
NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE
THE HOUSE OF THE SEVEN GABLES


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Contact: DigiCat@okpublishing.info

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THE lives of great men are written gradually. It often takes as long to construct a true biography as it took the person who is the subject of it to complete his career; and when the work is done, it is found to consist of many volumes, produced by a variety of authors. We receive views from different observers, and by putting them together are able to form our own estimate. What the man really was not even himself could know; much less can we. Hence all that we accomplish, in any case, is to approximate to the reality. While we flatter ourselves that we have imprinted on our minds an exact image of the individual, we actually secure nothing but a typical likeness. This likeness, however, is amplified and strengthened by successive efforts to paint a correct portrait. If the faces of people belonging to several generations of a family be photographed upon one plate, they combine to form a single distinct countenance, which shows a general resemblance to them all: in somewhat the same way, every sketch of a distinguished man helps to fix the lines of that typical semblance of him which is all that the world can hope to preserve.

This principle applies to the case of Hawthorne, notwithstanding that the details of his career are comparatively few, and must be marshalled in much the same way each time that it is attempted to review them. The veritable history of his life would be the history of his mental development, recording, like Wordsworth's "Prelude," the growth of a poet's mind; and on glancing back over it he too might have said, in Wordsworth's phrases:—

"Wisdom and spirit of the universe!

. . . . . .

By day or star-light thus from my first dawn
Of childhood didst thou intertwine for me
The passions that build up the human soul;
Not with the mean and vulgar works of man,
But with high objects, with enduring things—
With life and nature, purifying thus
The elements of feeling and of thought,
And sanctifying by such discipline
Both pain and fear, until we recognize
A grandeur in the beatings of the heart."

But a record of that kind, except where an autobiography exists, can be had only by indirect means. We must resort to tracing the outward facts of the life, and must try to infer the interior relations.

Nathaniel Hawthorne was born on the Fourth of July, 1804, at Salem, Massachusetts, in a house numbered twenty-one, Union Street. The house is still standing, although somewhat reduced in size and still more reduced in circumstances. The character of the neighborhood has declined very much since the period when Hawthorne involuntarily became a resident there. As the building stands to-day it makes the impression simply of an exceedingly plain, exceedingly old-fashioned, solid, comfortable abode, which in its prime must have been regarded as proof of a sufficient but modest prosperity on the part of the occupant. It is clapboarded, is two stories high, and has a gambrel roof, immediately beneath which is a large garret that doubtless served the boy-child well as a place for play and a stimulant for the sense of mystery. A single massive chimney, rising from the centre, emphasizes by its style the antiquity of the building, and has the air of holding it together. The cobble-stoned street in front is narrow, and although it runs from the house towards the water-side, where once an extensive commerce was carried on, and debouches not far from the Custom House where

Hawthorne in middle life found plenty of occupation as Surveyor, it is now silent and deserted.

He was the second of three children born to Nathaniel Hathorne, sea-captain, and Elizabeth Clarke Manning. The eldest was Elizabeth Manning Hathorne, who came into the world March 7, 1802; the last was Maria Louisa, born January 9, 1808, and lost in the steamer Henry Clay, which was burned on the Hudson River, July 27, 1852. Elizabeth survived all the members of the family, dying on the 1st of January, 1883, when almost eighty-one years old, at Montserrat, a hamlet in the township of Beverly, near Salem. In early manhood, certainly at about the time when he began to publish, the young Nathaniel changed the spelling of his surname to Hawthorne; an alteration also adopted by his sisters. This is believed to have been merely a return to a mode of spelling practised by the English progenitors of the line, although none of the American ancestors had sanctioned it.

