

## SCENES OF HAWTHORNE'S ROMANCES.\*

### CONCORD.

FORTY years ago the little village of Concord covered a large area of the cultivated Western world. Whether that was the reason why Hawthorne went to live there is, perhaps, open to question. It is certain that the Old Manse was to be rented at a very reasonable figure; and it does occasionally happen that the materially and the transcendently desirable are coincident. Be that as it may, the early years of Hawthorne's married life were spent in Concord; and the mosses that he gathered there have since enriched the substance of many minds in all parts of the civilized globe.

The archaic seclusion of the place was even more conducive to meditation than to composition or creation, which last often seems to be promoted by some more or less acute external stimulus. The new husband and wife, or Adam and Eve, as they liked to call themselves, were almost as poor in money as their prototypes, and, in spite of their orchard and their vegetable garden, a good deal less able to get on without occasional remittances. Accordingly, the future author of "The Scarlet Letter" was compelled to alternate his hoeing and digging, his rambles over the hills and his paddling on the river, with periods of application to pen and paper in his study, where he would sit with locked doors, clad in a long and ancient flowered dressing-gown, upon the lining of the left-hand skirt of which he was in the habit of wiping his pen. His wife noticed this habit, and said nothing about it; but one day, on bringing his pen to the accustomed spot, Hawthorne found stitched on there a pretty pen-wiper, in the shape of a butterfly with red and black wings; and this butterfly was ever after renewed from time to time, as necessity required.

What was written in that little sunny-hued study, readers know; but nobody, not even the author's wife, ever saw him in the act of writing. He had to be alone. The force of the habit acquired during those solitary years in Salem could not now be overcome; and he had the air of feeling as if this business of story-producing was not altogether a reputable one,—hardly to be alluded to in decent

society. I remember that his son was led to take that view of the matter at a very tender age, and used to regard this unfortunate proclivity of his father with a sympathetic regret. It seemed strange that a man of his general ability and strength and charm of character should be the victim of such a weakness. The father was inclined to encourage this attitude on his son's part, and so successfully that the latter was over eighteen years old before he became familiar with any of the former's works, except the "Wonder Books," and the "True Stories." "Whatever you do, old boy, never write books!" was an exhortation volunteered more than once; and the recipient of it used to wonder why a warning so entirely gratuitous should be given at all. Write books, indeed!

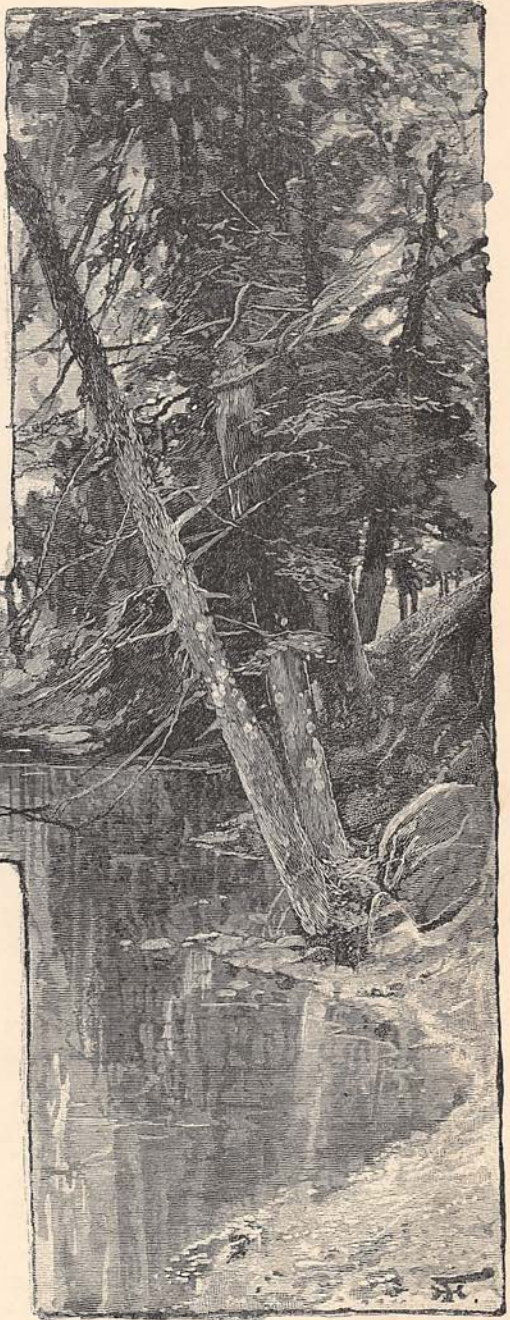
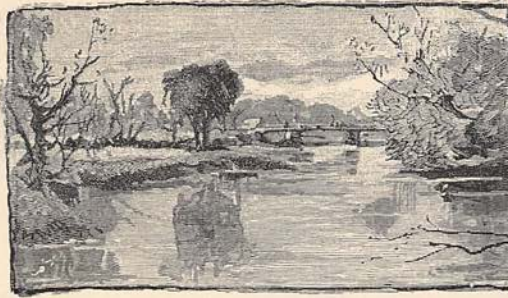
None of the stories written in the Old Manse were indebted to Concord for their scenery or background. "Birds and Bird Voices" is merely a description of spring; and "The Old Manse" was written in Salem, after the Concord life was over for the time. It was not until twenty years later that the sketch of "Septimius Felton" came into existence—after Hawthorne had lived in England and Italy, and had placed an atmosphere of years and growth between his early Concord reminiscences and himself. This kind of atmosphere seems a necessity to most writers of any depth. They cannot immediately translate their surroundings into literature. Much of what a man sees out of his study window does not belong to his mind or nature; it is unsympathetic with his genius, and acts like a discord. But in process of time these discords, finding no root, fall away and are forgotten; what is sympathetic remains, and becomes organically assimilated with the man. After this assimilation has taken place, and not before, the material, whatever it be, is ready for use.

Hawthorne was supremely happy, as well as fortunate, in his marriage; and no doubt this sense of domestic well-being rendered even the choicest of outside company more or less irksome to him. Emerson himself could teach him nothing that bettered the silent instruction of love. "I admired him as a poet of deep beauty and austere tenderness," he writes, "but sought nothing from

\* See also "The Salem of Hawthorne," by the same author, in this magazine for May, 1884, "Scenes from 'The Marble Faun,'" by W. L. Alden, in September, 1871, and "Hawthorne's Last Bequest," by T. W. Higginson, in November, 1872.



him as a philosopher. It was good, nevertheless, to meet him in the wood-paths, or sometimes in our avenue, with that pure, intellectual gleam diffused about his presence like the garment of a shining one; and he, so quiet, so simple, so without pretension, encountering each man alive as if expecting to receive more than he could impart." And then he adds: "And, in truth, the heart of many an ordinary man had, perchance, inscriptions which he could not read." This seems to express the situation precisely. He was living at a depth of peace greater than the plummet of the wisest philosopher, or the most primitive disciple of nature, or the most polished man of the world, could sound. In his neighborhood, and occasionally visiting or encountering him, were Henry Thoreau, Ellery Channing, James Russell Lowell, Margaret Fuller, George Bradford, George Hillard, and all the rest of that sublimated



conclave; and he took their society in good part, but was liable to enjoy it more in the anticipation and the reminiscence than in the visible and audible reality. Intellectual association is a privilege, but there is something essential to life which it cannot give. And by and by the deficiency is perceived. At such a time the society of persons of vastly less endowment is felt as a relief, and even an improvement. So, when, after two or three transcendental years, Hawthorne suddenly found himself in the Salem Custom House, he says:

"I took it in good part, at the hands of Providence, that I was thrown into a position so little akin to my past habits, and set myself seriously to gather from it whatever profit was to be had. After my fellowship of toil and impracticable schemes with the dreamy brethren of Brook Farm; after living for three years within the subtle influence of an intellect like Emerson's; after these wild, free days on the Assabeth, indulging fantastic speculations, beside our fire of fallen boughs, with Ellery Channing; after talking with Thoreau about pine-trees and Indian relics in his hermitage at Walden; after growing fastidious by sympathy with the classic refinement of Hillard's culture; after becoming imbued with poetic sentiment at Longfellow's hearthstone — it was time, at length, that I should exercise other faculties of my nature, and nour-

ish myself with food for which I had hitherto had little appetite. Even the old Inspector was desirable as a change of diet to a man who had known Alcott. I looked upon it as an evidence, in some measure, of a system naturally well-balanced, and lacking no essential part of a thorough organization, that, with such associates to remember, I could mingle at once with men of altogether different qualities, and never murmur at the change."

