Nathaniel Hawthorne as a critic of literature

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NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE AS A CRITIC OF LITERATURE

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate College of the State University of Iowa in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

--by--

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The aim of this paper is to show that Nathaniel Hawthorne, long acknowledged a great writer of the romance and the short story, is also a critic of literature. As such, except incidentally and very briefly, he has been ignored. Rather he has been looked upon as an emotional genius of mood, altogether without the steadying influence of thoughtful standards of judgment. This attitude toward Hawthorne has resulted from the work of two classes of critics: those who have worshipped a genius whom they thought needed no restraint of preconceived system, and those who have over-emphasized the influence on his literary achievements of his characteristically retired manner of living. It is my belief that both sets of critics are far from the truth, and I shall attempt to show that Hawthorne developed a definite critical attitude toward literature and that he used a conscious critical method as well as pure emotion in his own writing. The material on which I base my belief that Hawthorne was a critic of literature is found scattered throughout his writings in large amounts; in these passages, he considers both the work of other authors and his own.

CRITICAL MATERIAL IN HAWTHORNE'S WRITINGS

From the beginning to the end, Hawthorne's critical writing, large in amount as it is, shows no definite arrangement.
Critical articles, as such, he did not write. Coming in countless impressionistic and sometimes intuitive flashes, his critical passages are dropped in the exact spot in his works which saw their birth. Now and then, his evaluation of a literary effort flashes into keen light, brief and sparkling, in his letters. He is concerned with the mood of the moment always; mechanically to arrange those moods in the cold atmosphere of a later critical attitude, he thinks, is to destroy all the simplicity of a unified effect in the whirling cogs of diversified mechanical effort. And yet, when all such flashes of insight into the material and the method of literary art are collected, the result, if not a critical system, is at least a definite critical attitude.

HAWTHORNE'S CRITICISM OF OTHER AUTHORS

In the collection and the arrangement of Hawthorne's critical material, it is important to ascertain whether he arrived at a critical attitude toward those authors whom he read. That he did is certain. He also ultimately established certain critical dicta on literary art in general. Whether he ever set up a conscious standard by which he measured the good and the bad art in specific authors, though, is not so certain. If he did, that standard was contained in his heart, not in his head. Fundamentally an artist himself, and concerned with his own technique, still he looked only for the final effect on himself in the works of others, rarely for how that effect was attained. He worshipped at the altar of great achievement; but
in the holy temple he never sought the secret of the incense perfume; he was satisfied with breathing its atmosphere. And that the incense in one temple differed from that in another did not concern him; for, after all, the ways of men always diverge, and the ultimate thing is their goal. Impressionistic, wilfully and intellectually so, emotionally romantic, he took what he found in each writer, refusing, although with the keenness of his perception he often struck to the very heart of their art in a single thrust, to level them to the measurement of a scientifically cold set of critical standards. In each case, he took a definite attitude; but these attitudes cannot be abstracted into an exact system.

Probably Hawthorne's best piece of critical writing concerns Shakespeare. From early boyhood, he had known Shakespeare thoroughly. Peculiarly his attitude toward the poet finds expression in his appraisal of Delia Bacon's book, *The Shakespeare Problem Solved*. Although the book was brought out through his good offices, he did not believe in the woman's theory; in fact, he considered her intellectually insane. He did believe, however, in her ability as a Shakespearean critic. So it is in his *Recollections of a Gifted Woman. Our Old Home*, that he sketches in briefly, but with a keenness that shames the dilatory methods of many Shakespearean scholars, his evaluation of the poet who to him is humanity's noblest product: "Shakespeare has surface beneath surface, to an immeasurable depth, adapted to the plummetline of every reader; his works present many
phases of truth, each with scope large enough to fill a contemplative mind. Whatever you seek in him, you will surely discover, provided you seek the truth. There is no exhausting the various interpretations of his symbols; and a thousand years hence a world of new readers will possess a whole library of new books, as we ourselves do, in these volumes old already.

Further on in the same essay, he makes a fine tribute to the humaneness of Shakespeare: "And when, not many months after the outward failure of her (Miss Bacon's) lifelong object, she passed into the better world, I know not why we should hesitate to believe that the immortal poet may have met her on the threshold and led her in, reassuring her with friendly and comfortable words, and thanking her (yet with a smile of gentle humor in his eyes at the thought of certain mistaken speculations) for having interpreted him to mankind so well.

Mention of Shakespeare's work is made also in the fantastic sketch, Earth's Holocaust, in which all literature undergoes the test of fire. Men watching the blaze are blinded by the "meridian glow" of the flame which gushed out in "such marvellous splendor" when the poet's works are subjected to the test. Even the heavy blanket of his elucidators' writings cannot cloud the radiance.

The high esteem in which Hawthorne held the works of Scott was evident in his reading the romancer, entire, to his wife and children. Yet, in spite of that, he treats him with more severity than he does any other prose writer; for he seemed to find in Scott's work a failure to achieve the effect aimed
Immediately upon seeing certain spots in Scotland which Scott had attempted to describe, he hits directly at that weakness in Scott's descriptions. He deplores the fact that Scott diminishes the impressiveness of the scenes and fails to get the desired effect of his description. Even the museum-like appearance of Scott's house heightens the impression of his failure; he says: "Scott could not really have been a wise man, nor an earnest one, nor one that grasped the truth of life; he did but play, and the play grew very sad toward its close. In a certain way, however, I understand his romances the better for having seen his house . . . . They throw light on one another." With the same sense of Scott's failure, he looks at Loch Katrine; but he comes to feel that this failure is only the universal inability of the artist to reproduce nature. If Scott had not taken so much freedom with the arrangement and adornment of natural scenery, as well as with his historical incidents, his failure would have been so much the greater. In the end, he leaves the "mighty minstrel and romancer" whom he "had so admired and loved" and who had done so much for his happiness when he was young, with remorse over the coldness of his critical attitude and with the resolution to re-read his works.