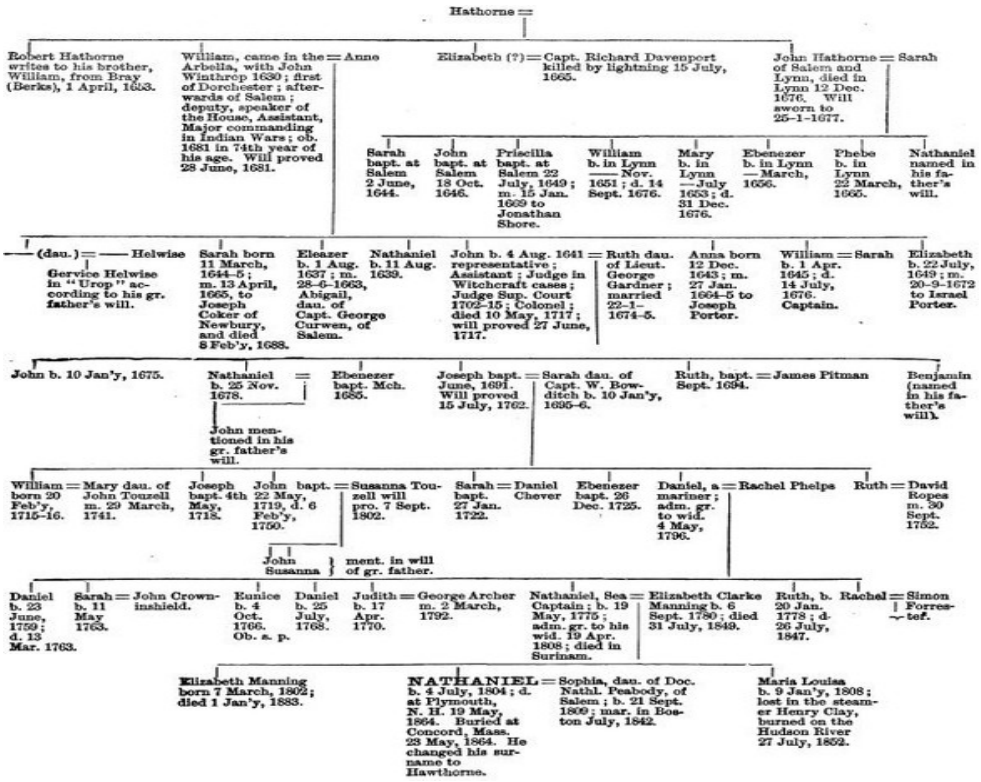
"The fact that he was born in Salem," writes Dr. George B. Loring, who knew him as a fellow-townsman, "may not amount to much to other people, but it amounted to a great deal to him. The sturdy and defiant spirit of his progenitor, who first landed on these shores, found a congenial abode among the people of Naumkeag, after having vainly endeavored to accommodate itself to the more imposing ecclesiasticism of Winthrop and his colony at Trimountain, and of Endicott at his new home. He was a stern Separatist ... but he was also a warrior, a politician, a legal adviser, a merchant, an orator with persuasive speech.... He had great powers of mind and body, and forms a conspicuous figure in that imposing and heroic group which stands around the cradle of New England. The generations of the family that followed took active and prominent part in the manly adventures which marked our entire colonial period.... It was among the family traditions gathered from the Indian wars, the tragic and awful spectre of the witchcraft delusion, the

wild life of the privateer, that he [Nathaniel] first saw the light."

The progenitor here referred to is William Hathorne, who came to America with John Winthrop in 1630. He had grants of land in Dorchester, but was considered so desirable a citizen that the town of Salem offered him other lands if he would settle there; which he did. It has not been ascertained from what place William Hathorne originally came. His elder brother Robert is known to have written to him in 1653 from the village of Bray, in Berkshire, England; but Nathaniel Hawthorne says in the "American Note-Books" that William was a younger brother of a family having for its seat a place called Wigcastle, in Wiltshire. He became, however, a person of note and of great usefulness in the community with which he cast his lot, in the new England. Hathorne Street in Salem perpetuates his name to-day, as Lathrop Street does that of Captain Thomas Lathrop, who commanded one of the companies of Essex militia, when John Hathorne was quartermaster of the forces; Thomas Lathrop, who marched his men to Deerfield in 1675, to protect frontier inhabitants from the Indians, and perished with his whole troop, in the massacre at Bloody Brook. The year after that, William Hathorne also took the field against the Indians, in Maine, and conducted a highly successful campaign there, under great hardships. He had been the captain of the first military organization in Salem, and rose to be major. He served for a number of years as deputy in the Great and General Court; was a tax-collector, a magistrate, and a bold advocate of colonial self-government. Although opposed to religious persecution, as a magistrate he inflicted cruelties on the Quakers, causing a woman on one occasion to be whipped through Salem, Boston, and Dedham. "The figure of that first ancestor," Hawthorne wrote in "The Custom House," "invested by family tradition with a dim and dusky grandeur, was present to my boyish imagination as far back as I can remember;"

