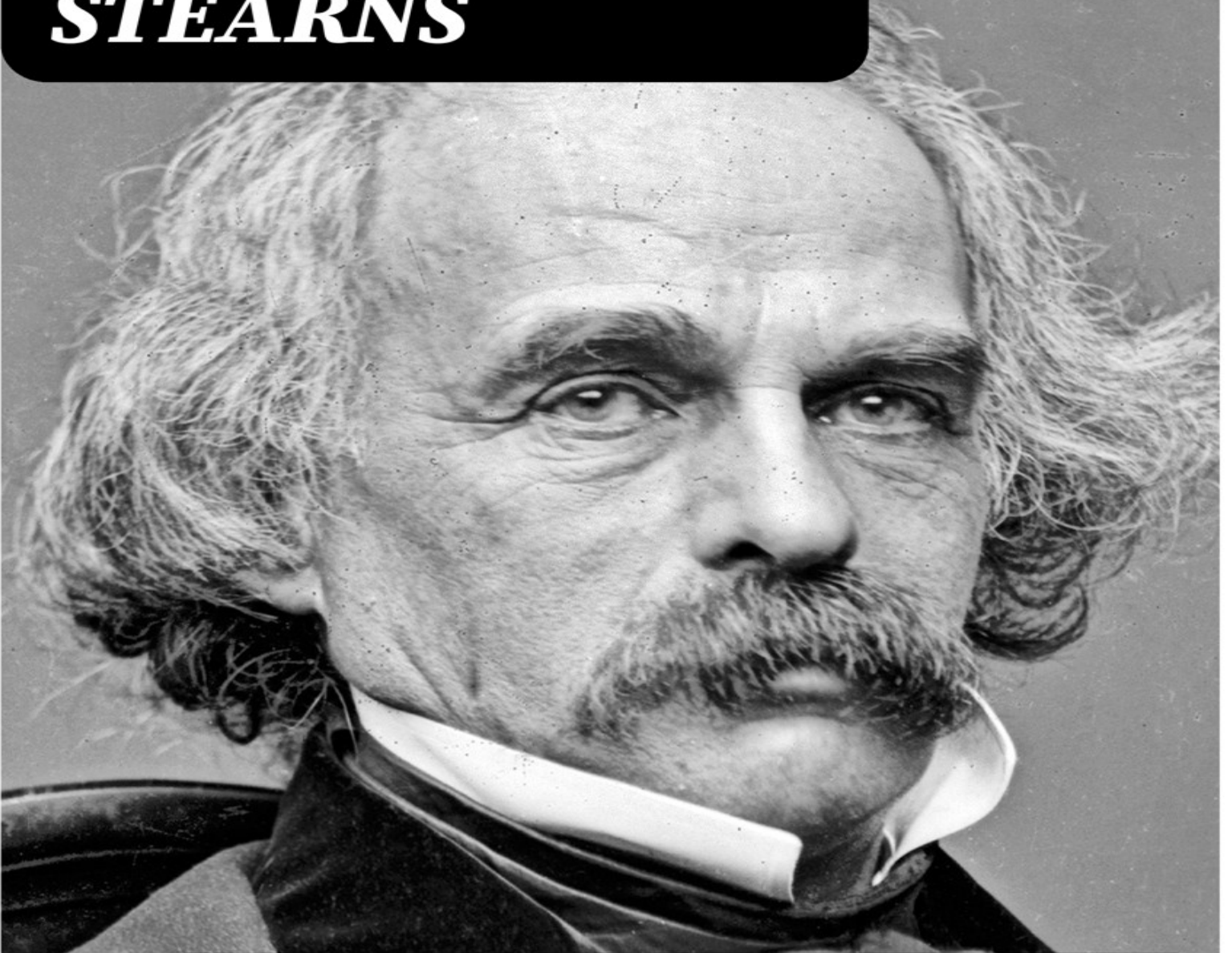


***FRANK PRESTON  
STEARNS***



***THE LIFE AND  
GENIUS  
OF NATHANIEL  
HAWTHORNE***

**Frank Preston Stearns**

# **The Life and Genius of Nathaniel Hawthorne**

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# INSCRIBED

TO

## EMILIA MACIEL STEARNS

“In the elder days of art  
Builders wrought with greatest care  
Each minute and unseen part,—  
For the gods see everywhere.”  
—Longfellow

“Oh, happy dreams of such a soul have I,  
And softly to myself of him I sing,  
Whose seraph pride all pride doth overwing;  
Who stoops to greatness, matches low with high,  
And as in grand equalities of sky,  
Stands level with the beggar and the king.”  
—Wasson



## PREFACE

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The simple events of Nathaniel Hawthorne's life have long been before the public. From 1835 onward they may easily be traced in the various Note-books, which have been edited from his diary, and previous to that time we are indebted for them chiefly to the recollections of his two faithful friends, Horatio Bridge and Elizabeth Peabody. These were first systematised and published by George P. Lathrop in 1872, but a more complete and authoritative biography was issued by Julian Hawthorne twelve years later, in which, however, the writer has modestly refrained from expressing an opinion as to the quality of his father's genius, or from attempting any critical examination of his father's literary work. It is in order to supply in some measure this deficiency, that the present volume has been written. At the same time, I trust to have given credit where it was due to my predecessors, in the good work of making known the true character of so rare a genius and so exceptional a personality.