As with Scott, it is the concrete facts of their haunts which led Hawthorne to an abstract evaluation of Burns, Southey, Wordsworth, and Pope. It seems necessary for him to hold intercourse, if not with reality, "at least with the stalwart ghost of . . . . earth's memorial sons," in the scenes where they
lived and worked. In that atmosphere, he comes into direct contact with the men he had read. He hears Burns "crooning some verses, simple and wild, in accordance with their native melody;" and he calls him "the germ of the richest human life which mankind then had within its circumference." At Greenwich, inevitably he comes in contact with thousands of concrete details incrusted with associations of Lord Nelson. With a single cut, he bears the weakness of Southey's biography of the great sailor and the weaknesses of his art in general; for he finds in that biography superficial worth combined with lack of delicate appreciation and of real insight, and with inadequacy in actual delineation of the man. He visits Skiddaw Cascade and feels that it is worthy of better poetry than any Southey could write. As he stands by Southey's grave, he remarks that few better men ever lived; "but he seems to lack color, passion, warmth, or something that should enable me to bring him into close relation with myself." That Wordsworth had been capable of better self-criticism is his profound wish; and in the spirit of simple reverence with which he handles all spots associated with the life and death of that poet, he arrives at a worthy estimate of his singing. Stanton Harcourt brings to mind Pope's description of the place, "one of the most admirable pieces of description in the language,—playful and picturesque, with fine touches of humorous pathos;" it "conveys as perfect a picture as ever was drawn of a decayed English country house." As he stands in the tower where "that decrepit little figure
of Queen Anne's time . . . . finished the fifth book of the Iliad, 1 "he definitely portrays his own attitude toward him: "A poet has a fragrance about him, such as no other human being is gifted with all; it is indestructible, and clings forever more to everything that he has touched." 2

Hawthorne refers to Shelley, Byron, and Keats in numerous scattered passages. In P's Correspondence, a fanciful sketch, from a peculiar point of view, that of an old man who imagines the poet still alive, he clearly traces Shelley's development as an artist. Rarely had this essential element of Shelley's art been recognized. In the light of Hawthorne's time, Shelley reviews his own productions and finds "a harmony, an order, a regular procession . . . . They are like the successive steps of a staircase, the lowest of which, in the depths of chaos, is as essential to the support of the whole as the highest and final one." Then Hawthorne, through the lips of his peculiar old character, gives the elements which bring about the development. As poems, he considers the productions of Shelley's maturity superior to those of his youth. "They are warmer with human love . . . . The author has learned to dip his pen often- er into his heart, and has thereby avoided the faults into which a too exclusive use of fancy and intellect are wont to betray him. Formerly his page was often little other than a concrete arrangement of crystallizations, or even of icicles, as cold as they were brilliant. Now you take it to your heart, and are conscious of a heart warmth responsive to your own." 3
In Earth's Holocaust, Shelley's poetry, tested by fire, emits "a purer light than almost any productions of his day." This is in contrast to the "fitful and lurid gleams and gushes of black vapor that flashed and eddied from the volumes of Lord Byron." Dealing more specifically with Byron, Hawthorne estimates his work in a flash. "Whenever he has to deal with a statue, a ruin, a battlefield," he says, "he pounces upon the topic like a vulture, and tears out its heart in a twinkling, so that there is nothing more to be said." He admires Byron's descriptive powers, finding the poet's picture of the Roman coliseum better than reality, because there Byron gets the artistic effect he strives for. With a more delicate touch than that with which he handles either Shelley or Byron, Hawthorne shows the frail Keats staggering under "the burden of a mighty genius." He feels that Keat's poetry hardly needs human language to float to heaven, where its unknown voice makes sweeter the melody of angels.

It is impossible to go into detail with Hawthorne's critical attitude toward all authors he mentions. He was influenced by Bunyan to the extent of writing a modern parable, The Celestial Railroad, based on Pilgrim's Progress; it has been called the finest tribute ever paid to Bunyan's genius. Swift, he dubs the "bloodhound of literature." It is with the reverence of a true Puritan that he speaks of the worth and the loftiness of Milton; yet, with a rare skill of judgment in details, in one instance, at least, he finds the poet's diction insufficient for
the expression of spiritual truth. In the Italian and French Note Books, he describes the Italian sunshine glowing through antique stained glass windows. "This is," he writes, "the dim religious light that Milton speaks of; but I doubt whether he saw these windows while in Italy . . . else he would have illuminated the word 'dim' with some epithet that should not chase away the dimness, yet should make it shine like a million rubies, sapphires, emeralds, and topazes, bright in themselves, but dim with tenderness and reverence." Again Hawthorne's Puritanism comes to the surface in his emphasis on the moral worth contained in the writings of Milton's prose contemporary, Jeremy Taylor; he does not concern himself with that divine's poetic prose style. His attitude toward Doctor Johnson is one of close intimacy. Brought up in boyhood at that literary dictator's knee, under the watchful fussiness of Boswell, he came, as did few other men of his time and place, to appreciate Johnson's life and work, with its ponderous shortcomings and its human and intellectual value. He loves the man for what he was and did; clearly he recognizes his failures, and without pity he pardons those failures, knowing that Johnson needed no snivelling sympathy. Ben Johnson, he merely mentions in passing, with expression of his admiration for the Alchemist.

In the numerous brief but penetrating scraps of criticism scattered through his works, Hawthorne makes but few allusions to contemporary writers. Even while he resided in England, he came in contact with practically none of the great authors
then living there. Although his failure to move widely in literary circles has been attributed to his natural shyness, the explanation of the scarcity of his comment must be found elsewhere than in his own retiring disposition; for, regardless of what happened in Europe, he certainly came in direct and often extended contact with the greatest men of his time in American literature. The explanation lies, I believe, in his fine feeling for others' sensibilities; unlike Poe, he withholds criticism, because he thinks that ink "is apt . . . to raise a blister, instead of any more agreeable titillation, on skins so sensitive as those of artists."

Such glimpses as he does give us of his attitude toward his contemporaries, however, are worthy of notice. Speaking of Robert Browning, whom he knew well, he says: "I am rather surprised that Browning's conversation should be so clear, and so much to the purpose at the moment, since his poetry can seldom proceed far without running into the high grass of latent meanings and obscure allusions."