so that it is by no means idle to reckon the history of his own family as among the important elements influencing the bent of his genius. John, the son of William, was likewise a public character; he, too, became a representative, a member of the Governor's council, a magistrate and a military officer, and saw active service as a soldier in the expedition which he headed against St. John, in 1696. But he is chiefly remembered as the judge who presided over the witchcraft trials and displayed great harshness and bigotry in his treatment of the prisoners. His descendants did not retain the position in public affairs which had been held by his father and himself; and for the most part they were sea-faring men. One of them, indeed, Daniel—the grandfather of Nathaniel—figured as a privateer captain in the Revolution, fighting one battle with a British troop-ship off the coast of Portugal, in which he was wounded; but the rest led the obscure though hardy and semi-romantic lives of maritime traders sailing to Africa, India, or Brazil. The privateersman had among his eight children three boys, one of whom, Nathaniel, was the father of the author, and died of fever in Surinam, in the spring of 1808, at the age of thirty-three.

HATHORNE FAMILY OF SALEM, MASSACHUSETTS.



The founders of the American branch were men of independent character, proud, active, energetic, capable of extreme sternness and endowed with passionate natures, no doubt. But they were men of affairs; they touched the world on the practical side, and, even during the decline of the family fortunes, continued to do so. All at once, in the personality of the younger Nathaniel Hawthorne, this energy which persisted in them reversed its direction, and found a new outlet through the channel of literary expression. We must suppose that he included among his own characteristics all those of his predecessors; their innate force, their endurance, their capacity for impassioned feeling; but in him these elements were fused by a finer prevailing quality, and held in firm balance by his rare temperament. This must be borne in mind, if we would understand the conjunction of opposite traits in him. It was one of his principles to guard against being run away with by his imagination, and to cultivate in practical affairs what he called "a morose common sense." There has been

attributed to him by some of those who knew him a certain good-humored gruffness, which might be explained as a heritage from the self-assertive vitality of his ancestors. While at Liverpool he wrote to one of his intimates in this country, and in doing so made reference to another acquaintance as a "wretch," to be away from whom made exile endurable. The letter passed into the hands of the acquaintance thus stigmatized long after Hawthorne was in his grave; but he declared himself to be in no wise disturbed by it, because he knew that the remark was not meant seriously, being only one of the occasional explosions of a "sea-dog" forcefulness, which had come into the writer's blood from his skipper forefathers. Hawthorne had, in fact, parted on friendly terms from the gentleman of whom he thus wrote. On the other hand we have the traits of sensitiveness, great delicacy, reserve and reverie, drawn from both his father and his mother. Captain Hathorne had been a man of fine presence, handsome, kindly, and rather silent; a reader, likewise; and his son's resemblance to him was so marked that a strange sailor stopped Hawthorne on the steps of the Salem Custom House, many years afterward, to ask him if he were not a son or nephew of the Captain, whom he had known.

His mother belonged to an excellent family, the Mannings, of English stock, settled in Salem and Ipswich ever since 1680, and still well represented in the former place. She, too, was a very reserved person; had a stately, aristocratic manner; is remembered as possessing a peculiar and striking beauty. Her education was of that simple, austere, but judicious and perfected kind that—without taking any very wide range—gave to New England women in the earlier part of this century a sedate freedom and a cultivated judgment, which all the assumed improvements in pedagogy and the general relations of men and women since then have hardly surpassed. She was a pious woman, a sincere and devoted wife, a mother whose