THE HEMLOCKS ON THE CONCORD.



There is a delicate flavor of irony in the last words; but Hawthorne was one of the most courteous of men, and used his exquisite faculty of literary expression rather as the veil of his arch incisiveness than as a whet to it.

The Old Manse to-day presents an aspect little different from that of forty years ago, and resembles scarcely at all such a rickety

"Mosses," Hawthorne mentions their grave, and goes on to speak of the story Lowell told him about one of them. "Tradition says that the lad now left his task"—he had been chopping wood—"and hurried to the battle-field with the axe still in his hand. The British had by this time retreated; the Americans were in pursuit; and the late



wraith of architecture as is pictured in the frontispiece to the new edition of Hawthorne's works. The frame-work of the house seems indestructible; and repairs have been made here and there, as from time to time they were needed. But the region in which it stands is less secluded than of yore. New little shanties have sprung up here and there. The old historic bridge, across which the Concord fight took place, has been rebuilt, after an elaborately rustic design; and on the western bank stands a commendable statue, by Mr. French, of the Minute Man—the embodiment of the embattled farmers who fired the shot heard round the world. His rifle is in his hand, and he smells the invader afar off. Opposite, on the hither shore, still uplifts itself the little granite obelisk put up long ago in memory of the conflict; and in the wall on the left has been placed a stone, bearing an inscription referring to the two unnamed British soldiers who were buried at this spot. In the introduction to the

scene of strife was thus deserted by both parties. Two soldiers lay on the ground. One was a corpse; but, as the young New Englander drew nigh, the other Briton raised himself painfully upon his hands and knees, and gave a ghastly stare into his face. The boy—it must have been a nervous impulse, without purpose, without thought, and betokening a sensitive and impressionable nature rather than a hardened one—the boy uplifted his axe and dealt the wounded soldier a fierce and fatal blow upon the head. . . . The story comes home to me like a truth. Oftentimes, as an intellectual and moral exercise, I have sought to follow that poor youth through his subsequent career, and observe how his soul was tortured by the blood-stain, contracted as it had been before the long custom of war had robbed human life of its sanctity, and while it still seemed murderous to slay a brother man. This one circumstance has borne more fruit for me than all that history tells us of the fight."



The fruit ripened at last, though in a shape considerably modified from its early germ. Twenty years later, in the romance of "Septimius," the hero kills a British officer, not by a nervous impulse, however, but in fair fight. "He had taken a human life; and however the circumstance might excuse him—might make the thing even something praiseworthy, and what would be called patriotic—still it was not at once that a fresh country youth could see anything but horror in the blood with which his hand was stained." Like all writers of the richest and sanest imagination, Hawthorne sought always to root his flowers of fancy in some basis of fact. And, for the observing eye and retentive mind, the quietest life affords abundance of material on which to found the most exalted and singular imaginative architecture. It is only the vulgar and the feeble who presume to invent a story or an episode out of whole cloth.

"Many strangers," he writes, "come in the summer-time to view the battle-ground." These strangers are still coming, in undiminished numbers, and now not to view the battle-ground alone, but the Old Manse also, and the Wayside, and Sleepy Hollow Cemetery, and the site of Thoreau's Hermitage at Walden, and the home of Emerson. Worthy and pious pilgrims that they are, they afford no little amusement, as well as some annoyance, to the presumptuous persons who have had the audacity to take up their abode in or near the sacred precincts. Pilgrims seem to think that no one has any rights which they are bound to respect over the goal of their pilgrimage—no one, that is, but the pilgrims themselves, who are plenipotentiary. Their bearing is haughty, indignant, and immitigable. It would appear to be morally incumbent on them to rout you out of bed in the morning, to disturb you at dinner, to invade your evening repose, implacably demanding to be forthwith conducted all over the premises, to have all their questions answered, yea, to be fed and soothed and flattered, and sent on their way (when they do not intend a permanent sojourn) with gratitude and blessings for their kindness in coming. Sometimes they approach singly, like the knight-errants of old, Britomarts as often as Artegalls (and the former are even more awe-inspiring than the latter); sometimes in twos and threes; sometimes in great battalions. They surround the



A GLIMPSE OF THE OLD MANSE FROM THE CONCORD RIVER.

devoted spot, they overrun it, they invest it, they encamp upon it, they peep through the





HAWTHORNE'S SEAT AT THE WAYSIDE.

windows, they walk unheralded through the doors, they pluck the flowers from the flowerbeds, they tear down the vines from the walls, they pull branches from the trees, they talk, they stare, they laugh, they frown, they question, they affirm, they deny, they investigate. One of their most engaging characteristics is the rare ingenuity they display in mistaking what they are looking at for something else. They insist upon it that the Wayside is the Old Manse, that the Old Manse is the Wayside, that the two are one and the same, that either or both are not in Concord but in Salem; that Sleepy Hollow is beside Walden Pond, that Walden Pond is in Sleepy Hollow; that Emerson lived in Thoreau's Hermitage; that Thoreau was present at Concord fight, collecting the arrow-heads of the invaders; that Alcott wrote the "Scarlet Letter"; that Hawthorne wore a black veil, ate only vegetables, and never looked upon the light of day; that Concord is in Lexington; that Lexington is on Bunker Hill. And if you attempt to combat or modify any or all of these convictions of theirs, they will give you plainly and immediately to understand that you are lost to all sense of truth as well as of decency. Their behavior throws a new light upon the Crusades of the Middle Ages, and suggests a doubt whether something might not have been said in behalf of the Turks, after all.

In spite of the pilgrims, Concord has a good many more inhabitants now than at

the time of the "Mosses"; society exists there of a loftier and more cultured sort than humanity has hitherto afforded; and the Concord School of Philosophy makes one realize what it might have been to be snowed up at a Wayside Inn with Pythagoras, Plato, Hypatia, Margaret Fuller, Descartes, Spinoza, Hegel, Fichte, Schopenhauer, Kant, Comte, Shakspeare, and Herbert Spencer for fireside cronies. The School itself—the material part of it—is a pretty little wooden structure (scarcely large enough, one would think, to contain the wisdom of the world) standing on the hill-side above the house formerly occupied by Alcott. The site and aspect of the latter building is one of the most agreeable in Concord, which, to speak seriously, is one of the comeliest and most attractive little towns in New England. "Apple Slump," as Miss Louisa Alcott once named it, is a low, brown, gabled, irregular structure, with a lazy wink of wise old windows, and overshadowed by the venerable branches of two or three enormous trees. It reclines, rather than stands, at a distance of forty yards or so back from the road, from which it is further protected by a praiseworthy modern fence. The fence, however, notwithstanding its intrinsic virtue, does not quite harmonize with the house; it is as though some hoary sage were to hold a carved ivory fan before his furrowed visage. Twenty years ago there was a fence of Mr. Alcott's own building, made of the curved and gnarled branches of forest-trees—an



excellent specimen of a species of architecture whereof Mr. Alcott was, if not the actual inventor, at all events one of the most admirable adepts. Of the same period, and constructed by the same hand, was the sum-

irascible old personage), and in a pet revoked his resolution, and so died. This gentleman, so far as he went, suggested or confirmed the conception of the deathless man which haunted Hawthorne's mind for so many years,



PATH UP THE WAYSIDE HILL.

mer-house on Emerson's premises, with the wind-harp of untrimmed boughs upon its gable—a harp which gave forth its music only in the wildest gales. Two more of these rustic edifices, which seemed to have come into existence by the consent of nature rather than by the hand or agency of man, once stood on the hill-side above the "Way-side," and at the bottom of the meadow on the other side of the road. They are all gone now, being among the few things in the shape of houses in New England that possessed the faculty of growing old and falling into picturesque decay.