The publication of Horatio Bridge's memoirs and of Elizabeth Manning's account of the boyhood of Hawthorne have placed before the world much that is new and valuable concerning the earlier portion of Hawthorne's life, of which previous biographers could not very well reap the advantage. I have made thorough researches in regard to Hawthorne's American ancestry, but have been able to find no ground for the statements of Conway and Lathrop, that William Hathorne, their first ancestor on this side of the ocean, was directly connected with the Quaker persecution. Some other mistakes, like Hawthorne's supposed connection

with the duel between Cilley and Graves, have also been corrected.

F. P. S.



# **THE LIFE AND GENIUS OF NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE**

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# **CHAPTER I. — SALEM AND THE HATHORNES: 1630-1800**

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The three earliest settlements on the New England coast were Plymouth, Boston, and Salem; but Boston soon proved its superior advantages to the two others, not only from its more capacious harbor, but also from the convenient waterway which the Charles River afforded to the interior of the Colony. We find that a number of English families, and among them the ancestors of Gen. Joseph Warren and Wendell Phillips, who crossed the ocean in 1640 in the “good ship Arbella,” soon afterward migrated to Watertown on Charles River for the sake of the excellent farming lands which they found there. Salem, however, maintained its ascendancy over Plymouth and other neighboring harbors on the coast, and soon grew to be the second city of importance in the Colony during the eighteenth century, when the only sources of wealth were fishing, shipbuilding, and commerce. Salem nourished remarkably. Its leading citizens became wealthy and developed a social aristocracy as cultivated, as well educated, and, it may also be added, as fastidious as that of Boston itself. In this respect it differed widely from the other small cities of New England, and the exclusiveness of its first families was more strongly marked on account of the limited size of the place. Thus it continued down to the middle of the last century, when railroads and the tendency to centralization began to draw away its financial prosperity, and left the city to small manufactures and its traditional respectability.

The finest examples of American eighteenth century architecture are supposed to exist in and about the city of Salem, and they have the advantage, which American architecture lacks so painfully at the present time, of possessing a definite style and character—edifices which are not of a single type, like most of the houses in Fifth Avenue, but which, while differing in many respects, have a certain general resemblance, that places them all in the same category. The small old country churches of Essex County are not distinguished for fine carving or other ornamentation, and still less by the costliness of their material, for they are mostly built of white pine, but they have an indefinable air of pleasantness about them, as if they graced the ground they stand on, and their steeples seem to float in the air above us. If we enter them on a Sunday forenoon—for on week-days they are like a sheepfold without its occupants—we meet with much the same kind of pleasantness in the assemblage there. We do not find the deep religious twilight of past ages, or the noonday glare of a fashionable synagogue, but a neatly attired congregation of weather-beaten farmers and mariners, and their sensible looking wives, with something of the original Puritan hardness in their faces, much ameliorated by the liberalism and free thinking of the past fifty years. Among them too you will see some remarkably pretty young women; and young men like those who dug the trenches on Breed's Hill in the afternoon of June 16, 1775. There may be veterans in the audience who helped Grant to go to Richmond. Withal there is much of the spirit



of the early Christians among them, and virtue enough to save their country in any emergency.

These old churches have mostly disappeared from Salem city and have been replaced by more aristocratic edifices, whose square or octagonal towers are typical of their leading parishioners,—a dignified class, if somewhat haughty and reserved; but they too will soon belong to the past, drawn off to the great social centres in and about Boston. In the midst of Salem there is a triangular common, “with its never-failing elms,” where the boys large and small formerly played cricket—married men too—as they do still on the village greens of good old England, and around this enclosure the successful merchants and navigators of the city built their mansion houses; not half houses like those in the larger cities, but with spacious halls and rooms on either side going up three stories. It is in the gracefully ornamented doorways and the delicate interior wood-work, the carving of wainscots, mantels and cornices, the skilful adaptations of classic forms to a soft and delicate material that the charm of this architecture chiefly consists,—especially in the staircases, with their carved spiral posts and slender railings, rising upward in the centre of the front hall, and turning right and left on the story above. It is said that after the year eighteen hundred the quality of this decoration sensibly declined; it was soon replaced by more prosaic forms, and now the tools no longer exist that can make it. Sir Christopher Wren and Inigo Jones would have admired it. America, excepting in New York City, escaped the false rococo taste of the eighteenth century.