teachings could not fail to impress upon her children a bias towards the best things in life. Nathaniel's sister Elizabeth, although a recluse to the end of her days, and wholly unknown to the public, gave in her own case evidence indisputable of the fine influences which had moulded her own childhood and that of her brother. She showed a quiet, unspoiled, and ardent love of Nature, and was to the last not only an assiduous reader of books but also a very discriminating one. The range of her reading was very wide, but she never made any more display of it than Hawthorne did of his. An intuitive judgment of character was hers, which was really startling at times: merely from the perusal of a book or the inspection of a portrait, she would arrive at accurate estimates of character which revealed a power of facile and comprehensive insight; and her letters, even in old age, flowed spontaneously into utterance of the same finished kind that distinguished Nathaniel Hawthorne's epistolary style. How fresh and various, too, was her interest in the affairs of the world! For many years she had not gone farther from her secluded abode in a farm-house at Montserrat, than to Beverly or Salem; yet I remember that, only six months before her death, she wrote a letter to her niece, a large part of which was devoted to the campaign of the English in Egypt, then progressing: with a lively and clear comprehension she discussed the difficulties of the situation, and expressed the utmost concern for the success of the English army, at the same time that she laughed at herself for displaying, as an old woman, so much anxiety about the matter. Now, a mother who could bring up her daughter in such a way as to make all this possible and natural, must be given much credit for her share in developing an illustrious son. Let us not forget that it was to his mother that Goethe owed in good measure the foundation of his greatness. Mrs. Hathorne had large, very luminous gray eyes, which were reproduced in her son's; so that, on both sides, his parentage entitled him to the

impressive personal appearance which distinguished him. In mature life he became somewhat estranged from her, but their mutual love was presumably suspended only for a time, and he was with her at her death, in 1849. She lived long enough to see him famous as the author of "Twice-Told Tales"; but "The Scarlet Letter" had not been written when she died.

She, as well as her husband, was one of a family of eight brothers and sisters; these were the children of Richard Manning. Two of the brothers, Richard and Robert, were living in Salem when she was left a widow; Robert being eminent in New England at that time as a horticulturist. She was without resources, other than her husband's earnings, and Robert undertook to provide for her. Accordingly, she removed with her young family to the Manning homestead on Herbert Street, the next street east of Union Street, where Nathaniel was born. This homestead stood upon a piece of land running through to Union Street, and adjoining the garden attached to Hawthorne's birthplace. At that time Dr. Nathaniel Peabody, a physician, occupied a house in a brick block on the opposite side of Union Street; and there in 1809, September 21st, was born his daughter, Sophia A. Peabody, who afterwards became Hawthorne's wife. Her birthplace, therefore, was but a few rods distant from that of her future husband. Sophia Peabody's eldest sister, Mary, who married Horace Mann, noted as an educator and an abolitionist, remembers the child Nathaniel, who was then about five years old. He used to make his appearance in the garden of the Herbert Street mansion, running and dancing about there at play, a vivacious, golden-haired boy. The next oldest sister, who was the first of this family to make the acquaintance of the young author some thirty years later on, was Miss Elizabeth P. Peabody, who has taken an important part in developing the Kindergarten in America. There were plenty of books in the Manning house, and Nathaniel very soon got at them. Among the authors whom

he earliest came to know were Shakespeare, Milton, Pope, Thomson, and Rousseau. The "Castle of Indolence" was one of his favorite volumes. Subsequently, he read the whole of the "Newgate Calendar," and became intensely absorbed in Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress," which undoubtedly left very deep impressions upon him, traceable in the various allusions to it scattered through his works. He also made himself familiar with Spenser's "Faërie Queen," Froissart's "Chronicles," and Clarendon's "History of the Rebellion."

"Being a healthy boy, with strong out-of-door instincts planted in him by inheritance from his sea-faring 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 the foot is no better, and that a new doctor is to be sent for. 'Maybe,' 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.'... 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, ... came to hear him his lessons at home. The good pedagogue does not figure after this in Hawthorne's 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 socks for the cat who reigned in the household at the time. When tired of reading, he constructed houses of books for the same feline pet, building walls for her to leap, and perhaps erecting triumphal arches for her to pass under."[1]

The lexicographer, Dr. Worcester, was then living at Salem in charge of a school, which he kept for a few years; and it was with him that Hawthorne was carrying on his primary studies. He also went to dancing-school, was fond of fishing as well as of taking long walks, and doubtless engaged in the sundry occupations and sports, neither more nor less extraordinary than these, common to lads of his age. He already displayed a tendency towards dry humor. As he brought home from school frequent reports of having had a bout at fisticuffs with another pupil named John Knights, his sister Elizabeth asked him: "Why do you fight with John Knights so often?" "I can't help it," he answered: "John Knights is a boy of very quarrelsome disposition."