That his critical balance is not disturbed by work differing widely from his own, is evident in what he writes from Europe to his publishers concerning the novels of Anthony Trollope; he finds them "precisely to his taste," "solid and substantial, and just as real as if a giant had hewn a great lump out of the earth and put it under a glass case, with all its inhabitants going about their daily business and not suspecting they were made a show of." With admirable open-mindedness and a sensitive delicacy of touch, he treats of Leigh Hunt, for whom he had a tender personal affection, which sprang up from
a visit to the poet's home. He bemoans the lack of appreciation for Hunt's work, both in England and in America, especially in the latter, since he felt that Hunt had those artistic qualities most desired by the American reading public. While visiting Westminster Abbey, he convinces himself that Hunt is worthy of a niche there, though he is hardly expectant that the poet will ever achieve that honor. "He deserves it," he writes in his English Note Book, if not for his verse (the value of which I do estimate, never having been able to read it), yet for his delightful prose, his unmeasured poetry, the inscrutable happiness of his touch, working soft miracles by a life process like the growth of grass and flowers. As with all such gentle writers, his page sometimes betrayed a vestige of affectation, but the next moment, a rich natural luxuriance overgrew and buried it out of sight. He mentions Carlyle only once critically, finding his utterances "like the cry of solitary sentinel, whose station was on the outposts of the advance-guard of human progression; or, sometimes, the voice came sadly from among the shattered ruins of the past, but yet, with a hopeful echo in the future." Ravishing effects by dint of a tender minuteness of touch, is what Tennyson means to him. Of American writers, he seems to have appreciated most Emerson, Ellery Channing, Thoreau, and Longfellow. Although Longfellow unconsciously snatched the material for Evangeline from under the pen of Hawthorne, he regarded the poem as a masterly achievement, and on its publication he gave it the
highest praise. Speaking of its author, he writes: "Let him stand, then, at the head of our list of native poets, until some one else shall break up the rude soil of our American life, as he has done, and produce from it a lovelier and nobler flower than this poem of Evangeline." — Concerning Hiawatha, which he read in England, he writes his publishers, that he finds it "perfectly original; and, too, "it seems to have caught the measure and rhythm from the sounds of the wind among the forest boughs." — Even though he lived "for three years within the subtile" reach of Emerson's intellect, and although he has written many passages on the course of the companionship between the philosopher and himself, he has little to say of his critical attitude toward Emerson. That he was not in complete sympathy with the Transcendental movement is clear. It was too cloudy for his basic simplicity; on that point, he "felt as if there were no question to be put," and he "admired Emerson as a poet of deep beauty and austere tenderness, but sought nothing from him as a philosopher." To Hawthorne, he seemed, as a philosopher, to be groping down from the clouds, vainly seeking reality. Hawthorne is a bit more definite in his attitude toward Ellery Channing. With a typical keen flash of critical comment, he sums up his estimate of Channing's poetry: "some of the poems have a richness that is not merely of the surface, but glows still brighter the deeper and more faithfully you look into them. They seem carelessly wrought, however, like those rings and ornaments of the very purest gold, but of rude native
manufacture, which are found among the gold dust from Africa.\(^1\)

He finds Thoreau "a healthy and wholesome man to know." Thoreau's writing, to him, is "true, innate, and literal in observation, yet giving the spirit as well as the letter of what he sees, even as a lake reflects its wooded banks, showing every leaf, yet giving the wild beauty of the whole scene;" and, at times, "his thoughts seem to measure and attune themselves into spontaneous verse, as they rightfully may, since there is real poetry in them.\(^2\) The foundation for all this, he discovers to be "a basis of good sense and moral truth.\(^2\)

Besides these four American writers, Hawthorne, in passing, throws flashes of light on several others: Thanatopsis gleams over Bryant "like a sculptured marble sepulchre by moonlight;" Whittier is "a fiery Quaker youth, to whom the muse had perversely assigned a battle trumpet;\(^3\) he found Howells "worthy" very early in his career; Mrs. Howe writes "admirable poems," but these women writers are too pat at making "a show of their hearts as well as their heads.\(^4\)

**HAWTHORNE'S CRITICISM OF HIS OWN WRITING**

Overshadowing in importance his criticism of other authors, is Hawthorne's estimate of his own work and, especially, of his own method; for, as I shall attempt to show later, it is from this material that he, to a large extent, builds up the critical dicta which he applies to art in general. Here, if anywhere, his criticism approaches the regularity of definite principles.

The material for this self-criticism is found in the prefaces to his books, in his correspondence, and scattered through
his journals. In amount, it varies with different stages in the
development of his art; chronologically, there is a steady in-
crease.

Hawthorne seems to have written his earliest tales with
no fixed purpose except that of artistic expression of his own
thought; he really wrote for nobody but himself, although, of
course, he attempted to reach an audience. He wrote The Twice
Told Tales, he says, "for nothing but the pleasure itself of
composition." That there is, even in his earliest efforts, a
definite method cannot be denied; but he says nothing that
would lead to the belief that he recognized any such method. In
fact, such statements as the one in an early estimate of The
Gentle Boy, where he remarks "that nature led him deeper into
the universal heart than art has been able to follow," would
point in the opposite direction. "Lights and shadows" flitted
across his "inward sky," and he knew not whence they came nor
where they went. However, there later came to him a realization
of his own method, with a large increase in the amount of self-
criticism, until, in his later romances, his definite dicta on
romance writing are laid down. In The Marble Faun, he goes so
far as to throw a triple explanation of his method into the
body of the book, - first in the preface, then twice at the end.

With this increase in the amount of critical material
referring to himself, there is evident in Hawthorne a growth
in the direction of a critical attitude. At first, there is
nothing to indicate that he attempted criticism of his own
work. Writing as he did purely for self-expression, altogether
emotionally and without conscious purpose, he exhibited no power of estimating his own work other than by the effect it had on the public. It would seem that intuition and thoughtless impressionism held the place of a critical attitude. As a result, the cold indifference of publishers and the public left him in hopeless despair, and he burned much of his early writing. Creating thus without fixed critical standards, he was not yet ready to be satisfied with an artistic accomplishment as such; he had no real basis for judgment. It was not long, however, before he passed that intuitive stage, and was able to look on his own art as does Owen, the principal character in The Artist of the Beautiful. Of him, Hawthorne says: "When the artist rose high enough to achieve the beautiful, the symbol by which he made it perceptible to the mortal senses became of little value in his eyes while his spirit possessed itself in the enjoyment of the reality." From then on, he rapidly developed a definite critical attitude toward his work and art in general. Another noticeable element in Hawthorne's early work is its realistic quality and a certain desire on the author's part to appeal to realistic standards of criticism. On that score, he wrote to Longfellow, complaining that he had "great difficulty in the lack of materials" because he had seen so little of the world. Many of his early sketches are of this type, the realistic portrayal of what he actually observed. The desirability of realistically describing autumnal trees, for instance, finds expression in an early passage of the American Note Books: "It would be easy, by a process of word daubing, to set down a confused group of gor-
geous colors...; but there is nothing of reality in the glare which would thus be produced. With the realization, though, of the impossibility of an exact copy of nature, developed a change in aim toward romantic ideals; the concrete became only the foundation for a heightened, interpretative atmosphere. Realism gave way to artistic truth; then was the creation of this truth and of a unity of effect through the use of an atmosphere of romance the sole purpose of his writing. Finally, his judgment of his work came to depend on whether or not he had created the atmosphere of romance he desired. This standard of judgment is stated in the conclusion to The Marble Faun: Hawthorne "designed the story and the characters to bear, of course, a certain relation to human nature and human life; but still to be so artfully and airily removed from our mundane sphere, that some laws and proprieties of their own should be implicitly and insensibly acknowledged. The idea of the modern Faun, for example, loses all the poetry and beauty which the Author fancied in it, and becomes nothing better than a grotesque absurdity, if we bring it into the actual light of day. "In so far as the romance has failed to escape from the bonds of realism, it is, "to that extent, a failure."

