HAWTHORNE AND THE EMANCIPATION OF WOMEN

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PREFACE

To associate Hawthorne with the emancipation of women might seem to be a contradiction to those who ordinarily think of the author as not having been an active participant in the intense reforms of his day. Aside from his brief association with Brook Farm, the reform movements influenced him very little. Along with such reform movements as temperance, abolition of slavery, and advocacy of peace, the woman's rights movement flourished. There was indeed no reform movement which did not concern woman, and Hawthorne had his own ideas about woman's emancipation.

Chapter I of this thesis indicates the influence which English writers and speakers have had in arousing American women to definite action in working for their rights. Chapter II presents some of the great American women who have laid the foundations for the privileges which women enjoy today.

Chapters III and IV deal with the women whom Hawthorne was associated with intimately, casually, and observingly. In these chapters I have attempted to show the influence of family and friends on his attitude toward the expansion of woman's world. In Chapters V and VI I have tried to show Hawthorne's feminist ideas as portrayed through his heroines and the significance of his interest in feminism.

In relating the Woman's Rights Movement to Hawthorne, I have surveyed the movement and its ideas. Its importance to this study consists in its having come to Hawthorne's notice.

This thesis stresses that Hawthorne did not care for the intellectually-minded woman. Those women who were not content to stay within their sphere were exposed in his published works as well as in his letters and notebooks.

My thanks are due to my major professor, Dr. Cecil B. Williams, for his sound and patient counsel, his helpful criticism, and kind interest given me in the preparation of this thesis and in all matters pertaining to my work. I am particularly indebted to him for the use of his copy of Eminent Women of the Age. Thanks and appreciation are also due to the library staff for many considerations and courtesies.

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Chapter I

STATUS OF WOMEN PRIOR TO HAWTHORNE'S TIME

One of the writers of advanced views concerning woman's rights toward the latter part of the eighteenth century was Charles Brockden Brown. His articles were in the form of unique dialogues, making woman speak as the mouthpiece of current opinion about the status of her sex. The woman in the following case was asked if she were a Federalist. Her answer was:

> What! ask a woman, shallow and inexperienced, as all women are known to be, especially with regard to these topics, her opinion on any political question! What in the name of decency have we to do with politics? If you enquire the price of this riband, or at what shop I purchased that set of china, I may answer you. . . . These things, you know, belong to the woman's province. We are surrounded by men and politicians. You must observe that they consider themselves in an element congenial to their sex and station. The daringness of female curiosity is well known; yet it is seldom so adventurous as to attempt to penetrate into the mysteries of government.[1]

This excerpt from the essay on "The Rights of Women" by Charles Brockden Brown gives a clear statement, perhaps representative of the prevailing opinions about women and their status previous to the nineteenth century. Women were more elegant when they confined themselves to the tea-table and their work-bags; they were to grace the home by being seen and not heard,

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1 Charles Brockden Brown, The Rights of Women, as quoted in Clifton J. Furness, The Genteel Female, p. 241.

and certainly their sphere did not include thoughts of female education, separate property rights in marriage, voting privileges, and employment outside the home. Fortitude in women was not encouraged; it was expected that they should be loyal and trusting dependents of men, whose task was to assume responsibilities in business affairs. American law, however, towards the middle of the nineteenth century showed many changes in the provisions of woman's rights.

Viewing the status of women in England and in America up to the beginning of the Woman's Rights Movement, one can see distinct gains toward the emancipation of the female sex. The pioneer women spoke loudly of many things which are taken for granted now, and they maintained a silence concerning many things which are discussed freely today. Perhaps the spirit of the American woman can be felt in these few lines spoken by an "ungenteel female" who bobbed her hair in spite of violent protests. Her utterance was published in An American Girl over 50 years ago.

> I've been coming to it for a long time, and this morning, when a hair-pin got crosswise and spoiled the whole lecture for me, I thought things had come to a crisis. Now you know that I'll do anything to please you that is not a sacrifice of principle, but this hair takes too much of my time--it shackles me, abridges my freedom, and I must be free; so come off it must![2]

English Background

In England husbands represented not only husbands, but

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2 Clifton J. Furness, The Genteel Female, pp. xlii-iii.

houses, lands, positions in society, and financial backing; a woman's entire life was decided by the husband she selected. Within the boundary of the home and the family, of the society and community in which they lived, she found her satisfactions.

It was the established tradition that English girls were to be taught music, drawing, French, and fine sewing. Since their goals were to be good wives and mothers, the emphasis in their training was placed in equipping them for the sphere which they were to occupy.

From John Stuart Mill we learn of the legal position, not the actual treatment, of women in England up to his day.[3] Wives were just as much bondservants of their husbands, as far as legal obligations go, as slaves were slaves. They made a vow of obedience to them at the altar, and were held to it all through life by law. However brutal a husband a woman had, she was his and by law their children were his children. He alone had any legal rights over them. If she should leave her husband, she could take nothing with her, neither her children nor anything which was rightfully her own. If he so desired, he could compel her to return by law or by physical force. A court decree which granted legal separation was given at such an expense that it was nearly impossible to anyone out of the higher ranks. One cannot generally draw the conclusion that all husbands were this cruel. Surely those who took advantage of the laws were exceptional cases which kept the laws in effect.

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3 John Stuart Mill, The Subjection of Women, pp. 247-248.

Since custom is a rut which unthinking people fall into, women generally accepted the rule of men as the natural thing. But there were some in England who refused to accept the stereotyped tradition which had been in vogue for centuries.

It was at the close of the seventeenth century in England that the literary circles created the agitation on the questions of the proper position of women.[4] This seemed to be the ripe time for this important question to weigh upon the minds of the public, for Anne and Mary, and even earlier Elizabeth, had been ruling queens--women important in the political world! Mary Astell's essay in "Defence of the Female Sex" (1697) was dedicated to Princess Anne. In it Mrs. Astell pointed out that there was no such thing as male and female souls.[5] Surely if God gave woman the power of intellect, he intended for her to use it in giving part of her time and care to improving her mind as well as her body.

Addison and Steele were trying to improve women's condition through the medium of their written work which appeared in their Spectator and Tatler papers.[6] Their comments revealed the shallow social and intellectual life of most of the women of their time.

In the latter part of the seventeenth century there appeared two books addressed to women. They were The Ladies

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4 Mary Wollstonecraft, The Rights of Woman, p. xviii.

5 Ibid., p. xviii.

6 Mary Sumner Benson, Women in Eighteenth-Century America, p. 16.

Calling (1673), and The Lady's New Year's Gift: or Advice to a Daughter (1688), by the Marquis of Halifax.[7] These books were concerned with the improvements of feminine life.

Women have been brave to write and express their sentiments of protests against their social condition in a "man's world." It was not exactly lady-like to urge the right to vote, to clamor for education in the same branches of knowledge as men, or to seek employment in professions and occupations which had been closed to them. That a woman would protest her condition rather than accept it was certainly crossing the boundary of her sphere.

Mary Wollstonecraft, however, in 1790 threw down her challenge: "'I insist that not only the virtues but the knowledge of the two sexes should be the same, in nature if not in degree.'" For this and other statements Horace Walpole called her a "'hyena in petticoats.'"[8]

Mary Wollstonecraft addresses "reasonable men" when she says,

> I appeal to their understandings; and, as a fellow creature, claim, in the name of my sex, some interest in their hearts. I entreat them to assist to emancipate their companion, to make her a helpmeet for them.
>
> Would men but generously snap our chains, and be content with rational fellowship instead of slavish obedience, they would find us more observant daughters, more affectionate sisters, more faithful wives, more reasonable mothers--in a word, better citizens. We should then love them with true affection, because we should learn to respect ourselves; and the peace of mind of a worthy man would not be interrupted by

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7 Ibid., p. 16.

8 Mary Foulke Morrisson, "Preliminary Agitation," in Victory, p. 6.

the idle vanity of his wife. . . .[9]

She thrust the problem of the position of women upon the public. Mary Wollstonecraft's personal history no doubt affected her views on the position of women. Since she was forced by circumstances to earn her own living, it was easy to become aroused about the injustices of law. Experiencing the drawbacks of a social and economic world which made no provision for the independent woman fired her indignation and led her to speak openly for her sex. Mary Wollstonecraft was the pioneer of the Woman's Rights Movement.[10] Despite the fact that other writers were concerned about the position of women, she kept a tenacious hold on the cause regardless of the reproach she had to suffer.

Mary Wollstonecraft's book, Rights of Woman (1792), marked the beginning of a movement which has not turned back since her day.[11] She had the personal encouragement of Catherine Macaulay who, in her Letters on Education (1790), earned from a contributor to the Gentleman's Magazine the praise that "'her work was really wonderful considering her sex.'"[12] As yet men were not expecting anything very intellectual from a woman, for she was always thought to be not only the weaker sex physically but also mentally. As has been stated, Mary Wollstonecraft did not stand alone in her views. In the interval between Mary Astell's

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9 Mary Wollstonecraft, The Rights of Woman, p. 164.

10 Ibid., p. xii.

11 Ibid., p. xii.

12 Ibid., p. xii.

publication of "Defence of the Female Sex" (1697), and Mary Wollstonecraft's Rights of Woman (1790), Lady Wortley Montague and Lady Sarah Pennington wrote in favor of improving woman's condition.[13]

Influential English writers on female education whose works were read widely in the United States were Mrs. Elizabeth Inchbald, whose Simple Story (1791) exposed the evils existing in the old type of boarding schools; Mrs. Barbauld, a sincere reformer, whose field was that of female education; and Thomas Holcroft, who was an ardent advocate of the plea for reform in female education.[14] All of these writers were read, discussed, and echoed on this side of the Atlantic.

The movement which Mary Wollstonecraft initiated did not die down. The scope of women's rights began to expand. Agitators for feminine freedom began to plead for the national education of women. Woman was born with a mind that could be trained and cultivated as well as the mind of man. Knowledge and truth, common to women as well as to men, would make wives better companions.

The system of education, standards, and conventions cramped and suppressed the powers of women. Mary Wollstonecraft told of three little girls who from their masters

> learned how tables, chairs, etc., were called in French and Italian; but as the few books thrown in their way were far above their capacities, or devotional, they neither acquired ideas nor sentiments,

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13 Ibid., p. xxii.

14 Clifton J. Furness, The Genteel Female, p. 268.

> and passed their time, when not compelled to repeat words, in dressing, quarreling with each other, or conversing with their maids by stealth, till they were brought into company as marriageable.[15]

So woman's intellectual faculties lay dormant; she passed the time unprofitably while waiting for a man who could give her economic security. It seemed that women were trained away from, instead of being trained towards, any of the occupations reserved for men. But recognition of the right of the sex to education was gradually increasing. Among most thinking people, it seemed that the concept of women as household drudges had passed. There were some who held to the old idea, but the larger number desired to extend her sphere.

Mary Astell, who believed in individual development for women, was a forerunner in a movement which led in the eighteenth century to increased educational opportunities for women and at the end of the century to pleas for feminine rights in other directions. In the middle 1800's John Mill was advocating suffrage for women in England.[16] In 1851 an article by Mrs. Taylor, the future wife of John Mill, appeared in the Westminster Review on the "Enfranchisement of Women."[17] In 1859 Florence Nightingale had privately printed her defense of the right of women to have a public avocation.[18]

Before the movement to free the female sex began, women

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15 Mary Wollstonecraft, The Rights of Woman, p. 204.

16 John Stewart Mill, The Subjection of Women, p. 268.

17 Wollstonecraft, op. cit., p. xxiii.

18 Ibid., p. xxiii.

did not have a road open by which they could pursue extensive plans of usefulness and independence. Some of the positions for which they worked are taken for granted by us today. The few employments that were open to women were menial. Many women probably wasted life away discontentedly when they could have been performing useful services in various employments.

English writings--novels, essays, and books--furnished the background of the first American publications on the subject of woman's rights; these writings helped to form definite advancing opinions concerning women. It would be unwise to generalize too much from so many opinions, but certain concepts stand out clearly. Although ideas concerning women were constantly changing, woman's character was believed still to be essentially domestic. She was treated as intellectually and physically inferior to man, her only approved goal being to be a good wife and mother. With few exceptions those advocating an extended education for women designed it for the pleasure and service of men, to make women more agreeable companions for them, and better teachers for their children.

Colonial and Early National Period

Among the pioneering Americans were women who possessed the spirit of the typical American civilization--the spirit of freedom. Yet this spirit of freedom was soon to be suppressed, though not eradicated. The pioneer women worked hard and were able to make the American pioneer home a place of cheerfulness and some comfort. During the period of settlement the women were faithful to the duties of the household and left the

management of the weightier affairs of the young colony to the men.

In the colonial days as early as 1631 women began to assert their influence. The court of Plymouth sent for the elders and charged them to urge the people to "avoid the costliness of apparel which was beginning to be noted,"[19] for it was "a detriment to the young colony; but, unfortunately, the worshipful court did not take into consideration all the circumstances of the case," for the elders' wives were partners in the general disorder, and the elders did not dare to urge reform in this matter too strenuously. Since little was done about it, this small exertion of feminine independence had its influence and became a foothold from which to attack new problems.

It was chiefly in the matters of religion that woman's early influence was exerted. Religion was the most important subject in the mind of the Puritan, and it was the women who were the extremists in this matter. Fanaticism, persecution, and enthusiasm were maintained by the women even to the extent of dying to further the ideals for which they were striving.

There were many remarkable women in America who were examples of the status of women. One of the most remarkable among them who was a fervent advocate of woman's rights was Mrs. Anne Hutchinson of Boston.[20] Living too early to be an American by birth, but emphatically an American in spirit, Mrs. Hutchinson

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19 John Rouse Larus, Women of America, p. 141.

20 Ibid., p. 155.

was regarded as a typical New England woman of early colonial times. She began to hold women's meetings where she set forth her religious beliefs. Her boldness outraged the ministers because of her defying their authority and stepping outside of women's sphere almost as much as because of her religious errors. This opposition inflamed her zeal more than ever, and soon she became boisterous in denouncing the ruling powers. She was banished. She had failed, but she was the first American woman to hold meetings, to claim for her sex the privilege of freedom as claimed by the Pilgrims. "She was the first American woman to uprear the banner of her sex in the matter of independence; she may be said to have been the prototype of all the succeeding upholders of 'women's rights.'"[21]

According to Major Hawthorne, Cassandra Southwick, another colonial New England woman, was a religious fanatic who said that "'she was greater than Moses, for Moses had seen God but twice, and his back, and she had seen Him three times, and face to face, instancing the places.'"[22] Although she was imprisoned, she doubtless contributed somewhat to feminine independence in those early days.

Mary Dyer, a sincere Quaker lady who felt that she must preach the doctrines of her sect, died for her faith after repeated warnings not to appear again in Boston.[23]

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21 Ibid., p. 155.

22 Ibid., p. 157.

23 Ibid., p. 157.

The deed of another woman pioneer in America must be commemorated. Mrs. Margaret Brent of Maryland has the distinction of being the first American "suffragette."[24] In the will of her kinsman, Governor Leonard Calvert, she was named as his only executrix. She appeared one day before the Assembly and insisted that she be given vote and voice in the House. Mrs. Brent, after being denied a vote, "turned on her heel, left the astounded legislators staring after her, and walked out to resume the management of her extensive interests."[25]

The early American woman was independent in spirit. When she was convinced of right, she steadfastly followed her impulses, regardless of sneers or even bodily danger. These women were not representative of all women, but they were representative of the gradually advancing spirit of freedom.