The Wayside, in which Hawthorne's last years were passed, presents externally an appearance almost precisely the same as when he lived in it. The original house, the nucleus of the present building, was small and simple, consisting of only four or five small rooms and an attic. It was built some time before the Revolution broke out, and seems likely, with its additions, to prolong its existence as far into the future as it has lived in the past. Here, in the early times, lived a man—a crank we should call him now—whose hobby it was that death was a weakness to which only the pusillanimous succumb, and which he, at all events, was resolved never to be guilty of. Accordingly, he lived on to a considerable age, and might have been living still had he not become irritated at something (he appears to have been a very

and which finally found incomplete expression in "Septimius" and



THE TERRACES AT THE WAYSIDE.

the "Dolliver" fragment; and this house was the home of Septimius, that of Robert Hag-



burn being apparently identical with Mr. Alcott's. As for Rose Garfield's cottage, which stood half-way between the other two, within the memory of man nothing has remained of it save the hollow of its cellar—a deep green dimple in the ground, in which, as Hawthorne writes, "I, this very past summer, planted some sunflowers, to thrust their great disks out from the hollow, and allure the bee and the humming-bird." Hawthorne always had a great liking for sunflowers and for hollyhocks; and often, I remember, used to stand with his hands behind his back, as his manner was, contemplating the great, dignified plants as they reared themselves up out of the little hollow aforesaid. This part of Concord township has undergone less alteration than any other. It is out of the way of railway stations; the nearest shop is three-quarters of a mile distant; it does not seem to invite new settlers. Here is still the ridgy hill mentioned in the "Romance," rising abruptly behind the houses, and stretching, with one or two breaks and interruptions, into the heart of the village. In those days the Lexington road, which extends into Boston, was the only means of communication with the latter town, and hence most of the houses now to be found here were built at that period and not afterward. The road skirts the base of the hill, "in the side of which, according to tradition, the first settlers of the village had burrowed in caverns, which they had dug out for their shelter, like swallows and woodchucks. As its slope was toward the south, and its ridge and crowning woods defended them from the fierce northern blasts and snow-drifts, it was an admirable situation for the severe New England winter; and the temperature was milder, by several degrees, along this hillside, than on the unprotected plains, or by the river, or in any other part of Concord." This is true; but it may be observed that Concord is one of the coldest as well as one of the hottest places in New England, and that the site of the Wayside is one of the hottest though not one of the coldest in Concord. The bottom-land lies very low—twenty or thirty yards lower, it is said, than the bottom of Walden Pond, only two miles distant; and the air in summer stagnates and simmers like a sultry pool, until it would stew the life out of a salamander. Hawthorne never had his full health in the Wayside, and living there probably shortened his life several years.

Thirty years ago or more the house was owned by Mr. Alcott, who built an additional room on the western end, and made some other minor improvements. He also, I believe, planted the willows that still grow along the brook-side at the foot of the meadow.

Hawthorne, before leaving America for England in 1853, purchased the house from him as it stood, together with seven acres of meadow, and about twice as much woodland, including the hill, at the back of the dwelling. The steep hill-side was built up in terraces, on which apple-trees were planted; the western spur was overgrown with locust-trees, which in summer were heavy with pendent plumes of yellow blossoms. From England Hawthorne sent back a great number of Norway spruces and firs, which were set out along the walks and on the slope of the hill; and to-day they are grown so large and dense as quite to overshadow the place. The summit of the hill, and thence northward for a quarter of a mile or more, is a thick and tangled growth of oak, birch, and pine, with brambles and moss under foot, essentially untouched for many years. The path on which Hawthorne used to pace to and fro, and which his foot-prints gradually made, is still easily traced along the level brow of the declivity. It is perhaps two hundred yards in length, and undulates somewhat, though still preserving a uniform direction east and west. It was his custom to ascend hither in the late afternoon, and walk his beat for an hour or two till sunset, his hands clasped behind him, and his eyes gazing forward or downward abstractedly; occasionally he would pause on the western extremity of the path, which commanded a wide view over the Concord meadows, and stand looking out toward the sunset clouds. During the spring and summer of 1863—the last summer and the last spring but one before his death—his wife used often to ascend the hill with him, and they would loiter about there together, or sit down on the wooden benches that had been set up beneath the larger pines, or at points here and there whence glimpses of the vale were to be had. At other times they would stroll down the larch path to the brook, where was a pleasant gurgle of water, and a graceful dip and shadow of willows, and the warble of bobolinks and blackbirds. They were as constantly together during the last years as during the first of their married life at the Old Manse; and they talked much to each other in the low, sympathetic tones that were characteristic of them. But what they said can never be known. They were always happy in each other, and serene.

Hawthorne added a second story and a garret to the western wing of the house, and built on three rooms in the rear, one on top of the other, forming the tower, in the top-most chamber of which he wrote "Our Old Home" and the later fragments. It is a pleasant little room, lofty, with vaulted ceiling,



and accessible to whatever air might be stirring; but the heat in summer was oven-like, and in winter the only warmth to be obtained was from a small stove, which did more to vitiate the atmosphere than to temper it. Nevertheless, Hawthorne was fond of his study, or imagined that he was; but there must have been in his mind memories of cool, shadowy, secluded rooms, wainscotted and ceiled with oak, and embowered with ivy, such as he had often seen in England—rooms with a grave, antique individuality and flavor of their own, never to be reproduced in republican America. He regretted our Old Home, though not admitting to himself that he did so, and wasted slowly away in the keen dry air of New England. Or perhaps no geniality of earthly climate would have availed him much; he needed a change of scene more complete than the world could afford him. He had not misused such space and time as had been given to him in the world.

## BOSTON.

THE Boston of the "Scarlet Letter"—the infant Boston—betrayed few signs of its predestined dignity as Hub of the Universe. At high water it was an irregular island, comprising an area of rather less than seven hundred acres. Speaking roughly, the land somewhat resembled in shape an Indian arrow-head, the point lying toward the "Neck," which was at that period a neck of such slender proportions that it altogether vanished twice a day. It was little more than a long beach or sand-bar, in short, overflowed at flood-tide, and affording the sole means of gaining the main-land dry-shod when the tide was low. The path which led over it, and which extended through the central length of the island, was the forerunner of the celebrated thoroughfare which now bears the title of Washington street. It formerly pursued its way through a series of appellations. Thus, from its beginning, a little east of the present State street, it was called Cornhill as far as the junction with Milk street. Thence to the corner of Summer street it was dubbed Marlborough; and thence, successively, Newbury street and Orange street. What name it was known by after it crossed the Neck I am unable to say; probably it was little more than a rough wood-path. Indeed, such is the inference to be drawn from various passages in the romance. In the chapter called "A Forest Walk," for example, we read that "the road, after the two wayfarers had crossed from the peninsula to the main-land, was no other than

a footpath. It straggled onward into the mystery of the primeval forest. This hemmed it in so narrowly, and stood so black and dense on either side, and disclosed such imperfect glimpses of the sky above, that, to Hester's mind, it imaged not amiss the moral wilderness in which she had so long been wandering." And in this forest, in a dell whose site is now covered by brick buildings and sidewalks, where the whisper of the breeze and the gurgle of the brook are now replaced by the shuffling feet and discordant voices of innumerable passers-by, by the rattle of wagons and the jingle of horse-cars—here it was that the secret interview occurred between the Rev. Arthur Dimmesdale and Hester Prynne, at which it was decided that they were to flee together to the Old World. Here, too, or hereabouts, must have taken place those witch-meetings to which old Mistress Hibbins so mysteriously alluded. We see no Scarlet Letters on women's brows nowadays, and the Black Man has ceased to hold open revel within the precincts of Boston; and yet, possibly, the difference may be more apparent than real.

