punishment for fornication at Salem, while in 1644, in the middle of the very period the novel covers, the unfortunate Mary Latham, who was married to an old man whom she did not love and who committed adultery with "divers young men," was actually subjected to the statutory death penalty by the Massachusetts Bay court.[9] Hawthorne could not allow strict historical accuracy to kill off his heroine in the first chapter.

Instead he simply exercised his novelist's prerogative of shifting about the historical details to suit his purpose. He acknowledged as much about the sketch "Main Street," the historical facts of which he pretended came from one of Surveyor Pue's manuscripts, as did those of *The Scarlet Letter*.[10] In "Main Street" an unnamed critic of the mechanical panorama which exhibits Salem's history is made to thunder: "you have fallen into anachronisms that I positively shudder to think of!" The showman Hawthorne calmly admits the charge, but mildly adds: "Sir, you break the illusion of the scene. . . ."[11]

May the showman forgive us for sniffing out clues of the historical Hester.

The Source of Crane's Metaphor, "Red Badge of Courage"

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ALTHOUGH THERE SEEMS NO END to the speculations about the source of the Civil War framework upon which Stephen Crane based *The Red Badge of Courage,* the source of the central metaphor itself has drawn only a single guess by Abraham Feldman, who suggests that it may be derived from Shakespeare's "murder's crimson badge" in *Henry VI: Part III*.[1] Knowing something of Crane's

[9] Warren, p. vii, citing Winthrop's *Journals* of 1644. Plymouth, too, had the death penalty for adultery, but it was never invoked.

[10] *Works,* V, 49.

[11] *Works,* III, 454.

[1] "Crane's Title from Shakespeare," *American Notes & Queries,* VIII, 185-186 (March, 1950).

impatient and often unsympathetic reading tastes, we find it difficult to imagine his laboring through that unwieldly drama, though it is not impossible that he struck upon the line by accident. Mr. Feldman is correct, however, in suspecting that Crane borrowed rather than originated his metaphor, but its source was a popular phrase in use during and after the Civil War.

For any Union veteran with service in Virginia, "red badge of courage" would have brought to mind both the New Jersey general, Philip Kearny, and his famous "red badge" (also called "red diamond" and "red patch") division of the Third Corps, Army of the Potomac. Kearny, whom General Winfield Scott called "the bravest man I ever knew and the most perfect soldier,"[2] was a resident of Newark and its most outstanding soldier of the war. The Kearny family home stood within the city limits of Newark during Stephen Crane's lifetime, and Philip Kearny's mansion, "Belle Grove," was a landmark on the Hudson County side of the Passaic River. Crane's brother William, we are told, was an authority on the Civil War;[3] he would have been a dull authority, indeed, had he not known something of Kearny and the "red badge" division.

Philip Kearny was, apparently, the first Union commander to order his men to wear a special badge so that he could distinguish them in battle.[4] Disgusted at what he considered the incompetence of Union command during the campaigns before Richmond in 1862, he directed his officers "to wear a red patch in shape of a diamond on the crown or left side of their cap, while enlisted men were to wear theirs in front of the cap."[5] From the first the patch was a "sign of good character and a badge of honor."[6] Moreover, the red diamond was recognized by the enemy as a special mark of valor; Kearny's biographers tell of a Union colonel buried with full military honors by the Confederates because of their respect for his red badge.[7] Although other generals soon adopted divisional patches, the red diamond became almost sacrosanct. It remained the badge

[2] Quoted in John Watts DePeyster, *Personal and Military History of Philip Kearny* (New York, 1869), p. 495.

[3] Thomas Beer, *Stephen Crane* (London, 1924), p. 49.

[4] Thomas Kearny, *General Philip Kearny: Battle Soldier of Five Wars* (New York, 1937), p. 267.

[5] DePeyster, p. 495.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 354.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 368, and Kearny, p. 268.

of the original Kearny division even after his death at Chantilly in September, 1862, and after his command had been absorbed into the Second Corps (the official badge for which was the trefoil).[8]

It might also be noted that in addition to the Kearny red badge, there was also a Kearny red medal designed by his successor, General David B. Birney. This was awarded to those soldiers who distinguished themselves by individual acts of heroism in battle; engraved on the cross below the ribbon was the Kearny motto, *"Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori."*[9] Both the red badge and the red medal were familiar to most Union soldiers serving in Virginia, just as both are now well known to Civil War historians.

The evidence linking Crane and Kearny is not entirely circumstantial. A Kearny family tradition credits Crane with visits to "Belle Grove" on several occasions for talks with Philip Kearny's son, John Watts Kearny. One of the General's biographers has this to say in a footnote:

> Crane born in Newark, while resident in Asbury Park and later before he became famous visited "Kearny Castle" ["Belle Grove"]. When his fame was achieved he again visited General [John Watts] Kearny and told the General the symbolic meaning hidden under the title of his famous book.[10]

Unfortunately nothing more is said of this "symbolic meaning."

These fragments may be fitted together for a possible explanation of the meaning of Crane's title, "The Red Badge of Courage." We know that Crane's original title was the prosaic *Henry Fleming, His Various Battles,*[11] but at some point in his composition he struck upon the phrase "red badge of courage," which in Chapter IX he used as a synonym for "wound." Ironically, Henry's wound, inflicted by a fellow Union soldier, is a private badge of cowardice which passes as a public badge of courage. By changing his title, Crane underscored the irony of the novel, but he also had in mind another purpose. What better title could be chosen for a book that he had originally intended as a "pot-boiler" (his own designation)[12]

[8] DePeyster, p. 367.

[9] For an illustration of the Kearny medal see *ibid.*, facing p. 368; for an illustration of the Kearny patch see the front cover of Gilbert A. Hayes, *Under the Red Patch* (Pittsburgh, 1908).

[10] Kearny, p. 267.

[11] Robert W. Stallman, *Stephen Crane: An Omnibus* (New York, 1952), p. 218.

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 210.

than one which would echo a public and hallowed metaphor? Union veterans would, of course, associate his title with Kearny and the red badge division; therefore it is little wonder that the novel was bitterly criticized by former soldiers who resented the author's wholly unexpected and unflattering exploration of the nature of courage.[13]

[13] Thomas Beer records a sample of the veteran's outrage (p. 133).