It is of value, at this point, to consider Hawthorne's later critical attitude toward such of his earlier work as escaped destruction, whether through evaluation or chance it is impossible to ascertain. This attitude is clearly shown in the preface to a late edition of the Twice Told Tales (1851). He
believes that after years of sober thought he can fairly criticise those efforts; in fact, he thinks that if writers were allowed the privilege of self-criticism "and would perform the task with perfect sincerity and unreserve, their opinions of their own productions would be more valuable and instructive than the works themselves." Of the tales, he says: "They have the pale tint of flowers that blossomed in too retired a shade ... Whether from lack of power, or an unconquerable reserve, the Author's touches have often an effect of tameness; the merriest man can hardly contrive to laugh at his broadest humor; the tenderest woman ... will hardly shed tears at his deepest pathos. The book, if you would see anything in it, requires to be read in the clear, brown twilight atmosphere in which it was written; if opened in the sunshine, it is apt to look exceedingly like a volume of blank pages ... They (the tales) are not the talk of a secluded man with his own heart ... but his attempts, and imperfectly successful ones, to open an intercourse with the world." Contained in this passage, would seem to lie the verification of what has been said concerning Hawthorne's first intuitive attitude toward his work and the attempt to get public judgment. Now that he has come to the realization of his own method, he insists on an appreciation of the atmosphere, the effect, the state of mind, he has attempted to create. Finally, the passage brings out two points of self-criticism which Hawthorne makes throughout his works: the recognition of the limits of his art, and a feeling of failure.
in his inability wholly to give the artistic truth of his thought to the public.

Hawthorne then did criticize, impressionistically, a large number of writers whom he had read. Besides that, his criticism of his own writing is extensive in amount. His self-criticism, however, differs from that he did on other authors, in that it shows a growth toward a more definite critical attitude. This growth takes two courses: from intuitive reaction, Hawthorne turned to certain conscious standards of judgment; and those standards changed from the realistic to the romantic point of view.

GENERAL VIEW OF HAWTHORNE'S CRITICAL GROWTH

EARLIER CRITICAL ATTITUDE

A general view of Hawthorne's critical growth shows a rough division into three periods: an early, a later, and a final attitude. This growth is evident in his reaction to literature and art in general, as well as in his critical attitude toward his own work.

Hawthorne's early stand, and much of his purely impressionistic estimation of other authors is found in his first sketches, is that of an observer. As an observer, of course, he applied more or less realistic standards of criticism to the material he handled. Besides such sketches as The Old Apple Dealer, Sights from a Steeple, and Night Sketches beneath an Umbrella, he has built for himself a monument of realistic description in the first part of the American Note Book. The descriptions there
of scenes through which he wandered bear the exact actuality of photographs. He considers them successful in so far as they attain this realism. At this period, too, he feels that he is, in not keeping to realism, surrounding himself with shadows which bewilder him by aping the realities of life. The characters used by romancers are "lukewarm and abortive," and they overcrowd "the world of fiction." Even in a work so far along in his development as The Scarlet Letter, he still continues to look with admiration on realistic art; in the preface, he says it would have been wiser to have handled the "opaque substance" of the actual, rather to have wandered aimlessly in the romantic mists of the past. The dull and commonplace in life were so only because he could not fully probe their meaning; and, "A better book than I shall ever write was there (in the Custom House); leaf after leaf presenting itself to me, just as it was written out by the reality of the fleeting hour." By this attitude, and he never fully got away from it, he was led to a taste "for quite another class of works than those which I myself am able to write." His emphasis on the value of observing the actual is evident in his saying that "a work of genius is but the newspaper of a century" and in his insistence on the worth of almanacs and newspapers. Although his development as a critic of painting and sculpture came later, it followed the same course as did his literary criticism. At first wholly impressionistic and insistent on the superiority of realism in those arts, he finally thought his way into a clearer and broad-
er attitude, which corresponded to his stand on literature. (Realism became only a means to an end and ceased to be end in itself.) Hogarth's detailed actualities were lost in contemplation of Raphael's divine spirituality, and American sculptors who could model a perfect hand were replaced by Michelangelo, "sculpturing his highest touches upon air and duskiness."1

LATER CRITICAL ATTITUDE

In his later criticism, in spite of the fact that he became more systematic, Hawthorne did not absolutely discard the elements he used at first. He remained an impressionist, but he became what I have called an intellectual and wilful impressionist; that is, he subjected his mood-reaction to immediate thought, and by means of certain critical standards in that thought arrived at an evaluation of the piece of art he was observing on the spot. This method led to several results: it produced more clear and systematic critical reactions than did thoughtless intuition; it prohibited the construction of a detailed theory of art by ruling out after-deliberation; it concerned itself with production of effect and rarely with technique. In short, Hawthorne assumed what he called the Gothic attitude, an attitude which he defines in speaking of architecture as being beautiful and grand, but "made out of the dim, awful, mysterious, grotesque, intricate nature of man."2 His refusal to let the cold criticism of later thought destroy the warm judgments made at the moment of coming in contact with creations of art is emphasized, too, in his attitude toward architecture: art contemplated with too much "malice aforethought" misses its "crowning glory," that
which God, out of his pure grace, mixes up with only the simple-hearted, best efforts of man. At the end of *The Marble Faun*, he pleads with the reader to judge his work according to this light. If any brilliant, or beautiful, or even tolerable effects have been produced, he says, this pattern of kindly readers will accept it at its worth, without tearing its web apart, with the idle purpose of discovering how the threads have been knit together. Probably he arrives at his Gothic or romantic standards of criticism, with some systematization, by the realization that his method in his own art led him straight in that direction, so straight indeed that it suffers as much from over-ornamentation as do some of the Gothic cathedrals. As has been suggested, that method is hinted at often, but it is clearly stated for the first time in the preface to *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851). The romantic artist must submit his work, as an object of art, rigidly to laws; however, "while it sins unpardonably as it may swerve aside from the truth of the human heart - has fairly a right to present that truth under the circumstances, to a great extent, of the writer's own choosing or creation. If he think fit, also, he may so manage his atmospherical medium as to bring out or mellow the lights and deepen and enrich the shadows of the picture." It is hardly necessary, here, to say that such was the point of view of the Gothic craftsman in his best and most lasting work, whether expressed in the cathedral or in other types of art.