To return, however, to our topography. The waters of what is now known as the Back Bay completely bounded Boston on the north-west, washing the verge of the Common, and along the line now marked by Boylston street; on the north, round the foot of Beacon Hill, the broad expanse of Charles River flowed into the sea. The level region on the outer side of Cambridge street, occupied to-day by dingy blocks of warehouses and shops, and by two or three smoky railway stations, was all a waste of waters in the year 1630. Afterward a dam was built across the mouth of the inlet, and the inclosed space was called the mill-pond, and retained that name long after it had been made solid ground. In the account of Benjamin Franklin, in the "True Stories," it is alluded to as a place where "he and the other boys were very fond of fishing, and spent many of their leisure hours on the margin, catching flounders, perch, eels, and tomcod, which came up thither with the tide. . . . At that period it was a marshy spot on the outskirts of the town, where gulls flitted and screamed overhead, and salt-meadow grass grew under foot." To the south and east was the open sea—or at least the Bay of Boston; only at that time the waves concealed the site of many of those buildings which were burned down in the great fire thirteen or fourteen years ago. The Common has retained almost unchanged its present form. The lower part of Tremont street, which skirts it on the south, was in old





THE WAYSIDE.

times called Common street, and was, in fact, nothing but an unimproved cart-track. The first white settler of Boston, a certain William Blackstone, who afterward sold the entire peninsula to the colonial Government for the sum of thirty pounds sterling, is said to have had his farm on the south-west side of Beacon Hill, so that it must have included a part of the Common or the whole of it; but there is no record of this tract ever having been built upon, so long ago as 1626.

Isaac Johnson was the second pioneer to take up his abode in the future Boston; and he established himself upon the plot of land now bounded on the north and south by Tremont and Washington streets, on the east and west by Court and School streets, respectively. Two hundred and fifty years ago this modest farm may have been worth as much silver as Mr. Johnson could easily have carried in his breeches pocket; what it would be valued at to-day it might impoverish a Vanderbilt to pay. Howbeit, this Isaac (who was the husband of the Lady Arbella) was a man of wealth and station in England, but emigrated to New England for conscience' sake, along with Winthrop and others of the Puritans, in 1630. His wife, as we read in "Grandfather's Chair," died within a

month after her arrival, and "they dug a grave for her in the new soil, where the roots of the pine-trees impeded their spades." Mr. Johnson's heart "appears to have been quite broken, for he died at Boston within a month after the death of his wife. He was buried in the very same tract of ground where he had intended to build a dwelling for Lady Arbella and himself. Where their house would have stood, there was his grave. The people loved and respected him so much that it was the last request of many of them, when they died, that they might be buried as near as possible to this good man's grave. And so the field became the first burial-ground in Boston. When you pass through Tremont street, along by King's Chapel, you see a burial-ground containing many old graves and monuments. That was Mr. Johnson's field." Furthermore, in the first chapter of the "Scarlet Letter," we learn that "it may be safely assumed that the forefathers of Boston had built the first prison-house somewhere in the vicinity of Cornhill." Now, the old prison, "marked with weather stains and other indications of age which gave a yet darker aspect to its beetle-browed and gloomy front," and which, "like all that pertains to crime, seemed never to have known a youthful



era"—this ugly wooden jail, the rust on whose iron-bound door "looked more antique than anything else in the New World," stood, as a matter of historic fact, on the site now appropriated by the Boston Court-House, immediately in the rear of the City Hall, and a stone's throw from the windows of Parker's Hotel, in School street. It therefore fronted on Court street (then Prison Lane), and was nearly opposite the top of the present Cornhill, at one time known as Market street. The market-place, into which Prison Lane led, and where Hester Prynne's pillory was

the Revolution times the name of Congress street. This thoroughfare is several times mentioned in Hawthorne's writings, and always seems to enkindle in him a certain warlike and patriotic eloquence. The earliest allusion to it occurs in "The Gray Champion"—an episode imagined as taking place during the governorship of Sir Edmund Andros, in 1689:

"The roll of the drum, at that unquiet crisis, seemed to go through the streets, less as the martial music of the soldiers than as a muster-call to the inhabitants themselves. A multitude, by various avenues, assem-



BROOK NEAR THE  
WAYSIDE.

erected, was where the old State-House now is. Accordingly, if we wish to follow Hester's footsteps on that journey of hers from the prison door to the scaffold, we must start from the steps of the Court-House and proceed down Court street to the old State-House. "It was no great distance, in those days, from the prison door to the market-place. Measured by the prisoner's experience, however, it might be reckoned a journey of some length; for, haughty as was her demeanor, she perchance underwent an agony from every footstep of those that thronged to see her, as if her heart had been flung into the street for them all to spurn and trample upon." The scaffold is described in the "Romance" as standing at the western extremity of the market-place—"nearly beneath the eaves of Boston's earliest church, and appeared to be a fixture there."

Let us now betake ourselves to King street,—State street it is now, and also bore during

bled in King street, which was destined to be the scene, nearly a century afterward, of another encounter between the troops of Britain and a people struggling against her tyranny. . . . All this time the roll of the drum had been approaching through Cornhill [Washington street], louder and deeper, till with the reverberations from house to house, and the regular tramp of martial footsteps, it burst into the street. A double rank of soldiers made their appearance, occupying the whole breadth of the passage, with shouldered matchlocks, and matches burning, so as to present a row of fires in the dusk. Their steady march was like the progress of a machine that would roll irresistibly over everything in its way. Next, moving slowly, with a confused clatter of hoofs on the pavement, rode a party of mounted gentlemen, the central figure being Sir Edmund Andros, elderly, but erect and soldier-like. . . . Another guard of soldiers, in double rank, brought up the rear.

"The whole scene was a picture of the condition of New England. . . . On one side the religious multitude, with their sad visages and dark attire, and



on the other the group of despotic rulers, with the high churchman in the midst, . . . proud of unjust authority and scoffing at the universal groan. And the mercenary soldiers, waiting but the word to deluge the street with blood, showed the only means by which obedience could be secured.

"O Lord of Hosts," cried a voice among the crowd, 'provide a Champion for thy people!'

"This ejaculation was loudly uttered, and served as a herald's cry, to introduce a remarkable personage. The crowd had rolled back, and were now huddled together near the extremity of the street, while the soldiers had advanced no more than a third of its length. The intervening space was empty — a paved solitude, between lofty edifices, which threw almost a twilight shadow over it. Suddenly there was seen the figure of an ancient man, who seemed to have emerged from among the people, and was walking by himself along the center of the street, to confront the armed band. He wore the old Puritan dress, a dark cloak and a steeple-crowned hat, in the fashion of at least fifty years before, with a heavy sword upon his thigh, but a staff in his hand to assist the tremulous gait of age. . . . As he drew near the advancing soldiers, and as the roll of their drum came full upon his ear, the old man raised himself to a loftier mien, while the decrepitude of age seemed to fall from his shoulders, leaving him in gray but unbroken dignity. Now, he marched onward with a warrior's step, keeping time to the military music. Thus the aged form advanced on one side, and the whole parade of soldiers and magistrates on the other, till, when scarcely twenty yards remained between, the old man grasped his staff by the middle, and held it before him like a leader's truncheon.

"Stand!" cried he.

"The eye, the face, and attitude of command; the solemn, yet warlike peal of that voice, fit either to rule a host in the battle-field or be raised to God in prayer, were irresistible. At the old man's word and outstretched arms the roll of the drum was hushed at once, and the advancing line stood still. A tremulous enthusiasm seized upon the multitude. That stately form, combining the leader and the saint, so gray, so dimly seen, in such an ancient garb, could only belong to some old champion of the righteous cause, whom the oppressor's drum had summoned from his grave. They raised a shout of awe and exultation, and looked for the deliverance of New England."