But all this time an interior growth, of which we can have no direct account, was proceeding in his mind. The loss of the father whom he had had so little chance to see and know and be fondled by, no doubt produced a profound effect upon him. While still a very young child he would rouse himself from long broodings, to exclaim with an impressive shaking of the head: "There, mother! I is going away to sea some time; and I'll never come back again!" The thought of that absent one, whose barque had glided out of Salem harbor bound upon a terrestrial voyage, but had carried him softly away to the unseen world, must have been incessantly with the boy; and it would naturally melt into what he heard of the strange, shadowy history of his ancestors, and mix itself with the ever-present hush of settled grief in his mother's dwelling, and blend with his unconscious observations of the old town in which he lived.

Salem then was much younger in time, but much older to the eye, than it is now. In "Alice Doane's Appeal" he has sketched a rapid bird's-eye view of it as it appeared to him when he was a young man. Describing his approach with his sisters to Witch Hill, he says: "We ... began to ascend a hill which at a distance, by its dark slope and the even line of its summit, resembled a green rampart along the road; ... but, strange to tell, though the whole slope and summit were of a peculiarly deep green, scarce a blade of grass was visible from the base upward. This deceitful verdure was occasioned by a plentiful crop of 'wood-wax,' which wears the same dark and gloomy green throughout the summer, except at one short period, when it puts forth a profusion of yellow blossoms. At that season, to a distant spectator the hill appears absolutely overlaid with gold, or covered with a glory of sunshine even under a clouded sky." This wood-wax, it may be said, is a weed which grows nowhere but in Essex County, and, having been native in England, was undoubtedly brought over by the Pilgrims. He goes on: "There are few such prospects of town and village, woodland and cultivated field, steeples and country-seats, as we beheld from this unhappy spot.... Before us lay our native town, extending from the foot of the hill to the harbor, level as a chess-board, embraced by two arms of the sea, and filling the whole peninsula with a close assemblage of wooden roofs, overtopped by many a spire and intermixed with frequent heaps of verdure.... Retaining these portions of the scene, and also the peaceful glory and tender gloom of the declining sun, we threw in imagination a deep veil of forest over the land, and pictured a few scattered villages here and there and this old town itself a village, as when the prince of Hell bore sway there. The idea thus gained of its former aspect, its quaint edifices standing far apart with peaked roofs and projecting stories, and its single meeting-house pointing up a tall spire in the midst; the vision, in short, of the town in 1692, served to introduce

a wondrous tale." There were in fact several old houses of the kind here described still extant during Hawthorne's boyhood, and he went every Sunday to service in the First Church, in whose congregation his forefathers had held a pew for a hundred and seventy years. It is easy to see how some of the materials for "The House of the Seven Gables" and "The Scarlet Letter" were already depositing themselves in the form of indelible recollections and suggestions taken from his surroundings.

Oppressed by her great sorrow, his mother had shut herself away, after her husband's death, from all society except that of her immediate relatives. This was perhaps not a very extraordinary circumstance, nor one that need be construed as denoting a morbid disposition; but it was one which must have distinctly affected the tone of her son's meditations. In 1818, when he was fourteen years old, she retired to a still deeper seclusion, in Maine; but the occasion of this was simply that her brother Robert, having purchased the seven-mile-square township of Raymond, in that State, had built a house there, intending to found a new home. The year that Hawthorne passed in that spot, amid the breezy life of the forest, fishing and shooting, watching the traits and customs of lumber-men and country-folk, and drinking in the tonic of a companionship with untamed nature, was to him a happy and profitable one. "We are all very well," he wrote thence to his Uncle Robert, in May, 1819: "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 brook. I am sorry you intend to send me to school again." He had been to the place before, probably for short visits, when his Uncle Richard was staying there, and his memories of it were always agreeable ones. To Mr. James T. Fields, he said in 1863: "I lived in Maine like a bird of the air, so perfect was the freedom I enjoyed. But it was there I first got my cursed habits of solitude." "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 through the woods of Maine!'"[2]