Of necessity, during the growth of the romantic attitude, generally referred to as the Gothic by Hawthorne, he discarded
other critical standards. His loss of belief in realism as an end in art has already been touched upon. Scholastic treatment of literature he never tolerated; he was not concerned with musty research students poring over musty volumes and puzzling themselves "with trying to find out when, and how, and for what" works of the human heart were made. The classical attitude received about as short a shift as the scholastic. In the preface to *The Wonder Book*, he proposes deliberately to turn the classical aspect of Greek myths into "a Gothic or romantic guise." And he succeeds in doing it, for he changes "shapes of indestructible beauty • • • but cold and heartless into quite another mould, - a mould formed by human and divine morality and warmth of heart, passion, and affection. That he felt justified in the change he wrought is evident from his belief that classical writers, in their detached coldness, had done all subsequent ages an incalculable harm. Having definitely placed himself in the romantic attitude, he puts his final emphasis on the retention of the human element in all art and on the necessity of interpretation and spiritualization of fact.

**FINAL CRITICAL ATTITUDE**

It is about this emphasis that Hawthorne's ultimate critical standards may be formed. True, he never collected those standards into a clean-cut system, but their assembly from many sources into a group results in a fairly definite statement of his final critical attitude. The fact should be recognized that
in this attitude, Hawthorne insists on the same requirements from all artists, whether they be writers, painters, sculptors, or architects. He says that an artist must be a man "of the finest imagination, the most delicate taste, the sweetest feeling, and the rarest artistic skill;" he must possess "force of character hardly compatible with its delicacy;" he must be able to symbolize a lofty moral, "converting what was earthly to spiritual gold;" he must have simplicity of vision and a profound insight into the human heart; he must possess in his character a nobler strain of poetry than he can write; he must place the artistic truth above fact; he must "feel a power higher and wiser than himself making him its instrument." The resulting work, he believes, will combine the beautiful and the moral values of life, with a "majesty and a minuteness, neither interfering with the other, each assisting the other," and suggesting truth instead of attempting to copy it. Human reality and thought will unite with the atmosphere of artistic truth, which is the artist's own creation; and fact will be spiritualized into its "most delicate and divinest colors." That, I think, is Hawthorne's statement of the Gothic attitude, the attitude he assumed in looking at art. The standards he established in arriving at that attitude he applied to art in general and to his own work; really, as I have said before, his purpose in his own art, when he recognized it, led him to that point of view.

Briefly, Hawthorne's growth in criticism, I have found to be from purely intuitive reaction toward a final critical atti-
tude and from the standards of the realist to those of the "Gothic" romanticist.

DETAILED VIEW OF HAWTHORNE'S FINAL CRITICAL PRINCIPLES

Having established the fact that Hawthorne did some definite critical work and that he grew toward a final critical attitude with certain standards or dicta, I shall now attempt to show more in detail the general principles of that attitude and the application of those principles to specific types of literary art. Such a detailed view of Hawthorne's final critical dicta demonstrates that he defined art and that he treated its purpose, its method, its limits, and its relation to life.

DEFINITION OF ART

Even in some of his earliest writing, Hawthorne attempted a definition of art. In Prophetic Pictures, a short story of early date, he calls art "the image of the Creator's own," because of its power to bring into being "the innumerable forms, that wander in nothingness." Those forms are lifted into a spiritual life which they never could have possessed in actuality, and art is the force which elevates them into that atmosphere of lasting permanence. But the forms themselves must innately contain elements that make them worthy of such treatment. The worthiness consists in their being "high, heroic, and ideal." From this came the most nearly definite attempt Hawthorne made at an exact definition of art. He maintains that no man should dare touch artistic material unless "he feels within himself a cer-
tain consecration and a priesthood;" the only evidence of his possessing this feeling comes from his art itself, which must be "the high treatment of heroic subjects, or the delicate evolution of spiritual, through material beauty.\(^1\) Besides beauty in art, Hawthorne insisted on the use of the moral element. That, of course, comes automatically with the artist's feeling of consecration and priesthood. On the moral element and on the evolution of spiritual values, he generally placed his emphasis.

PURPOSE OF ART

From this definition, it follows that the purpose of art is the development of the beautiful with a moral tone. The artist succeeds who, "symbolizing a lofty moral by a material trifle, - converting what was earthly to spiritual gold, - had won the beautiful into his handiwork.\(^2\) Though Hawthorne, from a modern point of view, ruins, artistically, many of his works by over-emphasis on the moral quality, as a critic he took a very different stand. A story, he maintains, should never be unnaturally and stiffly impaled with a moral; by such a method, the artist deprives his work of life and beauty, thereby destroying one essential of art by the use of the other. An artistic glory, however, is added to a piece of literary art by skilfully working into it a high moral truth, but this truth should be no truer nor any more evident at the last page than at the first.\(^1\)

Of course, Hawthorne never lost sight of beauty for its own sake in his critical attitude; for, to him, the expression of beauty was the fundamental purpose of all art. His natural instinct
as an artist made such a belief inevitable. The very beauty of his own style, an artistic expression he consciously strove for, kept that element ever in his mind. Just how fundamental his belief in the beautiful was to him is evident when he says: "What is called poetic insight is the gift of discerning in this sphere of strangely mingled elements, the beauty and the majesty which are compelled to assume a garb so sordid." Given a combination of the beautiful and the moral, he felt the result would be the development of a mighty and everlasting symbol out of a great mind, and the attainment of the true purpose of art. But even in that expression of what he believed to be the true purpose of art, he did not lose sight of the necessity for humanity's claim on it. Aside from its purpose of combining moral truth and beauty, art in its final appeal must be addressed as "much to the human sympathies as to a formed intellectual taste."

METHOD OF ART

Directly connected with his definition of art, too, is Hawthorne's critical attitude toward the method of art. Here again, he emphasized the necessity of spiritualizing fact into universal truth. His giving up realistic standards has already been spoken of. (Yet he relinquished them only as ends in themselves; he still retained fact as the foundation on which could be built up the atmosphere essential to spiritualized art. It was the spirit alone that should determine the method
of arriving at that atmosphere. And the method he considered most worthy was one which gave an improved effect, with an atmosphere of strange enchantment, in which the characters could have a propriety of their own. This meant, of course, that what he calls "poetic interpretation" should be resorted to in any explanation of life or nature. Facts can never be seen in their most delicate colors until they have been steeped in a powerful menstruum of thought. Belief in this spiritualizing method led Hawthorne to cast aside all faith in the direct portrayal of nature. Attempts at such portrayal were sheer nonsense, he felt; the thing for the artist to do was to substitute something to suggest the truth. He says the highest merit of art is suggestiveness. In the ideal method, "states of mind" produced by contact with life and nature replace facts; they work a genuine effect and go further toward representing the actual scene than any direct effort to paint it. The use of this method, Hawthorne thought, is what makes the great artist rise far above his material; by his spiritualization of the stuff of his art he becomes a prophet and gives his production everlasting life.