It was not my intention to quote at such length; but the pleasure of transcribing words like these is hardly to be forborne. The story, in sustained power, austere eloquence, and graphic imagination, has always seemed to me equal to anything that Hawthorne has produced; and it was written when he was scarce thirty years old. He recurs to the same spot, nearly twenty years later, in the account of the Boston Massacre:

"Down toward the Custom-House, as I told you, came a party of wild young men. When they drew near the sentinel he halted on his post, and took his musket from his shoulder, ready to present the bayonet at their breasts. 'Who goes there?' he cried, in the gruff, peremptory tones of a soldier's challenge. The young men, being Boston boys, felt as if they had a right to walk their own streets without being accountable to a British redcoat. They made some rude answer to the sentinel. There was a dispute, perhaps a scuffle. Other soldiers heard the noise, and ran hastily from their barracks to assist their com-

rades. At the same time many of the townspeople rushed into King street by various avenues, and gathered in a crowd round about the Custom-House. It seemed wonderful how such a multitude had started up all of a sudden. . . .

"As the tumult grew louder it reached the ears of Captain Preston, the officer of the day. He immediately ordered eight soldiers of the main guard to take their muskets and follow him. . . . Arriving at the sentinel's post, he drew his men up in a semicircle, with their faces to the crowd. . . . When the people saw the officer, and beheld the threatening attitude with which the soldiers fronted them, their rage became almost uncontrollable. 'Fire, you lobster-backs!' bel-lowed some. 'Rush upon them!' shouted many voices. 'Drive the rascals to their barracks! Down with them! Let them fire if they dare!' Amid the uproar the soldiers stood glaring at the people with the fierceness of men whose trade was to shed blood. . . . 'Fire, if you dare, villains!' hoarsely shouted the people, while the muzzles of the muskets were turned upon them. 'You dare not fire!'

"They appeared ready to rush upon the leveled bayonets. Captain Preston waved his sword and uttered a command. His soldiers deemed that he had spoken the fatal mandate, 'Fire!' The flash of their muskets lighted up the street, and the report rang loudly between the edifices. It was said, too, that the figure of a man, with a cloth hanging down over his face, was seen to step into the balcony of the Custom-House and discharge a musket at the crowd.

"A gush of smoke overspread the scene. It rose heavily, as if it were loath to reveal the dreadful spectacle beneath it. Eleven of the sons of New England lay stretched upon the street. Some, sorely wounded, were struggling to rise again. Others stirred not, nor groaned; for they were past all pain. Blood was streaming upon the snow; and that purple stain in the midst of King street, though it melted away in the next day's sun, was never forgotten nor forgiven by the people."

It is said that the descendants of these Boston boys of a hundred years ago are very solicitous to imitate the dress, manners, and speech of the youth of England. So Time brings about his revenges.

Hester Prynne's cottage seems to have been situated on Back Bay, probably in the near vicinity of the Common.

"On the outskirts of the town, within the verge of the peninsula but not in close vicinity to any other habitation, there was a small thatched cottage. It had been built by an earlier settler, and abandoned, because the soil about it was too sterile for cultivation, while its comparative remoteness put it out of the sphere of that social activity which already marked the habits of the emigrants. It stood on the shore, looking across a basin of the sea at the forest-covered hills, toward the west. A clump of scrubby trees, such as alone grew on the peninsula, did not so much conceal the cottage from view, as seem to denote that here was some object which would fain have been, or at least ought to be, concealed."

Poor Hester's residence, were it standing to-day, would be in the near neighborhood of Boston's most aristocratic region. But, in the deepest of her sad musings over past and future, beside the gray waters of the land-locked bay, she never could have beheld a vision of Commonwealth Avenue rising from



the waves. Where, in the harsh soil of Puritan asceticism, were the seeds hidden of all this present luxury and culture?

Governor Bellingham's mansion stood midway between Pemberton Square and Beacon street.

"This was a large wooden house, built in a fashion of which there are specimens still extant in the streets of our elder towns; now moss-grown, crumbling to decay, and melancholy at heart with the many sorrowful or joyful occurrences, remembered or forgotten, that have happened, and passed away, within their dusky chambers. Then, however, there was the freshness of the passing year on its exterior, and the cheerfulness, gleaming forth from the sunny windows, of a human habitation, into which death had never entered. It had, indeed, a very cheery aspect; the walls being overspread with a kind of stucco, in which fragments of broken glass were plentifully intermixed; so that, when the sunshine fell aslant-wise over the front of the edifice, it glittered and sparkled as if diamonds had been flung against it by the double handful. . . . It was further decorated with strange and seemingly cabalistic figures and diagrams, suitable to the quaint taste of the age, which had been drawn in the stucco when newly laid on, and had now grown hard and durable, for the admiration of after times."

In order to reach the Governor's residence from their own abode, on that errand about the embroidered and fringed gloves, Hester and little Pearl would have only to cross the Common or to come round by Beacon street. Bellingham, by the by, was Governor three times — in 1641, in 1654, and, finally, from 1666 to 1672. Hester's visit to him, therefore, must have been made during his first governorship, and we must suppose the remainder of the story to have taken place during the same year. As for Mistress Hibbins, history describes her as Bellingham's relative, but does not say that she was his sister, as is stated in the "Romance." She was hanged for a witch in 1656. I trust these dates and details are of interest to some readers. Others will no doubt find it possible to enjoy the "Romance" without them.

Before I leave the subject of the "Scarlet Letter" I will say a word about a sickly little story that has been lately going the round of the papers upon the authority of Mr. Moncure D. Conway. It reads as follows:

"One wintry day Hawthorne received word at his office that his services would no longer be required. With heaviness of heart he repairs to his humble home. His young wife recognizes the change, and stands waiting for the silence to be broken. At length he falters, 'I am removed from office.' Then he leaves the room. Soon she returns with fuel and kindles a bright fire with her own hands; next she brings pen, paper, ink, and sets them beside him. Then she touches the sad man on the shoulder, and, as he turns to the beaming face, says, 'Now you can write your book!' The cloud cleared away. The lost office looked like a cage from which he had escaped. The 'Scarlet Letter' was written, and a marvelous success rewarded the author and his stout-hearted wife."

I think it is Wordsworth who somewhere says, "I heard a little lamb say, Ba-a!" But Hawthorne was not a little lamb, and never said Ba-a! I will now transcribe, from the introduction to the "Scarlet Letter," his own version of his attitude on the occasion referred to. He writes:

"Unpleasant as was my predicament at best, I saw much reason to congratulate myself that I was on the losing side rather than the triumphant one. . . . Nor was it without something like regret and shame that, according to a reasonable calculation of chances, I saw my own prospect of retaining office to be better than those of my Democratic brethren. But who can see an inch into futurity beyond his nose? My own head was the first that fell!

"The moment when a man's head drops off is seldom or never, I am inclined to think, precisely the most agreeable of his life. Nevertheless, like the greater part of our misfortunes, even so serious a contingency brings its remedy and consolation with it, if the sufferer will but make the best, rather than the worst, of the accident that has befallen him. In my particular case the consolatory topics were close at hand, and, indeed, had suggested themselves to my meditations a considerable time before it was requisite to use them. . . . Meanwhile the press had taken up my affair, and kept me for a week or two careering through the public prints in my decapitated state, like Irving's Headless Horseman: ghastly and grim, and longing to be buried, as a politically dead man ought. So much for my figurative self. The real human being, all this time with his head safely on his shoulders, had brought himself to the comfortable conclusion that everything was for the best; and, making an investment in ink, paper, and steel pens, had opened a long-disused writing-desk and was again a literary man."