Before the Revolution American ideas, as revealed either in the establishment of schools for girls or in books on women, had not advanced far.[26] Women were taught little except domestic duties and religion--any education given was designed to further these phases of life. Religion was a blessing to the early woman in that she held a position of dignity and respect. This was the side of feminine life on which the New England clergy laid stress. Woman's relationship to man was based on a

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24 H. Addington Bruce, Woman in the Making of America, p. 26-8.

25 Ibid., p. 28.

26 Mary Sumner Benson, Women in Eighteenth Century America, p. 101.

literal interpretation of Scripture. Subjection to her husband was a rule of the woman's life, and she accepted it as the natural thing.

The instruction of girls included means of developing piety. Other educational aims in this period seemed to be to learn to read, to sew, and to write. This type of education obviously reflected the Puritan concept of woman's status.

From the Revolution to the beginning of the nineteenth century there was an increased interest in women's education. A new recognition of its importance was evidenced by the opening of schools and academies for young ladies in towns and villages and by publication of books and discussions of the subject in periodicals, especially Benjamin Franklin's writings.[27] Traces of the earlier idea of the subjection of women based on Scripture survived, but the enlightened thought of the time favored the liberal education of women as companions for men and tried to meet this need by the development of schools which taught little besides "accomplishments."[28]

After the Revolutionary War women in America were filled with a proud sense of new birth with their country. They had shared in the struggle and now participated in the triumphant result. They had bravely borne the loss of husbands and sons. If their homes were in the path of war, they courageously

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27 Ibid., p. 102.

28 Ibid., p. 136. Women were taught "accomplishments" in music, dancing, drawing, needlework, French, Latin, and Greek. pp. 162-163.

withstood the outrages of the soldiers. Many women saw their homes go up in flames and the lives of their loved ones threatened. All this they thought not too great a price to pay for liberty.

Women had been asserting the power of womanhood in their inner strength. They had turned from the peculiar attempts of some of their sex to win fame by religious leadership or other manifestations of ambitions. They were consecrated to a cause which they found worthy of their devotions.

The hold of the customs of the Old World upon the American woman had suddenly been loosed; the American woman had gained emancipation from one source. She must have rejoiced in her freedom from European dominance; now she was able to prove herself an American indeed.

After the centralization of our government, for the first time one woman filled the eyes of the nation as the "first lady of the land"--Martha Washington.

Mercy Otis Warren, a female writer of the day, wrote Mrs. Washington:

> Your observation may be true, that many younger and gayer ladies consider your situation as enviable; yet I know not one who by general consent would be more likely to obtain the suffrages of the sex, even were they to canvass at elections for the elevated station, than the lady who now holds the first rank in the United States.[29]

Mrs. Warren revealed in her letter what American women must have been thinking. Since their emancipation from the law of England,

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29 John Rouse Larus, Women of America, p. 278.

they were determined not to rest until their goals were achieved.

Abigail Adams wrote to John Adams in 1776 when he was attending the Continental Congress:

> I long to hear that you have declared an independency, and, by the way, in the new code of laws which I suppose it will be necessary for you to make, I desire that you should remember the ladies and be more generous and favorable to them than your ancestors. . . . If particular care and attention are not paid to the ladies we are determined to foment a rebellion, and will not hold ourselves bound to obey any laws in which we have no voice or representation.[30]

At the close of the eighteenth-century European ideals and methods still predominated to a certain degree. Those in America who were interested in women's sphere were being affected by Mary Wollstonecraft's work. The American novelist, Charles Brockden Brown, discussed the rights of women in such a way as to show the influence of Mary Wollstonecraft. One can see the distinct gains made in education for women, but women were being aroused to work for still greater economic and educational opportunities.

During Hawthorne's Boyhood

During Hawthorne's boyhood in the early years of the nineteenth century, domesticity still held first place in the majority of American circles. The American woman still ruled the home and "refused to abdicate her crown even at the call of fashion, but it must be acknowledged that she wore that crown

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30 Mary Foulke Morrisson, "Preliminary Agitation," in Victory, p. 3.

less easily and comfortably than in earlier days."[31] It has been observed that women previous to the nineteenth century cast a little light on the path of their sex and many difficulties were removed.

Women were trying to break their bonds. Men were being asked to remove the barriers and permit women to show what they could do. Of course, it was hard for men, for their minds were encumbered by tradition. They considered self-dependence as a fault in most women. Women were taught to depend upon others, not to be independent of others. One of the greatest workers for woman's emancipation, Margaret Fuller, proposed that women lay aside all thought of being taught and led by men.[32] Men thought that it was dangerous for a woman to have originality of thought or character; their minds were supposed to be so impeded by doubts that they could not think free thoughts.

"Her mother taught her to do it that way" was used as a reason for making no effort toward reformation.[33] Although distinct gains had been made in education, instruction for girls still did not have as broad a field as for boys. An influence was growing toward better and wider instruction. Poor as the instruction sometimes was, yet women learned more than they could receive in the close ties of a home circle. Whether women would be authors or painters was not so important. The importance

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31 John Rouse Larus, Women of America, p. 302.

32 Margaret Fuller Ossoli, Woman in the Nineteenth-Century, p. 120.

33 Ibid., p. 95.

lay in the fact that they had an intellect which needed to be developed. It was the opinion of some that something should and must be done. It was natural that woman wanted to advance, but usually she was discouraged or told that "girls can't do that; they are sissies."[34]

Women had invaded many of the trades and some of the professions in the early nineteenth century.[35] Factories were employing them. They were engaged in the culture of fruits, flowers, and vegetables, even in the sale of them. There were even female physicians. Many women were becoming useful in writing. In this period writing, music, and teaching were probably the most esteemed professions for women.

There was during this time a move for a national education which would require more schools to be established.[36] There was then a plan to have Cincinnati as a central point from which teachers would be prepared and sent to their duties, and two ladies, Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe and Miss Catherine Beecher, were to examine and instruct the teachers. The central committee was to have charge of raising funds, finding teachers, and places where teachers were wanted. This forward move seemed as if it were ushering in the golden age for women. They were beginning to take possession of many fields for which men had earlier pronounced them unfit. It is true, there were many

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34 Ibid., p. 44.

35 Ibid., p. 222.

36 Ibid., p. 224.

fields not open to them, but they did not seem to know just where they would stop.

Women still did not have the privileges of voting, speaking in public, or having equal property rights; but in the 1840's and 1850's there was to be a widespread awakening of women and a bitter opposition to the whole woman's rights movement.

Chapter II

THE WOMAN'S RIGHTS MOVEMENT AND ITS LEADERS

The problem of woman's position, of her duties, responsibilities, and rights attracted a large measure of attention from the thinkers and agitators of the time. The legislators were concerned about the problem.[1] Why should woman not have a voice in shaping the laws by which she was ruled? Why could she not be free to choose her vocation? Why could she not be regarded as an individual, with a mind independent of that of her husband? Such questions and similar ones caused a growing liberality on the subject of women's rights during the first half of the nineteenth century.

Courageous leaders had gone before and straightened out some of the crooked paths to the goal. The account of Anne Hutchinson's prayer meetings in Boston in 1636 have been related. Margaret Brent's demand for a voice in the State assembly of Maryland in 1647 was a shocking event. Another interesting event was Abigail Adams' letter to John Adams asking consideration of women in the laws of the New Nation. It was in 1790 that Mary Wollstonecraft threw down her challenge. In Gloucester, Massachusetts, also in 1790, the fathers of the

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1 Margaret Fuller Ossoli, Woman in the Nineteenth-Century, p. ix.

town decided that "females are a tender and interesting branch of the Community but have been much neglected by the Public Schools of this town."[2] Urged by the citizens of Troy, New York, Emma Willard moved her Academy for Female Education from Waterford, New York, to Troy. It was in 1821 that she opened the Female Seminary at Troy.[3]

Women knew that if woman's proper field of work and self-expression were to be widened, then wishes would have to be publicly expressed by women. They realized that they themselves would have to be the reformers. The movement for the emancipation of women began when the champions of woman spoke from public platforms in behalf of rights in which they earnestly believed. Sarah and Angelina Grimké, daughters of a Southern slaveholder, went North to lecture against the institution of slavery.[4] Abby Kelley made her first appearance on the anti-slavery platform.[5] She traveled extensively in the United States, speaking amidst all kinds of persecutions. In 1832 Lydia Marie Child's History of Woman was published.[6] It probably encouraged the agitation of woman's rights. Ernestine Rose,

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2 Mary Foulke Morrisson, "Preliminary Agitation," in Victory, p. 6.

3 E. B. Huntington, "Lydia H. Sigourney," in Eminent Women of the Age, p. 280.

4 Elizabeth Cady Stanton, "Sarah and Angelina Grimké," in Eminent Women of the Age, p. 363.

5 Ibid., p. 365.

6 T. W. Higginson, "Lydia Marie Child," in Eminent Women of the Age, p. 47.

a native of Poland, came to America in 1836 and addressed large audiences on "The Science of Government."[7] She had petitioned in 1838 for legislation concerning the property rights of women. She was one of the leaders in the Woman's Rights Movement who had the privilege of speaking at all the annual conventions. The women who had taken an active part in the antislavery cause, beginning in 1830, were prepared to put their energies into this advancing movement. In 1836 William Lloyd Garrison nominated Abby Kelley to a place on a committee of the Anti-Slavery Society; and thus gave recognition to woman's equal status in the organization.[8] It was a question which split the anti-slavery forces in America, and made trouble at the World Anti-Slavery Convention in London. The new society sent men delegates, while the Anti-Slavery society sent both men and women.

It was in 1840 that women from Boston, New York, and Philadelphia went to London as delegates to the World's Anti-Slavery Convention.[9] The idea of women appearing as delegates was more than England could stand; consequently they were denied membership on account of their sex. William Lloyd Garrison, protesting because the women were not accepted, refused to be seated. He and the women sat in the gallery as silent spectators.

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7 Elizabeth C. Stanton, "The Woman's Rights Movement and Its Champions in the United States," in Eminent Women of the Age, p. 362.

8 Mary Gray Peck, "First Organized Action," in Victory, p. 16.

9 Elizabeth C. Stanton, "Lucretia Mott," in Eminent Women of the Age, p. 376.

Mrs. Stanton and Mrs. Mott resolved that day to hold a convention when they returned home and to form a society to advocate the rights of women.[10] The "woman" question was brought closer to the hearts of the women now than ever before. They realized the problem of breaking down the prejudices of people whose narrow opinions kept woman's sphere and her mission within narrow limitations. The general indignation felt by the most progressive minds of the time gave birth to the Woman's Rights Movement. Elizabeth Cady Stanton said that the Woman's Rights cause proper could be dated from the division in the anti-slavery organization in 1840.

During these years women gradually took a more active part in reform movements. Margaret Fuller published "The Great Lawsuit; Man versus Men, Woman versus Women" in the Dial, the magazine of Transcendentalism.[11] It attracted so much attention that the number was soon out of print. In the essay, which was later reprinted in book form, Margaret Fuller was optimistic in believing that in her time there was materializing an approach to a nobler era than the world had ever known. She felt that during the present upheaval about women their minds would be on higher purposes than before, "their sleeping powers developed, and their characters strengthened."[12] Others agitated

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10 Ibid., p. 378.

11 T. W. Higginson, "Margaret Fuller Ossoli," in Eminent Women of the Age, p. 184.

12 Margaret Fuller Ossoli, Woman in the Nineteenth-Century, p. 220.

for temperance, anti-slavery, suffrage, and equal education before audiences of women. There was an almost simultaneous rising of persons in different localities in favor of reform for woman which resulted in the organized Woman's Rights Movement.

It was in the summer of 1848 that Elizabeth Stanton in a visit with Lucretia Mott decided to call a Woman's Rights Convention at Seneca Falls, New York, where Mrs. Stanton lived.[13] The two women prepared resolutions and sentiments, and the call was issued in the county papers. The guiding principle of the convention was set forth in this declaration: "'Resolved, That woman is man's equal--was intended to be so by the Creator, and the highest good of the race demands that she should be recognized as such.'"[14] Years later as Elizabeth Stanton was relating the outcome of the first convention, she said:

> The declaration was published in nearly every paper in the country, and the nation was convulsed with laughter, from Maine to Louisiana, though our demands for suffrage, the right to property, work, and wages were the same that wise men accept today, the same that Henry Ward Beecher preaches in his pulpit, and John Stuart Mill presses on the consideration of the British Parliament.[15]

While the press and public remained hostile, they must have been impressed with the way the efficient women carried on their program.

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13 Elizabeth C. Stanton, "Lucretia Mott," in Eminent Women of the Age, pp. 377-78.

14 Mary R. Beard, Woman As Force in History, p. 146.

15 Elizabeth C. Stanton, "Lucretia Mott," in Eminent Women of the Age, p. 378.

The First National Woman's Rights Convention was held in Worcester, Massachusetts, in 1850.[16] After this, the movement being organized on a national basis, speakers traveled over the country in the interest of work, wages, property, education, and suffrage. Another great movement had begun to manifest itself in the United States as a sign of progress.

Relationship to Other Movements

Co-education

In the early nineteenth century after America had received a wave of the Wollstonecraft influence from England, a few brave souls said that the public schools should be large enough to include both boys and girls. As might have been anticipated, there was a storm of protest. Mary Wollstonecraft proposed that women should be educated with an emphasis upon the practical side of life rather than the ornamental. Her revolutionary proposal resulted in an agitation for a reassessment of values in women's education in both England and America. Except in a single group, woman was still regarded as mentally inferior to man; the Quakers placed their women in an intellectual status equal with the men. Women were educated with men and were recognized as a part in helping to guide church and community affairs.

The flood of new opinion which invaded America soon began to open the minds of the people as to the necessity of providing intellectual activity for the female sex. It was a time

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16 Ibid., p. 388.

of awakening in America; old ideas of colonial and national days were giving way to the general enlightenment of the age. The time for woman to sit around and look pretty had passed. Our country was growing and developing; it needed the cultivated minds of both men and women.

It was in 1803 that Bradford Academy was founded as a co-educational school.[17] However, it became a girls' school in 1836. Selections from the by-laws reflect the strict code of living demanded in the early stages of the school:

> The instruction in the female apartment may be suspended whenever the proprietors judge necessary.
>
> It shall be the duty of the students to attend public worship both on the Sabbath and on lecture days. Refrain from all noise and walking the streets or fields on the Sabbath except in going to and returning from meeting and the monitors shall note all absentees on the Sabbath.
>
> No student shall in going to or from the Academy cast stones into the adjacent fields, injure any person's property, or take fruit from any orchard on penalty of public admonition.
>
> The students shall return to their lodgings precisely at nine o'clock in the evening, and on Saturday evening they shall not be absent.
>
> The students shall treat one another with affection and if anyone should injure another person or property he shall be punished or fined.[18]

A number of educational institutions for women were soon established. In 1819 Emma Willard presented to the New York legislature her "Plan for Improving Female Education," and in

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17 Clifton J. Furness, The Genteel Female, p. 269.

