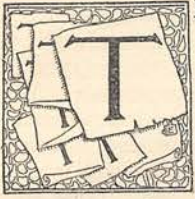


## SOME PORTRAITS OF HAWTHORNE.



THE portraits of men who have proved their greatness in literature, art, statecraft, religion, warfare, or in some other field of human action, naturally become subjects of public interest. It has happened recently that in several quarters attention has been directed to portraits of Nathaniel Hawthorne; and some valuable discoveries have been made. Owing to these discoveries, however, more or less confusion has arisen concerning the portraits newly found. In the paragraphs which follow, I shall attempt to dispel this confusion and to record facts in such a way that collectors, or future investigators, may have something accurate to go by. But it may be well to premise that my remarks are not to be read as if they formed what is called a literary essay. The nature of the case compels a simple effort to unravel a certain tangle of facts and inferences; and that unraveling is all that I shall attempt. It will be necessary for me to talk about coats, waistcoats, and cravats; but if it should seem to readers amusing that I do so, because I wish to be accurate and make my meaning clear, that is a matter of little moment to me.

A short time before I wrote the *Introductory Notes* for a new edition of Hawthorne's Works,\* I received a letter from Mr. George H. Holden, of Providence, which referred to Hawthorne. This resulted in a correspondence and acquaintance. Mr. Holden took a great interest in the various existing portraits of Hawthorne, and especially the original photographs of him. In the "Biographical Sketch" that I attached to the *Riverside* edition, I made mention of several representations of Hawthorne with which I was familiar.

One of these was a photograph taken in England, formerly owned by Nathaniel Hawthorne's wife and now, as for some years past, in the possession of her daughter, Mrs. Lathrop. This photograph, Miss E. P. Peabody (Mrs. Hawthorne's sister) had frequently told me, was made for John Lothrop Motley. Her belief in this regard, founded apparently upon something which Mr. Motley had told her, was that the historian, wishing to have a graphic likeness of his friend, which should be

taken without premeditation, surprised Hawthorne into being photographed unawares. Accordingly, I detailed the supposed authentic incident in my *Biographical Sketch*,† as follows:

"His friend, John Lothrop Motley, induced him one day to enter a photographer's establishment, on the plea that he had business of his own there. Hawthorne was given a book to read, while waiting, and when the photographer was ready Motley attracted his friend's attention. Hawthorne looked up with a dawning smile, a bright, expectant glance—holding the book on his knee meanwhile, with a finger in the place,—and instantly a perfect negative was made."

This was the way in which the story had been many times related to me, on what I supposed to be the best authority; and it was natural, therefore, that it should have been repeated, among others, to Mr. Holden, who I believe further questioned Miss Peabody about it, and then published the supposed facts in a letter to the "Salem Gazette." His version, however, introduced some particulars which I did not remember to have heard before; viz., that Motley's excuse for going into the photograph gallery was to examine some proofs of a likeness of himself, and that Hawthorne was photographed while looking after Motley just as the latter was disappearing behind a screen, ostensibly in search of the proofs. Mr. Holden also said that, although Hawthorne remained ignorant of the "surreptitious picture," one of his children saw it, and mentioned it to her father after they had left England. But Hawthorne was incredulous, and fancied that his daughter was mistaken. "After her husband's death," Mr. Holden went on, "Mrs. Hawthorne became acquainted with the facts as above narrated, and at her earnest entreaty the photograph was sent to her."

The anecdote thus put forward in print for the first time—it was published in the "Gazette" before my *Biographical Sketch* came out—was pronounced by Mr. Julian Hawthorne "a real curiosity in fabrication";‡ and he proceeded to give an extract from a letter written to him by Henry A. Bright, of Liverpool, one of Nathaniel Hawthorne's intimate friends in England. According to Mr. Bright's letter:

"The account of the photograph being taken for Mr. Motley is quite wrong. I went with Hawthorne

‡ Vol. II., p. 257, "Nathaniel Hawthorne and his Wife: a Biography."

\* The *Riverside* edition, 1883.