Now, this indicates two things: first, that Hawthorne had foreseen his removal from office as a probable contingency, and had prepared for it; and secondly, that he had regarded it as by no means an unmixed evil. He liked to be a literary man better than to be a Custom-House surveyor; and though he would not deliberately have given up the certainty of a Government salary for the lottery of a literary success, yet he was far from regretting that the exchange had been forced upon him. Let us see how much is left of Mr. Conway's story, after eliminating from it the statements that Hawthorne came home crushed by a sudden and unexpected blow, that his wife stood waiting for the silence to be broken, and that she then (after lighting the fire with her own hands) touched him upon the shoulder and beamingly suggested (what they had been discussing for weeks past) that he should write his book! All that remains, in the absence of these touching details, is an implication that an interview of some kind took place between Mr. and Mrs. Hawthorne on the day of his being superseded. And did any such interview occur? Yes; and this is what happened. Hawthorne came in, with a humor-



ous smile in his eyes, and said: "Well, Sophie, my head is off, so I must begin to write a book. But what puzzles me is, how we are to live while the book is writing." "Oh, wait till you see how economical I've been!" replied his wife. Whereupon she unlocked a drawer, and presented to her astonished husband a roll of bills amounting to one hundred and fifty dollars, being the accumulation of her savings out of the money he had from time to time given her for housekeeping. I have heard my mother tell the story a score of times. How they both would have laughed to read, "At length he falters, 'I am removed from office.' Then he leaves the room."

Poor, shortsighted, sentimental, timid, faltering Hawthorne!

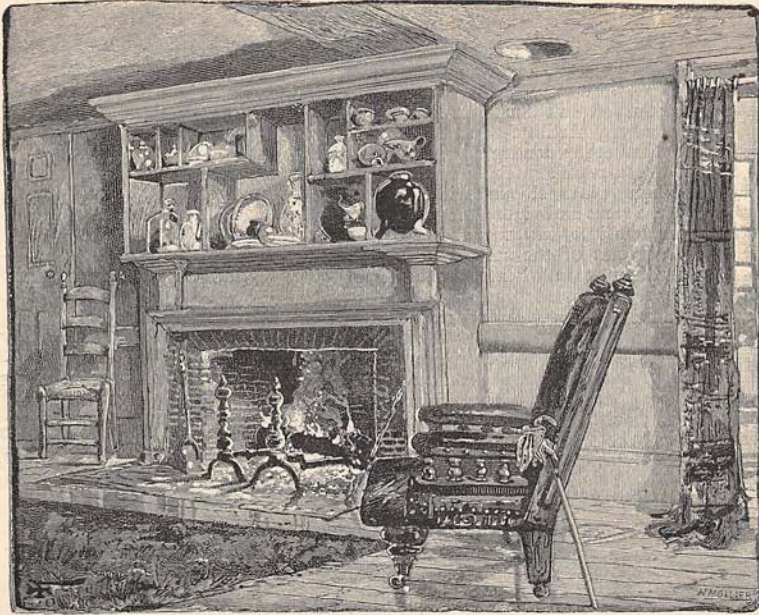
There is more of Boston than of any other particular locality in Hawthorne's books: he made the best use he could of the comparatively short historical

perspective that was available to him, and, living in Salem, was enabled to regard Boston from a more objective point of view than his native place. In the "Legends of the Province House" the mansion of the old royal Governors of Massachusetts is mentioned as being still in existence, and as standing in a small and secluded courtyard, behind a brick row of shops, to which access was obtained through a narrow archway and passage leading out of Washington street, nearly opposite the Old South Church. Now, whether the old Province House was standing so late as the date of the story, my archæological resources do not enable me to affirm. It is described by Hawthorne with a touch so graphic as to indicate an imaginary building rather than a material one. It had a square front, was "three stories high, and surmounted by a cupola, on the top of which a gilded Indian was discernible, with his bow bent and his arrow on the string, as if aiming at the weathercock on the spire of the Old South. The figure has kept this attitude for seventy years or more, ever since good Deacon Drowne, a cunning carver of wood, first stationed him on his long sentinel's watch over the city. The Province House is constructed of brick, which seems recently to have been overlaid with a coat of light-colored paint. A flight of red freestone steps,



HAWTHORNE'S STUDY AT THE WAYSIDE.





A FIRE-PLACE AT THE WAYSIDE.

fenced in by a balustrade of curiously wrought iron, ascends from the court-yard to the spacious porch, over which is a balcony, with an iron balustrade of pattern and workmanship similar to that beneath. These letters and figures—16 P. S. 79—are wrought into the ironwork of the balcony, and probably express the date of the edifice, with the initials of its founder's name. A wide door with double leaves admitted me into the hall or entry, on the right of which is the entrance to the bar-room." All this sounds almost too real and circumstantial to be true; but Hawthorne was so fond of blending the real and the fictitious in his writings, casting over the one the glamour of the other, and over the second the veracity of the first, that it is impossible to determine, save upon positive information, which is which. For my part, I should not be surprised to hear that the old Province House vanished with the last century; and there seems to be no trace of it in any of the published note-books and journals. Doubtless trustworthy news on this point might be found in Mr. Drake's "Landmarks," to which I am already much indebted, and to whose pages the insatiable on such matters are referred.

In "the Blithedale Romance"—in some respects the most delightfully expressed of all Hawthorne's books—the scene is laid once or twice in the more modern Boston of his own time. The cozy pair of bachelor rooms in which Coverdale used to sit by a fire of cannel coal immersed in "musings of every hue, from

the brightest to the most somber," and sipping "a glass of particularly fine sherry, on which I used to pride myself in those days"—as to the whereabouts of this pleasant apartment, no clew is given. But the "certain respectable hotel," with the view from its back windows of the rear of a fashionable boarding-house, may be more easily identified; and it may be of interest to compare the picture in the romance with the sketch from nature in the journals. The hotel itself, indeed, is either entirely apocryphal, or else the Tremont House was (as a temporary measure of convenience) removed from its present site and set down somewhere in West street, upon the spot at other times occupied by the abode of Dr. Peabody, Hawthorne's father-in-law. At all events, the Tremont was the hotel at which Hawthorne generally put up when in Boston, and in the journal of 1838 there is a passage describing a view from his chamber window of the brick edifice opposite, and concluding with the remark that "with this sketch might be mingled and worked up some story that was going on within the chamber where the spectator was situated." But the description of the boarding-house in the novel is derived from another passage in the journals for 1850, which is much more definite and specific. Miles Coverdale writes:

"Over against the hotel and its adjacent houses, at the distance of forty or fifty yards, was the rear of a range of buildings, which appeared to be spacious, modern, and calculated for fashionable residences.



The interval between was apportioned into grass-plots, and here and there an apology for a garden, pertaining severally to these dwellings. There were apple-trees, and pear and peach trees too, the fruit on which looked singularly large, luxuriant, and abundant—as well it might in a situation so warm and sheltered, and where the soil had doubtless been enriched to a more than natural fertility. In two or three places grape-vines clambered upon trellises, and promising the richness of Malta or Madeira in their ripened juice. The blighting winds of our rigid climate could not molest these trees and vines; the sunshine, though descending late into this area, and too early intercepted by the height of the surrounding houses, yet lay tropically there, even when less than temperate in any other region. Dreary as was the day, the scene was illuminated by not a few sparrows and other birds, which spread their wings, and flitted and fluttered, and alighted now here, now there, and busily scratched their food out of the wormy earth. Most of these winged people seemed to have their domicile in a robust and healthy buttonwood tree. It aspired upward, high above the roof of the houses, and spread a dense head of foliage across the area."

Let us now see where Miles Coverdale found the *disjecta membra* of this lovely little piece of artistic draughtsmanship. In his notebook for 1850 Hawthorne says:

"The view is bounded at perhaps thirty yards distance, by a row of opposite brick dwellings standing. I think, on Temple Place—houses of the better order, with tokens of genteel families visible in the rooms betwixt the basements and the attic windows in the roof. In the intervals are grass-plots, already green because so sheltered; and fruit trees, now beginning to put forth their leaves, and one of them, a cherry-tree, almost in full blossom. Birds flutter and sing among these trees. I should judge it to be a good site for the growth of delicate fruit; for, quite inclosed on all sides by houses, the blighting winds cannot molest the trees. They have sunshine on them a good part of the day, though the shadow must come early, and I suppose there is a rich soil about the roots. I see grape-vines clambering against one wall, and also peeping over another, where the main body of the vine is invisible to me. In another place a frame is erected for a grape-vine, and probably it will produce as rich clusters as the vines of Madeira, here in the heart of the city, in this little spot of fructifying earth, while the thunder of wheels rolls about it on every side. The trees are not all fruit trees. One pretty well-grown buttonwood tree aspires upward above the roof of the houses. In the full verdure of summer there will be quite a mass or curtain of foliage between the hither and the thither row of houses."