18 Ibid., pp. 277-78, quoting Jean S. Pond, Bradford, a New England Academy, pp. 56-7.

1821 she opened her famous Female Seminary at Troy, New York.[19] The Hartford Female Seminary was founded in 1823 by Catherine Beecher.[20] Abbott Academy for Girls was founded at Andover in 1829.[21] In 1831 John J. Shepherd founded Oberlin, the first co-educational college in the United States. In his circular he listed among the prominent objects of the seminary "The elevation of female character by bringing within the reach of the misjudged and neglected sex all the instructive privileges which hitherto have unreasonably distinguished the leading sex from theirs."[22] In 1836 Mary Lyon established South Hadley Female Seminary, primarily as a training school for wives of ministers and missionaries.[23] Soon normal schools, which trained women for specific duties in teaching young women, were established. The first normal school for women was established at Lexington, Massachusetts, in 1839.[24] Although there was still criticism against feminine learning, women would not be defeated or turned back; they went forward despite the many protests which continued until about 1848, when the Woman's Rights Convention seemed to cement the views of the general public toward the advancing woman. Women were outstanding pioneers

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19 Mary Foulke Morrisson, "Preliminary Agitation," in Victory, p. 6.

20 Clifton J. Furness, The Genteel Female, p. 270.

21 Ibid., p. 270.

22 Mary Foulke Morrisson, "Preliminary Agitation," in Victory, pp. 6-7.

23 Clifton J. Furness, The Genteel Female, p. 270.

24 Ibid., p. 270.

in bringing to their sex the privilege of studying subjects which formerly had been reserved for men exclusively. Co-education today is the result of women's barging forward and preparing the way for the education of their sex.

Abolition

It is not strange that woman would take upon herself the desire to work for the abolition of slavery. Early nineteenth century women organized a Female Anti-Slavery Society.[25] Women were among the most earnest, eloquent, and untiring champions of emancipation. Most of the women who attained distinction as pioneers in the movement to set free the slaves carried on their propaganda from the public platform. They endured the double insult of being abolitionists and "women out of their sphere." Elizabeth Stanton recalled that "the press and the pulpit exhausted the English language to find adjectives to express their detestation of so horrible a revelation as 'a woman out of her sphere.'"[26]

Slavery forces were appalled at the boldness of women's speaking in public. These women had several harrowing experiences. The Grimké sisters were attacked by angry mobs, armed with stones, sticks, and rotten eggs. While they spoke there would be enraged mobs outside shouting and throwing stones in

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25 H. Addington Bruce, Woman in the Making of America, p. 161.

26 Elizabeth C. Stanton, "Mary Grew," in Eminent Women of the Age, p. 367.

the windows.[27] The Grimké sisters deserve credit for their sacrifice for a cause which they had courage to defend. They and other women to be discussed later greatly influenced public opinion.

Suffrage

When the sentiment for woman's franchise got under way and new views of all sorts were gaining ground, protest was still strong against woman's active part in public life. It was argued that if woman's cause were introduced in the legislature, the beauty of the home would be destroyed; woman would be putting herself boldly forward; the dignified halls of the legislature would be disgraced. A woman doing work outside her home was seen to be inconsistent with the duties of a mother. Ridiculously humorous pictures of ladies in hysterics at the polls and senate chambers filled with cradles were soon put into circulation.[28]

Marietta Holley was a writer on the subject of "woman suffrage." In her comical style she said to one of her characters:

> Women's speah is where she can do the most good; if God had meant that wimmen should be nothin' but men's shadders, He would have made gosts and fantoms of 'em at once. But havin' made 'em flesh and blood, with braens and souls, I believe He meant 'em to be used to the best advantage. And the talk about wimmen havin' to fight, and men wash dishes, if wimmen vote, is all shear nonsense. . . . It is jest as ridiculous to say that kissin' a pretty baby, or lovin' books and

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27 H. Addington Bruce, Woman in the Making of America, p. 171.

28 Margaret Fuller Ossoli, Woman in the Nineteenth-Century, p. 34.

> music and pictures, makes a man a hen huzzy. . . . Men and wimmin votin' side by side, would no more alter their natural dispositions than singin' one of Watts'es hymns together would. One will sing bass, and the other air, so long as the world stands.[29]

Writings like this one helped to turn the minds of men and women toward the advancing cause of "woman suffrage."

Women were out of one reform right into another. They were living in a day of reform, a day of progress for their own sex. Speaking from platforms, from one to another, and from women's conventions, the right to vote became a most sought for privilege. The importance of suffrage was brought out. The subject of suffrage was lectured on in many states, and volumes were written about it. Some states voted to give their women the right to vote; this action laid the foundation for the gradually advancing position of woman's suffrage.

There were many women who lectured on suffrage for women. From 1849 to 1855 Frances D. Gage lectured on the subject in Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Missouri, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and New York, and also wrote for the press.[30] In 1850 Antoinette Brown attended a convention in Worcester, Massachusetts, and made a speech on the enfranchisement of woman.[31] Olympia Brown, an able debater, lectured on the importance of suffrage for woman.[32]

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29 Clifton J. Furness, The Genteel Female, p. 238.

30 Elizabeth C. Stanton, "Frances D. Gage," in Eminent Women of the Age, p. 386.

31 Ibid., "Antoinette Brown," p. 390.

32 Ibid., "Olympia Brown," p. 403.

The move for suffrage had small beginnings, but the cause advanced until gradually women became very bold in their agitation for national right of the franchise. Other important speakers and writers for the suffrage of women are discussed in the section titled "Leaders."

Transcendentalism

The Transcendentalists were a group of men and women who read, wrote, and thought with each other along common lines of interest. Their common interests brought them together for discussion and analysis of literature, philosophy, and religion.

Although a little group of writers had written articles about their Transcendental beliefs, it was not until 1838 that Transcendentalism really began to attract public attention.[33] At first Transcendentalism seemed to manifest itself in the sphere of religion, but soon it branched out into many fields. It became a reform movement in that it was concerned in and desired to promote the best interests of the outstanding reforms of the day. The Transcendental movement had ideas about politics, economics, education, and the rights of woman. The Transcendentalists were seekers of truth and a higher cultural living. Their beliefs in the reform movements were in harmony with the general trend of enlightened opinion during the nineteenth century.

Conquests had been made in literature by the female sex.

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33 Clarence L. F. Gohdes, The Periodicals of American Transcendentalism, p. 11.

The shock of women writers had been eased somewhat; moreover the Transcendentalists were intimately associated with two of these literary women: Margaret Fuller and Elizabeth Peabody.

Women were beginning to be put upon an intellectual equality with men; so it was considered perfectly in order for Margaret Fuller, Elizabeth Peabody, and, occasionally, Sarah Ripley to participate in the discussions of the Transcendentalists.

The Transcendentalists posed "the problem of the relation between the sexes in new terms, arguing for sexual equality."[34] Women, as well as men, had reasoning power. Margaret Fuller was a strong agitator for women's rights. Her book, Woman in the Nineteenth-Century, which was an outgrowth of an article that she had written earlier for the Transcendental publication, The Dial, made a great impression on the "feminist" movement in America. Because of her ability to take her place in a man's world, some thought Margaret was rapidly getting out of her sphere. "Edgar Allan Poe took delight in classifying the race into three categories: men, women, and Margaret Fuller."[35]

Margaret Fuller was not only a contributor to The Dial; she was also its first editor.[36] She was valued in the circle of individualists because of her witty and intellectual conversational talents. She held conversational classes in which

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34 Perry Miller, The Transcendentalists, p. 369.

35 Ibid., p. 457.

36 Mason Wade, Margaret Fuller: Whetstone of Genius, p. 83.

women interested in intellectual matters came and discussed them.[37] The "Conversations" awakened women to intellectual activity and did much to make women's rights seem important.

Elizabeth Peabody, not as well-known as Margaret Fuller, made many contributions to the Transcendentalist movement. One effect of Transcendentalism was to lead to an investigation of educational techniques and possibilities. Miss Peabody published Record of a School in 1835.[38] It was an account of the school which Elizabeth Peabody and Bronson Alcott had opened in 1834. The school was an embodiment of principles of revolt against the prevailing methods of education.

After publication of The Dial ceased, Elizabeth Peabody attempted to start a Transcendental magazine under the title of Aesthetic Papers, but the magazine achieved only a single issue.[39] Miss Peabody was known as an educator and bookseller. In 1839 she opened a bookshop in West Street, which served as headquarters and intellectual station for the Transcendentalists.[40]

The movement was short-lived; it was mostly a wave of enthusiasm. Aside from the fact that Margaret Fuller and Elizabeth Peabody contributed to the Transcendental Movement, it was the least influential of several ventures which related to the

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37 Ibid., p. 68.

38 Perry Miller, The Transcendentalists, p. 141.

39 Ibid., p. 372.

40 Ibid., p. 141.

Woman's Rights Movement.

Literature

Margaret Fuller, who recognized that literary ambitions of womankind were struggling to have free expression, stated: "Sign of the times is furnished by the triumph of Female Authorship."[41] Literature was about the first avenue of expression to be opened to the women of that day. In general the literary efforts of women were confined to journals or religious writings which were not prepared for publication.

It has been brought out earlier that woman was regarded in the beginning as essentially inferior mentally, and this attitude persisted until well into the nineteenth century. One of the Protestant ministers of Newburyport in undertaking the task of measuring woman's ability and accomplishments spoke plainly when he said:

> When I see ladies of talent, and learning, and refinement--ladies whose accomplishments and virtues would have fitted them to stand in the first rank of their own sex, stepping out of their sphere, to enter upon stations and offices which have heretofore been regarded as appropriate to men; when popular female writers, and women professing godliness, begin to take the same ground, it is time for the pulpit as well as the press to speak plainly.[42]

Evidence that the prejudice against women's writing goes back to colonial days is found in the following quotation,

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41 Margaret Fuller Ossoli, Woman in the Nineteenth-Century, p. 93.

42 J. F. Stearns, "Female Influence, and the True Christian Mode of Its Exercise," as quoted in Clifton J. Furness, The Genteel Female, p. 215.

which credits a woman's insanity to her having been addicted to literary pursuits:

> The Governor of Hartford upon Connecticut came to Boston, and brought his wife with him (a godly young woman and of special parts) who was fallen into a sad infirmity, the loss of her understanding and reason, which had been growing upon her divers years by occasion of her giving herself wholly to reading and writing, and had written many books. Her husband being very loving and tender of her was loath to grieve her; but he saw his error when it was too late. For if she had attended to her household affairs, and such things as belong to women, and not gone out of her way and calling to meddle in such things as are proper for men, whose minds are stronger, she had kept her wits and might have improved them usefully and honorably in the place God had set her.[43]

Even in the middle of the nineteenth century a Victorian magazine recommended "that books by male and female authors ought really to be kept on separate shelves."[44]

Despite opposition women tried their talents in literature. The general disapproval of women's participating in anything but household duties gradually gave way to a more tolerant attitude toward the writings from the female pen. It was often thought that literary women and those who were active and earnest in promoting reform movements, must neglect the domestic duties of life. This may have been so, but some of the most devoted mothers whose minds were highly cultured were active in efforts for the welfare of the race. Among the women writers who concentrated their work upon various phases of the feminist movement, there were Lucretia Mott, Margaret Fuller, Elizabeth Cady

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43 John Rouse Larus, Women of America, p. 134.

44 Clifton J. Furness, The Genteel Female, p. 257.

Stanton, and the Grimké sisters.

Other prominent writers were Lydia Maria Child, Mrs. Sarah Parton, Lydia H. Sigourney, Grace Greenwood, Alice and Phebe Cary, Mrs. Caroline H. Dall, and Harriet Beecher Stowe. By the eighteen-fifties this school of authoresses had reached its peak. The number of published works by these women was evidence that women had achieved a fair degree of popular recognition as professional writers. Women writers who are not discussed in the section entitled "Leaders" will be discussed here.

In 1851 Mrs. Sarah Parton, known in literary life as "Fanny Fern," published an essay which was gladly received by the public.[45] Critics "charged the new story-writer and essayist with eccentricity, flippancy, cynicism, irreverence, masculinity,--with every conceivable sin of authorship except sentimentality, pharisaism, and prosiness."[46] Her works included tales, essays, sketches, and letters which were a delight to the people, shown by the popular favor of them.

When Grace Greenwood was in her teens, she sent compositions to the Rochester papers.[47] The literary world received her with open arms. In 1850 many of her sketches and letters were collected and published under the name of Greenwood Leaves. She continued writing. She was a zealous writer through her

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[45] Grace Greenwood, "Fanny Fern--Mrs. Parton," in Eminent Women of the Age, pp. 72-83.

[46] Ibid., p. 73.

[47] Joseph B. Lyman, "Grace Greenwood--Mrs. Lippincott," in Eminent Women of the Age, pp. 151-163.

school days--letters from Europe, story-writing for children, and the war years were covered by her pen.

Alice and Phebe Cary's first literary work was a joint volume of poems published in 1850.[48] Alice published the next year "Clovernook Papers," sketches of characters and incidents drawn from experience and observation. Several other works appeared which were well received by the public.

Mrs. Caroline H. Dall was a distinguished writer, a close student of historical facts.[49] Her writings cover the labor for promotion of Woman's Rights.

Although women wrote, they did so in the face of opposition and criticism by those who thought writing was out of woman's sphere. But on the whole there was a steady progress of female literary writers after 1820. They came gradually into acceptance as the general emancipation of women progressed.

Leaders

Women knew that if they were to be emancipated, their yokes lifted, their chains broken, they would have to be the leaders. The leaders in the Woman's Rights Movement are too numerous for this report, but the outstanding ones will be viewed as to their work, courage, and stedfastness. The women who were pioneers in the reform movements carried on their propaganda from the public platform and through the medium of

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[48] Horace Greeley, "Alice and Phebe Cary," in Eminent Women of the Age, p. 168.

[49] Elizabeth C. Stanton, "Mrs. Caroline H. Dall," in Eminent Women of the Age, p. 394.

writing--books, essays, and editorials.

Margaret Fuller's thoughts did not seem to have been directed so exclusively to the subject of women as were the minds of some others, but she could not remain indifferent to the movement. Her book, Woman in the Nineteenth-Century, emphasized the rights for which women were battling.[50] It was a treatment of the question of feminine shortcomings and the reasons for them. She refuted the arguments against the emancipation of women.

Another woman who made a very real sacrifice in championing woman's rights was Lydia Maria Child.[51] Mrs. Child's hopes and plans as a popular writer were ruined by her advocacy of freedom for the negro. She was a popular authoress until she published her Appeal in Favor of that Class of Americans called Africans. It was unfortunate that under the form of an Appeal a colored man "had thrown a firebrand into Southern society which had been followed by Nat Turner's insurrection; and now a literary lady, amid the cultivated circles of Boston, dared also to 'appeal.'"[52] The demand for her books dropped suddenly. The Appeal was the first anti-slavery work ever printed in America in book form. It covered the history of slavery and the duties of the American people in behalf of the slaves.

Undaunted by opposition, Mrs. Child entered enthusiastically

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50 Margaret Fuller Ossoli, Woman in the Nineteenth-Century.