† The *Complete Works* of Nathaniel Hawthorne. *Riverside* edition, Vol. XII., p. 561.

to the photographer (Mayall), as he had promised me a photograph of himself. He gave his name, and Mayall came up in a great state of excitement. Hawthorne got very shy, and grasped his umbrella as if it were the last friend left him. This, of course, was taken away from him by the photographer, and a table with a book on it was put in its place. 'Now, sir!' said Mayall, 'please to look *intense!*' He was afterwards told to look smiling (at the portrait of a lady!) I chose the intense one, and afterwards had a copy of it taken for a friend of Hawthorne. I am amused to find (in the current anecdote) that Mr. Motley attracted Hawthorne's attention 'at the critical moment.' This is quite imaginative; for Mayall insisted on my going behind a screen, where your father could not see me. After your father's death the photograph was engraved, and I sent other copies to your mother, Mr. Longfellow, and one or two more. The original (there was only one taken at the time) hangs in my own room."

It would appear, from Mr. Bright's statement, that only one photograph was made in England; and that that one was made for him, under his personal care. Mr. Julian Hawthorne has also published a note sent by Mr. Bright to Nathaniel Hawthorne, dated Thursday, May 18, 1860, which contains the following:

"MY DEAR MR. HAWTHORNE: *If* to-morrow is sunshiny enough to photograph you, and *if* you are not otherwise engaged, well, let us get it done! I shall be here (Oxford and Cambridge Club) at twelve, and again at four, if you will look in at either time. . . . I was very glad indeed to see Mr. Motley last night."

The prime value of this evidence is that it fixes the day on which a photograph of Hawthorne was taken for Bright. The day was May 19th, 1860; and Bright's letter to Julian Hawthorne shows that the photograph was the work of Mayall, a photographer then well known in London. The note also incidentally mentions Mr. Motley as being in town. These points must be borne in mind.

Mr. Holden did not rest content with the assurance that the traditional story was a fabrication. He believed in the tradition so far as to set on foot an inquiry. This resulted in his obtaining from Mayall (who is still living) a copy of a photograph of Nathaniel Hawthorne, hitherto unknown to the surviving members of the romancer's family. An interesting circumstance connected with this newly found photograph (an engraving from which was issued as the frontispiece of "Harper's Monthly" for July, 1886) is that—according to Mayall's entry-books—it was taken on May 19, 1860. Now that is the precise date at which Mr. Bright's Hawthorne photograph was made. But the "cabinet size" copy after which the enlarged "Harper" engraving was cut is now before me; it is the copy which Mr. Holden procured from Mayall; and on the back of it appear, in the writing of Mayall's son, these words taken from the original entry-book:

"Photo. of Nathaniel Hawthorne, May 19, 1860, for Mr. Motley, 31 Hertford St., Mayfair, London."

The pose and expression in this photograph, however, are materially different from those of the picture in Mrs. Lathrop's possession, which for a number of years had passed unchallenged as the Motley photograph. Here, then, we encounter a puzzle, the solution of which might at first seem impossible. Mrs. Lathrop's supposed "Lothrop Motley" photograph represents Hawthorne seated in a chair of peculiar shape, with a vacant space on each side. In his right hand he holds a book, with a finger between the leaves; and the book rests upon his left knee, which is crossed above his other knee. The face looks to the left, with a slightly upward glance and the intimation of a smile. A copy of this was used by Schoff in his etching of the head alone, for the second volume of "Nathaniel Hawthorne and his Wife" (p. 150); and the head, with the half-figure, has been reproduced by various photographers, who have sold great numbers of impressions. I do not know how they first obtained their plates for these reproductions. The Mayall picture, engraved for "Harper's Monthly," shows Hawthorne seated beside a table, only the edge of which is visible, with one arm lying easily upon a couple of books. The hand is not disclosed beyond the wrist; but the leaves of the upper book are slightly parted in the middle of the volume, as if a finger had been inserted there, after the manner of Mrs. Lathrop's photograph. The face, however, is turned towards the right, instead of the left; the chin is not lifted, but is depressed; and the eyes do not look upward. They are absorbed in a dreamy, meditative gaze which centers upon some point a little below their level. The right eyebrow, too, is very decidedly raised,—a characteristic peculiarity which is not exhibited in any other portrait of Hawthorne. The difference between these two pictures is, indeed, so striking that they are immediately recognizable as having been printed from two distinct negatives. But it is important to observe that the size of the head in both is the same, and that the coat, waistcoat, broad black cravat, and shirt-collar are the same. The waistcoat, curiously enough, becomes an important *pièce justificative*; the coat is a frock—or what would now be called a "Prince Albert"—of broadcloth, thrown loosely back and exposing the waistcoat, which is made of ribbed material. The texture of this waistcoat is plainly distinguishable in both of the photographs. Briefly, all the external adjuncts—the costume, and the book held with a finger between the leaves—go to prove that the two negatives were made on the

same day. The difference consists only in the fact that the pose is varied and that Mrs. Lathrop's picture gives us Hawthorne sitting in a chair, isolated, while the original of the "Harper" engraving places him at a table.

