

1. Hawthorne & His Mosses, By a Virginian Spending July in Vermont Part I

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A papered chamber in a fine
old farm-house -- a mile from any other dwelling,
and dipped to the eaves in foliage -- surrounded by
mountains, old woods, and Indian ponds, -- this, surely, is
the place to write of Hawthorne. Some charm is in
this northern air, for love and duty seem both impelling
to the task. A man of a deep & noble nature has seized
me in this seclusion. His wild, witch voice rings thro' me;
or, in softer cadences, I seem to hear it in the songs of
the hill-side birds, that sing in the larch trees at my
window.

Would that all excellent books were foundlings,
without father or mother, that so it might be, we
could glorify them, without including their ostensible authors. Nor
would any true man take exception to this; -- least of all,
he who writes, --

But more than this. I know not

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what would be the right name to put on the
title-page of an excellent book, but this I feel, that
the names of all fine authors are fictitious ones, far
more so than that of Junius-- simply standing, as they do, for the
mystical, ever-eluding Spirit of all Beauty, which
ubiquitously possesses men of genius. Purely imaginative imagina
tive as this fancy may appear, it nevertheless seems to
receive some warrantry from the fact, that on a personal
interview no great author has ever come up to the
idea of his reader. But that dust of which our
bodies are composed, how can it fitly express
the nobler intelligences among us? With reverence be
it spoken, that not even in the case of one deemed
more than man, not even in our Saviour, did his
visible frame betoken anything of the augustness of the nature within.
Else, how could those Jewish eyewitnesses fail to
see heaven in his glance.

It is curious, how a man may travel
along a country road, and yet miss the grandest,
or sweetest of prospects, by reason of an intervening
hedge, so like all other hedges, as in no way
to hint of the wide landscape beyond.
So has it been with me concerning the enchanting
landscape in the soul of this Hawthorne, this most
excellent Man of Mosses. His "Old Manse" has been
written now four years, but I never read it till a day or two since.
. I had seen it in the book-stores --
heard of it often -- even had it recommended to me
by a tasteful friend, as a rare, quiet book, perhaps
too deserving of popularity to be popular. But there are
so many books called "excellent," and so much

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unpopular merit, that amid the thick stir of other things, the hint of my tasteful friend was disregarded; and for four years the Mosses on the old Manse never refreshed me with their perennial green. It may be, however, that all this while, the book, like wine, was only improving in flavor and body. At any rate, it so chanced that this long procrastination eventuated in a happy result. At breakfast the other day, a mountain girl, a cousin of mine, who for the last two weeks has every morning helped me to strawberries and raspberries,-- which, likethe roses and pearls in the fairy tale, seemed to fall into the saucer from those strawberry-beds her cheeks,-- this delightful creature, this charming Cherry says to me -- "I see you spend your mornings in the hay-mow; and yesterday I found there "'Dwight's Travels in New England'". Now I have something far better than that,--something more congenial to our summer on these hills. Take these raspberries, and then I will give you some moss." -- "Moss"! said I. -- "Yes, and you must take it to the barn with you, and good-bye to 'Dwight' ". [With that she left me, and soon returned with a volume, verdantly bound, and garnished with a curious frontispiece in green,-- nothing less, than a fragment of real moss cunningly pressed to a fly-leaf. -- "Why this," said I spilling my raspberries, "this is the 'Mosses from an Old Manse'." "Yes" said cousin Cherry "yes, it is that flowery Hawthorne." --

-- "Hawthorne and Mosses" said I "no more: it is morning: it is July in the country: and I

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am off for the barn".

Stretched on that new mown clover,
the hill-side breeze blowing over me
thro' the wide barn door, and soothed by the hum of the
bees in the meadows around, how magically
stole over me this **Mossy Man**! And how amply,
how bountifully, did he redeem that delicious
promise to his guests in the Old Manse, of whom
it is written -- "Others could give them pleasure,
"or amusement, or instruction -- these could be
"picked up anywhere -- but it was for me to
"give them rest. Rest, in a life of trouble! What
"better could be done for weary and
"world-worn spirits? what better could be done
"for anybody, who came within our magic
"circle, than to throw the spell of a magic spirit
"over him?" -- So all that day, **half**-buried in the
new clover, I watched this Hawthorne's
"Assyrian dawn, and Paphian sunset and moon-
rise, from the summit of our Eastern Hill."

