts to thwart the coming evil. At the beginning of April, 1864, completely broken down, yet without apparent cause, he set out southward with Mr. William Ticknor. On arriving at Philadelphia he began to improve; but Mr. Ticknor's sudden death overthrew the little he had gained, and caused him to sink still more. It is not my purpose here to dwell upon the sad and unbeautiful details of a last illness: these things would make but a harsh closing chord in the strain of meditation on Hawthorne's life which we have been following out,—a life so beautiful and noble that to surround its ending with the remembrance of mere mortal ailment has in it something of coarseness. But it was needful to show in what way this great spirit bowed beneath the weight of its own sympathy with a national woe. Even when Dr. Holmes saw him in Boston, though "his aspect, medically considered, was very unfavorable," and though "he spoke as if his work were done, and he should write no more," still "there was no failing noticeable in his conversational powers." "There was nothing in Mr. Hawthorne's aspect," wrote Dr. Holmes, "that gave warning of so sudden an end as that which startled us all." He passed on into the shadow as if of his own will; feeling that his country lay in ruins, that the human lot carried with it more hate and horror and sorrow than he could longer bear to look at; welcoming—except as those dear to him were concerned—the prospect of that death which he alone knew to be so near. It was on the 19th of May, 1864, that the news came from Plymouth, in New Hampshire,—whither he had gone with Ex-President Pierce,—that Hawthorne was dead. Afterward, it was recalled with a kind of awe that through many years of his life Hawthorne had been in the habit, when trying a pen or idly scribbling at any time, of writing the number sixty-four; as if the foreknowledge of his death, which he showed in the final days, had already begun to manifest itself in this indirect way long before. Indeed, he had himself felt that the number was connected with his life in some fatal way. Five days later he was carried to Sleepy Hollow, the beautiful cemetery where he had been wont to walk among the pines, where once when living at the Manse he had lain upon the grass talking to Margaret Fuller, when Mr. Emerson came upon them, and smiled, and said the Muses were in the woods that day.

A simple stone, with the single word "Hawthorne" cut upon it, was placed above him. He had wished that there should be no monument. He liked Wordsworth's grave at Grasmere, and had written, "It is pleasant to think and know that he did not care for a stately monument." Longfellow and Lowell and Holmes, Emerson and Louis Agassiz, and his friends Pierce, and Hillard, with Ellery Channing, and other famous men, assembled on that peaceful morning to take their places in the funeral train. Some who had not known him in life came long distances to see him, now, and ever afterward bore about with them the memory of his aspect, strong and beautiful, in his last repose. The orchards were blossoming; the roadside-banks were blue with violets, and the lilies of the valley, which were Hawthorne's favorites among the flowers, had come forth in quiet companies, to look their last on his face, so white and quiet too. So, while the batteries that had murdered him roared sullenly in the distant South, the rites of burial were fulfilled over the dead poet. Like a clear voice beside the grave, as we look back and listen, Longfellow's simple, penetrating chant returns upon the ear.

In vain to sum up, here, the loss unspeakable suffered in Hawthorne's death; and no less vain the attempt to fix in a few words the incalculable gain his life has left with us. When one remembers the power that was unexhausted in him still, one is ready to impeach cold Time and Fate for their treason to the fair prospect that lay before us all, in the continuance of his career. We look upon these few great works, that may be numbered on the fingers of a hand, and wonder what good end was served by the silent shutting of those rich pages that had just begun to open. We remember the tardy recognition that kept the fountain of his spirit so long half concealed, and the necessities that forced him to give ten of his best years to the sterile industry of official duties. But there are great compensations. Without the youthful period of hopes deferred, Hawthorne, as we have seen, would not have been the

unique force, the high, untrammelled thinker that he became through that fortunate isolation; wanting the uncongenial contact of his terms at Boston and Salem and Liverpool, it may be that he could not have developed his genius with such balance of strength as it now shows; and, finally, without the return to his native land, the national fibre in him would have missed its crowning grace of conscientiousness. He might in that case have written more books, but the very loss of these, implying as it does his pure love of country, is an acquisition much more positively valuable.