We must now go back to the fact that Mr. Bright speaks of *two* negatives having been made on May 19th, 1860,—one of them "intense," and the other "smiling." He chose the "intense" one, and says that he afterwards sent a copy to Mrs. Hawthorne. This copy is the one which Mrs. Lathrop now owns; but it is not "intense": on the contrary, it is smiling. The question thus arises, Was the portrait which has been published in "Harper's Monthly" the "intense" picture that Mr. Bright preferred, of the two which were produced under his supervision? We might decide that it was, but for two facts: (1) The "Harper" picture comes from Mayall, unequivocally, as having been made for Mr. Motley. (2) A third English photograph—with the same costume, with one hand lying on a book upon a table, and the eyes looking straight forward (the face almost full)—has been brought to light within a few months. We have, therefore, got three pictures to deal with, instead of two; and it is evident that Mr. Bright either did not know that one of them existed, or else had forgotten all about it.

The third photograph, to which I here allude, is for the first time placed before the public in this number of *THE CENTURY*. Its history is worth detailing. Francis Bennoch, another English friend of Hawthorne's,—a wealthy manufacturer, member of Parliament, and amateur author, who figures frequently in the "English Note-Books" and is still active in British politics,—had long cherished a photographic portrait of Hawthorne, made in 1860, and presented to him by the romancer, which he esteemed the best one extant. Mr. Holden, in the course of his inquiries, heard of this, and wrote to Mr. Bennoch; whereupon he received the particulars which are here to be set down. Some six years ago, or a little more, Mr. Bennoch sat for his portrait to one Piercy of Pall Mall, East, London, who rejoiced in a special and profitable process of portraiture which he had invented. Piercy then expressed a desire to utilize Bennoch's Hawthorne photograph for reproduction by his process, and Bennoch lent it to him. The matter escaped his mind for a year or two, when suddenly he became aware that the photograph had not been returned. Finally, recalling that it had been left with Piercy, he went to the latter's studio in search of it. Piercy declared that Mr. Julian Hawthorne, who had been living in London and had several times visited the studio to inspect the

progress of the work, had carried away the original photograph, promising to convey it to Mr. Bennoch. Bennoch was at a loss to account for his not having received it, and Mr. Julian Hawthorne, by that time, had left England and returned to the United States. Piercy held stoutly to his assertion; but when Bennoch renewed his inquiries, later, in 1886, a son of Piercy happened to be present and listened to the conversation. He asked about the size of the photograph, the style of frame, etc., and at last, without a word, stepped out of the room, coming back presently with the identical Bennoch-Hawthorne photograph in his hands. It was covered with dust; the glass was shattered by innumerable radiations. The photograph had been laid aside and forgotten; Mr. Julian Hawthorne had never had it in charge at all; Piercy was mistaken in his assertion on this point. But for Bennoch's persistence, prompted by Mr. Holden's questions, the picture might have been lost altogether. As events have turned out, it comes to us just in time to clear up the mystery enveloping the Bright and the Lothrop-Motley photographs.

How did these three photographs originate? The third one became the property of Mr. Bennoch, and until recently remained unknown to Hawthorne's family. Of the other two, which one was made for Motley; which for Mr. Bright? These are the essential questions.

Mr. Holden still maintains\* that the picture published in "Harper's" is from the Bright photograph, and that Mrs. Lathrop's photograph is the one which was taken for John Lothrop Motley. Several items of evidence go against this theory. Mrs. Lathrop's photograph has no imprint; so that we do not know positively from whose atelier it came. Bright, also, in his letter to Mr. Julian Hawthorne, states that Nathaniel Hawthorne was posed beside a table on which was laid a book. Now in Mrs. Lathrop's photograph no fragment of a table, even, is visible. But the Bennoch and "Harper" pictures both include a table; the first showing one book, and the second two books placed upon the table-top. The inference from this would be that these two portraits were taken from the two negatives which Bright mentions. Nevertheless, making allowance for a lapse of memory, we may venture to doubt the accuracy of Mr. Bright's recollection. The Bennoch picture and Mrs. Lathrop's both give almost the whole figure; and both represent Hawthorne with one hand resting upon or holding a book. They are alike in size, and both present the same curiously shaped chair, with identical curves and identical knobs and grooves. The ribbed waistcoat in