In literary art, Hawthorne believed that the method should be made definite in building up an effect through the creation of a romantic atmosphere. In attaining this atmosphere, the author should allow himself as much license with his material as if the facts had been entirely of his own invention. The arrangement of the material should be such as to strive for
"authenticity of outline" only. In that manner, he builds himself a theater, "a little removed from the highway of ordinary travel, where the creatures of his brain may play their phantasmagorical antics, without exposing them to too close a comparison with actual events of real lives." An improved effect is bound to result thereby. Although the creatures of the author's brain must bear a true relationship to their atmosphere of heightened effect, they must not lose their reality altogether; so real must they be, indeed, that the reader will judge them by the laws of their own land - a land far above the realism of the world. In short, actuality and highly developed romance must join to produce a living artistic creation in whose truth the reader, if the artist has been successful, will believe.

Two other elements, the attitude of the artist toward his art and his care in technique, enter into the method. The artist must possess the originality of innate truth and have, at least, freedom enough to make errors for himself. This freedom will lead him to the expression of the truth there is in him, not to the common attitude of being satisfied with "an interminably repeated echo . . . . of the images that were moulded by our great fathers of song and fiction."

Neither shall he resort to mere "knack of expression." He shall bear the relationship of a priest and a prophet to his art, giving himself wholly to the true expression of its impulse, submitting himself to the discipline of its laws, even if he be the "sole disciple" of that art. In such an attitude, with proper care
in technique, each touch being just that necessary to produce the whole effect of simplified unity, the artist will arrive at the accomplishment of all his aims. Then the method has been justified.

THE LIMITS OF ART

It must not be supposed that Hawthorne, in making such demands on the artist, ever lost sight of the limits of art. To him, they were only too evident,—the one repeated phase of his self-criticism. Especially, he felt the limitations of language. "Even a blot," he says,"conveys some of those subtile intimations for which the language has no shape." Standing among the ruins of Furness Abbey, he feels produced in him "the effect of the first idea of anything admirable, when it dawns upon the mind of an artist or a poet,—an idea, which, do what he may, he is sure to fall short of in his attempt to embody it." He despises himself when he attempts to describe a cathedral, and he feels that he could no more adequately reproduce in words one of Michel Angelo's statues than he could "stop the ghost of Hamlet's father by crossing spears before it." But he came to the belief that "this sense of shortcoming must always be the reward and punishment of those who try to grapple with a great or beautiful idea. It only proves that you have been able to imagine too high for mortal faculties to execute. The idea leaves you an imperfect image of itself, which you at first mistake for the ethereal reality, but soon find that the latter has escaped out of your clos-
It is but natural, from his romantic viewpoint, that Hawthorne should have seen a close relationship between art and life, and that he should have believed in the necessity of humanizing, to a certain extent, all art. To him, the beautiful was the property of all those who could "live it and enjoy it." In the art that contained within itself an innate appeal to humanity lay truth. He found, too, that as a man, in himself, approaches the ideals of the highest art, his life becomes true. He clearly expresses this relationship in his attitude toward classic sculpture; here the form of art is but nature's plan for all life, and the nearer actuality approaches it, the more natural that actuality becomes. The meeting of the two elements, art and life, makes for the higher destiny of the human race.

Truth in the literary art, he found in those productions which "have come out of the heart of man in a way that cannot be imitated of malice aforethought." "This truth he discovered in legends," incrusted over with humanity, by passing from one homely mind to another. The value of such material consists in its being the production of human hearts; its artistic form gathers about it in the genuine atmosphere of romantic age. Unless art, to some degree, is "an emblem of the human heart," touched by "the tender and familiar influences which soften almost every scene of nature and real life," it fails. In this failure, art strays away from its legitimate paths and aims,—the aims especially of softening and
sweetening "the lives of its worshippers, in even a more exquisite degree than the contemplation of natural objects." It was to avoid such failure in his own writing that Hawthorne retained the basis of actuality on which to build up his atmosphere of romance.

SPECIFIC CRITICISM OF TYPES OF LITERARY ART

So it is that Hawthorne developed his critical attitude. In realism and in intellectualism, he found a lack of complete artistic truth. Classicism was inhumanly cold. The Gothic ideal, combining those critical principles just treated, contained for him the artistic truth; for he found that it joined human life with atmosphere of spiritualized romance. It was from this point of view that he specifically criticised different types of literary art.

THE ROMANCE

Probably Hawthorne's most valuable literary criticism deals with the romance. This criticism takes two courses: the exposition of his own method of romance writing and the treatment of the differentiation between the romance and the novel. The Ancestral Footstep, a late and unfinished romance, casts light on what Hawthorne thought that type of writing should be. In it, he puts some paragraphs explanatory of his critical attitude and of his method of writing. An attempt at the application of his theory that the romance should aim at the creation of an atmosphere of its own, but that it should bear certain rela-
tions to actuality and life, is evident. "I do not want it to be a picture of life," he says, "but a Romance, grim, grotesque, quaint . . . . It might have so much of the hues of life that the reader should sometimes think it was intended for a picture, yet the atmosphere should be such as to excuse all wildness. The descriptions of scenery, etc. . . . might be correct, but there should be a tinge of the grotesque given to all characters and events. The tragic and the gentler pathetic need not be excluded by the tone and treatment. If I could but write a central scene in this vein, all the rest of the Romance would readily arrange itself around that nucleus." It must all be written, however, "with insight, with knowledge of life." The essential necessity of idealizing material into an atmosphere of romance he insists on wherever he speaks of his own later writings; to get such an effect he thought was extremely difficult for American writers. In the preface to The Blithedale Romance, he emphasizes both that point and the preceding one: "Among ourselves . . . . there is as yet no such Fairy Land, so like the real world, but with an atmosphere of strange enchantment, behold through which the inhabitants have a propriety of their own. This atmosphere is what the American romancer needs. In its absence, the beings of imagination are compelled to show themselves in the same category as actually living mortals; a necessity that generally renders the paint and pasteboard of their composition but too painfully discernible. "Again, in the preface to The Marble Faun, he almost repeats what he has said here, incidentally listing what he con-
siders some of the elementary prerequisites of romance write-
ing. Italy was valuable to him in composing The Marble Faun, because it afforded "a sort of poetic or fairy precinct, where actualities would not be so terribly insisted upon as they are, and needs must be, in America. No author, without a trial, can conceive of the difficulty of writing a romance about a country where there is no shadow, no antiquity, no mystery, no picturesque and gloomy wrong, no anything but a commonplace prosperity, in broad and simple daylight • • • . Romance and poetry, ivy, lichens, and wall-flowers, need ruin to make them grow." Upon the idealization of material and the creation of a heightened atmosphere of romance rested Hawthorne’s definition of the romance and his differentiation between it and the novel. The distinction he makes between the two forms of literature is found in the preface to The House of the Seven Gables. The romance is a work presenting artistic truth, subject to specific laws and based on human emotion, under circumstances of the author’s own creation, with the atmosphere raised to an idealized level; on the other hand, the novel aims at a portrayal of the actual course of man’s life, with minute realism. In Hawthorne’s own words, the distinction is made as follows: "When a writer calls his work a Romance, it need hardly be ob-
served that he wishes to claim a certain latitude, both as to its fashion and material, which he could not have felt himself entitled to assume had he professed to be writing a Novel. The latter form of composition is presumed to aim at a very minute
fidelity, not merely to the possible, but to the probable and ordinary course of man's experience. The former—while, as a work of art, it must rigidly subject itself to laws, and while it sins unpardonably so far as it may swerve aside from the truth of the human heart—has fairly a right to present that truth under circumstances, to a large extent, of the writer's own choosing or creation.*