51 T. W. Higginson, "Margaret Fuller Ossoli," in Eminent Women of the Age, p. 47.

52 Ibid., p. 47.

into the struggle to promote the spread of abolitionary ideas. She published "Oasis," an anti-slavery manual, an "Anti-Slavery Catechism," a small book entitled Authentic Anecdotes of American Slavery, and The Evils of Slavery and the Cure of Slavery. To the end of her life she retained a warm spot in her heart for the oppressed slave.

In 1821 Lydia Maria Child published her first novel under the title of Hobomok: A Tale of Early Times.[53] This little book came out just at the beginning of American literature before very many books had been printed. It was at least successful enough to encourage the publication of The Rebel. She published in 1827 the Juvenile Miscellany, a children's magazine which continued eight years, and in 1829 her Frugal Housewife, a cookbook. It was the idea in that day that before an authoress could be recognized in literature, she must produce a cookbook. That was one way to keep her mind attached to home duties. Her heart was in the anti-slavery movement, and much of her energies were spent in that direction, although she did notable work in many departments of literature.

In 1852 Uncle Tom's Cabin was published by a woman, Harriet Beecher Stowe.[54] Harriet had always felt a deep interest in the slaves; it was often that she had seen them mistreated; she knew plantation life. This novel with its heartrending pictures of

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53 T. W. Higginson, "Margaret Fuller Ossoli," in Eminent Women of the Age, pp. 42-65.

54 H. Addington Bruce, Woman in the Making of America, p. 185.

the life of the slave was a powerful influence in developing a stronger anti-slavery sentiment. The popularity of the book was unusual; in general it awakened sympathy for the slave in the North and aroused hatred in the South. Mrs. Stowe continued writing novels and columns for newspapers and magazines.

Lucretia Mott labored faithfully for the abolition of slavery, the cause of temperance, and the elevation of woman.[55] She had an early abhorrence of slavery impressed upon her mind by books, pictures, and ministers. In her own words she said:

> But the millions of down-trodden slaves in our land being the greatest sufferers, the most oppressed class, I have felt bound to plead their cause, in season and out of season, to endeavor to put my soul in their souls stead, and to aid, all in my power, in every right effort for their immediate emancipation.[56]

She devoted herself ardently to the cause of abolition by traveling extensively in free states and slave states holding meetings in an effort to free the slaves.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton found Lucretia Mott an extremely interesting woman. While they were in London attending the World Anti-Slavery Convention, Mrs. Stanton heard Mrs. Mott speak in church. She had always felt that women should be privileged to speak in public, and now her idea was confirmed, for Mrs. Mott proved herself to be gracious and expressive in the pulpit.

When the women delegates to the World's Anti-Slavery

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55 Elizabeth C. Stanton, "Lucretia Mott," in Eminent Women of the Age, pp. 371-75.

56 Ibid., p. 375-76.

Convention in London were denied membership, Mrs. Mott began to think seriously about helping to relieve the bondage of women. Her whole mind and soul were dedicated to the rights of humanity.

Mrs. Stanton said that Lucy Stone was the first speaker who really stirred the nation's heart on the subject of woman's wrongs."[57] She early saw the injustice of the education of boys and not girls. She rebelled against her brothers' having the privileges and advantages of a college education, while she had to remain at home to work on the farm. She made up her mind that she would go to college and have a liberal education. She entered Oberlin College, where she proved to be a very capable student, graduating with high honors. While she was at Oberlin, she found that she had a talent for speaking, and determined to be a lecturer. Although she won the honor of being chosen to write the Commencement address, she refused because a professor was to read it instead of her. Even a co-educational college did not permit women students to speak in public.

Lucy Stone spent much time in working for the reforms of her sex. She attended the Topeka Convention, at the formations of the "Kansas Impartial Suffrage Association," and lectured during the winter on suffrage for women in Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and New York.[58]

Once when speaking for an Anti-slavery society, she lectured on woman's rights. After being rebuked for not representing

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57 Elizabeth C. Stanton, "Lucy Stone," in Eminent Women of the Age, p. 392.

58 Ibid., p. 394.

the slaves, she said, "'I was a woman before I was an Abolitionist.'"[59]

Another influential leader of the woman's rights movement was Elizabeth Cady Stanton.[60] As a child Mrs. Stanton felt the injustices and burdens that women had to bear. She spent much time in her father's law office, and while there she heard many women make complaints of the injustice of the laws. The plight of these women touched her heart and she asked her father if something could be done. He showed her the law books and explained that the laws kept him from doing anything. Elizabeth proposed to get rid of the laws by cutting them out of the book. This action was prevented by her father's explanation that the cruel laws were made by the legislature and could be changed only by that State body. She vowed that when she became old enough she would have the laws changed; and so she did. After she finished at Mrs. Willard's Female Seminary, she went back home and studied her father's law books in her leisure time.

She attended the Anti-Slavery Convention in London where her husband was a delegate. Here she met Lucretia Mott, in whom she found a liberal thinker on womanhood. The two women became close friends and decided that when they returned to America they would call a Woman's Rights Convention. This convention was called in 1848, chiefly by Mrs. Stanton. She is

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59 Mary Foulke Morrisson, "Preliminary Agitation," in Victory, p. 10.

60 Theodore Tilton, "Mrs. Elizabeth Cady Stanton," in Eminent Women of the Age, pp. 332-341.

responsible for the leading idea--the elective franchise--of the Woman's Rights Convention. It was the first public demand for woman's suffrage made by any organized convention. Mrs. Stanton demanded it in the following resolution: "Resolved, that it is the duty of the women of this country to secure to themselves their sacred right to the elective franchise."[61] The convention hesitated, but finally the resolution was passed.

Theodore Tilton, who wrote the biography of Elizabeth Stanton, said that that convention and, especially its demand for woman's suffrage, excited the universal laughter of the nation. People thought these women were some eccentric creatures ahead of their time. Mr. Tilton added that her father thought she must have gone crazy. He went to visit her and tried to talk her out of her position, but in vain. At last, when getting ready to leave her, he said, "'My child, I wish you had waited till I was under the sod, before you had done this foolish thing!'" She replied by calling to his attention how he had given her law books to read, and that it was there that she had discovered the injustice of the American laws toward women.[62] She was an untiring leader in promoting the rights of her sex and proving woman equal to man.

Vehement females claimed a right to develop their mental powers and apply them in any way they saw fit. Susan B. Anthony was invited to prepare a report on educating the sexes

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61 Theodore Tilton, "Elizabeth Cady Stanton," in Eminent Women of the Age, pp. 346-51.

62 Ibid., pp. 346-351.

together.[63] She read the report to a large audience in Troy, New York, in 1858. At the close of the report, a Mr. Hazeltine came to her and said:

> While I must admit the talent and power of your report, I would rather see a daughter of mine buried beneath the sod, than that she should stand before a promiscuous audience and utter such sentiments.[64]

In the winter of 1854-1855 Miss Anthony held fifty-four conventions in different counties of the State, with two petitions in hand, one demanding equal property rights, the other the ballot.[65]

Susan B. Anthony in the capacity of a schoolteacher learned of the unjust pay for women teachers--men were paid three times as much.[66] She was an enthusiastic supporter of the temperance movement. Mrs. Stanton and Miss Anthony began to work together and throw out challenges

> in the form of resolutions, petitions, appeals, and speeches, on every subject,--temperance, anti-slavery, woman's rights, agriculture, education, and religion, --uniformly accepting every invitation to go everywhere, and do everything.[67]

With the determination not to be less brilliant than boys, Lydia Sigourney made an early attempt at co-education in Hartford. Having recalled a hectic day at school where the critical

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63 Elizabeth C. Stanton, "Susan B. Anthony," in Eminent Women of the Age, p. 399.

64 Ibid., p. 399.

65 Ibid., p. 400.

66 Ibid., p. 396.

67 Ibid., p. 398.

boys sat with gaping mouths eager to detect a mistake in a girl's recitation, she wrote of the determination which this incident gave her:

> I studied all my lessons thoroughly last evening. I repeated them after I lay down in bed. While I was dreaming, Memory showed me that she had got the whole all right and clear. So now I will go bravely to school, and that bench of Scribes and Pharisees shan't have a chance to whisper again, "There! there! ain' that a'most a mistake?[68]

Lydia H. Sigourney began her literary life while she was a teacher.[69] She published her first volume entitled Pieces in Prose and Verse in 1815. In 1816 she published Life and Writings of Nancy Marie Hyde, a tribute to the memory of a close friend and fellow-teacher. Her published writings numbered fifty-seven volumes, not counting newspaper and magazine literature.

Mrs. Emma Willard was among the most prominent professional educators.[70] After many very successful years of teaching, she began to notice the difference between the college course of a young man and that of a young woman. This injustice lay heavily on her heart, with the result that she summoned her best energies and drew up an enlarged course of study. Although the public was not with her, she was not detoured from the track of liberal education for women. She worked hard, planned long

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68 Lydia Sigourney, "An Early Attempt at Co-education in Hartford," Lucy Howard's Journal, as quoted in Clifton J. Furness, The Genteel Female, p. 294.

69 E. B. Huntington, "Lydia H. Sigourney," in Eminent Women of the Age, pp. 93-96.

70 Ibid., "Mrs. Emma Willard," p. 273.

hours, and brought forth ideas about a new day in woman's education. In 1818 she put her plan into execution. The school was established. She added new courses to the ordinary curriculum of the schools for young ladies of that time. She constantly sought to widen her own knowledge and become more efficient.

It seems strange that Sarah and Angelina Grimké, two of the women who were prominent in the Abolition movement, were southern.[71] They knew slavery, and they went North to lecture on its evils. They were so eloquent in their speaking that they had to move from the parlors of church women to the churches. Angelina was invited to speak before the Massachusetts legislature in 1838--the first time for a woman to speak in the Boston State House. The general public was aroused at the Grimké sisters' speaking in public. Angelina wrote:

> We have given great offense on account of our womanhood, which seems to be as objectionable as our abolition. The whole land seems roused to a discussion of the province of women and I am glad of it.[72]

Abby Kelley made her first appearance on the anti-slavery platform.[73] For a period of thirty years she traveled about the country speaking on the subject of slavery. She was a persecuted pioneer, but still spoke at every opportunity.

Women have come a long way since Mary Wollstonecraft wrote

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71 Mary Foulke Morrisson, "Preliminary Agitation," in Victory, p. 7.

72 Ibid., p. 8.

73 Elizabeth C. Stanton, "Abby Kelley," in Eminent Women of the Age, p. 365.

her revolutionary book, The Rights of Woman. It has been many a day since Mary Dyer met her death by hanging--many a day since Anne Hutchinson, Margaret Fuller, Lydia Maria Child, Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and all of the other worthy women of early America passed across the stage of life. But the agitation they aroused and the action they accomplished have never ceased to influence the heart and thought of the nation.

Chapter III

WOMEN WITH WHOM HAWTHORNE WAS ASSOCIATED

Family Circle

Hawthorne's Aunt Mary scolded the Hawthornes in their childhood and Grandmother Manning considered them impertinent;[1] it would not be any wonder if Nathaniel Hawthorne formed a distaste for women in general. Hawthorne was brought up as a child under what might be considered peculiar disadvantages. His mother lost her husband when Nathaniel was only four years old, and from that day she began a life of seclusion which did not end until her death.[2] Having lived in this strange, detached environment, Hawthorne could not help being affected by his mother's eccentric behavior. Life at home became a set pattern of

> unchanging days, solitary meals, quiet mornings when the children were at school, quieter afternoons, without visits, or walks, or shopping, a quiet evening when the children, themselves quiet and relaxed, walked or read, and the silent house grew quieter still.[3]

Despite Mrs. Hawthorne's solitary habits, she helped to

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1 Robert Cantwell, Nathaniel Hawthorne, p. 382.

2 Julian Hawthorne, Nathaniel Hawthorne and His Wife, I, p. 5.

3 Robert Cantwell, op. cit., p. 383.

develop within Nathaniel a love for reading by giving him books of romance, poetry, and allegory.[4] These books provided an immaterial world for him in which his powers of imagination could be exercised to the fullest extent.

Hawthorne's boyhood was more ordinary than otherwise, but after his first four years, he was largely associated with women. His being the only boy in the home placed him at a disadvantage. Was he spoiled by the admiration of his mother and sisters? He said that he was. Referring to Una in his American Notebooks, he said:

> Mother hinted an apprehension that poor baby would be spoilt, whereupon I irreverently observed that, having spoiled her own three children, it was natural for her to suppose that all other parents would do the same; when she averred that it was impossible to spoil such children as E____ and I, because she had never been able to do anything with us.[5]

At every turn in the story of Hawthorne's life one comes upon the touching figure of his mother. When Hawthorne reached college age, his "good" mother sent him to Salem where a private instructor prepared him for Bowdoin College.[6] Before he was reconciled to going to Bowdoin, he had to be convinced that he would be permitted to spend his vacations with his mother at Raymond, Maine.[7] Bowdoin was closer to Raymond than Salem was;

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4 Julian Hawthorne, op. cit., p. 6.

5 Nathaniel Hawthorne, American Note-Books, p. 362. Entry for April 14, 1844.

6 Julian Hawthorne, Nathaniel Hawthorne and His Wife, I, p. 96.

7 Ibid., p. 107.

he knew it would be impossible for him to go home if his mother lived at Salem.

While he was still in Salem working for his uncle, Hawthorne wrote his mother a letter which throws some light on their cordial relationship. He wrote:

> I am quite reconciled to going to college, since I am to spend the vacations with you. Yet four years of the best part of my life is a great deal to throw away. I have not yet concluded what profession I shall have.[8]

He continued by giving her concrete reasons for not wanting to become a minister, a lawyer or a doctor. Then he asked her opinion of his becoming an author and relying for support upon his pen. Knowing that Mrs. Hawthorne was interested in her children, Nathaniel said to her: "How proud you would feel to see my works praised by the reviewers, as equal to the proudest productions of the scribbling sons of John Bull."[9]

Mrs. Hawthorne's sisters began to persuade her to return to Salem to live.[10] Of course, Hawthorne did not want her to return, and wrote her accordingly:

> I hope, my dear mother, that you will not be tempted by their entreaties to return to Salem to live. You can never have so much comfort here as you now enjoy. You are now undisputed mistress of your own house. . . . Elizabeth is as anxious for you to stay as myself. She says she is contented to remain here for a short time, but greatly prefers Raymond as a permanent place of residence. The reason for my saying so much on this subject is that Mrs. Dike and Mrs. Manning are

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8 Julian Hawthorne, Nathaniel Hawthorne and His Wife, I, p. 107.

9 Ibid., p. 108.

10 Robert Cantwell, Nathaniel Hawthorne, p. 61.

> very earnest for you to return to Salem, and I am afraid they will commission Uncle Robert to persuade you to it. But, mother, if you wish to live in peace, I conjure you not to consent to it. Grandmother, I think, is rather in favor of your staying.[11]

The pull to Salem seems to have been too inviting, however, for Mrs. Hawthorne, Elizabeth, and Louisa returned. Hawthorne must have been terribly disappointed, for he was separated from the family for seven years.[12]

He was always pleased with letters from home. He wrote to his mother and sisters and was eager to receive letters from them. In one of his letters to Elizabeth he told her that he was very glad for her letters because they were "like angel visits, few and far between."[13] In a letter to his sister Louisa he told of his awful homesickness. He asked Louisa to write him a letter stating that his mother was desirous for him to return home and to assign some reason for it. He stated that the letter must be proper to be read by the president and continued by saying "if mother has any objections, your eloquence will easily persuade her to consent. I can get no good by remaining here, and earnestly desire to be at home."[14] He continued by pleading for Louisa to make up any kind of excuse, and if none of his suggested ones suited her or if she could think of none, then "write and order me to come home with--any.