\* "Salem Gazette," June 15, 1886.

the Bennoch likeness seems to be reproduced in Mrs. Lathrop's print; but the latter has been so retouched that it is impossible to decide whether the cloth was ribbed or not. Giving attention to these little particulars may seem irrelevant or funny; but men have been hanged on the strength of cloth, or on the proof supplied by a button; and although the present question is not one of hanging,—except in so far as it affects the position of portraits in a gallery,—we cannot afford to ignore details. The resemblance between the pictures owned by Mrs. Lathrop and Mr. Bennoch is so pronounced, that I am forced to believe they were impressions from the two negatives which Mr. Bright caused to be made.

The original of the "Harper" portrait is much smaller than these, and a great deal more informal in attitude. The size is but little over half-length. But the most significant thing is, that it is the only Hawthorne photograph recorded as taken in England, and that Mayall entered it as taken for Motley. Neither Bright nor Bennoch made allusion to it when they were questioned; hence I conclude that it was really printed at Motley's request. That he obtained the sitting surreptitiously, as I was formerly led to believe, I greatly doubt.

The question has been raised whether it was possible in 1860 to take a sun picture in less than thirty or forty seconds. Mayall has stated that it could not have been done; although Mr. Getchell (a partner of Silsbee, Case & Co., who made an excellent photograph of Hawthorne in 1861-62, engraved for *THE CENTURY* of May, 1886) says that so early as 1857 he took a large number of photographic portraits with an exposure of only *five seconds* each, by employing French chemicals of exceptional purity. The famous Boston photographer, Black, unhesitatingly avers that the Motley picture could have been made in a few seconds in 1860. Moreover, two Salem photographers now living state that in 1860, under specially favorable conditions, they got good impressions upon the plate in less than *two seconds*. It is barely possible that Mayall put forth unusual exertion and used fine chemicals, in order to secure a likeness of Hawthorne within a few seconds. But the younger Mayall speaks of the shrouded light generally maintained in his father's studio; so that it is not probable that an exception was made in Hawthorne's case. Besides, the well-planned position of the seated figure and the deliberate arrangement of the finger between the book-leaves, in the photograph from which the "Harper" cut was taken (an arrangement ignored and obliterated by the

burin which traced that block), prove almost conclusively that the likeness was not made without premeditation.

The one thing upon which we may now definitely resolve is that Mr. Motley secured a copy of an uncommonly good photograph of Hawthorne, the negative of which was made on the same day and at the same place (*viz.*, May 19th, 1860, at Mayall's) with the other two negatives which Bright and Bennoch liked. Mayall, in short, must have photographed Hawthorne in three positions. Probably Motley was not present at the time, but afterwards had a photograph printed from the third negative, while Bennoch and Bright severally chose the other two; and Bright forgot that three had been made. Bright says that he selected the "intense" view, which was doubtless the same as Bennoch's. But, when Bright ordered a copy sent to Mrs. Hawthorne, in the remote distance of Concord, Massachusetts, it is conceivable that Mayall's subordinates printed off a copy of the "smiling" picture, by mistake, and dispatched it to America.

I may say that Hawthorne's daughter sets a special value upon the Motley (or "Harper") version of her father's face, because it reproduces one of his most characteristic moods,—that mood in which, unconscious of observation, he followed out some train of reverie. The Bennoch picture, however, presents perhaps the truest and most comprehensive rendering of his personal appearance and of his individuality so far as it might be read upon the surface.

Mr. Julian Hawthorne, in a letter to me, speaks of "a *carte-de-visite* of Fields, Hawthorne, and Ticknor in a group, full length and standing, with their hats on." This curious little souvenir, depicting Hawthorne and his publishers as they appeared in every-day life, on the streets of Boston or in the Old Corner Bookstore, is quite rare. It has never been engraved. Mr. Bennoch, having lately seen a copy of it, referred to it in a private letter as "a portrait of those tall hats. The heads," he added, "and the grouping, remind me of a group of old Jews at the corner of Petticoat Lane, haggling over some recent purchase of 'old clo'." It may be appreciated by the curiosity-hunter, but never by those who loved the originals." I think, however, that Mr. Bennoch underrates the value of this unique transcript from the life. What would we not give to-day for some similar representation of Shakspeare hobnobbing with Ben Jonson at the Mermaid Tavern, engaging in a "wit-combat" with Raleigh, Beaumont, and Donne, or standing hatted in front of the Black Friars' Theatre, between a couple of his fellow-shareholders or fellow-actors?