Now for Coverdale again: "There was a cat," he writes,— "as there invariably is in such places,— who evidently thought herself entitled to all the privileges of forest-life in this close heart of city conventionalisms. I watched her creeping along the low, flat roofs of the offices, descending a flight of wooden steps, gliding among the grass, and besieging the buttonwood tree with murderous purpose against its feathered citizens." And here is Hawthorne: "In the background of the house, a cat, occasionally stealing along on the roof of the low out-houses; de-

scending a flight of wooden steps into the brick area; investigating the shed, and all dark and secret places; noiseless, attentive to every noise." It is doubtful, in this instance, whether Coverdale's version is intrinsically as good as the original from which he drew; but it is more in tone with the rest of the picture. A true artist will always sacrifice any delicacy of detail for the sake of harmony in the whole design. Yet see, on the other hand, how charmingly Coverdale can develop a simple expression when he has a mind to. "I take an interest in all the nooks and crannies and every development of cities," reads the journal; and the "Romance": "Bewitching to my fancy are all those nooks and crannies, where nature, like a stray partridge, hides her head among the long-established haunts of men!" And here, again, is an example of how an ordinary incident may be invested with a subtle delicacy of sentiment. "Once this morning," we read in the journal, "a solitary dove came and alighted on the peak of an attic window, and looked down into the areas, remaining in this position a considerable time. Now it has taken a flight, and alighted on the roof of this house, directly over the window at which I sit, so that I can look up and see its head and beak and the tips of its claws." The "Romance" says:

"There was nothing else worth noticing about the house, unless it be that on the peak of one of the dormer-windows which opened out of the roof sat a dove, looking very dreary and forlorn; insomuch that I wondered why she chose to sit there in the chilly rain while her kindred were doubtless nestling in a warm and comfortable dove-cote. All at once this dove spread her wings, and, launching herself in the air, came flying so straight across the intervening space that I fully expected her to alight directly on my window-sill. In the latter part of her course, however, she swerved aside, flew upward, and vanished, as did likewise the slight, fantastic pathos with which I had invested her."

This story of Blithedale, though in its essence as romantic, in the Hawthornian sense, as anything that came from its author's pen, yet has superficially the air of lying nearer to the every-day familiar world than most that he has written. It has the look and the tone of a man of the world, with all the grace and subtlety of the poet in the conception and organization of it. In no other instance, moreover, is the opportunity afforded of comparing the author's finished work so closely with the actual sketches and observation on which it is founded; and it is for this reason that I have ventured to indicate parallelisms to an extent that might otherwise be indefensible. Let us take, as a final example in this part of our subject, the figure that served as the model for old Moodie:



"Pacing the sidewalk in front of this grogshop of Parker's (or sometimes, on cold and rainy days, taking his station inside), there is generally to be observed an elderly ragamuffin, in a dingy and battered hat, and old surtout, and a more than shabby general aspect; a thin face and red nose, a patch over one eye, and the other half drowned in moisture. He leans in a slightly stooping posture on a stick, forlorn and silent, addressing nobody, but fixing his one moist eye on you with a certain intentness. He is a man who has been in decent circumstances at some former period of his life, but, falling into decay (perhaps by dint of too frequent visits at Parker's bar), he now haunts about the place, as a ghost haunts the spot where he was murdered, 'to collect his rents,' as Parker says—that is, to catch an occasional ninepence from some charitable acquaintance or a glass of liquor at the bar. The word 'ragamuffin' which I have used above does not accurately express the man, because there is a sort of shadow or delusion of respectability about him, and a sobriety too, and a kind of decency in his groggy and red-nosed destitution."

Contrast this with old Moodie himself:

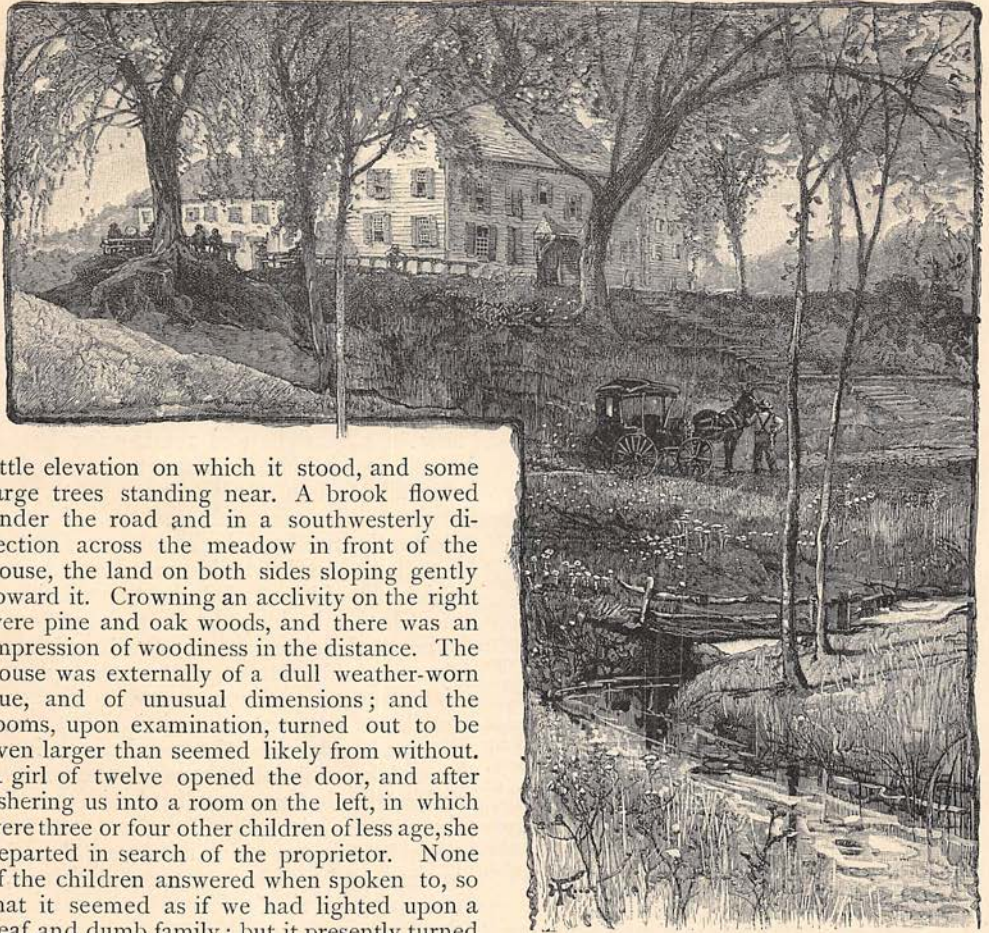
"He was an elderly man, dressed rather shabbily, yet decently enough, in a gray frock-coat, faded toward a brown hue, and wore a broad-brimmed white hat, of the fashion of several years gone by. His hair was perfect silver, without a dark thread in the whole of it; his nose, though it had a scarlet tip, by no means indicated the jollity of which a red nose is the generally admitted symbol. He was a subdued, undemonstrative old man, who would doubtless drink a glass of liquor now and then, and probably more than was good for him; not, however, with a purpose of undue exhilaration, but in the hope of bringing his spirits up to the ordinary level of the world's cheerfulness. Drawing nearer, there was a shy look about him, as if he were ashamed of his poverty; or, at any rate, for some reason or other, would rather have us glance at him sidelong than take a full front view. He had a queer appearance of hiding himself behind the patch on his left eye."