The Salem sea-captains of old times were among the boldest of our early navigators; sailing among the pirates of the Persian Gulf and trading with the cannibals of Polynesia, and the trophies which they brought home from those strange regions, savage implements of war and domestic use, clubs, spears, boomerangs, various cooking utensils, all carved with infinite pains from stone, ebony and iron-wood, cloth from the bark of the tapa tree, are now deposited in the Peabody Academy, where they form one of the largest collections of the kind extant. Even more interesting is the sword of a sword-fish, pierced through the oak planking of a Salem vessel for six inches or more. No human force could do that even with a spear of the sharpest steel. Was the sword-fish roused to anger when the ship came upon him sleeping in the water; or did he mistake it for a strange species of whale?

There is a court-house on Federal Street, built in Webster's time, of hard cold granite in the Grecian fashion of the day, not of the white translucent marble with which the Greeks would have built it. Is it the court-house where Webster made his celebrated argument in the White murder case, or was that court-house torn down and a plough run through the ground where it stood, as Webster affirmed that it ought to be? Salem people were curiously reticent in regard to that trial, and fashionable society there did not like Webster the better for having the two Knapps convicted.

Much more valuable than such associations is William Hunt's full-length portrait of Chief Justice Shaw, which hangs over the judge's bench in the front court-room. "When I look at your honor I see that you are homely, but when I think of

you I know that you are great." it is this combination of an unprepossessing physique with rare dignity of character which Hunt has represented in what many consider the best of American portraits. It is perhaps too much in the sketchy style of Velasquez, but admirable for all that.

Time has dealt kindly with Salem, in effacing all memorials of the witchcraft persecution, except a picturesque old house at the corner of North and Essex Streets, where there are said to have been preliminary examinations for witchcraft,—a matter which concerns us now but slightly. The youthful associations of a genius are valuable to us on account of the influence which they may be supposed to have had on his early life, but associations which have no determining consequences may as well be neglected. The hill where those poor martyrs to superstition were executed may be easily seen on the left of the city, as you roll in on the train from Boston. It is part of a ridge which rises between the Concord and Charles Rivers and extends to Cape Ann, where it dives into the ocean, to reappear again like a school of krakens, or other marine monsters, in the Isles of Shoals.

New England has not the fertile soil of many sections of the United States, and its racking climate is proverbial, but it is blessed with the two decided advantages of pure water and fine scenery. There is no more beautiful section of its coast than that between Salem Harbor and Salisbury Beach, long stretches of smooth sand alternating with bold rocky promontories. A summer drive from Swampscott to Marblehead reminds one even of the Bay of Naples (without Vesuvius), and the wilder coast of Cape Ann, with its dark

pinetrees, red-roofed cottages, and sparkling surf, is quite as delightful. William Hunt went there in the last sad years of his life to paint "sunshine," as he said; and Whittier has given us poetic touches of the inland scenery in elevated verse:

"Fleecy clouds casting their shadows  
Over uplands and meadows;  
And country roads winding as roads will,  
Here to a ferry, there to a mill."

Poets arise where there is poetic nourishment, internal and external, for them to feed on; and it is not surprising that a Whittier and a Hawthorne should have been evolved from the environment in which they grew to manhood.

It is a common saying with old Boston families that their ancestors came to America in the "Arbella" with Governor Winthrop, but as a matter of fact there were at least fifteen vessels that brought colonists to Massachusetts in 1630, and I cannot discover that any lists of their passengers have been preserved. The statement that certain persons came over at the same time with Governor Winthrop might soon become a tradition that they came in the same ship with him; but all that we know certainly is that Governor Winthrop landed about the middle of June, 1630, and that his son arrived two weeks later in the "Talbot," and was drowned July 2, while attempting to cross one of the tide rivers at Salem. Who arrived in the thirteen other vessels that year we know not. Ten years later Sir Richard Saltonstall emigrated to Boston with the Phillips and Warren families in the "Arbella" (or "Arabella"), and there is no telling how much longer she sailed the ocean.