There is a fitness, too, in the abrupt breaking off of his activity, in so far as it gives emphasis to that incompleteness of any verbal statement of truth, which he was continually insisting upon with his readers.

Hawthorne, it is true, expanded so constantly, that however many works he might have produced, it seems unlikely that any one of them would have failed to record some large movement in his growth; and therefore it is perhaps to be regretted that his life could not have been made to solely serve his genius, so that we might have had the whole sweep of his imagination clearly exposed. As it is, he has not given us a large variety of characters; and Hester, Zenobia, and Miriam bear a certain general likeness one to another. Phoebe, however, is quite at the opposite pole of womanhood; Hilda is as unlike any of them as it is easy to conceive of her being; and Priscilla, again, is a feminine nature of unique calibre, as weird but not so warm as Goethe's Mignon, and at the same time a distinctly American type, in her nervous yet captivating fragility. In Priscilla and Phoebe are embodied two widely opposed classes of New England women. The male characters, with the exception of Donatello and Hollingsworth, are not so remarkable as the feminine ones: Coverdale and Kenyon come very close together, both being artistic and both reflectors for the persons that surround them; and Dimmesdale is to some extent the same character,—with the artistic escape closed upon his passions, so that they turn within and ravage his heart,—arrested and altered by Puritan influences. Chillingworth is perhaps too devilish a shape of revenge to be discussed as a human individual. Septimius, again, is distinct; and the characterization of Westervelt, in "Blithedale," slight as it is, is very stimulating. Perhaps, after all, what leads us to pronounce upon the whole fictitious company a stricture of homogeneity is the fact that the author, though presenting us each time with a set of persons sufficiently separate from his previous ones, does not emphasize their differences with the same amount of external description that we habitually depend upon from a novelist. The similarity is more in the author's mode of presentation than in the creations themselves.

This monotone in which all the personages of his dramas share is nearly related with some special distinctions of his genius. He is so fastidious in his desire for perfection, that he can scarcely permit his actors to speak loosely or ungrammatically: though retaining their essential individuality, they are endowed with the author's own delightful power of expression. This outward phasis of his work separates it at once from that of the simple novelist, and leads us to consider the special applicability to it of the term "romance." He had not the realistic tendency, as we usually understand that, but he possessed the power to create a new species of fiction. For the kind of romance that he has left us differs from all compositions previously so called. It is not romance in the sense of D'Urfé's or Scudéri's; it is very far from coming within the scope of Fielding's "romances"; and it is entirely unconnected with the tales of the German Romantic school. It is not the romance of sentiment; nor that of incident, adventure, and character viewed under a worldly coloring: it has not the mystic and melodramatic bent belonging to Tieck and Novalis and Fouqué. There are two things which radically isolate it from all these. The first is its quality of revived belief. Hawthorne, as has been urged already, is a great believer, a man who has faith; his belief goes out toward what is most beautiful, and this he finds only in moral truth. With him, poetry and moral insight are sacredly and indivisibly wedded, and their progeny is perfect beauty. This unsparingly conscientious pursuit of the highest truth, this metaphysical instinct, found in conjunction with a varied and tender appreciation of all forms of human or other life, is what makes him so decidedly the representative of a wholly new order of novelists. Belief, however, is, not what he has usually been credited with, so much as incredulity. But the appearance of doubt is superficial, and arises from his fondness for illuminating fine but only half-perceptible traces of truth with the torch of superstition. Speaking of the supernatural, he says in his English journal: "It is remarkable that Scott should have felt interested in such subjects, being such a worldly and earthly man as he was; but then, indeed, almost all forms of popular superstition do clothe the ethereal with earthly attributes, and so make it grossly perceptible." This observation has a still greater value when applied to Hawthorne himself. And out of this questioning belief and transmutation of superstition into truth—for such is more exactly his method—proceeds also that quality of value and rarity and awe-enriched significance, with which he irradiates real life until it is sublimed to a delicate cloud-image of the eternal verities.