Hawthorne at this time had an intention of following the example of his father and grandfather, and going to sea; but this was frustrated by the course of events. His mother, it is probable, would strongly have objected to it. In a boyish journal kept while he was at Raymond he mentions a gentleman having come with a boat to take one or two persons out on "the Great Pond," and adds: "He was 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." And again: "A young man named Henry Jackson, Jr., was drowned two days ago, up in Crooked River.... I read one of the Psalms to my mother this morning, and it plainly declares twenty-six times that 'God's mercy endureth forever.'... Mother is sad; says she shall not consent any more to my swimming 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." This same journal, which seems to have laid the basis of his life-long habit of keeping note-books, was begun at the suggestion of Mr. Richard Manning, who gave him a blank-book, with advice that he should use it for recording his thoughts, "as the best means of his securing for mature years command of thought and language." In it were made a number of entries which testify plainly to his keenness of observation both of people and

scenery, to his sense of humor and his shrewdness. Here are a few:—

"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."

"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 well might cave in, but hired Samuel Shaw to go down. In the goodness of her heart, she thought the son of old Mrs. Shaw not quite so good as the son of the Widow Hathorne."

Of a trout that he saw caught by some men:—"This trout had a droll-looking hooked nose, and they tried to make me believe that, if the line had been in my hands, I should have been obliged to let go, or have been pulled out of the boat. They are men, and have a right to say so. I am a boy, and have a right to think differently."

"We could see the White Hills to the northwest, though Mr. Little said they were eighty miles away; 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."

The mental clearness, the sharpness of vision, and the competence of the language in this early note-book are remarkable, considering the youth and inexperience of the writer; and there is one sketch of "a solemn-faced old horse" at the grist-mill, which exhibits a delightful boyish humor with a dash of pathos in it, and at the same time is the first instance on record of a mild approach by Hawthorne to the writing of fiction:—

"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 into 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 the meal and him up the Ben Ham Hill home, and am now so weak that I can hardly stand. Oh 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.... At last the horse winked and stuck out his 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 he shut his eyes. 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 him if his master whipped him much. He 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.'... 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 understood well enough what I said, for I looked him in the eye and spoke horse language."

Mother and uncles could hardly have missed observing in him many tokens of a gifted intelligence and an uncommon individuality. The perception of these, added to Mrs. Hawthorne's dread of the sea, may have led to the decision which was taken to send him to college. In 1819 he went back to Salem, to continue his schooling; and one year later, March 7, 1820, wrote to his mother, who was still at Raymond: "I have left school, and have begun to fit for College, under Benjamin L. Oliver, Lawyer. So you are in great danger of having one learned man in your family.... Shall you want me to be a Minister, Doctor, or Lawyer? A minister I will not be." Miss E. P. Peabody remembers another letter of his, in which he touched the same problem, thus: "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 but for me to be an author. How would you like some day to see a whole shelf full of books written by your son, with 'Hathorne's Works' printed on the backs?" There appears to have been but little difficulty for him in settling the problem of his future occupation. During part of August and September he amused himself by writing three numbers of a miniature weekly paper called "The Spectator;" and in October we find that he had been composing poetry and sending it to his sister Elizabeth, who was also exercising herself in verse. At this time he was employed as a clerk, for a part of each day, in the office of another uncle, William Manning, proprietor of a great line of stages which then had extensive connections throughout New England; but he did not find the task congenial. "No man," he informed his sister, "can be a poet and a book-keeper at the same time;" from which one infers his distinct

belief that literature was his natural vocation. The idea of remaining dependent for four years more on the bounty of his Uncle Robert, who had so generously taken the place of a father in giving him a support and education, oppressed him, and he even contemplated not going to college; but go he finally did, taking up his residence at Bowdoin with the class of 1821.