Hawthorne himself states that his ancestors came from Wig Castle in Wigton in Warwickshire, {Footnote: Diary, August 22, 1837.} but no such castle has been discovered, and the only Wigton in England appears to be located in Cumberland. {Footnote: Lathrop's "Study of Hawthorne," 46.} He does not tell us where he obtained this information, and it certainly could not have been from authentic documents,—more likely from conversation with an English traveller. Hawthorne never troubled himself much concerning his ancestry, English or American; while he was consul at Liverpool, he had exceptional advantages for investigating the subject, but whatever attempt he made there resulted in nothing. It is only recently that Mr. Henry F. Waters, who spent fifteen years in England searching out the records of old New England families, succeeded in discovering the connecting link between the first American Hawthornes and their relatives in the old country. It was a bill of exchange for one hundred pounds drawn by William Hathorne, of Salem, payable to Robert Hathorne in London, and dated October 19, 1651, which first gave Mr. Waters the clue to his discovery. Robert not only accepted his brother's draft, but wrote him this simple and business-like but truly affectionate epistle in return:

"GOOD BROTHER: Remember my love to my sister, my brother John and sister, my brother Davenport and sister and the rest of our friends.

"In haste I rest

"Your loving brother,

"From Bray this 1 April, 1653.

"ROBERT HATHORNE."

From this it appears that Major William Hathorne not only had a brother John, who established himself in Lynn, but a sister Elizabeth, who married Richard Davenport, of Salem. Concerning Robert Hathorne we only know further that he died in 1689; but in the probate records of Berkshire, England, there is a will proved May 2, 1651, of William Hathorne, of Binfield, who left all his lands, buildings and tenements in that county to his son Robert, on condition that Robert should pay to his father's eldest son, William, one hundred pounds, and to his son John twenty pounds sterling. He also left to another son, Edmund, thirty acres of land in Bray, and there are other legacies; but it cannot be doubted that the hundred pounds mentioned in this will is the same that Major William Hathorne drew for five months later, and that we have identified here the last English ancestor of Nathaniel Hawthorne. His wife's given name was Sarah, but her maiden name still remains unknown. The family resided chiefly at Binfield, on the borders of Windsor Park, and evidently were in comfortable circumstances at that time. From William Hathorne, senior, their genealogy has been traced back to John Hathorne (spelled at that time Hothorne), who died in 1520, but little is known of their affairs, or how they sustained themselves during the strenuous vicissitudes of the Reformation. {Footnote: "Hawthorne Centenary at Salem," 81.}

Emmerton and Waters {Footnote: "English Records about New England Families."} state that William Hathorne came to Massachusetts Bay in 1630, and this is probable enough, though by no means certain, for they give no authority for it. We first hear of him definitely as a freeholder in the

settlement of Dorchester in 1634, but his name is not on the list of the first twenty-four Dorchester citizens, dated October 19, 1630. All accounts agree that he moved to Salem in 1636, or the year following, and Nathaniel Hawthorne believed that he came to America at that time. Upham, the historian of Salem witchcraft, who has made the most thorough researches in the archives of old Salem families, says of William Hathorne:

“William Hathorne appears on the church records as early as 1636. He died in June, 1681, seventy-four years of age. No one in our annals fills a larger space. As soldier, commanding important and difficult expeditions, as counsel in cases before the courts, as judge on the bench, and innumerable other positions requiring talent and intelligence, he was constantly called to serve the public. He was distinguished as a public speaker, and is the only person, I believe, of that period, whose reputation as an orator has come down to us. He was an Assistant, that is, in the upper branch of the Legislature, seventeen years. He was a deputy twenty years. When the deputies, who before sat with the assistants, were separated into a distinct body, and the House of Representatives thus came into existence, in 1644, Hathorne was their first Speaker. He occupied the chair, with intermediate services on the floor from time to time, until raised to the other House. He was an inhabitant of Salem Village, having his farm there, and a dwelling-house, in which he resided when his legislative, military, and other official duties permitted. His son John, who succeeded him in all his public honors, also lived on his own farm in the

village a great part of the time.” {Footnote: “Salem Witchcraft,” i. 99.}

Evidently he was the most important person in the colony, next to Governor Winthrop, and unequalled by any of his descendants, except Nathaniel Hawthorne, and by him in a wholly different manner; for it is in vain that we seek for traits similar to those of the great romance writer among his ancestors. We can only say that they both possessed exceptional mental ability, and there the comparison ends.