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11 Ibid., pp. 61-62.

12 Ibid., p. 62.

13 Julian Hawthorne, Nathaniel Hawthorne and His Wife, I, p. 110.

14 Ibid., p. 115.

If you do not, I shall certainly forge a letter, for I will be at home within a week."[15] From the contents of this letter one can see the unwavering determination of the strong-willed Hawthorne--unwavering in his devotion and unwavering in his will.

Hawthorne and his sisters enjoyed very close family associations. He loved to tease Elizabeth and Louisa. He had a childhood playmate named William. When Hawthorne tossed a pet kitten over the fence and Elizabeth told him that the cat would never play with him again, he said lightly, "Oh, she'll think it was William."[16]

While he was separated from his mother and sisters after he went to live in Salem, he was unhappy because he seldom saw his family. Being away from home sadly affected his morale. He wrote to Louisa:

> I have almost given up writing poetry. No man can be a Poet and a bookkeeper at the same time. I do find this place most "dismal" and have taken to chewing tobacco with all my might, which, I think, raises my spirits. Say nothing of it in your letters.[17]

The Hawthorne family evidently recognized the peculiar genius of the son and brother. Soon after Fanshawe was published, Hawthorne secured all of the copies that he could and burned them. He had published the book anonymously and insisted that his family and friends keep the secret. "And of course we did," said Elizabeth, "with one or two exceptions; for we were

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15 Ibid., p. 115.

16 Ibid., p. 99.

17 Robert Cantwell, Nathaniel Hawthorne, p. 60.

in those days almost absolutely obedient to him. I do not quite approve of either obedience or concealment."[18] When Hawthorne returned from his walks in the evenings, Elizabeth said that

> we discussed political affairs, upon which we differed in opinion; he being a Democrat, and I of the opposite party. In reality, his interest in such things was so slight that I think nothing would have kept it alive but my contentious spirit.[19]

Hawthorne respected Elizabeth's judgment and often depended on her to help him write articles for the American Magazine. At one time he wrote to her asking for "concoctions, prose, and poetical. Concoct, concoct, concoct," he said. "I make nothing of writing a history or biography before dinner. Do you the same."[20] Elizabeth answered Hawthorne's pleas by sending him three long quotations from Leonard Withington's The Puritan, which Hawthorne printed intact.[21]

He must have valued his sisters' criticisms, for he sent Louisa a copy of his first issue of the American Magazine, with this note: "Read this infernal magazine and send your criticisms. To me it appears very dull and respectable--almost worthy of Mr. Bradford himself."[22]

Hawthorne wrote many of the articles for the American Magazine, but Elizabeth helped him by writing an enormous amount of

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18 Julian Hawthorne, op. cit., pp. 124-125.

19 Ibid., p. 125.

20 Robert Cantwell, Nathaniel Hawthorne, p. 182.

21 Ibid., p. 184.

22 Ibid., p. 185.

work. He told Louisa: "I have written all but about half a page with my own pen; except what Ebie wrote. Let her send more; for I have worked my brain hard enough for this month."[23]

The affection which the Hawthornes had for each other may be detected in the following letter from Louisa to Nathaniel while he was at Brook Farm:

> My dear brother,--I am very glad you did bethink yourself that we might want to hear from you; for we had looked for you so long in vain, that we were very impatient to know in what quarter of the world you had bestowed yourself. . . . Do not work too hard; I have more faith in your working than Elizabeth has, and I am afraid you will take it too hard. Mother groans over it, and wishes you would come home. . . . If you only knew how we anticipated your coming home, and how impatient we are when you do not come at the usual time, you would not think you could be spared. It is a comfort to look at the picture, to be sure; but I am tempted to speak to it sometimes, and it answers never a word; and when Mother looks at it, she takes up a lamentation because you stay away so long and work so hard. . . . Shall not you be at home by next Friday,--the National Fast? It is five weeks tomorrow since you went away, and we do so want to see you. . . . If you do not come home this week, do write,--but do come.[24]
>
> Your affectionate sister,
> M. L. Hawthorne

Hawthorne did not tell his mother of his plans for his marriage.[25] Perhaps he doubted that his mother would be pleased at his marrying a semi-invalid. Despite the fact that Hawthorne possessed a reverence and tenderness for his mother, he had never discussed his deepest and inmost thoughts with her. There seems

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23 Ibid., p. 186.

24 Julian Hawthorne, Nathaniel Hawthorne and His Wife, I, pp. 229-231.

25 Ibid., p. 196.

to have been a barrier which had grown up between them. Hawthorne explained their strained relationship when he said:

> I love my mother; but there has been, ever since boyhood, a sort of coldness of intercourse between us, such as is apt to come between persons of strong feelings if they are not managed rightly.[26]

Time went on and the plans for their marriage went forward. Soon Hawthorne told his mother and sisters of his plans to marry Sophia. When he acquainted his mother with his matrimonial intentions, she received the news cheerfully and in a way that pleasantly surprised her son.

> "What you tell me is not a surprise to me," she said; "I already knew it." "How long have you known it?" he demanded. "Almost ever since you knew it yourself," was her reply; "and Sophia Peabody is the wife of all others whom I would have chosen for you."[27]

It would seem that Hawthorne's delay in telling his family of his plans caused him a great deal of unnecessary anxiety, for his mother and sisters rejoiced with him in the forthcoming event.

After Hawthorne married and left the family home, he probably saw his mother about as often as when he lived there. She had gone into retirement while she was young and lived in retirement when she grew old. Life went on; the world changed; and still she kept her unvaried life in her upstairs room.

In 1847 Hawthorne's feminine world increased when his mother and sisters moved in with him at the Mall Street house.[28]

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26 Ibid., p. 347.

27 Ibid., p. 201.

28 Louise Hall Tharp, The Peabody Sisters of Salem, p. 183.

He had very little contact with them, however, because they seemed to choose to stay in their rooms most of the time. Madam Hawthorne became very ill, and her critical illness affected Hawthorne deeply, causing times of emotional stress in his life which hindered his writing. When he could tell that his mother would not live long, he relieved his tension by writing down scenes which passed before him from hour to hour. The following excerpt from an impressive passage reveals his feeling for her:

> At about five o'clock I went to my mother's chamber, and was shocked to see such an alteration since my last visit. . . . I did not expect to be much moved at this time,--that is to say, not to feel any overpowering emotion struggling just then,--though I knew that I should deeply remember and regret her. Mrs. Dike was in the chamber; Louisa pointed to a chair near the bed, but I was moved to kneel down close by my mother, and take her hand. She knew me, but could only murmur a few indistinct words; among which I understood an injunction to take care of my sisters. Mrs. Dike left the chamber, and then I found the tears slowly gather--in my eyes. I tried to keep them down, but it would not be; I kept filling up, till, for a few moments, I shook with sobs. For a long time I knelt there, holding her hand; and surely it is the darkest hour I ever lived. . . . And then I looked at my poor dying mother, and seemed to see the whole of human existence at once, standing in the dusty midst of it. Oh, what a mockery, if what I saw were all,--let the interval between extreme youth and dying age be filled up with what happiness it might! But God would not have made the close so dark and wretched, if there were nothing beyond; for then it would have been a fiend that created us and measured out our existence, and not God.[29]

Madam Hawthorne's death occurred two days later.

Hawthorne's mother was a reserved and thoughtful person; thus she had many characteristics in common with her son. James

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29 Julian Hawthorne, Nathaniel Hawthorne and His Wife, I, pp. 347-348.

T. Fields has the following to say concerning Hawthorne's affection for his mother:

> Those who knew the family describe the son's affection for her as of the deepest and tenderest nature, and they remember that when she died his grief was almost insupportable. The anguish he suffered from her loss is distinctly recalled by many persons still living, who visited the family at that time in Salem.[30]

Marriage

There is an age-old belief that if a man is happily married, he is inevitably influenced by the character of his wife. The most fortunate event in Nathaniel Hawthorne's life was, probably, his marriage with Sophia Peabody. Sophia, with her keen insight and patient understanding, was a sympathetic and congenial companion who stood by her husband in the making of his career. Julian Hawthorne said of his father that

> he protected her, championed her, and cherished her in all ways that a man may a woman; but, half playfully and all earnestly, he avouched her superiority over himself, and, in a certain class of questions relating to practical morality and domestic expediency, he always deferred to and availed himself of her judgment and counsel. This was no make-believe or hollow humility on his part; he believed, and was delighted to believe, in the higher purity and (as it were) angelic wisdom of her feminine nature; and if he ever ascribed wisdom to himself, it was on the ground that he accepted her view upon all matters as to which mere worldly experience and sagacity were uncertain guides.[31]

The life of Hawthorne would be a skeleton of events without the flesh and blood of his wife's influence. Her spirit

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30 James T. Fields, Yesterdays with Authors, p. 47.

31 Julian Hawthorne, Nathaniel Hawthorne and His Wife, I, pp. 41-42.

encouraged his spirit; her personality complemented his personality; each found a deep satisfaction and gratification in the other.

His marriage appears to have been perfectly happy. In Sophia he found the humanized realization of his dreams. The natural tact which she possessed, enlightened by her love, prepared her to be the wife of a man of letters.

Hawthorne believed that,

> indeed, we are but shadows; we are not endowed with real life, all that seems most real about us is but the thinnest substance of a dream,--till the heart be touched. That touch creates us,--then we begin to be. . . .[32]

He admired Sophia for her goodness of character and cheerfulness, which inspired his confidence and courage. Hawthorne's courtship and marriage to Sophia Peabody are not themselves matters for scrutiny here, but certain incidents in their lives show the complementary influence each had upon the other, and throw light on Hawthorne's literary development.

When Hawthorne was first introduced to Sophia, he "looked at her intently,--he did not realize how intently."[33] He wrote to Elizabeth, Sophia's sister, that "she is a flower to be worn in no man's bosom, but was lent from Heaven to show the possibilities of the human soul."[34] Their feeling for each other was mutual. Sophia, writing to her sister Elizabeth said, "I never,

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32 Austin Warren, Nathaniel Hawthorne, p. xvi.

33 Julian Hawthorne, Nathaniel Hawthorne and His Wife, I, p. 179.

34 Ibid., p. 181.

hardly, knew a person for whom I had such a full and at the same time perfectly quiet admiration."[35]

Hawthorne's love-letters are packed with beautiful sentiments for Sophia. The expression, tone, and thought bear testimony to the magnanimous passion that was his. For example:

> How strange it is, tender and fragile little Sophia, that your protection should have become absolutely necessary to such a great, rough, burly, broad-shouldered personage as I! I need your support as much as you need mine.[36]

And again:

> Worthy of you I am not; but you will make me so, for there will be time or eternity enough for your blessed influence to work on me. Would that we could build our cottage this very summer, amid these scenes of Concord which you describe. My heart thirsts and languishes to be there, away from the hot sun, and the coal-dust, and the steaming docks, and the thick-pated, stubborn, contentious men, with whom I brawl from morning till night, and all the weary toil that quite engrosses me, and yet occupies only a small part of my being, which I did not know existed before I became a measurer. . . . You know not what comfort I have in thinking of you amid those beautiful scenes and amid those sympathizing hearts.[37]

Sophia brought daytime to Hawthorne's life. He began to really live and experience the joys of life.

> How immediately and irrecoverable (if you did not keep me out of the abyss) should I relapse into the way of life in which I spent my youth! If it were not for you, this present world would see no more of me forever. . . . I should be only a shadow of the night; it is you that give me reality, and make all things real for me. If, in the interval since I quitted this lonely old chamber, I had found no woman (and you were the only possible one) to impart reality

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35 Ibid., p. 192.

36 Ibid., p. 216.

37 Ibid., pp. 218-219.

> and significance to life, I should have come back hither ere now, with a feeling that all was a dream and a mockery. Do you rejoice that you have saved me from such a fate? Yes; it is a miracle worthy even of you, to have converted a life of shadows into the deepest truth by your magic touch.[38]

Hawthorne began to feel that he had lived a life of seclusion long enough. With no bright pecuniary prospects, he and Sophia were married in 1842. Most of his Custom House savings had been lost in the Brook Farm Community experiment and his publishers were not encouraging that his financial standing would soon improve; but marriage had long been his goal.[39] Hawthorne wrote to his sister:

> We made a Christian end and came straight to Paradise where we abide at present writing. We are as happy as people can be, without making themselves ridiculous, and might be even happier, but as a matter of taste, we prefer to stop short at this point.[40]

In Sophia's letters to her mother after her marriage, there are to be found many expressions of marital happiness. While Mary, the cook, was in Boston on a holiday, Hawthorne took the role of housekeeper. Mrs. Hawthorne records this day of blessed undisturbance:

> Our breakfast was late, because we concluded to have only breakfast and dinner. After breakfast, I put the beloved study into very nice order, and, after establishing him in it, proceeded to make smooth all things below. When I had come to the end of my labors, my dear lord insisted upon my sitting with him; so I sat by him and sewed, while he wrote, with now and

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38 Ibid., p. 238.

39 Ibid., p. 201.

40 Robert Cantwell, Nathaniel Hawthorne, p. 339.

then a little discourse; and this was very enchanting.[41]

The love which marked Hawthorne's letters written before marriage was just as conspicuous in the letters which he wrote to Sophia during their marriage. Here he expressed what she meant to him:

> Oh, Phoebe, I want thee much. Thou art the only person in the world that ever was necessary to me. Other people have occasionally been more or less agreeable; but I think I was always more at ease alone than in anybody's company, till I knew thee. And now I am only myself when thou art within my reach. Thou art an unspeakably beloved woman.[42]

While he was in Salem visiting his mother and sister, he wrote: "I thank God above all things that thou art my wife. Nobody but we ever knew what it is to be married. If other people knew it, this dull old earth would have a perpetual glory around about it."[43] From another visit to his mother's home, he wrote Sophia:

> If I had not known it before, I should have been taught by this separation that the only real life is to be with you, and to share all things, good or evil, with you. The time spent away from you is unsubstantial,--there is nothing in it; and yet it has done me good, in making me more conscious of this truth.[44]

During Hawthorne's four years' residence in Salem, he had many new experiences. It was while he was Surveyor in the Salem Custom House that he began The Scarlet Letter, his son Julian was born, his domestic happiness deepened, and his manly character

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41 Julian Hawthorne, op. cit., p. 274.

42 Ibid., p. 327.

43 Ibid., p. 294.

44 Ibid., p. 295.

broadened. Hawthorne's letters and journals written in Salem are full of references to his children, Una and Julian.