The soft ravishments of the man spun me round
about in a web of dreams, and when the book was
closed, when the spell was over, this wizard
"dismissed me with but misty reminiscences, as if
I had been dreaming of him"

What a mild moonlight of contemplative
humor bathes that Old Manse!-- the rich and
rare distilment of a spicy and slowly-oozing heart.

No rollicking **rudeness**, no gross fun fed on fat dinners,
and bred in the lees of wine,-- but a humor
so spiritually gentle, so high, so deep, and yet

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so richly relishable, that it **were**
hardly inappropriate in an angel. **It** is the
very religion of mirth; for nothing so human
but it may be advanced to that. The orchard of
the **Old** Manse seems the visible type of the
fine mind that has described it. Those
twisted, and contorted old trees, And then, as surrounded
by these grotesque forms, and hushed in the
noon-day repose of this Hawthorne's **spell**, how **aptly**
might the still fall of his ruddy thoughts
into your soul be symbolized by "the thump of
a great apple, in the **stillest** afternoon, falling
without a breath of wind, from the mere
necessity of perfect ripeness"! For no less ripe
than ruddy are the apples of **the** thoughts and fancies in
this sweet Man of Mosses. "Buds and Bird-voices"--
What a delicious thing is that!"Will the world
ever be so decayed, that Spring may not renew
its greenness?"-- And the "Fire-Worship". Was ever
the hearth so glorified into an altar before?
The mere title of that piece is better than any
common work in fifty folio volumes. How
exquisite is this:-- "Nor did it lessen the charm
"of his soft, familiar courtesy and helpfulness,
that the mighty spirit, were opportunity offered
him, would run riot through the peaceful
house, wrap its inmates in his terrible embrace,
and leave nothing of them save their whitened

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bones. This possibility of mad destruction only
made his domestic kindness the more beautiful
and touching. It was so sweet of him, being
endowed with such power, to dwell, day after
day, and one long, lonesome night after
another, on the dusky hearth, only now & then
betraying his wild nature, by thrusting his
red tongue out of the chimney-top! True, he had
done much mischief in the world, and was
pretty certain to do more, but his warm heart
atoned for all; He was kindly to the race of man."

But he has still other apples, not
quite so ruddy, though full as ripe;--apples, that
have been left to wither on the tree, after the
pleasant autumn gathering is past. The
sketch of "**The** Old Apple Dealer is conceived in
the subtlest spirit of sadness; he whose "subdued
and nerveless boyhood prefigured his abortive
prime, which, likewise, contained within itself
the prophecy and image of **his** lean and torpid
age" Such **touches** as are **in** this piece can not
proceed from any common heart. They argue
such a depth of tenderness, such a boundless sym-
-pathy with **all** forms of being, such an omni-

present love, that we must needs say, that this Hawthorne is here almost alone in **his generation**, -- at least, in the artistic manifestation of these things. **Still** more. Such **touches** as these, -- and many, very many **similar ones**, all through his chapters--furnish clues, whereby we enter a

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little way into the intricate, profound heart **where** they originated. And we see, that suffering, some time or other **& in some shape or other**, -- this only can enable any man to depict it in others. All over **him**, Hawthorne's melancholy rests like an Indian Summer, **which tho' bathing a whole country in one softness, still reveals the distinctive hue of every towering hill, & each far-winding vale.**

But it is the least part of genius that attracts admiration. Where Hawthorne is known, he seems to be **deemed** a pleasant writer, with a pleasant style, -- a sequestered, harmless man, from whom any deep and weighty thing would **hardly be anticipated: -- a man who means no meanings.** But there is no man, in **whom** humor and love, like mountain peaks, soar to such a rapt height, as to receive the irradiations of the upper skies; -- there is no man in whom humor & love are developed in that high form called genius; no such man can exist without also possessing, as the **indispensable complement** of **these**, a great, deep intellect, which drops down into **the** universe like a **plummet**. **Or, love** and humor are only the eyes, through which such an intellect views this world. The great beauty in such a mind is but the product of its strength. What, to all readers, can be more charming than the piece entitled "Monsieur du Miroir"; and to a **reader** at all capable of **fully** fathoming it, what, at the same time, can possess more mystical depth of meaning? -- **Yes, there he sits**, and looks at me, -- this "shape of mystery", this "identical Monsieur du Miroir."