The village of Brunswick, where Bowdoin College is situated, some thirty miles from Raymond, stands on high ground beside the Androscoggin River, which is there crossed by a bridge running zig-zag from bank to bank, resting on various rocky ledges and producing a picturesque effect. The village itself is ranged on two sides of a broad street, which meets the river at right angles, and has a mall in the centre that, in Hawthorne's time, was little more than a swamp. This street, then known as "sixteen-rod road," from its width, continues in a straight line to Casco Bay, only a few miles off; so that the new student was still near the sea and had a good course for his walks. If Harvard fifty and even twenty-five years ago had the look of a rural college, Bowdoin was by comparison an academy in a wilderness. "If this institution," says Hawthorne in "Fanshawe," where he describes it under the name of Harley College, "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 local resources for amusement or dissipation must have been very limited, and the demands of the curriculum not very severe. Details of Hawthorne's four years' stay at college are not forthcoming, otherwise than in small quantity. His comrades who survived him never have been able to give any very vivid picture of

the life there, or to recall any anecdotes of Hawthorne: the whole episode has slipped away, like a dream from which fragmentary glimpses alone remain. By one of those unaccountable associations with trifles, which outlast more important memories, Professor Calvin Stowe (to whom the authoress of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" was afterwards married) remembers seeing Hawthorne, then a member of the class below him, crossing the college-yard one stormy day, attired in a brass-buttoned blue coat, with an umbrella over his head. The wind caught the umbrella and turned it inside out; and what stamped the incident on Professor Stowe's mind was the silent but terrible and consuming wrath with which Hawthorne regarded the implement in its utterly subverted and useless state, as he tried to rearrange it. Incidents of no greater moment and the general effect of his presence seem to have created the belief among his fellows that, beneath the bashful quietude of his exterior, was stored a capability of exerting tremendous force in some form or other. He was seventeen when he entered college,—tall, broad-chested, with clear, lustrous gray eyes,[3] a fresh complexion, and long hair: his classmates were so impressed with his masculine beauty, and perhaps with a sense of occult power in him, that they nicknamed him Oberon. Although unusually calm-tempered, however, he was quick to resent disrespectful treatment (as he had been with John Knights), and his vigorous, athletic frame made him a formidable adversary. In the same class with him were Henry W. Longfellow; George Barrell Cheever, since famous as a divine, and destined to make a great stir in Salem by a satire in verse called "Deacon Giles's Distillery," which cost him a thirty days' imprisonment, together with the loss of his pastorate; also John S. C. Abbott, the writer of popular histories; and Horatio Bridge, afterwards Lieutenant in the United States Navy, and now Commander. Bridge and Franklin Pierce, who studied in the class above him, were his most intimate friends. He boarded in a house which had a

stairway on the outside, ascending to the second story; he took part, I suppose, in the "rope-pulls" and "hold-ins" between Freshmen and Sophomores, if those customs were practised then; he was fined for card-playing and for neglect of theme; entered the Athenæan Society, which had a library of eight hundred volumes; tried to read Hume's "History of England," but found it "abominably dull," and postponed the attempt; was fond of whittling, and destroyed some of his furniture in gratifying that taste. Such are the insignificant particulars to which we are confined in attempting to form an idea of the externals of his college-life. Pierce was chairman of the Athenæan Society, and also organized a military company, which Hawthorne joined. In the Preface to "The Snow-Image" we are given a glimpse of the simple amusements which occupied his leisure: "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 trouts in that shadowy little stream which, I suppose, is still wandering riverward through the forest." He became proficient in Latin. Longfellow was wont to recall how he would rise at recitation, standing slightly sidewise—attitude indicative of his ingrained shyness—and read from the Roman classics translations which had a peculiar elegance and charm. In writing English, too, he won a reputation, and Professor Newman was often so struck with the beauty of his work in this kind that he would read them in the evening to his own family. Professor Packard says: "His themes were written in the sustained, finished style that gives to his mature productions an inimitable charm. The recollection is very distinct of Hawthorne's reluctant step and averted look, when he presented himself at the professor's study and submitted a composition which no man in his class could equal."