If these things are limitations, they are also foundations of a vast originality. Every greatness must have an outline. So that, although he is removed from the list of novelists proper, although his spiritual inspiration scares away a large class of sympathies, and although his strictly New England atmosphere

seems to chill and restrain his dramatic fervor, sometimes to his disadvantage, these facts, on the other hand, are so many trenches dug around him, fortifying his fair eminence. Isolation and a certain degree of limitation, in some such sense as this, belong peculiarly to American originality. But Hawthorne is the embodiment of the youth of this country; and though he will doubtless furnish inspiration to a long line of poets and novelists, it must be hoped that they, likewise, will stand for other phases of its development, to be illustrated in other ways. No tribute to Hawthorne is less in accord with the biddings of his genius than that which would merely make a school of followers.

It is too early to say what position Hawthorne will take in the literature of the world; but as his influence gains the ascendant in America, by prompting new and *un*-Hawthornesque originalities, it is likely also that it will be made manifest in England, according to some unspecifiable ratio. Not that any period is to be distinctly colored by the peculiar dye in which his own pages are dipped; but the renewed tradition of a highly organized yet simple style, and still more the masculine tenderness and delicacy of thought and the fine adjustment of aesthetic and ethical obligations, the omnipresent truthfulness which he carries with him, may be expected to become a constituent part of very many minds widely opposed among themselves. I believe there is no fictionist who penetrates so far into individual consciences as Hawthorne; that many persons will be found who derive a profoundly religious aid from his unobtrusive but commanding sympathy. In the same way, his sway over the literary mind is destined to be one of no secondary degree. "Deeds are the offspring of words," says Heine; "Goethe's pretty words are childless." Not so with Hawthorne's. Hawthorne's repose is the acme of motion; and though turning on an axis of conservatism, the radicalism of his mind is irresistible; he is one of the most powerful because most unsuspected revolutionists of the world. Therefore, not only is he an incalculable factor in private character, but in addition his unnoticed leverage for the thought of the age is prodigious. These great abilities, subsisting with a temper so modest and unaffected, and never unhumanized by the abstract enthusiasm for art, place him on a plane between Shakespere and Goethe. With the universality of the first only just budding within his mind, he has not so clear a response to all the varying tones of lusty human life, and the individuality in his utterance amounts, at particular instants, to constraint. With less erudition than Goethe, but also less of the freezing pride of art, he is infinitely more humane, sympathetic, holy. His creations are statuesquely moulded like Goethe's, but they have the same quick music of heart-throbs that Shakespere's have. Hawthorne is at the same moment ancient and modern, plastic and picturesque. Another generation will see more of him than we do; different interpreters will reveal other sides. As a powerful blow suddenly descending may leave the surface it touches unmarked, and stamp its impress on the substance beneath, so his presence will more distinctly appear among those farther removed from him than we. A single mind may concentrate your vision upon him in a particular way; but the covers of any book must perforce shut out something of the whole, as the trees in a vista narrow the landscape.

Look well at these leaves I lay before you; but having read them throw the volume away, and contemplate the man himself.

APPENDIX I.

In May, 1870, an article was published in the "Portland Transcript," giving some of the facts connected with Hawthorne's sojourn in Maine, as a boy. This called out a letter from Alexandria, Va., signed "W. S.," and purporting to come from a person who had lived at Raymond, in boyhood, and had been a companion of Hawthorne's. He gave some little reminiscences of that time, recalling the fact that Hawthorne had read him some poetry founded on the Tarbox disaster, already mentioned. [Footnote: See *ante*, p. 89.] Himself he described as having gone to sea at twenty, and having been a wanderer ever since. In. speaking of the date of the poetry, "We could not have been more than ten years old," he said. This, of course, is a mistake, the accident having happened in 1819, when Hawthorne was fourteen. And it is tolerably certain that he did not even visit Raymond until he was twelve.