The attempt has been made to connect William Hathorne with the persecution of the Quakers, {Footnote: Conway’s “Life of Hawthorne,” 15.} and it is true that he was a member of the Colonial Assembly during the period of the persecution; it is likely that his vote supported the measures in favor of it, but this is not absolutely certain. We do not learn that he acted at any time in the capacity of sheriff; the most diligent researches in the archives of the State House at Boston have failed to discover any direct connection on the part of William Hathorne with that movement; and the best authorities in regard to the events of that time make no mention of him. {Footnote: Sewel, Hallowell, Ellis.} It was the clergy who aroused public opinion and instigated the prosecutions against both the Quakers and the supposed witches of Salem, and the civil authorities were little more than passive instruments in their hands. Hathorne’s work was essentially a legislative one,—a highly important work in that wild, unsettled country,—to adapt English statutes and legal procedures to new and strange conditions. He was twice Speaker of the House between 1660 and 1671, and as



presiding officer he could exert less influence on measures of expediency than any other person present, as he could not argue either for or against them. And yet, after Charles II. had interfered in behalf of the Quakers, William Hathorne wrote an elaborate and rather circuitous letter to the British Ministry, arguing for non-intervention in the affairs of the colony, which might have possessed greater efficacy if he had not signed it with an assumed name. {Footnote: J. Hawthorne's "Nathaniel Hawthorne," i. 24.} However strong a Puritan he may have been, William Hathorne evidently had no intention of becoming a martyr to the cause of colonial independence. Yet it may be stated in his favor, and in that of the colonists generally, that the fault was not wholly on one side, for the Quakers evidently sought persecution, and would have it, cost what it might. {Footnote: Hallowell's "Quaker Invasion of New England."} Much the same may be affirmed of his son John, who had the singular misfortune to be judge in Salem at the time of the witchcraft epidemic. The belief in witchcraft has always had its stronghold among the fogs and gloomy fiords of the North. James I. brought it with him from Scotland to England, and in due course it was transplanted to America. Judge Hathorne appears to have been at the top of affairs at Salem in his time, and it is more than probable that another in his place would have found himself obliged to act as he did. Law is, after all, in exceptional cases little more than a reflex of public opinion. "The common law," said Webster, "is common-sense," which simply means the common opinion of the most influential people. Much more to blame than John Hathorne were those infatuated persons who

deceived themselves into thinking that the pains of rheumatism, neuralgia, or some similar malady were caused by the malevolent influence of a neighbor against whom they had perhaps long harbored a grudge. *They* were the true witches and goblins of that epoch, and the only ones, if any, who ought to have been hanged for it.

What never has been reasoned up cannot be reasoned down. It seems incredible in this enlightened era, as the newspapers call it, that any woman should be at once so inhuman and so frivolous as to swear away the life of a fellow-creature upon an idle fancy; and yet, even in regard to this, there were slightly mitigating conditions. Consider only the position of that handful of Europeans in this vast wilderness, as it then was. The forests came down to the sea-shore, and brought with them all the weird fancies, terrors and awful forebodings which the human mind could conjure up. They feared the Indians, the wild beasts, and most of all one another, for society was not yet sufficiently organized to afford that repose and contentment of spirit which they had left behind in the Old World. They had come to America to escape despotism, but they had brought despotism in their own hearts. They could escape from the Stuarts, but there was no escape from human nature.

It is likely that their immediate progenitors would not have carried the witchcraft craze to such an extreme. The emigrating Puritans were a fairly well-educated class of men and women, but their children did not enjoy equal opportunities. The new continent had to be subdued physically and reorganized before any mental growth could be raised there. Levelling the forest was a small matter

beside clearing the land of stumps and stones. All hands were obliged to work hard, and there was little opportunity for intellectual development or social culture. As a logical consequence, an era ensued not unlike the dark ages of Europe. But this was essential to the evolution of a new type of man, and for the foundation of American nationality; and it was thus that the various nationalities of Europe arose out of the ruins of the Roman Empire.

The scenes that took place in Judge Hathorne's courtroom have never been equalled since in American jurisprudence. Powerful forces came into play there, and the reports that have been preserved read like scenes from Shakespeare. In the case of Rebecca Nurse, the Judge said to the defendant:

““You do know whether you are guilty, and have familiarity with the Devil; and now when you are here present to see such a thing as these testify,—and a black man whispering in your ear, and devils about you,—what do you say to it?””

To which she replied:

““It is all false. I am clear.’ Whereupon Mrs. Pope, one of the witnesses, fell into a grievous fit.” {Footnote: Upham's “Salem Witchcraft,” ii. 64.}

Alas, poor beleaguered soul! And one may well say, “What imaginations those women had!” Tituba, the West Indian Aztec who appears in this social-religious explosion as the chief and original incendiary,—verily the root of all evil,—gave the following testimony:

“Q. ‘Did you not pinch Elizabeth Hubbard this morning?’

“A. ‘The man brought her to me, and made me pinch her.’

“Q. ‘Why did you go to Thomas Putnam’s last night and hurt his child?’

“A. ‘They pull and haul me, and make me go.’

“Q. ‘And what would they have you do?’

“A. ‘Kill her with a knife.’