The costume of Shakspeare's time was certainly more picturesque than that prevailing in nineteenth-century New England. But are we to reject a rare picture of Hawthorne and his publishers, simply because we dislike the absurd tall silk hat of so-called modern civilization? By no means. The photograph may excite a smile, because "stove-pipe" hats are always and unchangeably a ridiculous outrage upon the innate dignity of man; but the smile cannot by any possibility detract from our respect for Hawthorne himself.

I quote again from Mr. Julian Hawthorne's letter:

"Another carte-de-visite of the same date (1861-2) shows Hawthorne seated, in profile, three-quarters length. The Washington photographs were taken a year or two later; they were busts, carte-de-visite size, and show his hair and mustache nearly white. . . . Previous to the Washington period a head, imperial size, was taken in Boston for Mr. Fields, and used to hang in his house; Fields called it the 'Field-Marshal Hawthorne,' from a certain military aspect it had. It has since been copied, and there is an etching of it in the Biography. While he was in Washington the artist Leutze made an oil-portrait of him, which those who have seen it pronounce good. This has never been reproduced, and it concludes the list of his portraits, so far as I know them."

The Leutze portrait was painted at Washington, in April, 1862, about the time that Leutze was engaged upon his large encaustic wall-painting called "Westward the Star of Empire takes its Way," which occupies a panel on the western staircase leading to the gallery of the House of Representatives. Leutze's portrait of Hawthorne is now owned by a gentleman in Brooklyn.

On reviewing the circumstances already set forth with regard to the Bright and Bennoch photographs, the only sound conclusion at which I can arrive is that Mayall, instead of taking only two negatives, as Mr. Bright thought when Bright and Hawthorne went to his gallery, made a third plate, as well; and that he made it as an experiment, without saying a word about it to either of his visitors. It strikes me as a tenable supposition that, while Mayall was talking with Hawthorne and considering the most advantageous position in which to place him, he noticed the easy, natural attitude which his subject had taken at the table, fingering a book. Hawthorne frequently remained perfectly quiet in such a position for two or three minutes at a time. Mayall very likely, on the spur of the moment, took advantage of this habit, and took an experimental

negative. When he was interrogated on the subject, two years ago, he was old, and his memory was feeble: he may not have recalled the incident. Bright, of course, would have known nothing about it, and would have known only of the two views which Mayall then proceeded to take under his (Bright's) direction. One of these Bright selected to be printed for himself. The other Mr. Bennoch afterwards had ordered for *himself*. But Motley was in London at this time, and very likely, hearing that Hawthorne had sat to Mayall, he may have gone to the photographer's atelier to secure a copy of the likeness. On that occasion Mayall perhaps brought out the plate which he had made surreptitiously, and this pleased Motley more than the Bright and Bennoch negatives. From it, therefore, he would naturally wish to have an impression. In speaking of the affair afterwards, Motley — if the circumstances were such as I have suggested — would of course say to his friends that the photograph had been made without Hawthorne's knowledge; and in this way the tradition, with the facility of transformation belonging to all tradition, would become established, that Motley himself had arranged a little plot for obtaining a photograph of Hawthorne unawares.