The letter called out some reminiscences from Mr. Robinson Cook, of Bolster's Mills, in Maine, who had also known Hawthorne as a boy; some poetry on the Tarbox tragedy was also found, and printed, which afterward proved to have been written by another person; and one or two other letters were published, not especially relevant to Hawthorne, but concerning the Tarbox affair. After this, "W. S." wrote again from Alexandria (November 23, 1870), revealing the fact that he had come into possession, several years before, of the manuscript book from which he afterward sent extracts. The book, he explained, was found by a man named Small, who had assisted in moving a lot of furniture, among it a "large mahogany bookcase" full of old books, from the old Manning House. This was several years

before the civil war, and "W. S." met Small in the army, in Virginia. He reported that the book —"originally a bound blank one not ruled," and "gnawed by mice or eaten by moths on the edges"—contained about two hundred and fifty pages, and was written throughout, "the first part in a boyish hand though legibly, and showing in its progress a marked improvement in penmanship." The passages reprinted in the present volume were sent by him, over the signature "W. Sims," to the "Transcript," and published at different dates (February 11, 1871; April 22, 1871). Their appearance called out various communications, all tending to establish their genuineness; but, beyond the identification of localities and persons, and the approximate establishing of dates, no decisive proof was forthcoming. Sims himself, however, was recalled by former residents near Raymond; and there seemed at least much inferential proof in favor of the notes. A long silence ensued upon the printing of the second portion; and at the end of 1871 it was made known that Sims had died at Pensacola, Florida. The third and last supposed extract from Hawthorne's note-book was sent from Virginia again, in 1873 (published June 21 of that year), by a person professing to have charge of Sims's papers. This person was written to by the editors of the "Transcript," but no reply has ever been received. A relative of Hawthorne in Salem also wrote to the Pensacola journal in which Sims's death was announced, making inquiry as to its knowledge of him and as to the source of the mortuary notice. No reply was ever received from this quarter, either. Sims, it is said, had been in the secret service under Colonel Baker, of dreaded fame in war-days; and it may be that, having enemies, he feared the notoriety to which his contributions to journalism might expose him, and decided to die,—at least so far as printer's ink could kill him. All these circumstances are unfortunate, because they make the solution of doubts concerning the early notes quite impossible, for the present.

The fabrication of the journal by a person possessed of some literary skill and familiar with the localities mentioned, at dates so long ago as 1816 to 1819, might not be an impossible feat, but it is an extremely improbable one. It is not likely that an ordinary impostor would hit upon the sort of incident selected for mention in these extracts. Even if he drew upon circumstances of his own boyhood, transferring them to Hawthorne's, he must possess a singularly clear memory, to recall matters of this sort; and to invent them would require a nice imaginative faculty. One of the first passages, touching the "son of old Mrs. Shane" and the "son of the Widow Hawthorne," is of a sort to entirely evade the mind of an impostor. The whole method of observation, too, seems very characteristic. If the portion descriptive of a raft and of the manners of the lumbermen be compared with certain memoranda in the "American Note-Books" (July 13 and 15, 1837), derived from somewhat similar scenes, a general resemblance in the way of seizing characteristics will be observed. Of course, if the early notes are fabrications, it may be that the author of them drew carefully after passages of the maturer journal, and this among others. But the resemblance is crossed by a greater youthfulness in the early notes, it seems to me, which it would be hard to produce artificially. The cool and collected style of the early journal is not improbable in a boy like Hawthorne, who had read many books and lived much in the companionship of older persons. Indeed, it is very much like the style of "The Spectator" of 1820. A noticeable coincidence is, that the pedler, Dominicus Jordan, should be mentioned in both the journal and "The Spectator." The circumstance that the dates should all have been said to be missing from the manuscript book is suspicious. Yet the last extract has the month and year appended, August, 1819. What is more important is, that the date of the initial inscription is given as 1816; and at the time when this was announced it had not been ascertained even by Hawthorne's own family and relatives that he had been at Raymond so early. But since the publications in the "Transcript," some letters have come to light of which I have made use; and one of these, bearing date July 21, 1818, to which I have alluded in another connection, speaks of Raymond from actual recollection. "Does the Pond look the same as when I was there? It is almost as pleasant at Nahant as at Raymond. I thought there was no place that I should say so much of." The furnisher of the notes, if he was disingenuous, might indeed have remembered that Hawthorne was in Maine about 1816; he may also have relied on a statement in the "Transcript's" editorial, to the effect that Hawthorne was taken to Raymond in 1814. In that editorial, it is also observed: "Hawthorne was then a lad of ten years." I have already said that Sims refers to the period of the verses on the Tarboxes as being a time when he and Hawthorne were "not more than ten years old." This, at first, would seem to suggest that he was relying still further upon the editorial. But if he had been taking the editorial statement as a basis for fabrication, it is not likely that he would have failed to ascertain exactly the date of the freezing of Mr. and Mrs. Tarbox, which was 1819. The careless way in which he alludes to this may have been the inadvertence of an impostor trying to make his account agree with one already published; but it is more likely that the sender of the notes did not remember the precise year in which the accident occurred, and was confused by the statement of the "Transcript." An impostor must have taken more pains, one would think. It must also be noticed that "the Widow _Haw_thorne" is spoken of in the notes. Sims, however, in his preliminary letter, refers to the fact that "the universal pronunciation of the name in Raymond was Hathorn,—the first syllable exactly as the word 'hearth' was pronounced at that time"; and the explanation of the spelling in the notes doubtless is that Sims, or whoever transcribed the passage, changed it as being out of keeping with the now historic form of the name. It is possible that further changes were also made by the transcriber; and a theory which has some color is, that the object in keeping the original manuscript