“(Lieutenant Fuller and others said at this time, when the child saw these persons, and was tormented by them, that she did complain of a knife,—that they would have her cut her head off with a knife.)

“Q. ‘How did you go?’

“A. ‘We ride upon sticks, and are there presently.’

“Q. ‘Do you go through the trees or over them?’

“A. ‘We see nothing, but are there presently.’

“Q. ‘Why did you not tell your master?’

“A. ‘I was afraid. They said they would cut off my head if I told.’

“Q. ‘Would you not have hurt others, if you could?’

“A. ‘They said they would hurt others, but they could not.’

“Q. ‘What attendants hath Sarah Good?’

“A. ‘A yellow-bird, and she would have given me one.’

“Q. ‘What meat did she give it?’

“A. ‘It did suck her between her fingers.’”.

This might serve as an epilogue to “Macbeth,” and the wonder is that an unlettered Indian should have had the wit to make such apt and subtle replies. It is also noteworthy that these strange proceedings took place after the expulsion of the royal governor, and previous to the provincial government of William III. If Sir Edmund Andros had remained, the tragedy might have been changed into a farce.

After all, it appears that John Hathorne was not a lawyer, for he describes himself in his last will, dated June 27, 1717, as a merchant, and it is quite possible that his legal education was no better than that of the average English squire in Fielding's time. It is evident, however, from the testimony given above, that he was a strong believer in the supernatural, and here if anywhere we find a relationship between him and his more celebrated descendant. Nathaniel Hawthorne was too clear-sighted to place confidence in the pretended revelations of trance mediums, and he was not in the least superstitious; but he was remarkably fond of reading ghost stories, and would have liked to believe them, if he could have done so in all sincerity. He sometimes felt as if he were a ghost himself, gliding noiselessly in the walks of men, and wondered that the sun should cast a shadow from him. However, we cannot imagine him as seated in jurisdiction at a criminal tribunal. His gentle nature would have recoiled from that, as it might from a serpent.

In the Charter Street burial-ground there is a slate gravestone, artistically carved about its edges, with the name, "Col. John Hathorne Esq.," upon it. It is somewhat sunken into the earth, and leans forward as if wishing to hide the inscription upon it from the gaze of mankind. The grass about it and the moss upon the stone assist in doing this, although repeatedly cut and cleaned away. It seems as if Nature wished to draw a kind of veil over the memory of the witch's judge, himself the sorrowful victim of a theocratic oligarchy. The lesson we learn from his errors is, to trust our own hearts and not to believe too fixedly in the

doctrines of Church and State. It must be a dull sensibility that can look on this old slate-stone without a feeling of pathos and a larger charity for the errors of human nature.

It is said that one of the convicted witches cursed Judge Hathorne,—himself and his descendants forever; but it is more than likely that they all cursed him bitterly enough, and this curse took effect in a very natural and direct manner. Every extravagant political or social movement is followed by a corresponding reaction, even if the movement be on the whole a salutary one, and retribution is sure to fall in one shape or another on the leaders of it. After this time the Hathornes ceased to be conspicuous in Salem affairs. The family was not in favor, and the avenues of prosperity were closed to them, as commonly happens in such cases. Neither does the family appear to have multiplied and extended itself like most of the old New England families, who can now count from a dozen to twenty branches in various places. Of John Hathorne's three sons only one appears to have left children. The name has wholly disappeared from among Salem families, and thus in a manner has the witch's curse been fulfilled.

Joseph Hathorne, the son of the Judge, was mostly a farmer, and that is all that we now know of him. His son Daniel, however, showed a more adventurous spirit, becoming a shipmaster quite early in life. It has also been intimated that he was something of a smuggler, which was no great discredit to him in a time when the unfair and even prohibitory measures of the British Parliament in regard to American commerce made smuggling a practical necessity. Even as the captain of a trading vessel, however, Daniel

Hathorne was not likely to advance the social interests of his family. It is significant that he should have left the central portion of Salem, where his ancestors had lived, and have built a house for himself close to the city wharves,—a house well built and commodious enough, but not in a fashionable location.