Hawthorne always looked back with satisfaction to those simple and placid days. In 1852 he revisited the scene where they were passed, in order to be present at the semi-centennial anniversary of the founding of the college. A letter, from Concord (October 13, 1852), to Lieutenant Bridge, now for the first time published, contains the following reference to that event:—

"I meant to have told you about my visit to Brunswick.... Only eight of our classmates were present, and they were a set of dismal old fellows, whose heads looked as if they had been out in a pretty copious shower of snow. The whole intermediate quarter of a century vanished, and it seemed to me as if they had undergone the miserable transformation in the course of a single night—especially as I myself felt just about as young as when I graduated. They flattered me with the assurance that time had touched me tenderly; but alas! they were each a mirror in which I beheld the reflection of my own age. I did not arrive till after the public exercises were nearly over—and very luckily, too, for my praises had been sounded by orator and poet, and of course my blushes would have been quite oppressive."

Hawthorne's rank in his class entitled him to a "part" at Commencement, but the fact that he had not cultivated declamation debarred him from that honor; and so he passed quietly away from the life of Bowdoin and settled down to his career. "I have thought much upon the subject," he wrote to his sister, just before graduation, "and have 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." But declamation was not essential to his success, which was to be achieved in anything but a declamatory fashion.

II.

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In one sense it was all very simple, this childhood and youth and early training of Hawthorne. We can see that the conditions were not complicated and were quite homely. But the influence of good literature had been at work upon the excellent mental substance derived from a father who was fond of reading and a mother who had the plain elementary virtues on which so much depends, and great purity of soul. The composure and finish of style which he already had at command on going to college were ripened amid the homely conditions aforesaid: there must have been an atmosphere of culture in his home, unpretentious though the mode of life there was. His sister, as I have mentioned, showed much the same tone, the same commanding ease, in her writing. There existed a dignity, a reserve, an instinctive refinement in this old-fashioned household, which moved its members to appropriate the best means of expression as by natural right. They appear to have treated the most ordinary affairs of life with a quiet stateliness, as if human existence were really a thing to be considered with respect, and with a frank interest that might occasionally even admit of enthusiasm or strong feeling with regard to an experience, although thousands of beings might have passed through it before. Our new horizons, physically enlarged by rapid travel, our omnifarious culture, our passion for obtaining a glaze of cosmopolitanism to cover the common clay from which we are all moulded, do not often yield us anything essentially better than the narrow limits of the little world in which Hawthorne grew up. He was now to go back to Salem, which he once spoke of as being apparently for him "the inevitable centre of the universe;" and the conditions there were not radically altered from

what they had been before. We can form an outline of him as he was then, or at most a water-color sketch presenting the fresh hues of youth, the strong manly frame of the young graduate, his fine deep-lighted eyes, and sensitively retiring ways. But we have now to imagine the change that took place in him from the recent college Senior to the maturing man; change that gradually transforms him from the visionary outline of that earlier period to a solid reality of flesh and blood, a virile and efficient person who still, while developing, did not lose the delicate sensibility of his young prime.

His family having reëstablished themselves in Salem, at the old Herbert Street house, he settled himself with them, and stayed there until December, 1828, meanwhile publishing "Fanshawe" anonymously. They then moved to a smaller house on Dearborn Street, North Salem; but after four years they again took up their abode in the Herbert Street homestead. Hawthorne wrote industriously; first the "Seven Tales of my Native Land," which he burned, and subsequently the sketches and stories which, after appearing in current periodicals, were collected as "Twice-Told Tales." In 1830 he took a carriage trip through parts of Connecticut. "I meet with many marvellous adventures," was a part of his news on this occasion, but they were in reality adventures of a very tame description. He visited New York and New Hampshire and Nantucket, thus extending slightly his knowledge of men and places. A great deal of discursive reading was also accomplished. In 1836 he went to Boston to edit for Mr. S. G. Goodrich "The American Magazine of Useful and Entertaining Knowledge." It did not turn out to be either useful or entertaining for the editor, who was to be paid but $500 a year for his drudgery, and in fact received only a small part of that sum. Through Goodrich, he became a copious contributor to "The Token," in the pages of which his tales first came to be generally known; but he gave up the magazine after a four months'