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-- "Methinks I should tremble now, were his wizard power of gliding through all impediments in search of me, to place him suddenly before my eyes" How profound, nay appalling, is the moral evolved by the "Earth's Holocaust"; **where** -- beginning with the hollow follies and affectations of the world, -- **all vanities and empty theories & forms**, are, **one after another, & by an admirably graduated, growing comprehensiveness**; thrown into the allegorical fire, till, **at length**, nothing is left but the all-engendering heart of man; which remaining still unconsumed, the great conflagration is . **Of** a piece with this, is the "Intelligence Office", a wondrous symbolizing of **the** secret workings in **mens' souls**. are other sketches, still more charged with ponderous import. "The Christmas Banquet" & "The Bosom **Serpent**" would be **fine subjects**

for a curious and elaborate analysis, touching the conjectural parts of the mind that produced them. For spite of all the **Indian-summer** sunlight on the hither side of Hawthorne's soul, the other side -- like the dark half of the physical sphere -- is shrouded in a blackness, **ten times black**. But this darkness but gives more effect to the evermoving dawn, that forever **advances** through it, and **circumnavigates** his world. Whether Hawthorne has simply availed himself of this mystical blackness as a means **to** the wondrous effects he makes it to produce in his lights & shades; or whether there really lurks in him, perhaps unknown to himself, a touch of Puritanic gloom,-- this, I cannot

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altogether tell. Certain it is, however, that this great power of blackness in him derives its force from its appeals to that Calvinistic sense of **Innate Depravity** and original Sin, from whose visitations, in some shape or other, no deeply thinking mind is always & wholly free. **For, in** certain moods, no man can weigh this world, without throwing in something, **somehow Original Sin**, to strike the uneven balance. At all events, perhaps no **writer** has ever **wielded** this terrific thought with greater **terror** than this same harmless Hawthorne. Still more: this black **conceit pervades him**, through & through. You may be witched by his sunlight,-- transported by the bright gildings in the skies he builds over you;-- but there is the blackness of darkness beyond; and even **his bright** gildings but fringe, and play upon the edges of thunder-clouds.-- In one word, the world is mistaken in this Nathaniel Hawthorne. He himself must often have smiled at its absurd misconception **of him**. He is immeasurably deeper than the plummet of the mere critic. For it is not the **brain** that can test such a man; it is only the heart. You cannot come to know greatness by **inspecting it**; there is no glimpse to be caught of it, except by intuition; you **need not** ring it, you but touch it, and you find it is gold

now **it is that** blackness in Hawthorne, of which I have spoken, that so fixes & fascinates me. It may be, **nevertheless**, that it is too

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largely developed in him. Perhaps he does not give us a ray of his light for every shade of his **dark**. But however this may be, this blackness it is that furnishes the infinite obscure of his back-ground,-- that back-ground, against which Shakespeare plays his grandest conceits, the things that have made for Shakespeare his **loftiest, but most circumscribed** renown, as the **profoundest** of thinkers. For by philosophers Shakespeare is

not **adored** as the great man of tragedy and comedy.--"Off with his head! so much for Buckingham!" this sort of rant, **interlined** by **another** hand, brings down the house,--those mistaken souls, who dream of Shakespeare as a **mere** man of Richard-the-Third humps, and Macbeth daggers. But it is those deep **far-away** things in him; those occasional flashings-forth of the intuitive Truth in him; those short, quick probings **at** the very axis of reality:-- these are the things that make Shakespeare, Shakespeare. Through the **mouths** of the dark characters of Hamlet, Timon, Lear, and Iago, he craftily says, **or sometimes insinuates** the things, **which** we feel to be so terrifically true, that it were all but madness for any good man, in his own proper character, to utter, or even hint of them. **Tormented** into desperation, Lear the frantic King **tears off the mask,** & speaks the sane madness of vital truth. But, as I before said, it is the least part of genius that attracts admiration. And so,

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much of the blind, unbridled admiration that has been heaped upon Shakespeare, has been lavished upon the least part of him. And few of his endless commentators & critics seem to have **remembered, or even** , that the immediate products of a great mind are not so great, as that undeveloped, (**& sometimes undevelopable**) yet dimly-discernable greatness, to which **these immediate products** are but the infallible indices. In Shakespeare's tomb lies infinitely more than **Shakspeare** ever wrote. And if I magnify Shakespeare, it is not so much for what he **diddo**, as for what he did not do, **or refrained from doing**. For in this world of lies, Truth is **forced** to fly like a scared white doe in the woodlands; and only by cunning glimpses will she reveal herself, as in Shakespeare and other **masters** of the great **Art** of Telling the Truth,--even though it be covertly, and by snatches.