But Daniel Hathorne had the advantage over fashionable society in Salem, in being a thorough patriot. Boston and Salem were the two strongholds of Toryism during the war for Independence, which was natural enough, as their wealthy citizens were in close mercantile relations with English houses, and sent their children to England to be educated. Daniel Hathorne, however, as soon as hostilities had begun, fitted out his bark as a privateer, and spent the following six years in preying upon British merchantmen. How successful he was in this line of business we have not been informed, but he certainly did not grow rich by it; although he is credited with one engagement with the enemy, in which his ship came off with honor, though perhaps not with a decisive victory. This exploit was celebrated in a rude ballad of the time, which has been preserved in "Griswold's Curiosities of American Literature," and has at least the merit of plain unvarnished language. {Footnote: Also in Lathrop's "Hawthorne."}

There is a miniature portrait of Daniel Hathorne, such as was common in Copley's time, still in the possession of the Hawthorne family, and it represents him as rather a bullet-headed man, with a bright, open, cheery face, a broad English chin and strongly marked brows,—an excellent physiognomy for a sea-captain. He appears besides to have

had light brown or sandy hair, a ruddy complexion and bright blue eyes; but we cannot determine how truthful the miniature may be in respect to coloring. At all events, he was of a very different appearance from Nathaniel Hawthorne, and if he resembled his grandson in any external respect, it was in his large eyes and their overshadowing brows. He has not the look of a dare-devil. One might suppose that he was a person of rather an obstinate disposition, but it is always difficult to draw the line between obstinacy and determination.

A similar miniature of his son Nathaniel, born in 1775, and who died at Surinam in his thirty-fourth year, gives us the impression of a person somewhat like his father, and also somewhat like his son Nathaniel. He has a long face instead of a round one, and his features are more delicate and refined than those of the bold Daniel. The expression is gentle, dreamy and pensive, and unless the portrait belies him, he could not have been the stern, domineering captain that he has been represented. He had rather a slender figure, and was probably much more like his mother, who was a Miss Phelps, than the race of Judge Hathorne. He may have been a reticent man, but never a bold one, and we find in him a new departure. His face is more amiable and attractive than his father's, but not so strong. In 1799 he was married to Miss Elizabeth Clarke Manning, the daughter of Richard Manning, and then only nineteen years of age. She appears to have been an exceptionally sensitive and rather shy young woman—such as would be likely to attract the attention of a chivalrous young mariner—but with fine traits of intellect and character.



The maternal ancestry of a distinguished man is quite as important as the paternal, but in the present instance it is much more difficult to obtain information concerning it. The increasing fame of Hawthorne has been like a calcium-light, illuminating for the past fifty years everything to which that name attaches, and leaving the Manning family in a shadow so much the deeper. All we can learn of them now is, that they were descended from Richard Manning, of Dartmouth in Devonshire, England, whose son Thomas emigrated to Salem with his widowed mother in 1679, but afterwards removed to Ipswich, ten miles to the north, whence the family has since extended itself far and wide,—the Reverend Jacob M. Manning, of the Old South Church, the fearless champion of practical anti-slaveryism, having been among them. It appears that Thomas's grandson Richard started in life as a blacksmith, which was no strange thing in those primitive times; but, being a thrifty and enterprising man, he lived to establish a line of stage-coaches between Salem and Boston, and this continued in the possession of his family until it was superseded by the Eastern Railway. After this catastrophe, Robert Manning, the son of Richard and brother of Mrs. Nathaniel Hathorne, became noted as a fruit-grower (a business in which Essex County people have always taken an active interest), and was one of the founders of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society. The Mannings were always respected in Salem, although they never came to affluent circumstances, nor did they own a house about the city common. Robert Manning, Jr., was Secretary of the Horticultural Society in Boston for a long term of years, a pleasant, kindly man, with an aspect of

general culture. Hawthorne's maternal grandmother was Miriam Lord, of Ipswich, and his paternal grandmother was Rachel Phelps, of Salem. His father was only thirty-three when he died at Surinam.

In regard to the family name, there are at present Hawthornes and Hathornes in England, and although the two names may have been identical originally, they have long since become as distinct as Smith and Smythe. I have discovered only two instances in which the first William Hathorne wrote his own name, and in the various documents at the State House in which it appears written by others, it is variously spelled Hathorn, Hathorne, Hawthorn, Haythorne, and Harthorne,—from which we can only conclude that the a was pronounced broadly. It was not until the reign of Queen Anne, when books first became cheap and popular, that there was any decided spelling of either proper or common names. Then the printers took the matter into their own hands and made witch-work enough of it. The word "sovereign," for instance, which is derived from the old French *souvrain*, and which Milton spelled "sovrán," they tortured into its present form,—much as the clerks of Massachusetts Colony tortured the name of William Hathorne. This, however, was spelled Hathorne oftener than in other ways, and it was so spelled in the two signatures above referred to, one of which was attached as witness to a deed for the settlement of the boundary between Lynn and Salem, {Footnote: Also in Lathrop's "Hawthorne."} and the other to a report of the commissioners for the investigation of the French vessels coming to Salem and Boston in 1651, the two other commissioners being Samuel

Bradstreet and David Denison. {Footnote: Massachusetts Archives, x. 171.}The name was undoubtedly Hathorne, and so it continued with one or two slight variations during the eighteenth century down to the time of Nathaniel Hathorne, Jr., who entered and graduated at Bowdoin College under that name, but who soon afterward changed it to Hawthorne, for reasons that have never been explained.