It would be impossible to give a true picture of Mr. and Mrs. Hawthorne's domestic life without alluding to the great influence which the children had upon them. Hawthorne and his wife and children spent many a day at Tanglewood.[45] While Hawthorne lay on the grass, Mrs. Hawthorne sat on an old tree stump beside him; Una and Julian played around them. They showed their love for their father and mother by bringing them flowers, nuts, and fruits. Julian remembered that his

> father was a great tree climber, and he was also fond of playing the role of magician. 'Hide your eyes!' he would say, and the next moment, from being there beside us on the moss, we would hear his voice descending from the sky, and behold! he swung among the topmost branches, showering down upon us a hail-storm of nuts![46]

There was a close spiritual relationship in Sophia's and Nathaniel's marital happiness. The shy, introverted Hawthorne was brought out in his development by the extroverted Sophia. He did not seem to want Sophia to progress in her hobby of painting. He wrote to her:

> Everybody else thinks it of importance that you should paint and sculpture; but it would be no trouble to me if you should never touch clay or canvas again. It is not what you do, but what you are, that I concern myself about. And if your mighty works are to be wrought only by the anguish of your head, and weariness of your frame, and sinking of your heart, then I do never desire to see another. And this should be the feeling of

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45 Julian Hawthorne, Hawthorne and His Circle, p. 28.

46 Ibid., p. 29.

all your friends.[47]

Apparently Hawthorne could not get away from his old-fashioned views of women; he did not want Sophia to have an interest outside her domestic sphere. Nevertheless their marriage was a happy one; they were happy in their uneventful life amid quiet scenes.

Hawthorne spent his time in his study each morning, walked with Sophia in the afternoon, and read in the evening. He wrote:

> My life, at this time is more like that of a boy, externally, than it has been since I was really a boy. It is usually supposed that the cares of life come with matrimony; but I seem to have cast off all care, and live on with as much easy trust in Providence as Adam could possibly have felt before he had learned that there was a world beyond Paradise. My chief anxiety consists in watching the prosperity of my vegetables.[48]

When Hawthorne was removed from his office at the Salem Custom House, he wrote to Hilliard: "The intelligence has just reached me, and Sophia has not yet heard it. She will bear it like a woman--that is to say, better than a man."[49] Sophia had a talent for practical economy. After her husband told her that he had lost his job, she surprised him with a sum of money which she had secretly saved out of her weekly allowance.[50]

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47 Julian Hawthorne, Nathaniel Hawthorne and His Wife, I, pp. 236-237.

48 Nathaniel Hawthorne, American Note-Books, p. 300. Entry for August 13, 1842.

49 Robert Cantwell, Nathaniel Hawthorne, p. 419.

50 Julian Hawthorne, Hawthorne and His Circle, p. 4. Louise Hall Tharp says Sophia earned the money painting lamp shades and fire screens. Peabody Sisters of Salem, p. 192.

This savings made the situation look brighter. Julian Hawthorne said: "When Hawthorne told the news, she opened her private drawer and disclosed her banknotes, with such a smile in her eyes as I can easily picture to myself."[51]

While the Hawthornes were sightseeing in Edinburgh, Scotland, it happened to be the ninth of July which they spent wandering over Edinburgh. Hawthorne said:

> As it was our wedding day, and as our union has turned out to the uttermost satisfaction of both parties, after fifteen years' trial, I gave mamma a gold-and-amethyst bodied cairngorm beetle, with a ruby head.[52]

Ten years before his death, Hawthorne described his own happiness in his journal:

> I think I have been happier this Christmas than ever before,--by my own fireside, and with my wife and children about me,--more content to enjoy what I have --less anxious for anything beyond it in this life.[53]

Elizabeth Peabody

Hawthorne was successfully rescued from his retirement by the intrusion of Elizabeth Peabody. Miss Peabody had read with admiration Mr. Hawthorne's short stories in the New England Magazine.[54] Her family was aghast that she would be so bold as to visit the Hawthorne household, but Elizabeth usually did about what she wanted to do; so their solitude was no barrier

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51 Ibid., p. 4.

52 Julian Hawthorne, Nathaniel Hawthorne and His Wife, II, p. 142.

53 Nathaniel Hawthorne, English Notebooks, I, pp. 549-550. Entry for December 25, 1854.

54 Louise Hall Tharp, The Peabody Sisters of Salem, p. 113.

to her desire to become acquainted with Elizabeth Hawthorne--a schoolmate. It was at this visit that Elizabeth Peabody learned that the stories really were the work of Madam Hawthorne's son. She told Louisa Hawthorne: "If your brother can write like that, he has no right to be idle."[55] In a few months Mr. Hawthorne sent a copy of Twice-Told Tales to his literary admirer.[56] Miss Peabody was very much pleased.

It was some time before Mr. Hawthorne and his sisters called on the Peabodys. But the enthusiastic Elizabeth was all aglow at having such visitors. She remembered Mr. Hawthorne that evening as being

> very nicely dressed; but he looked, at first, almost fierce with his determination not to betray his sensitive shyness, which he always recognized as a weakness. But as he became interested in conversation, his nervousness passed away; and the beauty of the outline of his features, the pure complexion, the wonderful eyes, like mountain lakes reflecting the sky,-were quite in keeping with the Twice-Told Tales.[57]

Elizabeth was always wanting to be helpful; she tried to arrange appointments where Hawthorne might meet Longfellow, Holmes, and others who might be able to help him.[58] Even after Hawthorne refused her efforts, Elizabeth was not the woman to give up; she was not discouraged in trying to get a government position for him where he could have little work to do and more

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55 Ibid., p. 114.

56 Ibid., p. 114.

57 Julian Hawthorne, Nathaniel Hawthorne and His Wife, I, pp. 178-179.

58 Louise Hall Tharp, The Peabody Sisters of Salem, p. 117.

time for writing. It is thought that through her influence with George Bancroft, she got Hawthorne the position in the Boston Custom House.[59] Elizabeth was glad that a literary man should be in politics. Elizabeth asserted her dominating character when, in spite of Hawthorne's objections that he knew not the first thing about being a postmaster, she decided that he must be the Cambridge postmaster.[60] She failed to bring it about, but she did not give up.

As Hawthorne's visits to the Peabodys became more frequent, neighborhood gossips decided he must be calling on Elizabeth Peabody.[61] But this could never be, for Elizabeth loved to manage other people's affairs, and Hawthorne was quite capable of managing his own. On one occasion when Hawthorne was in Salem he stopped at the Peabodys to escort the Peabody sisters to a literary meeting at the fashionable Miss Susan Burley's.[62] Of course, Miss Burley was delighted with the young author's presence.

Miss Peabody had begun to talk of Hawthorne in the literary circles which she attended in Boston.[63] She praised him to Mr. Emerson, who had a good opinion of him, but had not read his works. Elizabeth had been doing much talking about Hawthorne,

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59 Robert Cantwell, Nathaniel Hawthorne, p. 290.

60 Louise Hall Tharp, op. cit., p. 125.

61 Ibid., p. 117.

62 Ibid., p. 118.

63 Robert Cantwell, Nathaniel Hawthorne, p. 300.

and when he appeared in society he appeared in her company.[64] It would be natural that people should talk of Hawthorne's and Elizabeth Peabody's engagement.

After the Peabodys moved to Boston, Elizabeth opened a bookshop.[65] It was an excellent one, which specialized in foreign books. Elizabeth was happy as a bookseller. On Wednesdays the bookstore hummed with feminine voices. Before Miss Margaret Fuller would arrive for her "Conversations," the bookshop would become a "Babel of talkers," as Hawthorne phrased it.

A radical thing happened when Miss Margaret Fuller and Miss Elizabeth Peabody were asked to join a club composed of some intellectual men of the day who discussed French, German, and English philosophy.[66] Both women believed in inquiring into things and in revolting against conventional thinking; so they could be classed as eligible.

Hawthorne frequented West Street in Boston quite often.[67] To the outsider it would seem that he was going to see his publisher, Elizabeth Peabody, who had published his Grandfather's Chair, A History for Youth, Famous Old People and Liberty Tree; but Sophia also lived at West Street, and her engagement to Hawthorne was still unknown to the outside world.[68]

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64 Louise Hall Tharp, The Peabody Sisters of Salem, p. 117.

65 Ibid., pp. 135-136.

66 Ibid., p. 139.

67 Ibid., p. 142.

68 Ibid., p. 142.

It was at Miss Peabody's bookshop that the ardent social reformers met in the evenings. Hawthorne listened to the ideas of his Transcendentalist friends, and decided to cast his lot with this experimental school. He had tried hardly four months of this new life when he wrote Sophia: "Such a number of troublesome and intrusive people as there are in this thronged household of ours! Thou and I must form other plans for ourselves."[69]

After Hawthorne's enthusiasm had given way, he left the community. It was probably embarrassing to him that soon after he left Brook Farm his sister-in-law, Elizabeth Peabody, published an article in The Dial entitled "A Glimpse of Christ's Ideal Society."

> Minds incapable of refinement will not be attracted into this association, whoever is satisfied with society as it is, whose sense of justice is not wounded by its common action, institutions, spirit of commerce, has no business with this community; neither has anyone who is willing to have other men, (needing more time for intellectual cultivation than himself) give their best hours and strength and bodily labor, to secure himself immunity therefrom. . . . Whoever is willing to receive from his fellowmen that for which he gives no equivalent will stay away from its precincts forever.[70]

After Hawthorne's marriage, his financial gains on his writings came mostly in "promises."[71] This fact irked Elizabeth, who always seemed to want to rush in and take care of things. She proposed that Hawthorne seek a government position, and she put forth her efforts trying to get him positions even if

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69 Ibid., p. 146.

70 Robert Cantwell, Nathaniel Hawthorne, p. 370.

71 Louise Hall Tharp, The Peabody Sisters of Salem, p. 176.

they were held by other people. "It is so much better not to interfere," Sophia told Elizabeth. "Our hopes center now on King Polk. Mr. Bancroft is at court and in favor."[72]

Hawthorne sent Elizabeth Peabody a manuscript of "The Unpardonable Sin" in answer to her pleas.[73] Elizabeth seems to have been the kind of person who thought she possessed authentic judgment; she expressed this attitude in her comment upon the manuscript, which she said was "full of genius, but too gloomy." She would like to read "something as great as well as more cheerful."[74] Probably Hawthorne felt that these comments justified his hoping that his sister-in-law would not come back to visit Salem for a long time.

Elizabeth knew genius, though, when she was confronted with it. She talked about Hawthorne's writings and his promising future to those who frequented her bookshop. She was interested in him, but tactless in her interest. When Miss Peabody asked Hawthorne how The Scarlet Letter would end, he told her that he did not know.[75] Elizabeth became indignant when the story ended in tragedy, for she had wanted a happy ending.

Elizabeth was naturally a possessive person. She felt that everybody needed her advice and her help. She was ever commending Hawthorne to the notice of prominent people who might

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72 Ibid., p. 177.

73 Ibid., p. 188.

74 Ibid., p. 188.

75 Ibid., p. 192.

aid him. She was probably unaware that her possessive actions infuriated him, and, besides, with Sophia's faith in him, he was capable of taking care of himself. It was Hawthorne who frankly told Elizabeth that God had not intended for her to marry. In 1855 he wrote to Elizabeth from Liverpool in response to some advice Sophia had received from her:

> I sometimes feel as if I ought . . . to endeavor to enlighten you as to the relation between husband and wife. . . . But the conjugal relation is one which God never meant you to share, and which therefore He apparently did not give you the instinct to understand; so there my labor would be lost.[76]

This must have stunned the vivacious, affectionate Elizabeth, but she had her bookshop to "occupy her mind."

After Sophia and Nathaniel moved to Liverpool, Elizabeth wrote asking for money to help support her father and brother and public causes.[77] She had noticed in the papers how many ships arrived in Liverpool from the United States each year and how much Hawthorne would receive from each ship. Elizabeth figured out their income, but the papers were wrong about the number of ships, and their income was not so great as anticipated. Hawthorne sent Mr. Peabody money, but for Elizabeth's other projects she would have to find another source of donation.

Elizabeth sent the manuscript of her anti-slavery pamphlet to Hawthorne while he was in Liverpool.[78] The pamphlet was returned without comment, and Elizabeth supposed that it was a

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76 Mark Van Doren, Nathaniel Hawthorne, pp. 106-107.

77 Louise Hall Tharp, The Peabody Sisters of Salem, p. 252.

78 Ibid., p. 286.

mistake and sent it to him again. She received this reply from her brother-in-law:

> I read your manuscript abolition pamphlet, supposing it to be a new production, and only discovered afterwards that it was the one I had sent back. Upon my word, it is not very good; not worthy of being sent three times across the ocean; not so good as I supposed you would always write on a subject in which your mind and heart were interested. However, since you make such a point of it, I will give it to Sophia and tell her all about its rejection and return.[79]

In the same letter Hawthorne told Elizabeth that her letters to Sophia concerning anti-slavery only "agitate her nerves without affecting her mind." The letter continued:

> As you have suggested dropping your correspondence with Sophia, I hope you will take it in good part, some remarks which I have often thought of making on that subject. I entirely differ from you in the idea that such correspondence is essential to her peace of mind; not but what she loves you deeply and sincerely and truly enjoys all modes of healthy intercourse with you. But it is a solemn truth, that I never in my life knew her to receive a letter from you without turning pale, and . . .[80]

Whether Sophia turned pale or not, Elizabeth was sure that she ought to know about conditions in her own country.

After Hawthorne's death Sophia found that a large debt against the Hawthorne accounts had accumulated at Ticknor and Fields.[81] Who should come to Sophia's rescue but her sister Elizabeth? She wrote for an explanation from Fields saying that he "ought to make all clear and bright in the details of the past."[82]

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79 Ibid., p. 286.

80 Ibid., p. 286.

81 Ibid., p. 313.

82 Ibid., p. 313.

Fields explained that by verbal agreement the royalty on all works since The Scarlet Letter had been reduced to ten per cent. "It has an ugly look," Elizabeth told Fields. "I do not suppose she will ever feel that affectionate confidence in your disinterested friendship that she once had," Elizabeth said.[83]

Elizabeth's interest in Sophia's cause proved beneficial. When Fields found that Elizabeth had written George Putnam about publishing Hawthorne's notebook material, he bought it, giving Mrs. Hawthorne an advance in money.[84]

Elizabeth just naturally enjoyed concerning herself with other people's affairs, but she seems to have been somewhat tactless in trying to force her own opinions upon Hawthorne. She was active in public life, being a lecturer, a promoter of education, and a shopkeeper. Her active life, her interest in other people's business, and her boldness irritated Hawthorne, who seemed not to approve of a woman's wandering from the domestic sphere.

Margaret Fuller

It seems that Hawthorne and Margaret Fuller clashed in opinion before Margaret knew for what the initial "H" stood.[85] When Hawthorne made a reply to an essay which Margaret had written in the October issue of the Boston Daily Advertiser in 1834,

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83 Ibid., p. 314.

84 Ibid., p. 314.

85 Madeleine B. Stern, The Life of Margaret Fuller, pp. 82-83.

it was signed "H." It was a response which upheld Bancroft's interpretation of Brutus, the subject which Miss Fuller had refuted in her article. After coming to the conclusion that the article must have been written by a "big wig" in Salem, Margaret remarked to her father that "perhaps it may be that young writer by the name of Hawthorne whom Elizabeth Peabody mentioned to Lydia Child. He lives in Salem. He must be a timeserver--truckling to George Bancroft so indiscriminately."[86]

Margaret Fuller was "an aggressive and high-spirited woman, an incessant talker, with a long nose and a trick of constantly blinking her eyes."[87] She made Emerson laugh all the time, but Hawthorne, who had become acquainted with her during her "Conversations" at Elizabeth Peabody's book store, said, "Would that Margaret Fuller would hold her tongue!"[88]

It is likely that Hawthorne came in contact with Margaret quite frequently at the Peabody Book Store or at Transcendentalist meetings; however, he seems to have shunned opportunities to meet her when he could decline. In November, 1840, he wrote in his notebooks: "I was invited to dine at Mr. Bancroft's yesterday, with Miss Margaret Fuller; but Providence had given me some business to do, for which I was very thankful."[89]

Naturally Hawthorne became closer acquainted with Miss

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86 Ibid., p. 83.