But **if** this view of the all-popular Shakspeare **be** seldom taken by his readers, and if very few who extol him, have ever read him deeply, **or, perhaps**, only have seen him on the tricky stage, (which alone made, and is still making him his mere mob renown) -- if few men have time, or patience, or palate , for the spiritual truth as it is in **that** great genius; -- it is, **then**, no matter of surprise that **in a contemporaneous age**, Nathaniel Hawthorne is a man, **as yet, almost** utterly mistaken among men. Here & there, in some quiet arm-chair in the noisy town, or some deep nook among the **noisless** mountains, he may be appreciated for something of what he is.

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But unlike Shakespeare, who was forced to **the contrary course** by circumstances, Hawthorne (either from simple disinclination, or else from inaptitude) refrains from all the **popularizing noise** and show of

broad farce, & blood-besmeared tragedy; content with the still, rich utterances of a great intellect in repose, and which sends few thoughts into circulation, except they be arterialized **at** his large warm lungs, and expanded in his honest heart.

Nor need you fix upon that blackness in him, if it suit you not. Nor, indeed, will all readers discern it, for it is, **mostly, insinuated** to those who may best undersand it, and account for it; it is not obtruded upon every one alike.

Some may start to read of Shakespeare and Hawthorne on the same page. They may say, that if an illustration were needed, a lesser light might have sufficed to elucidate this Hawthorne, this **small** man of yesterday. But I am not, willingly, one of those, who, as touching Shakespeare at least, exemplify the maxim of Rochefoucault, that "we exalt the reputation of some, in order to depress that of others";-- who, to teach all **noble-souled aspirants** that there is no hope for them, pronounce Shakespeare absolutely unapproachable. **But Shakespeare** has been approached. There are minds that have gone as **far** as Shakespeare into the universe. And hardly a mortal man, **who**, at some time or other, has not felt as great thoughts in him as any you will find in Hamlet. We must not **inferentially** malign mankind

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for the sake of any one man, whoever he may be. This is too cheap a purchase of contentment for conscious mediocrity to make. Besides, this absolute and unconditional adoration of Shakespeare has grown to be a part of our Anglo Saxon superstitions. The **Thirty Nine** articles are now **Forty**. Intolerance has come to exist in this matter.

You must believe in Shakespeare's **unapproachability**, or quit the country. But what sort of a belief is this for an American, a man who is bound to carry republican progress-**iveness** into Literature, as well as into Life? Believe me, my friends, that **men not very much inferior to** Shakespeare, are this day being born on the banks of the Ohio. And the day will come, when you shall say who reads a book by an Englishman **that is a modern?** The great mistake seems to be, that even with those Americans who look forward **to** the coming of a great **literary** genius among us, they somehow fancy he will come in the costume of Queen Elizabeth's day,-- be a writer of dramas founded upon old English history, or the tales of Boccaccio. Whereas, great geniuses are parts of the times; they themselves are the times; and possess a correspondent coloring. It is of a **piece** with the Jews, who while their Shiloh was meekly walking in their streets, were still praying for his magnificent coming; looking for him in a chariot, who was already among them on an ass. Nor must we forget, that, in his own life-time, Shakespeare was

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not Shakespeare, but only Master William Shakespeare of the **shrewd, thriving**, business firm of Condell, Shakespeare & Co., proprietors of the Globe Theatre in London; & by a courtly author, of the name of Chettle, was hooted at, as an "upstart crow" beautified "with other birds' feathers." For, mark it well, imitation is often the first charge brought against real originality. Why this is so, there is not space to set forth here. You must have plenty of sea-room to tell the **Truth** in; especially, when it seems to have an aspect of newness, as America did in 1492, tho' it was then just as old, and perhaps older than Asia, only **those** sagacious philosophers, the common sailors, had never seen it before; swearing it was all water & moonshine there. **#to be concluded next week)**

15. Part II

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Hawthorne and His Mosses

By a Virginian Spending July in Vermont

[concluded from the last number.]