out of the way may have been, to make it available for expansions and embellishments, using the actual record as a nucleus.

II.

The theme referred to in Chapter III. is given in full below. After the earlier portion of the present essay had been stereotyped, an article by Professor G. T. Packard, on Bowdoin College, was published in "Scribner's Monthly," which contains this mention of Hawthorne:—

"The author's college life was prophetic of the after years, when he so dwelt apart from the mass of men, and yet stirred so deeply the world's sensibilities and delighted its fancy. His themes were written in the sustained, finished style that gives to his mature productions an inimitable charm. The late Professor Newman, his instructor in rhetoric, was so impressed with Hawthorne's powers as a writer, that he not infrequently summoned the family circle to share in the enjoyment of reading his compositions. The recollection is very distinct of Hawthorne's reluctant step and averted look, when he presented himself at the Professor's study, and with girlish diffidence submitted a composition which no man in his class could equal.... When the class was graduated, Hawthorne could not be persuaded to join them in having their profiles cut in paper, the only class picture of the time; nor did he take part in the Commencement exercises. His classmates understood that he intended to be a writer of romance, but none anticipated his remarkable development and enduring fame. It seems strange that among his admirers no one has offered him a fitting tribute by founding the Hawthorne Professorship of English Literature in the college where, under the tutelage of the accomplished and appreciative Professor Newman, he was stimulated to cultivate his native gift."

DE PATRIS CONSCRIPTIS ROMANORUM.

Senatum Romanorum jam primum institutum, simplicem siniul atquo praestantissimuni fuisse sentiant onmes. Imperium fint, quod populo aec avaritis nee luxuria vitiato optimum videretar. Lecti fuerunt senatores, non qui ambitiose potestatem eupiere, sesl qui senectute, qui sapientia, qui virtute bellica vel privata insigues, in republica plurimam pollebant. Hominum consiliis virtute tam singulari praeditorum paruit populus libenter atque senatores at patres civilius venerati. Studium illis paternum adhibuere. Nulla unquam respublica, quam turn Romana, nec sanctior nec beatior t'uit; iis temporibus etenim solum in publicum commodum principes administrabant; fidemque principibus populi habetant. Sed virtute prisca reipublierc perdita, inimicitus mutuis patres plebesque flagrare coeperunt, alienaque prosequi. Senatus in populum tyrannice saeviit, atque hostem se monstravit potiue quam custodem reipubliere. Concitatur vulgus studio libertatis repetendre, alque per multa secula patrum plebisque contentiones historia Romana memorat; patribus pristinam auctoriratem servare conatis, liccentiaque plebis omnia jura spernante. Hoc modo usque ad Panieum bellum, res se habebant. Tun pericula externa discordiam domesticam superabant, reipublicaeque studium priscam patribus sapientiam, priscam populis reverentiam redundit. Hae aetate omnibus virtutibus cnituit Roma. Senatus, jure omnium consensu facto, opes suas prope ad inopiam plebis aequavit; patriaeque solum amore gloria quaesita, pecunia niluii habita est. Sed quuam Carthaginem reformidavit non diutius Roma, rediit respublica ad vitia pristina. Patres luxuria solum populis praestiterunt, et vestigia eorum populi secuti sunt. Senatus auctoritatem, ex illo ipso tempore, annus unusquisque diminuit, donce in aerate Angasti interitus nobilium humiliumque delectus omnino fere dignitatem conficerunt. Augustus equidem antiquam magnificentiam patribus reddidit, sed fulgor tantum liut sine fervore. Nunquam in republica senatoribus potestates recuperatae. Postremum species etiam amissa est.