87 Robert Cantwell, Nathaniel Hawthorne, p. 352.

88 Ibid., p. 352.

89 Nathaniel Hawthorne, American Notebooks, p. 225. Entry for November, 1841.

Fuller after he lost his job at the Custom House, for he became affiliated with the Brook Farm experiment where she spent some of her time giving lectures. At the farm was a cow which had been named the "transcendental heifer;" it belonged to Miss Fuller. Hawthorne recorded observations on the cow which showed what was in his mind:

> She is very fractious, I believe, and apt to kick over the milk-pail. . . . Miss Fuller's cow hooks the other cows, and has made herself ruler of the herd, and behaves in a very tyrannical manner. . . .
>
> The herd has rebelled against the usurpation of Miss Fuller's heifer; and, whenever they are turned out of the barn, she is compelled to take refuge under our protection. . . . She is not an amiable cow; but she has a very intelligent face, and seems to be of a reflective cast of character. I doubt not that she will soon perceive the expediency of being on good terms with the rest of the sisterhood.[90]

This little spirited record along with the earlier note could be taken as evidence that Hawthorne was contemptuous of Margaret and that his dislike constantly grew until it exploded in passages in his notebooks which were written in Rome some years after Miss Fuller's death. But there is also evidence that Hawthorne and Margaret respected each other's intellects. The feeling of antagonism was probably mainly on Hawthorne's side; Miss Fuller's opinion of him seems to have been of the highest. After Sophia told Margaret of her engagement to Hawthorne, Margaret congratulated her by replying that "if ever I saw a man who combined delicate tenderness to understand the heart of a woman, with quiet depth and manliness enough to

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90 Ibid., pp. 227-229. Entry for April 14-16, 1841.

satisfy her, it is Mr. Hawthorne."[91]

Margaret Fuller was on friendly terms with the Hawthornes. She visited them often while they were living at the Old Manse, and Nathaniel recorded a long account of an afternoon spent in her company that August. He was returning from Emerson's house where he had taken a book which Margaret Fuller had left at his house on her visit Saturday, when he came upon her reading in Sleepy Hollow. He sat down beside her and they discussed "matters of high and low philosophy"--crows, children, mountains, and the woods:

> In the midst of our talk, we heard footsteps above us, on the high bank; and while the person was still hidden among the trees, he called to Margaret, of whom he had gotten a glimpse. Then he emerged from the green shade, and, behold! it was Mr. Emerson. . . . It being now nearly six o'clock, we separated,--Margaret and Mr. Emerson towards his home, and I towards mine. . . .[92]

Margaret had written to the Hawthornes suggesting to Sophia her plan to have Ellery and Ellen Channing move in at the Old Manse.[93] Ellen Channing was Margaret's sister. Sophia's ideas were not altogether unfavorable to the plan, but she left Hawthorne the responsibility of decision. Hawthorne replied at once by letter that "my conclusion is that the comfort of both parties would be put in great jeopardy."[94] He meant nothing

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91 Mason Wade, Margaret Fuller: Whetstone of Genius, p. 110.

92 Nathaniel Hawthorne, American Notebooks, p. 307. Entry for August 22, 1842.

93 Julian Hawthorne, Nathaniel Hawthorne and His Wife, I, p. 251.

94 Ibid., p. 253.

against Mr. and Mrs. Channing, but "had it been proposed to Adam and Eve to receive two angels into their Paradise, as boarders, I doubt whether they would have been altogether pleased to consent." The host and hostess could no longer live their natural lives, and all "four would have been involved in an unnatural relation,--which the whole system of boarding out essentially and inevitably is." Hawthorne managed the problem tactfully when he ended the letter by saying:

> Sophia wished me to write; and as it was myself that made the objections, it seemed no more than just that I should assume the office of stating them to you. There is nobody to whom I would more willingly speak my mind, because I can be certain of being thoroughly understood. I would say more,--but here is the bottom of the page.[95]

Margaret was an active lady in the Boston world. Soon after her Woman in the Nineteenth Century was published, the Hawthornes wrote her a letter about it.[96] Later in her accounts she wrote of Hawthorne: "I feel more like a sister to Hawthorne, or rather more that he might be a brother to me, than ever with any man before. Yet with him it is, though sweet, not deep kindred; at least, not deep as yet."[97]

Sophia Hawthorne expressed herself on the subject of Woman's Rights in a letter to her mother as follows:

> What do you think of the speech which Queen Margaret Fuller has made from the throne? It seems to me that if she were married truly, she would no longer be puzzled about the rights of woman. This is the

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95 Ibid., pp. 255-256.

96 Mason Wade, Margaret Fuller: Whetstone of Genius, p. 112.

97 Ibid., p. 113.

> revelation of woman's true destiny and place, which never can be imagined by those who do not experience the relation. . . . Had there never been false and profane marriages, there would not only be no commotion about woman's rights, but it would be Heaven here at once. Even before I was married, however, I could never feel the slightest interest in this movement. It then seemed to me that each woman could make her own sphere quietly, and also it was always a shock to me to have women mount the rostrum. Home, I think, is the great arena for women, and there, I am sure, she can wield a power which no king or conqueror can cope with. I do not believe any man who ever knew one noble woman would ever speak as if she were an inferior in any sense: it is the fault of ignoble woman that there is any such opinion in the world.[98]

The preceding letter evidently contains Hawthorne's exact thoughts concerning the Woman's Rights Movement.

There seems to be no further allusion to Margaret Fuller in the American or English notebooks except a written passage regarding Margaret's character and career. While Hawthorne was in Rome, he came across some facts regarding her marriage and wrote of them:

> Mr. Mozier knew Margaret well, she having been an intimate of his during part of her residence in Italy. . . . He says that the Ossoli family, though technically noble, is really of no rank whatever. . . . He was the handsomest man that Mr. Mozier ever saw, but entirely ignorant, even of his own language; scarcely able to read at all; destitute of all manners --in short, half an idiot, and without any pretensions to be a gentleman. . . . He could not possibly have had the least appreciation of Margaret; and the wonder is, what attraction she found in this boor, this man without the intellectual spark--she that had always shown such cruel and bitter scorn of intellectual deficiency.[99]

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98 Julian Hawthorne, Nathaniel Hawthorne and His Wife, I, p. 257.

99 Ibid., p. 259.

Hawthorne knew Margaret as one who "had a strong and coarse nature, which she had done her utmost to refine, with infinite pains; but of course it could be only superficially changed."[100] Hawthorne wrote that it was his experience that Margaret had "not left in the hearts and minds of those who knew her any deep witness of her integrity and purity." Hawthorne added that Mr. Mozier remarked "that Margaret had quite lost all power of literary production before she left Rome." It seemed that a "total collapse" had appeared "in poor Margaret, morally and intellectually."[101] In Hawthorne's opinion there never was such a tragedy as Margaret Fuller's story:

> It was such an awful joke, that she should have resolved--in all sincerity, no doubt--to make herself the greatest, wisest, best woman of the age. . . . But she was not working on an inanimate substance like marble or clay; there was something within her that she could not possibly come at, to recreate or refine it; and, by and by, this rude, old potency bestirred itself, and undid all her labor in the twinkling of an eye. On the whole, I do not know but I like her the better for it; because she proved herself a very woman after all, and fell as the weakest of her sisters might.[102]

Margaret's friends were appalled at Hawthorne's attack on a dead friend. In The Literary World Margaret's nephew, Frederick T. Fuller, refuted many of the details of Hawthorne's passage from the Italian notebooks.[103]

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100 Ibid., p. 261.

101 Ibid., p. 261.

102 Ibid., pp. 261-262.

103 Mason Wade, Margaret Fuller: Whetstone of Genius, p. 107.

The editors of The Literary World stated in the issue which contained Frederick Fuller's rejoinder the following:

> The fact is that both Hawthorne and Margaret Fuller were in some respects abnormal and unhealthy growths of their kind. . . . The genius of each ran into eccentricities, and when eccentricities meet they clash. . . .
>
> However true the delineation may be, she suffers from the making of it rather less than he.
>
> We do not think anyone reading any of the memoirs of Margaret Fuller would derive from them the impression that she was a woman of unmixed loveliness.[104]

Perhaps there were qualities about Margaret Fuller which Hawthorne disliked. Maybe her frank expression of her thoughts, her egotism, her interest in the rights of women grated on his nerves. Whatever it was it seems definite that the antagonism came as a result of his conscious dislike of intellectual women.

Women Novelists

It was in 1850 that feminine fiction began to appear voluminously, and it was being bought by men as well as by women.[105] It might be said, but not without reservation, that Hawthorne did not care for literary women. He seemed to dislike all intellectual women and judged them unfit for authorship: "'There is a delicacy . . . that perceives, or fancies, a sort of impropriety in the display of woman's natal mind to the gaze of the world.'"[106] Even though Hawthorne disapproved

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104 Ibid., p. 284.

105 Fred Lewis Pattee, The Feminine Fifties, p. 51.

106 Mason Wade, Margaret Fuller: Whetstone of Genius, p. 108.

of female writers in general, there were some whom he tolerated and whose intellect he admired.

Sophia expressed her concern of Hawthorne's attitude toward brilliant women when she wrote to her sister Elizabeth:

> He said of Helen Barstow, that he thought she was not natural; but he expressed a sense of her brilliant powers, her wit and acuteness, and then said he thought 'women were always jealous of such a kind of remarkability' (that was his word) 'in their own sex,' and endeavored to deprecate it. I wonder what has given him such a horrid opinion of us women.[107]

Julian Hawthorne recalls that among the earliest visitors to arrive in West Newton to visit Mr. Hawthorne was

> Grace Greenwood, wading energetically to our door through the December snow. She was one of the first, if not the first, of the tribe of women correspondents; she had lately returned, I think, from England, and the volume of her letters from that strange country was in everybody's hands.[108]

Grace Greenwood had a gift for expression and description in her writings which reflected the ability of personal conversation in its happy, individual author. Julian further says:

> What she accomplished when she embarked, full-sailed, upon the topic of The Scarlet Letter and The House of the Seven Gables may be pictured to themselves by persons endowed with the rudiments of imagination. . . . Mortal language reeled and creaked under the strain of giving form to her admiration; but it was so honest and well meant that it could not but give pleasure even in the midst of bewilderment. My father bowed his head with a painful smile; but I dare say it did him good when the ordeal was over.[109]

From the English notebooks comes Hawthorne's account of a

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107 Julian Hawthorne, Nathaniel Hawthorne and His Wife, I, p. 193.

108 Julian Hawthorne, Hawthorne and His Circle, p. 45.

109 Ibid., pp. 45-46.

visit from a bold English woman:

> Yesterday, in the forenoon, I received a note, and shortly afterwards a call at the Consulate, from Miss H____, whom I apprehend to be a lady of literary tendencies. She said that Miss L. had promised her an introduction, but that, happening to pass through Liverpool, she had snatched the opportunity to make my acquaintance. She seems to be a mature lady, rather plain, but with an honest and intelligent face. It was rather a singular freedom, methinks, to come down upon a perfect stranger in this way,-- to sit with him in his private office an hour or two, and then walk about the streets with him as she did; for I did the honors of Liverpool, and showed her the public buildings. Her talk was sensible, but not particularly brilliant nor interesting; a good, solid personage, physically and intellectually. She is an English woman.110

While Hawthorne was in Liverpool he wrote his publisher, Mr. Ticknor, in 1855, that "he was inclined to abandon fiction writing because of literary conditions in America."[111] Vehemently he said:

> America is now wholly given over to a d____d mob of scribbling women, and I should have no chance while the public taste is occupied with their trash--and should be ashamed of myself if I did succeed. What is the mystery of these innumerable editions of The Lamplighter, and other books neither better nor worse? Worse they could not be, and better they need not be, when they sell by the hundred thousand.[112]

Hawthorne was quite perturbed about conditions in his native land, but it is strange that in another letter to his publisher, he applauds the most emotional female writer, "Fanny Fern":

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110 Nathaniel Hawthorne, English Notebooks, I, p. 432. Entry for August 24, 1853.

111 Fred Lewis Pattee, The Feminine Fifties, p. 110.

112 Ibid., p. 110.

> In my last, I recollect, I bestowed some vituperation on female authors. I have since been reading Ruth Hall; and I must say I enjoyed it a good deal. The woman writes as if the Devil was in her; and that is the only condition under which a woman ever writes anything worth reading. Generally women write like emasculated men, and are only to be distinguished from male authors by greater feebleness and folly; but when they throw off the restraints of decency and come before the public stark naked, as it were--then their books are sure to possess character and value. Can you tell me anything about this Fanny Fern? If you meet her, I wish you would let her know how much I admire her.[113]

There was another literary lady whom he admired. While Hawthorne was in England, he was invited to dine with Mr. and Mrs. Hall. After dinner, Hawthorne said he did not converse with Mrs. Hall a great deal,

> but enough to make me think her a genuine and good woman, unspoilt by a literary career, and retaining more sentiment than even most girls keep beyond seventeen. She told me that it had been the dream of her life to see Longfellow and myself! . . . Her dream is half accomplished now, and, as they say Longfellow is coming over this summer, the remainder may soon be rounded out.[114]

There was also Miss Delia Bacon, who had corresponded with Hawthorne concerning her unpublished book about Shakespeare.[115] Of his visit with her in Sussex Gardens, he said:

> I had expected (the more shame for me, having no other ground of such expectation than that she was a literary woman) to see a very homely, uncouth, elderly personage, and was quite agreeably disappointed by her aspect.[116]

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113 Ibid., p. 111.

114 Nathaniel Hawthorne, English Notebooks, II, pp. 237-238. Entry for April 8, 1856.

115 Nathaniel Hawthorne, Our Old Home, pp. 129-147.

116 Ibid., p. 130.

He listened while she talked about Shakespeare and Bacon.

Hawthorne probably kept his tongue in his cheek when he thought of Mrs. Anna Jameson, author of a little library of writings on Italian art. Julian Hawthorne said that

> she spoke very highly of Hawthorne's books, and she had a motherly way of holding his hand in hers when he took leave of her, and looking maternally in his face, which made him somewhat uneasy. "Were we to meet often," he remarked, "I should be a little afraid of her embracing me outright--a thing to be grateful for, but by no means to be glad of!"[117]

While Hawthorne was in Rome he and his family visited Miss Fredrika Bremer, novelist of Sweden, whom he had met in Lenox.[118] She had written of Hawthorne in her book of travels. One evening she accompanied the Hawthorne family to see the famous precipice of the Tarpeian Rock.