Now, I do not **say** that Nathaniel of Salem is a greater than William of Avon, or as great. But the difference between the two men is by no means immeasurable. Not a very great deal more, and Nathaniel were **verily** William.

This, too, I mean, that if Shakespeare has not been equalled, **give the world time**, & he is sure to be surpassed, **in one hemisphere or the other.**

Nor will

it **at** all do to say, that the world is getting **grey & grizzled**

now, and has lost that fresh charm which

she wore of old, and by virtue of which

the great poets of past times made themselves

what we esteem them **to be**. Not so. the world is as young today, as when it was created; and **this Vermont** morning dew is as wet to

my feet, as Eden's **dew** to Adam's. Nor has

Nature been all over ransacked by our progen--

itors, so **that** no new charms and mysteries remain

for this latter generation to find. Far from it.

The **trillionth** part has not yet been

said; and all that has been said, but mul-

tiplies the avenues to what **remains** to be said.

It is not so much paucity, as superabundance

of material that **seems to** incapacitate **modern authors.**

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praise mediocrity even, in her own children, before she praises (for everywhere, merit demands acknowledgment from every one) **the best excellence in the children of any other land.** Let her own authors, I say, have the priority of appreciation. I was much pleased with a hot-headed Carolina cousin of mine, who once said,--"If there were no other American to stand by, in Literature,--why, then, I would stand by Pop Emmons and his "Fredoniad," and till a better epic came along, swear it was not very far behind the Iliad." Take away the words, and in spirit he was sound.

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Let America then **prize** and cherish her **writers**; yea, let her glorify them. They are not so many in number, as to exhaust her good-will. And while she has good kith and kin of her own, to take to her bosom, let her not lavish her embraces upon the **household of an alien**. For believe it or not England, **after all, is, in many things**, an alien to us. China has more **bowels of real love** for us than she. But even were there no) --were there none of **strong literary individualities among us, as there are some dozens at least**, nevertheless, let America **first she praises (for everywhere, merit demands acknowledgment from every one)** the best excellence in the children of any other land.

Said a hot-headed Carolina cousin of mine, "If there were no to stand by, in Literature" said he, "why, then, I would stand by Pop Emmons and his

swear it was not very far behind

Not that American genius needs patronage in order to expand. For that **explosive** sort of stuff will expand though screwed up in a vice, and burst it, though it were triple steel. It is for the nation's sake, and not for her authors' sake, that I would have America be heedful of the **increasing** greatness among her writers. **For** how great the shame, if other nations should be before her, in crowning her heroes of the pen. But this is almost the case now. American authors have received more just and discriminating praise (however **loftily** and ridiculously

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given, **in certain cases**) even from some Englishmen, than from **their** own countrymen. **There are hardly five critics in America, and several of them are asleep.** As for patronage, it is the American author who now patronizes the country, and not his country him. And if at times some among them appeal to the people for **more** recognition, it is not always with selfish motives, but patriotic ones.

It is true, that but few of **them** as yet have **evinced** that **decided** originality which merits great praise. But that graceful writer, who perhaps of all Americans has received **the** most plaudits from his own country for his productions, -- that **very popular & amiable** writer, however good, & **self-reliant** in many things, perhaps owes his chief **reputation** to the self-acknowledged imitation of **a foreign** model, and to the studied avoidance of all topics but smooth ones. But it is better to fail in originality, than to **succeed** in imitation. **He** who has never failed **somewhere**, that man can not be great. **Failure is the true test of greatness .** And if it be said, that **continual** success is a proof that a man **wisely** knows his powers, - it is only to be added, that, **in that case**, he knows them to be small. Let us believe it, then, once for all, that there is no hope for us in these smooth pleasing writers that know their **powers**.

Without malice, but to speak the plain fact, they but furnish an appendix to Goldsmith, and other

English authors. And we want no American Goldsmiths: nay, we want no American Miltons.