THE SHORT STORY, THE TALE, AND THE SKETCH

It is evident from what has already been said that Hawthorne was conscious of no method in the composition of his short stories, tales, and sketches. The result was that he took no definite critical attitude toward those types of literature. Further than to insist on the production of an effect, the portrayal of a state of mind, the idealization of artistic material, he says nothing of them. He does, it is true, distinguish between the sketch and the (tale or the short story) by the use of realism in the one and of (a spiritualized effect of romance) in the others; but technical difference of structure he does not mention. In this respect, he is, as Brander Matthews says, "a creator rather than a critic;" his processes are intuitive and do not deliberately seek the abstraction of a system whereby to achieve his purpose. As with his method of writing, so it is with his critical attitude. He came to a definite critical attitude on the romance when he realized his method in its composition. At about the time that the recogni-
tion of his method in the romance arrived, he stopped writing tales and short stories; therefore he never reached a definite critical attitude toward them as distinct forms of literary expression.

POETRY

When consideration is given to the part poetry played in his reading throughout life and to the emphasis, in his critical standards, he placed on spiritualization, idealization, and heightened effect, it is not strange that much of Hawthorne's criticism has to do with poetry. Naturally he would be led to a profound interest in that type of art. That such is the case, he makes evident by maintaining that every great artist must be a poet in his understanding of the material with which he works. No matter whether the artist be a prose writer, a painter, a sculptor, or a builder, he must first of all possess poetic insight. Only through this can he rise sufficiently above himself and so idealize his work as to make its utterance artistically true. As a result, he looks upon the poet as the supreme achievement of man's struggle; in fact, he says: "Creation was not finished till the poet came to interpret and so complete it." In the final analysis, the poet's ideal is "the truest truth." As in his attitude toward the romance, so here, the critical touchstone is the ability of the poet to build out of his material an idealized, spiritualized world of his own; the true poet glorifies "the common dust of life" into the brightness of a paradise, causing the world to assume another and a better aspect from the time he blesses it with
"his mood of poetic faith." A mightier grandeur reposes on the mountain's breast, a more celestial smile gleams forever on the lake's surface, a deeper immensity broods over the sea's dread expanse, under the emotion of the poet's song.\(^1\) Years later, when Hawthorne stood in the Poet's Corner, at Westminster Abbey, he applied the same standards of judgment to the vast body of poetry whose last concrete association crowded around him as he did to the poet of his story and as he did to his own creations of romance. "The shades of the mighty have no substance; they flit ineffectually about the darkened stage where they performed their momentary parts, save when the poet has thrown his creative soul into them, and imparted a more vivid life than ever they were able to manifest to mankind while they dwelt in the body. And therefore - though he cunningly disguises himself in their armor, their robes of state, or kingly purple - it is not the statesman, the warrior, or the monarch that survives, but the despised poet, whom they may have fed their crumbs, and to whom they owe all that they now are or have.\(^2\) From such reactions as this came Hawthorne's profound reverence for the epic and the ballad in particular and for all romantic poetry in general.

**BIOGRAPHY AND HISTORY**

Hawthorne also felt the necessity for the idealization, to a certain extent, of material in biographical and historical writing. That professors of biographical and historical exactness are justified in making their works analogous to
a map, cold, naked, and destitute of all charm, he admitted. But he found such writing defective in ignoring the power of art to get desired effects; he felt that here, as in other forms of human expression, a certain idealization is necessary. "A license must be assumed," he says, "in brightening the material which time rusted, and in tracing out half-obliterated inscriptions on the columns of antiquity: Fancy must throw her reviving light on the faded incidents that indicate character, whence a ray will be reflected, more or less vividly, on the person to be described."

CRITICAL AND CLASSICAL WRITING

The truth of the matter is that Hawthorne, on the basis of his romantic standards, took much the same critical attitude toward all types of the literary art which he treated. The fault he finds with critical writing, for instance, is that he feels it goes directly against the human element which he has set up as a standard of judgment. Covering the true character of the critic, there is formed a hard and fine enamel, an artificial product of cultivation, far removed from the natural simplicity of human emotion. His reaction to classical literature was similar; it, too, he feels, is hard, cold, and "abhorrent to our christianized moral sense." Just how far that critical judgment led him is evident in his romantic versions of the Greek legends, a point that has been dwelt upon.

HAWTHORNE'S CRITICISM OF PAINTING AND SCULPTURE

As a critic of painting and sculpture, Hawthorne has, to
some extent, been recognized. Conway, in his *Life of Nathaniel Hawthorne*, has pointed out that his taste in this respect was much in advance of his time; he calls attention to the fact that Hawthorne set up in writing for the first time the claims to greatness of the statues of Castor and Pollux in the Quirinal and of Guido's portrait of Beatrice Cenci. He also claims that Hawthorne is one of the very few critics to recognize the true significance of the Venus de Medici. That Conway's estimate of Hawthorne's ability as an art critic is not over-stated can readily be established by consideration of his work in that field in his *French and Italian Note Books* and in *The Marble Faun*. Both books are packed with passages exhibiting a marvellous understanding of the pictures and the statues at which he looked. What he here wrote truly institutes him as one of the foremost amateur critics of modern times.