HATHORNE.

THE ROMAN SENATE.

Every one perceives that the Roman Senate, as it was originally constituted, was a no less simple than illustrious body. It was a sovereignty which appeared most desirable to a populace vitiated neither by avarice nor luxury. The senators were chosen, not from those who were ambitious of power, but those who wielded the largest influence in the Republic through wisdom and warlike valor or private virtue. The citizens bowed willingly to the counsels of men endowed with such singular worth, and venerated the senators as fathers. The latter exercised a paternal care. No republic ever was holier or more blessed than that of Rome at this time; for in those days the rulers administered for the public

convenience alone, and the people had faith in their rulers. But, the pristine virtue of the Republic lost, the fathers and the commonalty began to blaze forth with mutual hostilities, and to seek after the possessions of others. The Senate vented its wrath savagely upon the people, and showed itself rather the enemy than the guardian of the Republic. The multitude was aroused by the desire of recovering liberty, and through a very long period Roman history recounts the contentions of the fathers and the commonalty; the fathers attempting to preserve their old authority, and the license of the commons scorning every law. Affairs remained in this condition until the Punic War. Then foreign perils prevailed over domestic discord, and love of the Republic restored to the fathers their early wisdom, to the people their reverence. At this period, Rome shone with every virtue. The Senate, through the rightfully obtained consent of all parties, nearly equalized its power with the powerlessness of the commonalty; and glory being sought solely through love of the fatherland, wealth was regarded as of no account. But when Rome no longer dreaded Carthage, the commonwealth returned to its former vices. The fathers were superior to the populace only in luxury, and the populace followed in their footsteps. From that very time, every year diminished the authority of the Senate, until in the age of Augustus the death of the nobles and the selection of insignificant men almost wholly destroyed its dignity. Augustus, to be sure, restored to the fathers their ancient magnificence, but, great as was the fire (so to speak), it was without real heat. Never was the power of the senators recovered. At last even the appearance of it vanished.

III.

The lists of books referred to in Chapter IV. were recorded by different hands, or in different ways at various dates, so that they have not been made out quite satisfactorily. Some of the authors named below were taken out a great many times, but the number of the volume is given in only a few cases. It would seem, for example, that Voltaire's complete works were examined by Hawthorne, if we judge by his frequent application for some part of them, and the considerable number of volumes actually mentioned. In this and in other cases, the same volume is sometimes called for more than once. To make the matter clearer here, I have reduced the entries to a simple list of the authors read, without attempting to show how often a particular one was taken up. Few or none of them were read consecutively, and the magazines placed together at the end of my list were taken out at short intervals throughout the different years.

1830.

Oeuvres de Voltaire.
Mémoire de Litérature.
Liancourt.
Oeuvres de Rousseau.
Mass. Historical Collections.
Trial and Triumph of Faith.
Oeuvres de Pascal.
Varenius' Geography.
Mickle's Lucian.
Dictionnaire des Sciences.
Pamela. (Vols. I., II.)
Life of Baxter.
Tournefort's Voyage.
Swift's Works.
Hitt on Fruit-Trees.
Bibliotheca Americana.
Ames's Antiquities.
Hamilton's Works.
Gifford's Juvenal.
Allen's Biographical Dictionary.
Fénélon.
Académie Royale des Inscriptions.
Mather's Apology.
Vertol's History of Sweden.
Taylor's Sermons.
Life of Luckington.