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It were the vilest thing you could say of a true American author.that he were an American **Tompkins**. Call him an American, and have done; for you cannot say **a nobler thing of him.**-But it is **not meant** that all American writers should studiously cleave to **nationality** in their writings; only this, no American writer should write like an Englishman, or a Frenchman; let him write like a man, for then he will be sure to write like an American. Let us away with this leaven of **literary** flunkeyism towards England. If either must play the flunkey**in this thing**, let England do it, not us. . While we are rapidly preparing for that **political** supremacy among **the** nations, which **prophetically** awaits **us at** the close of the **present** century; in a literary point of view, we are deplorably unprepared **for it**; and we seem studious to remain so. Hitherto, reasons might have existed why this should be; but no good reason exists now. And all that is requisite to amendment in this matter, is simply this: that, **while freely acknowledging all excellence, everywhere**, we should refrain from unduly **lauding** foreign writers, &, **at the same time**, duly **recognise** the meritorious writers that are our own;--those writers, who breathe that unshackled, democratic spirit **of Christianity** in all things, **which** now takes the **practical** lead in **this** world, though at the same

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time led by **ourselves-us Americans**. Let us boldly condemn all imitation, though it comes to us graceful and fragrant as the morning; And foster all **originality**, though, **at first**, it be crabbed and ugly as our own pine knots. And if any of our authors fail, or seem to fail, **then, in the words of my enthusiastic Carolina cousin**, let us clap him on the shoulder, and back him against all Europe for his second round. The truth is, **that** in our point of view, **this** matter of a national literature has come to such a pass with us, that in some sense we must turn bullies, else the day is lost, or superiority so far beyond us, that we can hardly **say it will ever be ours.**

And now, my countrymen, as an excellent author, of your own flesh and blood,--an **unimitating**, and, perhaps, in his way, **an** inimitable man--whom better can I commend **to** you, in the first place, than Nathaniel Hawthorne. He is one of the new, and **far** better generation of your writer. The smell of your **beeches** and hemlocks is upon him; your own broad prairies are in his soul; and if you

travel away inland into his deep and noble nature, you will hear the far roar of his Niagara. Give not over to future generations the glad duty of acknowledging him for what he is. Take that joy to yourself, in your own generation; and so shall he feel those grateful **impressions in** him, that may **possibly** prompt him to the full flower of some **still** greater achievement in your eyes.

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And by confessing him, you thereby confess others; you brace the whole brotherhood. For genius, all over the world, stands hand in hand, and one shock of recognition runs the whole circle round.

In treating of Hawthorne, or rather of Hawthorne in his writings (for I never saw the man; and in the chances of a quiet **plantation** life, remote from his haunts, perhaps never shall) ; in **treating** of his works, I say, I have thus far omitted all mention of his "Twice Told Tales" , and "Scarlet Letter" . Both are excellent, but full of such manifold, **strange** and diffusive beauties, that time would **all but** fail me, to point the half of them out. But there are things in those two books, which, had they been written in England a century ago, Nathaniel Hawthorne had utterly displaced **many of the bright names we now revere on authority**. But I am content to leave Hawthorne to himself, **and to the infallible finding of posterity**; and however great may be the praise I have bestowed upon him, I feel, that in so doing, I have more **served** and honored myself, than him. For, at bottom, great excellence is praise enough to itself; but the feeling of a **sincere and appreciative love & admiration towards it** , **this** is relieved by utterance; and warm, honest praise ever leaves a pleasant flavor in the mouth; and it is an honorable thing to **confess to** what is honorable in others.

But I cannot leave my subject yet. No man can read a fine author, and relish him to his very bones, while he reads, without

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subsequently fancying to himself some ideal image of the man and his mind. And if you rightly look for it, you will almost always find that **the author** himself has **somewhere** furnished you with his own picture. For poets (whether in prose or verse), being painters of Nature, are like their brethren of the pencil, the true portrait-painters, **who**, in the multitude of likenesses to be **sketched**, do not **invariably** omit their own; **& in all high instances, they paint them without any vanity, though, at times, with a lurking something, take several pages to properly define.**

I submit it, then, to those best acquainted with the man personally, whether the following is not Nathaniel Hawthorne;-- and to himself, whether something involved in

it does not express the temper of this mind,
 --that lasting temper of all true, candid men
 --a seeker, not a finder yet:--

A man now entered, in neglected attire, with the aspect of a thinker, but somewhat too rough-hewn and brawny for a scholar. His face was full of sturdy vigor, with some finer and keener attribute beneath; though harsh at first, it was tempered with the glow of a large, warm heart, which had force enough to heat his powerful intellect through and through. He advanced to the Intelligencer, and looked at him with a glance of such stern sincerity, that perhaps few secrets were beyond its scope.