**CONNECTION BETWEEN LITERARY AND ART CRITICISM**

Primarily, however, I am not concerned with Hawthorne's position in art criticism. Rather, I wish to show the direct connection between his literary and his art criticism and the influence one had on the other, for in this paper, the real value of his art criticism lies in its interpretation of his literary criticism and of his method of romance writing. Although I have already alluded to this connection, a more detailed view will aid in getting the complete portrait of Hawthorne as a critic.

Hawthorne at all times maintained that a close association
between the material and the method of painting and sculpture on the one hand and literary expression on the other is essential. Extensive use of both those types of art in his own writing was the result. Even in so early a piece of work as *The Prophetic Pictures*, he uses the portrait as the motive force. Peculiarly, the artist's putting into his two portraits the psychological growth of his subjects is Hawthorne's literary method of telling his story. The artist's gift of seeing into the inmost soul and making it "glow or darken upon the canvas, in glances that express the thought and sentiment of years," is Hawthorne's gift of uncovering a state of mind until the psychological struggle involved assumes the colors and the form of a lasting and often terrible universality. And to the artist of *The Prophetic Pictures*, as to his creator, there is revealed "the glow of perilous moments; flashes of wild feeling, struggles of fierce power,-love, hate, grief, frenzy; in a word, all the wornout heart of the old earth . . . . in a new form."

In many of Hawthorne's other works, he utilizes this same sort of art material, until in *The Marble Faun*, the pictures, the statues, the architectural beauties of Rome are built into such a striking background as almost to obscure the story itself.

Attempts have been made to disparage Hawthorne as an art critic because he admits that enormous galleries exhausted him to the point of disgust with their contents. The fact is that his mind attempted to understand what his eyes saw so rapidly and to such a degree that it quickly wore itself out. He was always candid in admitting the limits of his receptivity; and, as
is usually the case, he has suffered by reason of his honesty. After all, too, those limits were the result of his assuming the attitude of the literary critic. From that attitude, he looks upon pictures as poems, "only requiring the greater study to be felt and comprehended. . . . What an absurdity it would seem, to pretend to read two or three hundred poems of all degrees between an epic and a ballad, in an hour or two!" Truly he was quite right. Had he reserved the understanding of what he saw for a period of later leisure, he might have avoided states of critical exhaustion; but, just as with literature, in his reaction to painting and sculpture, he insisted on impressionistic judgments— the living, emotional reaction of the moment, not the cold intellectualism of later abstract thought. He finally came to the realization that great pictures are as rare as great poems, even in Italy; from then on, he added to his reputation as a critic by ignoring those pictures he did not consider worthy instead of expressing a desire that they be whitewashed.

The resemblance between Hawthorne's growth in his attitude toward writing and toward the other fine arts has been alluded to. In both cases, the growth was away from realistic standards and toward those critical principles which have been treated. It has been thought that Hawthorne maintained early realistic tendencies in his admiration for the paintings of the Dutch Masters. (But the fidelity with which they represent their material, in itself, means nothing to him; the importance of the efforts they made consists in their accom-
plishing all they aim at and in the technical skill by which each one "of their million touches has been necessary to the effect." He sees an earthen picture, perfectly done by one of the school; to him, however, the greatest artistic value is not in the accuracy of achieving the actual, but in the suggestiveness and the spiritual element which that accuracy has created. This is the same attitude he took toward literature—the insistence that fact be used as a foundation on which to erect a structure of spiritualized effect. Even Hogarth came to be valuable to him only because his canvases were "incrusted deep with English nature." After all, he saw in various types of art only different modes of attaining the same end—the development of the beautiful with a high moral and human value. The general principles of workmanship in the highest art are the same in each case: the sculptor, the painter, the author, all should disregard "the imitation of actual nature," the better to produce an effect, each working "his magical illusions by touches that have no relation to the truth if looked at from the wrong point of view." That is, in general, Hawthorne's own method of writing.

HAWTHORNE'S CRITICISM OF ARCHITECTURE

If it were within the scope of this work to do so, I might show the applications Hawthorne made of his general principles of criticism to numerous masterpieces of sculpture and painting: how he recognized the moral worth of some of the early masters who, in spite of technical deficiencies,
of the beauty of holiness and devotion, wrought "veritable prayers on canvas;" how he arrived at the standpoint of the pre-Raphaelites, by applying his own standard of combining art with human emotion to the technically perfect frigidity of Raphael's successors; how he found his way to the sublime genius in Michel Angelo and Raphael by the path of spiritualization of artistic material. (It was, however, in the Gothic cathedral that he found the physical embodiment to the most perfect degree of those elements which he considered essential to all art. There he found spiritual, ideal, and moral value, brought into being by human devotion to an artistic and religious faith, true, noble, and, in its way, everlastinglly heroic. In the brooding and eternal mystery of its spirit, he felt the real symbol of what true romance meant to him,—human life with its love, its pity, its awe, its struggle, its surging play of emotion, its fundamental simplicity, towering to the sacred peaks of spiritualized expression. Such an achievement is the object "best worth gazing at in the whole world . . . . A Gothic cathedral is surely the most wonderful work which mortal man has yet achieved, so vast, so intricate, and so profoundly simple . . . . so difficult to comprehend within one idea, and yet all so consonant that it ultimately draws the beholder and his universe into its harmony. It is the only thing in the world that is vast enough and rich enough."

CONCLUSION

Such a critical estimate has required both a profound emo-
tional reaction and the thought of true understanding. Neither, in itself, could be complete. If I have shown that Hawthorne did use a more or less systematic course of intellectual effort in arriving at an attitude toward art in general and the literary art in particular, I have succeeded in making this piece of writing worthy of the effort it has entailed, and I may lay aside my probe, a most distasteful instrument, content that I have dissected out at least the rudiments of a critical theory. That theory, or attitude, may briefly be summarized in Hawthorne's judgment of the Gothic cathedral: could he have found a Gothic cathedral in words, he would have discovered in it literary perfection. I believe, certainly, could he have written such a work himself, he would have lost forever the sense of artistic failure which sadly tinges almost every word he wrote.

My aim then in this paper has been to show that Nathaniel Hawthorne was, to some extent, a critic of literature. The establishment of my theory rests on the following points which I have attempted to make:

1. That there is a large amount of critical material scattered through Hawthorne's works, referring to both himself and to other authors.

2. That Hawthorne as a critic of literature shows growth from pure intuition to a definite critical attitude, and from realistic to romantic standards.

3. That Hawthorne's romantic critical attitude embraces certain general principles of art and that he applies those principles in criticising specific types of literature.
4. That Hawthorne's criticism of sculpture, painting and architecture bears a close relationship to his criticism of literature and that each is interpretative of the other.
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