Hawthorne, in the course of the "Romance," returns again and again to this figure, adding touch after touch, until the faded old enigma stands out in almost merciless reality; for the very fact of his character and history being obscure and problematical aroused in his biographer that irresistible instinct of insight, so to speak, which none of the other makers of our literature have possessed in such perfection. One regrets, indeed, the withholding in the story of that sardonic flash of fancy in the note-book—that the old fellow haunts about the grog-shop that ruined him, "as a ghost haunts the spot where he was murdered!" But perhaps this would have been too bright a stroke to have been introduced into the marvelously restrained gray tone in which the whole portrait is conceived. No poet can put the whole of beauty into any one poem. This bar-room of Parker's was not, of course, the present august establishment, but a much less imposing resort, beneath the level of the sidewalk, and now, by a freak of destiny, a part of the premises owned and administered by Parker's most successful rival.

#### BROOK FARM.

THE district known as Brook Farm, though agreeable to look upon, with a rough, New England sort of agreeableness, in the summer or springtime, or when the hues of autumn have begun to glow, does not lend itself readily to description, and in winter is not worth describing. "The scenery," says Hawthorne, writing in April, "is of a mild and placid character, with nothing bold in its aspect; but I think its beauties will grow upon us, and make us love it the more, the longer we live here. There is a brook so near the house that we shall be able to hear its ripple in the summer evenings; but, for agricultural purposes, it has been made to flow in a straight and rectangular fashion, which does it infinite damage as a picturesque object." And in the "Romance" he speaks, somewhat imaginatively perhaps, of "those pleasantly swelling slopes of our farm descending toward the wide meadows, through which sluggishly circled the brimful tide of the Charles, bathing the long sedges on its hither and further shores; the broad, sunny gleam over the winding water; that peculiar picturesqueness of the scene where capes and headlands put themselves boldly forth upon the perfect level of the meadow, as into a green lake, with inlets between the promontories; the shadowy woodland, with twinkling showers of light falling into its depths; this misty heat-vapor, which rose everywhere like incense, and in which my soul delighted, as indicating so rich a fervor in the passionate day, and in the earth that was burning with its love." This certainly is the utmost degree of eulogy that could be applied to Brook Farm under the most favorable conditions, and is far beyond any length that I am qualified or inclined to go. My recollections of the place are mainly confined to a visit of a few hours made in the depths of last winter, the most agreeable feature of which was unquestionably the companionship of the two friends who transported me thither in a sleigh. The road from Jamaica Plain passes through two or three small villages, the regions intermediate being tolerably uneducated-looking country, uneven, but not to be called hilly: patches of woodland straggling here and there, plowed lands, meadows, brooks. As for the villages, they were as phenomenally featureless and characterless as only New England villages can be. After about an hour's leisurely progress, we turned aside to the right, and came by a crooked lane to the summit of a rise, whence we beheld a large, old-fashioned wooden house, with a flight of steps leading up the





BROOK FARM.

little elevation on which it stood, and some large trees standing near. A brook flowed under the road and in a southwesterly direction across the meadow in front of the house, the land on both sides sloping gently toward it. Crowning an acclivity on the right were pine and oak woods, and there was an impression of woodiness in the distance. The house was externally of a dull weather-worn hue, and of unusual dimensions; and the rooms, upon examination, turned out to be even larger than seemed likely from without. A girl of twelve opened the door, and after ushering us into a room on the left, in which were three or four other children of less age, she departed in search of the proprietor. None of the children answered when spoken to, so that it seemed as if we had lighted upon a deaf and dumb family; but it presently turned out that this scene of the transcendental community of forty years ago was now become a German orphan asylum, presided over by a German pastor from Magdeburg. This personage soon entered—an amiable, courteous, and obliging little man, brown-eyed, brown-haired and bearded, about five-and-forty years of age, who, as he told me, had lived ten years in this country without being able to speak the language, though he averred that he could read it. He had heard of “Brook Farm,” and of the “Communisten,” as he termed them, who had resided there; and he even had been informed that one of the Communists had written a romance about the association, but he (the pastor) had never been able to find a copy of the work. He now kindly volunteered to pilot us over the premises. The lower floor consists of three or four living-rooms, and a large room used as a kitchen, though I think this was originally the dining-room, and that the kitchen of the communists was a spacious, brick-floored apartment adjoining. It was disappointing to find

the house warmed entirely by stoves, and not a single open fire-place anywhere—what there were having all been built up by the hand of improvement. The halls and entries are broad and generous, and all the rooms are lofty. The upper chambers are large bedrooms, without distinguishing features. The make of the edifice throughout was broad, stanch, and massive. There is an extensive wing, probably added on since the communistic period, in which a number of elderly female paupers live. The whole place has that sort of German cleanliness that would be interpreted as dirt by a less philosophic race; and there was in the atmosphere a kind of aroma of petty rules and restrictions and dead stove-heat. There was a school-room full of incredibly dirty children sitting at desks in the German fashion, who, at the signals “Eins! Zwei!” from the pastor, rose from their seats and saluted us. It is strange how this spot on the world's surface has been cursed with philanthropy, in one form or another, for so many



successive years. There must be something peculiarly infectious in the air.

Appertaining to the house are nearly two hundred acres of wooded and cultivated land. Following along the ridge, at the eastern extremity whereof the house stands, we came, at a few rods' distance, on some stone-built cellars, sunk deep into the hill-side, sole remains of dwellings once erected there by members of the brotherhood. The pastor asserted that they had all been burnt down. Beyond these lay a wood, with a small abandoned cottage on its outskirts—a dismal little shanty, with all the dinginess and squalor, and none of the picturesqueness, of desertion. Further on, amidst the trees, was an inclosure containing perhaps a score of graves, the headstones being mere rough fragments of rock, without inscription or carving. The pastor glanced at me sympathetically, and inquired whether my father was buried there. These must, I presume, have been pauper graves, for the community, at one period of its career, seems to have been a pauper farm. We kept on across some plowed land, entered another tract of woodland, and presently found ourselves in front of a rocky mound or eminence, twenty or five-and-twenty feet in height, which our guide called "Die Felsen," but which we knew to be Eliot's Pulpit. It is not a mass of granite, as Coverdale leads us to believe, but a great lump of pudding-stone, undignified in character as well as in substance. It is surrounded with trees, oaks and pines, one large white pine growing at the northern corner. There is a deep cleft through the center of the lump, almost amounting to a cave. There is no resemblance whatever to a pulpit, though of course the elevation might be used as a coigne of vantage from which to address a multitude. There is, however, no accommodation for a large audience, the land falling away on all sides. Southward a mile or so lies the river

Charles, but invisible, even in winter, from this spot, though the elevation is as high as any in the neighborhood. Westward, amidst the woods, are Coverdale's Walk and Hermitage, where he ate his grapes in secret, and overheard the mysterious conversation between Zenobia and Westervelt. And this is really all there is of the scene of "Blithedale." It is not a seductive spot. The pastor said he was attached to it because he had buried one of his children here the preceding Christmas; but I think no grave, nor any living person even, could reconcile me to live in such a place. It is crude without being wild, and inconvenient without being remote.

Here I will bring this rambling and anomalous disquisition to a close; and, as is usual in such cases, with a feeling that the best of what there was to say has been left unsaid. With regard to "Blithedale" in particular, it might, or might not, have been worth while to give the narrative from which the chapter describing the finding of Zenobia's drowned body was derived—a narrative of an adventure in which Hawthorne was one of the chief actors, and which has never been printed from his journal. It is somewhat longer than the account in the romance, which resembles it in some of the main features; but it is little, if at all, inferior to it in vividness and horror. Let it pass, however. The scenes of Hawthorne's novels are not—be it repeated—accessible by earthly travel. His books, being works of art and of imagination, can be effectively explained and illuminated only by study of their inner aim and significance, to which the pictures of nature and human nature which they contain are strictly auxiliary. As some wise man has said, the mystical enjoyment of a thing goes infinitely further than the intellectual; and we can contemplate a work of art with delight and profit long after all that we can be taught about it has grown poor and wearisome.

*Julian Hawthorne.*

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CAPTIVE.

It was not much the captive had. The world  
Had, year by year, colder and narrower grown,  
Till now its limit was four frowning walls,  
A roof and floor of stone.

Bound close and fast upon a pallet hard,  
A little space to lift the hands, the head;  
Of life's good purposes and plans debarred,  
Breathing, alive, yet dead.