"I seek for Truth", said he."

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Twenty-four hours have elapsed since writing the foregoing. I have just returned from the hay mow, charged more and more with love and admiration of Hawthorne. For I have just been gleaning through the mosses, picking up many things here and there that had previously escaped me. **And** I found that but to glean after this man,

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is better than to be in at the harvest of others. To be frank (though, perhaps, rather foolish) notwithstanding what I wrote yesterday of these **Mosses**, I had not then culled them all; but had, nevertheless, been sufficiently **sensible of the** subtle essence, **in them, as to write** as I did. To what infinite height of loving wonder and admiration I may yet be borne, when by repeatedly banquetting on these **Mosses**, I shall have thoroughly incorporated **their** whole stuff into my being,--that, I can not tell. But already I feel that this Hawthorne has dropped germinous seeds into my soul. He expands and deepens down, the more I contemplate him; and further, and further, shoots his strong New-England roots into **the hot soil of my Southern soul.** .

By careful reference to the "Table of Contents", I now find, that I have gone through all the sketches; **but** that when I yesterday wrote, I had not at all read two particular pieces, to which I now desire to call special attention,--"A Select Party", and "Young Goodman Brown" . **Here**, be it said to all those whom this poor fugitive scrawl of mine may tempt to the purusal of the "Mosses," that they must on no account suffer themselves to be trifled with, disappointed, **or** deceived by the triviality of many of the titles to these Sketches. For in more than one instance, the title utterly belies the piece. It is as if rustic demjohns containing the very best and **costliest** of Falernian and Tokay, were labeled "Cider" , "Perry," and "Elder-berry Wine" . The truth seems to be, that like many other geniuses, this **Man of Mosses** takes great delight in hoodwinking the world,--at least, with respect to himself. Personally, I **doubt** not, that he rather prefers to be **generally** esteemed but a so-so sort of author; being willing to

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reserve the thorough and acute appreciation of what he is, to that party **most** qualified to judge--that is, **to himself**. Besides, at the bottom of their natures, men like Hawthorne, in many things, deem the plaudits of

the public such strong presumptive evidence of mediocrity in the object of them, that it would in some degree render them doubtful of their own powers, did they hear much and vociferous braying concerning them in the public pastures. True, I have been braying myself (if you please to be witty enough, to have it so) but then I claim to be the first that has so brayed in this particular matter; and therefore, while pleading guilty to the charge still claim all the merit due to originality.

But with whatever motive, playful or profound, Nathaniel Hawthorne has chosen to entitle his pieces in the manner he has, it is certain, that some of them are directly calculated to deceive--egregiously deceive, the superficial skimmer of pages. To be downright and candid once more, let me cheerfully say, that two of these titles did dolefully dupe no less an eagle-eyed reader than myself; and that, too, after I had been impressed with a sense of the great depth and breadth of this American man. "Who in the name of thunder" (as the country- people say in this neighborhood) "who in the name of thunder" , would anticipate any marvel in a piece entitled "Young Goodman Brown" ? You would of course suppose that it was a simple little tale, intended as a supplement to "Goody Two Shoes" . Whereas, it is deep as Dante; nor can you finish it, without addressing the author in his own words--"It is yours to penetrate , in every bosom, the deep mystery of sin" . And with

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Young Goodman, too, in allegorical pursuit of his Puritan wife, you cry out in your anguish,--

"'Faith!' shouted Goodman Brown, in a voice of agony and desperation; and the echoes of the forest mocked him, crying-- 'Faith! Faith!' as if bewildered wretches were seeking her all through the wilderness."

Now this same piece, entitled "Young Goodman Brown," is one of the two that I had not all read yesterday; and I allude to it now, because it is, in itself, such a strong positive illustration of that blackness in Hawthorne, which I had assumed from the mere **occasional** shadows of it, as revealed in several of the other sketches. But had I previously perused "Young Goodman Brown," I should have been at no pains to draw the conclusion, which I came to, at a time, when I was ignorant that the book contained one such direct and unqualified manifestation of it.