L'an 2440.
Montague's Letters.
English Botany. (3 vols.)
Gay's Poems.
Inchbald's Theatre.
Sowerby's English Botany.
Crabbe's Borough.
Crabbe's Bibliographical Dictionary.
Collection of Voyages (Hakluyt's?).
Lives of the Admirals.
British Zoölogy.

1831

Los Eruditos.
Connoisseur.
Camilla.
Gifford's Persius.
Bartram's Travels.
Humphrey's Works.
Voltaire.
Pennant's British Zoology.
Mandeville's Travels.
Rehearsal Transposed.
Gay's Poems.
Pompey the Little.
Shaw's General Zoology.
Philip's Poems.
Sowerby's English Botany.
Racine.
Corneille.
Wilkinson's Memoirs and Atlas.
History of the Shakers.
The Confessional.
Calamy's Life of Baxter.
Académie Royale des Inscripts.
Essais de Montaigne. (Vols. I., II., III., IV.)
Cadell's Journey through Italy and Carniola.
Cobbet's Rule in France.
Temple's Works. (Vols. I., II., III.)
Asiatic Researches.
Cochran's Tour in Siberia.
Chardin's Travels.
Brandt's History of the Reformation.
Russell's Natural History.
Aleppo. (Vol. I.)
Answer to the Fable of the Bees.
Hanway's Travels.
Memoirs of C. J. Fox.
Bayle's Critical Dictionary. (Vols. II., V., VI.)
State Trials. (Vols. I., II., IV., V., VI.)
Tales of a Traveller.
Dictionnaire des Sciences. (Vol. XVII.)
Bacon's Works. (Vol. II.)
Gordon's Tacitus.
Colquhoun on the Police.
Cheyne on Health.
Pope's Homer. (Vol I.)
Letters: De Maintenon. (Vol. IX.)
Reichard's Germany.
Oeuvres de Rousseau.
Notes on the West Indies by Prichard.
Crishull's Travels in Turkey.

1832-33.

Clarendon's Tracts.
History of England.
Prose Works of Walter Scott. (Vols. III., V., VI.)
Feltham's Resolves.
Roscoe's Sovereigns.
Histoire de l'Académie.
South America.
Savages of New Zealand.
Stackhouse's History of the Bible.
Dryden's Poems.
Tucker's Light of Nature.
History of South Carolina.
Poinsett's Notes on Mexico.
Brace's Travels.
Browne's Jamaica.
Collins's New South Wales.
Broughton's Dictionary.
Seminole War.
Shaw's Zoology.
Reverie.
Gifford's Pitt.
Curiosities of Literature.
Massinger.
Literary Recollections.
Coleridge's Aids to Reflection.
Coleridge, Shelley, and Keats.
Paris and Fonblanque.
Elia.
Gardens and Menagerie.
Medical Jurisprudence.
History of Paris.
Scott's Prose Works.
Kittell's Specimens American Poetry.
Lister's Journey.
Annals of Salem.
Library of Old English Prose Writers.
Memoirs of Canning.
Miscellaneous Works of Scott.
Jefferson's Writings.
History of Andover.
Good's Book of Nature.
History of Haverhill.
Madden's Travels. (Vols. I., II.)
Riedesel's Memoirs.
Boston Newspapers (1736, 1739, 1754, 1762, 1771, 1783).
Drake's Mornings in Spring.
Drake's Evenings in Autumn.
Anecdotes of Bowyer.
Gouverneur Morris. (Vols. I., II.)
Bryan Walton's Memoirs.
Moses Mendelssohn.
Collingwood.
Felt's Annals.
Strutt's Sports and Pastimes.
Schiller.
Mrs. Jameson. (2 vols.)
Thatcher's Medical Biography.
History of Plymouth.
Crabbe's Universal Dictionary.
Lewis's History of Lynn.
A Year in Spain, by a Young American. (Vols. I., II.)
Croker's Boswell.
Deane's History of Scituate.
Diplomatic Correspondence. (Vols. I., II.)