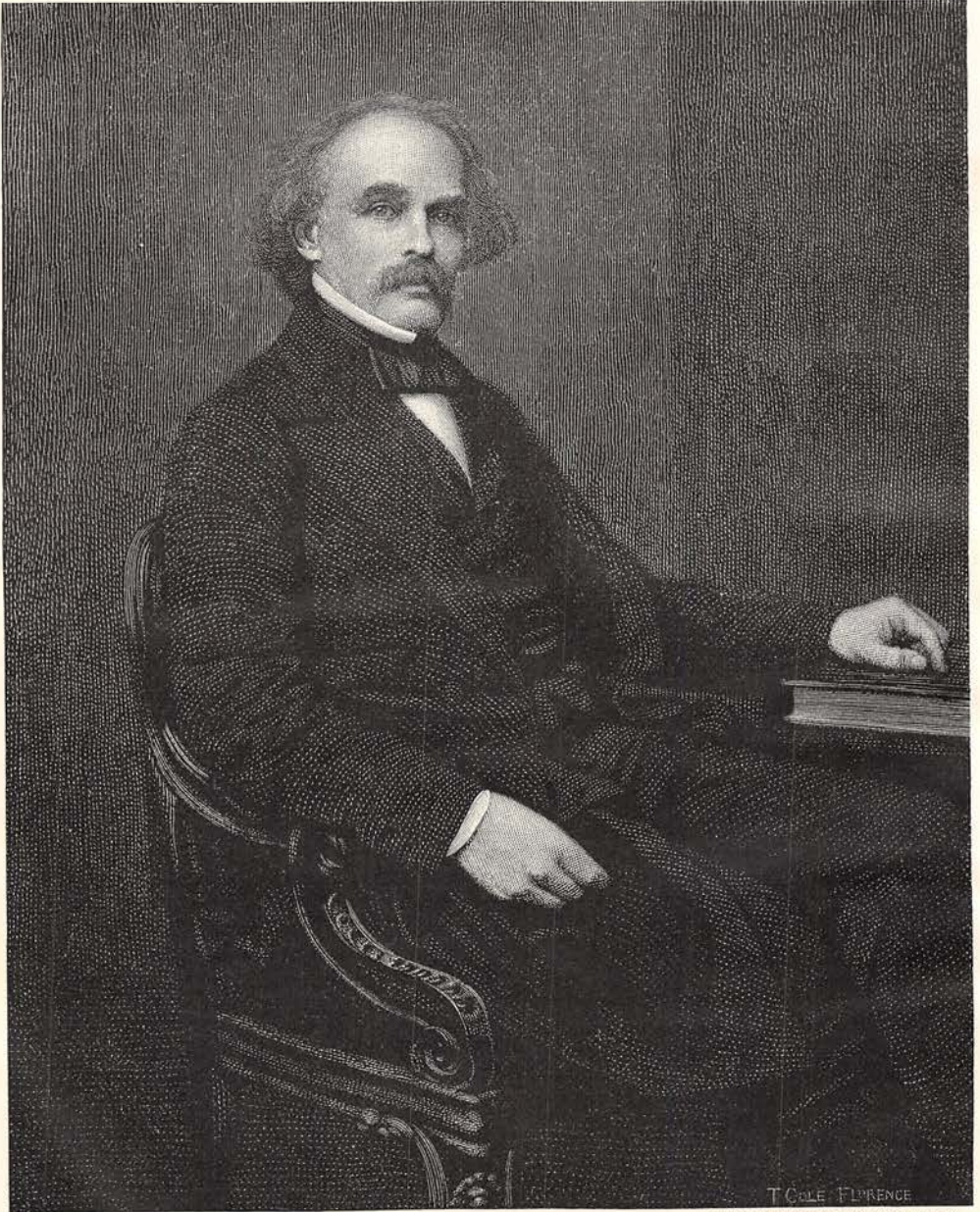
That Mayall made no record of the Bright (and Bennoch) photographs may be accounted for on the theory that both Bright and Hawthorne wanted to keep the matter quiet, so that copies should not be sought for by the public. But that caution would not apply to the record of another photograph printed for Motley, whose diplomatic discretion was trusted. This explanation is the only one, apparently, which can supply a key to the facts as we have ascertained them, and to the misunderstandings that have gradually arisen.

That the "Harper" picture is taken from the veritable Lothrop-Motley photograph, Mr. Julian Hawthorne clearly believes, as a contribution, over his signature, to the New York "World" of June 26th, 1886, attests. He there says:

"There is no escape from the conclusion that Mayall, on that 19th of May, took three negatives instead of only two, and Mr. Holden says in the 'Easy Chair' that 'Mayall's books show a distinct entry of a print from this same negative, sent to Mr. Motley, 31 Hertford street, Mayfair.' It may claim, therefore, to be the hitherto unseen Motley-Hawthorne-Mayall photograph; but that it was taken in Motley's company or in the manner described by Mr. Holden in his article in the Salem newspaper are positions no longer tenable."

*George Parsons Lathrop.*





ENGRAVED BY T. COLE, AFTER A PHOTOGRAPH BY MAYALL.

OWNED BY FRANCIS BENNOCH, ESQ., LONDON.

*Keith's Hawthorne*