The other piece of the two referred to, is entitled "A Select Party," which, in my first simplicity upon originally taking hold of the book, I fancied must treat of some pumpkin-pie party in Old Salem, or some **chowder party** on Cape Cod. Whereas, by all the gods of **Peedee!** it is the sweetest and sublimest thing that has been written since Spencer wrote. Nay, there is nothing in Spencer that **surpasses it, perhaps, nothing that equals it.** And the test is this: read any canto in "The Faery Queen," and then read "A Select Party," and decide which pleases you the most,-- **that is, if you are qualified to judge.** Do not be frightened at this; for when Spencer was alive, he was thought of very much as Hawthorne is now, -- was generally **accounted** just such a "gentle" harmless man. It may be, that to common eyes, the sublimity of Hawthorne seems lost in his sweetness, -- as perhaps in this same "Select Party" of his; for whom, he has builded so august a dome of sunset clouds, and served them on richer plate, than

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Belshazzar's when he banquetted his lords in Babylon.

But my **chief** business now, is to point out a particular page in this piece, having reference to an honored guest, who **under** the name of "The Master Genius" but in the guise of "ayoung man of poor attire, with no insignia of rank or acknowledged eminence", is introduced to the Man of Fancy, who is the giver of **the** feast. Now the page having reference to this "Master Genius," so happily expresses much of what I yesterday wrote, touching the coming of the literary Shiloh of America, that I cannot but be charmed by the coincidence; especially, when it shows such a parity of ideas , at **least**, in this one **point**, between a man like Hawthorne and a **man** like me.

And here, let me throw out another conceit of mine touching this American Shiloh, or "Master Genius," as Hawthorne calls him. May it not be, that this commanding mind has not been, is not, and never will be, individually developed in any one man? And would it, indeed, appear so unreasonable to suppose, that this great fullness and overflowing may be, or may be destined to be, shared by a plurality of men of genius? Surely, to take the very greatest example on record, Shakespeare cannot be regarded as in himself the concretion of all the genius of his time; nor as so immeasurably beyond Marlow, Webster, Ford, Beaumont, Jonson, that those great men can be said to share none of his **power**? For one, I conceive that there were dramatists in Elizabeth's day, between whom and Shakespeare the distance was by no means great. Let anyone, hitherto little acquainted with those neglected old authors, for the first time read them thoroughly, or even read Charles Lamb's Specimens of them, and he will

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be amazed at the wondrous ability of those **Anaks of** men, and shocked at this renewed example of the fact, that Fortune has more to do with fame than merit, -- though, without merit, lasting fame there can be none.

Nevertheless, it would argue too illy of my country were this maxim to hold good concerning Nathaniel Hawthorne, a man, who already, in some few minds, has shed "such a light, as never illuminates the earth, save when a great heart burns as the household fire of a grand intellect."

The words are his, "-- in the "Select Party"; and they are a magnificent setting to a **coincident sentiment** of my own, but **ramblingly** expressed yesterday, in reference to him self. Gainsay it who will, as I now write, I am **Posterity** speaking by proxy-- and after times will make it more than good, when I declare -- that the American, who up to the present day, has evinced, in Literature, the largest brain **with** the largest heart, that man is Nathaniel Hawthorne. Moreover, that whatever Nathaniel Hawthorne may hereafter write, "The Mosses from an Old Manse" will **be** ultimately accounted his masterpiece. For there is a sure, though a secret sign in some works which prove the culmination of the powers (**only the developable ones, however**) that produced them. But I am by no means desirous of the glory of a prophet. I pray Heaven that Hawthorne may

yet prove me an impostor in this prediction.

Especialy, as I somehow cling to the strange fancy, that, in all men, hiddenly reside certain wondrous, occult properties -- as in some plants and minerals -- which by some happy but very rare accident (as bronze was discovered by the melting of the iron and brass in the burning of Corinth) may chance to be called forth here on earth; not entirely waiting for their better discovery in the more congenial, blessed atmosphere of heaven.

Once more -- for it is hard to be finite upon an infinite subject, and all **subjects** are infinite.

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By some people, this entire

scrawl of mine may be esteemed altogether unnecessary, inasmuch, "as years ago" **(they may say)** "we found out the rich and rare stuff in this Hawthorne, whom you now **parade forth**, as if only yourself were the discoverer of this **Portuguese diamond in our Literature.**" -- But even granting

all this; and adding to it, the assumption that the books of Hawthorne have sold by the five-thousand, -- what does **that signify?** -- They should be sold by the hundred-thousand; and read by the million; and admired by every one who is capable of admiration.