Temple's Travels. (Vol. II.)
Fuller's Holy State.
Remarkables of Increase Mather.
History of Portland. (Vols. I., II.)
Practical Tourist.
Elements of Technology.
Heber's Life, by Taylor.
Ductor Substantium.
Heber's Travels in India. (Vols. I., II.)
Byron's Works.
Travels in Brazil and Buenos Ayres.
History of Spain.
Franklin's Works.
Mental Cultivation.

1835.

Life of Gouverneur Morris.
Hamilton's Progress of Society.
Twiner's Sacred History.
Encyclopaedia.
Life of Arthur Lee.
Life of Sir Humphry Davy.
Coleridge, Shelley, and Keats.
Prior's Poems. (Vol. I.)
Jefferson's Writings. (Vols. I., II.)
Memoirs of the Tower of London.
History of King's Chapel.
Memoirs of Dr. Burney.
Hone's Every Day Book. (Vols. I, II., III.)
Life of Livingstone.

1836.

Life of Hamilton. (Vol. I.)
Debates in Parliament. (Vol. I.)
Curiosities of Literature (Vol. I.)
Combe on the Constitution of Man.
Babbage on Economy of Machinery.
Eulogies on Jefferson and Adams.
Hone's Every Day Book. (Vols. I., III.)
Dunlap's History of the Arts of Design. (Vols. I., II.)
Mende's Guide to Observation of Nature.
Cobbett's Cottage Economy.
Douglas's Summary. (Vol. I.)
Practical Tourist. (Vols. I., II.)
Dick on Improvement of Society.
Bush's Life of Mohammed.
Temple's Travels in Peru. (Vol. I.)
Gay's Poems.
Pliny's Natural History.
Coleridge's Table-Talk.
Letters from Constantinople. (Vols. I., II.)
Reynolds's Voyages.
Adventures on Columbia River, by Ross Cox.
Baine's History of Cotton Manufacture.
History of Nantucket.
Travels in South America.
Müller's Universal History.
Antar. A Bedoueen Romance.
Lives of the Philosophers. (Vols. I., II.)
Description of Trades.
Colman's Visit to England.
Ludolph's History of Ethiopia.
Griffin's Remains.

McCree's Life of Knox.
Walker's Sufferings of the Clergy.
Voyage de la mer du Sud an Nord.
Biographia Literaria.
The Stranger in America.
Raumer's England in 1835.
Random Recollections of the House of Lords.
The German Student.
Sparks's American Biography.
Brewster's Natural Magic.
Prior's Life of Goldsmith.
Sparks's Washington.
Walter Scott's Demonology and Witchcraft.
Scott's Life of Bonaparte. (3 vols.)

1837.

Washington's Writings.
Martineau's Miscellany.
Wraxall's Memoirs.
Bancroft's United States History.
Rush, on the Human Voice.
Drake's Indian Biography.
Wordsworth's Poetical Works.
Clarendon's History of the Rebellion.
Reliques of Ancient English Poetry.
Bayle's Historical Memoirs of Plymouth County.
Life of Jefferson, by Tucker.
Random Recollections of the House of Commons.
Specimens of American Poetry.

1838.

Life of Jefferson.
Brown's Novels.
Parr's Works.
Select Comedies.
Froissart's Ancient Chronology.
Byron's Works.
Plutarch's Lives.
London Encyclopedia of Architecture.
Gentleman's Magazine.
Monthly Magazine.
Monthly Review.
European Magazine.
Christian Examiner.
Edinburgh Magazine.
Annual Register.
Quarterly Review.
Southern Review.
Worcester's Magazine.
North American Review.
United States Service Journal.
Court Magazine.
Museum of Literature and Science.
Westminster Review.
London Monthly Magazine.
Eclectic Review.
Foreign Quarterly Review.
Blackwood's Magazine.
Metropolitan Magazine.
New England Magazine.
British Critic.
American Encyclopaedia.
Rees's Cyclopaedia.

Gifford's Juvenal.

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