All cognomens would seem to have been derived originally from some personal peculiarity, although it is no longer possible to trace this back to its source, which probably lies far away in the Dark Ages,—the formative period of languages and of families. Sometimes, however, we meet with individuals whose peculiarities suggest the origin of their names: a tall, slender, long-necked man named Crane; or a timid, retiring student named Leverett; or an over-confident, supercilious person called Godkin In the name of Hawthorne also we may imagine a curious significance: “When the may is on the thorn,” says Tennyson. The English country people call the flowering of the hawthorn “the may.” It is a beautiful tree when in full bloom. How sweet-scented and delicately colored are its blossoms! But it seems to say to us, “Do not come too close to me.”

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## **CHAPTER II. — BOYHOOD OF HAWTHORNE: 1804-1821**

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Salem treasures the memory of Hawthorne, and preserves everything tangible relating to him. The house in which he was born, No. 27 Union Street, is in much the same style and probably of the same age as the Old Manse at Concord, but somewhat smaller, with only a single window on either side of the doorway—five windows in all on the front, one large chimney in the centre, and the roof not exactly a gambrel, for the true gambrel has a curve first inward and then outward, but something like it. A modest, cosy and rather picturesque dwelling, which if placed on a green knoll with a few trees about it might become a subject for a sketching class. It did not belong to Hawthorne's father, after all, but to the widow of the bold Daniel, It was the cradle of genius, and is now a shrine for many pilgrims. Long may it survive, so that our grandchildren may gaze upon it.

Here Nathaniel Hawthorne first saw daylight one hundred years ago {Footnote: 1804.} on the Fourth of July, as if to make a protest against Chauvinistic patriotism; here his mother sat at the window to see her husband's bark sail out of the harbor on his last voyage; and here she watched day after day for its return, only to bring a life-long sorrow with

it. The life of a sea-captain's wife is always a half-widowhood, but Mrs. Hathorne was left at twenty-eight with three small children, including a daughter, Elizabeth, older than Nathaniel, and another, Louisa, the youngest. The shadow of a heavy misfortune had come upon them, and from this shadow they never wholly escaped.

Lowell criticised a letter which John Brown wrote concerning his boyhood to Henry L. Stearns, as the finest bit of autobiography of the nineteenth century. {Footnote: *North American Review*, April 1860.} It is in fact almost the only literature of the kind that we possess. A frequent difficulty that parents find in dealing with their children is, that they have wholly forgotten the sensations and impressions of their own childhood. The instructor cannot place himself in the position of the pupil. A naturalist will spend years with a microscope studying the development of a plant from the seed, but no one has ever applied a similar process to the budding of genius or even of ordinary intellect. We have the autobiography of one of the greatest geniuses, written in the calm and stillness of old age, when youthful memories come back to us involuntarily; yet he barely lifts the veil from his own childhood, and has much more to say of external events and older people than of himself and his young companions. How valuable is the story of George Washington and his hatchet, hackneyed as it has become! What do we know of the boyhood of Franklin, Webster, Seward and Longfellow? Nothing, or next to nothing.

{Illustration: WINDOW OF THIS CHAMBER}

Goethe says that the admirable woman is she who, when her husband dies, becomes a father to his children; but in

the case of Hawthorne's mother, this did not happen to be necessary. Her brother, Robert Manning, a thrifty and fairly prosperous young man, immediately took Mrs. Hathorne and her three children into his house on Herbert Street, and made it essentially a home for them afterward. To the fatherless boy he was more than his own father, away from home ten months of the year, ever could have been; and though young Nathaniel must have missed that tenderness of feeling which a man can only entertain toward his own child, there was no lack of kindness or consideration on Robert Manning's part, to either the boy or his sisters.

It was Mrs. Hathorne who chiefly suffered from this change of domicile. She would seem to have been always on good terms with her brother's wife, and on the whole they formed a remarkably harmonious family,—at least we hear nothing to the contrary,—but she was no longer mistress of her own household. She had her daughters to instruct, and to train up in domestic ways, and she could be helpful in various matters, large and small; but the mental occupation which comes from the oversight and direction of household affairs, and which might have served to divert her mind from sorrowful memories, was now gone from her. Her widowhood separated her from the outside world and from all society, excepting a few devoted friends, {Footnote: *Wide Awake*, xxxiii. 502.} so that under these conditions it is not surprising that her life became continually more secluded and reserved. It is probable that her temperament was very similar to her son's; but the impression which has gone forth, that she indulged her melancholy to an excess,