> At parting, wrote Mr. Hawthorne, she kissed my wife most affectionately on each cheek, 'because,' she said, 'you look so sweetly;' and then she turned towards myself. I was in a state of some little tremor, not knowing what might be about to befall me, but she merely pressed my hand, and we parted, probably never to meet again. God bless her good heart, and every inch of her little body, not forgetting her red nose, big as it is in proportion to the rest of her! She is a most amiable little woman, worthy to be the maiden aunt of the whole human race.[119]

Although these quotations give differing surface opinions as to Hawthorne's attitude toward the women novelists of his time, Sophia Hawthorne has left the truth of his convictions. When she was asked to write the biography of her husband, she

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117 Julian Hawthorne, Hawthorne and His Circle, p. 319.

118 Ibid., p. 316.

119 Ibid., p. 318.

refused without flinching.[120] She had not forgotten how her husband looked upon women writers, and she was not going to "walk abroad . . . stark naked."[121]

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120 Louise Hall Tharp, The Peabody Sisters of Salem, p. 308.

121 Ibid., p. 300.

Chapter IV

HAWTHORNE'S VIEWS OF WOMEN AS REVEALED IN HIS NOTEBOOKS

Hawthorne's notebooks are among his most interesting works because they record his minute observations of people, places, and incidents.[1] In the notebooks he also jotted down little philosophies and ideas for stories. For this particular study of Hawthorne, the notebooks provide an insight into his views of women. He has recorded many characteristics and qualities of the women whom he has observed in his travels in New England and Europe. His opinion may be an impulsive one of the moment, or it may be based on an observation which has been colored by a premeditated thought. Still the notebooks reveal something of the ideas of Hawthorne and his attitude toward the female sex.

Sometimes Hawthorne spoke lightly of the vanities of women. In his American Notebooks he recalled such items as this: Mrs._____, a recent bride, shed tears when Mr. Brazer, preaching on the comet, told his congregation that those now living would probably not witness its reappearance.[2] Hawthorne said, "Poor

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1 Nathaniel Hawthorne, American and English Notebooks. Our Old Home, which was written from the English notes, is included in the English Notebooks, I.

2 Nathaniel Hawthorne, American Notebooks, p. 25. Entry for October 17, 1835.

soul! she would be contented to dwell in earthly love to all eternity!"[3] Or this: "A woman tempted to be false to her husband, apparently through mere whim."[4] Or again, he visited General Knox's old mansion and recalled that his wife was a "haughty English lady. She was a woman of violent passions, and so proud an aristocrat, that, as long as she lived, she would never enter any house in the town except her own."[5]

Hawthorne made many occasional observations. In his travels he met many wayfarers who were the objects of his casual comments: "Once two women in a cart,--decent, brown-visaged, country matrons."[6] Again:

> There was a fat woman, a stage passenger to-day,-a wonder how she could possibly get through the door, which seemed not so wide as she. When she put her foot on the step, the stage gave a great lurch, she joking all the while. A great, coarse, red-faced dame.[7]

Hawthorne described a forty-year-old woman who was accused of stealing as a "yellow, thin, and battered old thing, yet rather country-lady-like in aspect and manners."[8] He recalled seeing a young Frenchwoman, with a baby in her arms, "smiling, and looking pretty and happy."[9] He commented on his friend's wife, Mrs. Thaxter, as being not "more than eighteen years old, very

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3 Ibid., p. 25.

4 Ibid., p. 43. Entry for October 25, 1836.

5 Ibid., p. 82. Entry for August 12, 1837.

6 Ibid., p. 135. Entry for July 26, 1838.

7 Ibid., p. 152. Entry for August 11, 1838.

8 Ibid., p. 166. Entry for August 15, 1838.

9 Ibid., p. 53. Entry for July 9, 1837.

pretty, and with the manners of a lady,--not prim and precise, but with enough of freedom and ease."[10]

Hawthorne observed the "pretty and modest-looking young women," who lived in the Irish shanties.[11] Of all the trials of their situation, they seemed "to have kept up the distinction between virtue and vice; those who can claim the former will not associate with the latter."[12]

On a return journey from Augusta, Maine, Hawthorne stopped at a boarding-house tavern where he "talked with everybody: to Mrs. T____, good sense, ____to Mary, good sense, with a mixture of fun,____to Mrs. G____, sentiment, romance, and nonsense."[13] He even admitted that a flirtation sprang up between him and the "frank, free, mirthful daughter of the landlady."[14] It was an infatuation which made them both feel rather melancholy when they parted.

Hawthorne put down his recollections of a big Fourth of July celebration. He remembered the beautiful moon by which

> the girls all look beautiful and fairy-like in it, not exactly distinct, nor yet dim. The different characters of female countenances during the day, --mirthful and mischievous, slyly humorous, stupid, looking genteel generally, but when they speak often betraying plebeianism by the tones of their voices. Two girls are very tired,--one a pale, thin, languid-looking creature; the other plump, rosy, rather

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10 Ibid., p. 415. Entry for September 4, 1852.

11 Ibid., p. 61. Entry for July 15, 1837.

12 Ibid., p. 62.

13 Ibid., p. 80. Entry for August 12, 1837.

14 Ibid., p. 80.

overburdened with her own little body.[15]

It seems that Hawthorne enjoyed female company and was glad to have women in his presence. On one of his visits in Maine, he wrote in his notebook:

> Of female society I see nothing. The only petticoat that comes within our premises appertains to Nancy, the pretty, dark-eyed maid-servant of the man who lives in the other part of the house.[16]

Hawthorne recorded his impressions of English women in the English Notebooks. Despite his only five years of residence in England, his observations on English women were more numerous than those on American women. In commenting on English women he often gave his ideas of American women by contrasting them with one another. He spoke of the English women frankly, and the characterizations of the English women are sometimes startling. He must have shocked all England when he wrote the following powerful description of English women:

> I have heard a good deal of the tenacity with which English ladies retain their personal beauty to a late period of life; but (not to suggest that an American eye needs use and cultivation before it can quite appreciate the charm of English beauty at any age) it strikes me that an English lady of fifty is apt to become a creature less refined and delicate, so far as her physique goes, than anything that we Western people class under the name of woman. She has an awful ponderosity of frame, not pulpy, like the looser development of our few fat women, but massive with solid beef and streaky tallow; so that (though struggling manfully against the idea) you inevitably think of her as made up of steaks and sirloins. . . . She imposes awe and respect by the muchness of her personality, to such a degree that you probably credit her with far greater moral and

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15 Ibid., p. 118. Entry for July 4, 1838.

16 Ibid., p. 56. Entry for July 11, 1837.

> intellectual force than she can fairly claim. Her visage is usually grim and stern, seldom positively forbidding, yet calmly terrible, not merely by its breadth and weight of feature, but because it seems to express so much well-founded self-reliance, such acquaintance with the world, its toils, troubles, and dangers, and such sturdy capacity for trampling down a foe. . . . She certainly looks tenfold--nay, a hundred-fold--better able to take care of herself than our slender-framed and haggard womankind; but I have not found reason to suppose that the English dowager of fifty has actually greater courage, fortitude, and strength of character than our women of similar age, or even a tougher physical endurance than they. Morally, she is strong, I suspect, only in society, and in the common routine of social affairs, and would be found powerless and timid in any exceptional strait that might call for energy outside of the conventionalities amid which she has grown up.
>
> You can meet this figure in the street, and live, and even smile at the recollection. But conceive of her in a ball-room, with the bare, brawny arms that she invariably displays there, and all the other corresponding development, such as is beautiful in the maiden blossom, but a spectacle to howl at in such an over-blown cabbage-rose as this.
>
> Yet, somewhere in this enormous bulk there must be hidden the modest, slender, violet-nature of a girl, whom an alien mass of earthliness has unkindly overgrown; for an English maiden in her teens, though very seldom so pretty as our own damsels, possesses, to say the truth, a certain charm of half-blossom, and delicately folded leaves, and tender womanhood shielded by maidenly reserves, with which, somehow or other, our American girls often fail to adorn themselves during an appreciable moment. It is a pity that the English violet should grow into such an outrageously developed peony as I have attempted to describe.[17]

The following passage is a continued study of the corpulent female. As Hawthorne was about to depart from the Leicester Hospital, he observed that

> another old woman, very plainly dressed, but fat, comfortable, and with a cheerful twinkle in her

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17 Nathaniel Hawthorne, Our Old Home, pp. 66-68.

> eyes, came in through the arch, and looked curiously at me. This repeated apparition of the gentle sex (though by no means under its loveliest guise) had still an agreeable effect in modifying my ideas of an institution which I had supposed to be of a stern and monastic character.[18]

She invited Hawthorne to visit the apartment occupied by her ex-soldier husband and herself. The couple seemed glad to have somebody to talk with,

> but the good woman availed herself of the privilege far more copiously than the veteran himself, insomuch that he felt it expedient to give her an occasional nudge with his elbow in her well-padded ribs. "Don't you be so talkative!" quoth he; and, indeed, he could hardly find space for a word, and quite as little after his admonition as before. Her nimble tongue ran over the whole system of life in the hospital.[19]

Hawthorne thought that the "good dame" considered herself in "very rich clover" because of her bold character, but her husband undoubtedly derived far less pleasure from her overbearing spirit.

In describing a Captain's wife, Hawthorne says that she is

> an inconceivably tall woman,--taller than he,--six feet, at least, and with a well-proportioned largeness in all respects, but looks kind and good, gentle, smiling,--and almost any other woman might sit like a baby on her lap. She does not look at all awful and belligerent, like the massive English women one often sees. You at once feel her to be a benevolent giantess, and apprehend no harm from her. She is a lady, and perfectly well mannered, but with a sort of naturalness and simplicity that becomes her; for any the slightest affectation would be so magnified in her vast personality that it would be absolutely the height of the ridiculous.[20]

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18 Ibid., p. 97.

19 Ibid., pp. 97-98.

20 Nathaniel Hawthorne, English Notebooks, II, p. 289. Entry for May 24, 1856.

Through Hawthorne's descriptive power he was able to individualize women with a touch: "the comely, rather than pretty, English girls, with their deep, healthy bloom, which an American taste is apt to deem fitter for a milkmaid than for a lady."[21] In speaking of the landlady of the American Hotel in Liverpool, England, Hawthorne said that she was "a round, rosy, comfortable-looking English dame of fifty or thereabouts. I liked the woman very well, with her shrewd, good-humored, worldly, kindly disposition."[22]

At a friend's home in London, Hawthorne was introduced to

> Mrs. Newton Crosland,--a rather tall, thin, pale, and lady-like person, looking, I thought, of a sensitive character. She expressed in a low tone and quiet way great delight at seeing my distinguished self! for she is a vast admirer of "The Scarlet Letter" and especially of the character of Hester; indeed, I remember seeing a most favorable criticism of the book from her pen, in one of the London magazines.[23]

Hawthorne related the sordid conditions in the slums of England. He saw "women with young figures, but old, wrinkled, yellow faces, tanned and blear-eyed with the smoke."[24] Here he saw them sitting on their doorsteps fondling their unwashed babies, but Hawthorne could see that "motherhood, in these dark abodes, is strangely identical with what we have all known it to be in the happiest homes."[25] It was sad and yet amusing to

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21 Nathaniel Hawthorne, Our Old Home, p. 65.

22 Ibid., p. 448.

23 Nathaniel Hawthorne, English Notebooks, II, p. 205. Entry for March 25, 1856.

24 Nathaniel Hawthorne, Our Old Home, p. 332.

25 Ibid., p. 332.

Hawthorne to hear a thin and ragged mother "priding herself on the pretty ways of her ragged and skinny infant, just as a young matron might, when she invites her lady friends to admire her plump, white-robed darling in the nursery."[26] Hawthorne could feel that womanly characteristics were still in these poor souls. He gives these women general womanly characteristics of

> chatting with prodigious earnestness about intangible trifles, laughing for a little jest, sympathizing at almost the same instant with one neighbor's sunshine and another's shadow; wise, simple, sly, and patient, yet easily perturbed, and breaking into small feminine ebullitions of spite, wrath, and jealousy, tornadoes of a moment, such as vary the social atmosphere of her silken-skirted sisters, though smothered into propriety by dint of a well-bred habit.[27]

Hawthorne delighted in showing just how rough and rude the poorer class women were. He remembered having seen

> a woman meet a man in the street, and, for no reason perceptible to me, suddenly clutch him by the hair and cuff his ears,--an infliction which he bore with exemplary patience, only snatching the very earliest opportunity to take to his heels. Where a sharp tongue will not serve the purpose, they trust to the sharpness of their finger-nails, or incarnate a whole vocabulary of vituperative words in a resounding slap, or the downright blow of a doubled fist.[28]

Hawthorne was satisfied that the "belligerent propensities" of the English ladies were kept in control by the rigorous rules of society. And another word about the large English women: Hawthorne thought it would require "a vast deal of refinement to spiritualize their large physical endowments."[29] He observed

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26 Ibid., p. 332.

27 Ibid., p. 333.

28 Ibid., p. 334.

29 Ibid., p. 334.

that their hardihood and strength were the result of their living "mostly in the open air, amid the coarsest kind of companionship and occupation," which helps them to "carry on the intercourse of life with a freedom unknown to any class of American females, though still, I am resolved to think, compatible with a generous breadth of natural propriety."[30]

Hawthorne made an observation at the ferry-room where there

> was a small, thin, anxious-looking woman, with a bundle, seeming in rather poor circumstances, but decently dressed, and eying other women, I thought, with an expression of slight ill-will and distrust; also an elderly, stout, gray-haired woman, of respectable aspect, and two young lady-like persons, quite pretty, one of whom was reading a shilling volume of James's "Arabella Stuart." They talked to one another with that up-and-down intonation which English ladies practise, and which strikes an unaccustomed ear as rather affected, especially in women of size and mass.[31]

Hawthorne remarked that it was quite different from an American lady's mode of talking.

Hawthorne detected that

> the English women of the lower classes have a grace of their own, not seen in each individual, but nevertheless belonging to their order, which is not to be found in American women of the corresponding class.[32]

He described the naturalness and charm of a servant-girl who was put into the witness-box in the police court. He spoke of

> her tones, her gestures, her look, her way of speaking and what she said, being so appropriate and natural in a girl of that class; nothing affected; no proper grace

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30 Ibid., p. 334.

31 Nathaniel Hawthorne, English Notebooks, I, pp. 473-474. Entry for December 13, 1853.

32 Ibid., p. 576. Entry for June 2, 1855.

> thrown away by attempting to appear lady-like,--
> which an American girl would have attempted,--and
> she would also have succeeded in a certain degree.33

Hawthorne believed that each class should keep within itself, a practice which would make each more respectable.

According to Hawthorne the American women had more feminine beauty than the English country women. After witnessing a curious amusement called "Kissing in the Ring," Hawthorne observed that the girls all looked homely to him.

> They seemed to be country-lasses, of sturdy and wholesome aspect, with coarse-grained, cabbage-rosy cheeks, and, I am willing to suppose, a stout texture of moral principle, such as would bear a good deal of rough usage without suffering much detriment. But how unlike the trim little damsels of my native land! I desire above all things to be courteous; but, since the plain truth must be told, the soil and climate of England produce feminine beauty as rarely as they do delicate fruit; and though admirable specimens of both are to be met with, they are the hot-house ameliorations of refined society, and apt, moreover, to relapse into the coarseness of the original stock.34

But sometimes Hawthorne noticed a "certain gracefulness" among the younger women who possessed a natural charm, unaffected, not imitated. Hawthorne admired this kind of beauty which

> is probably vanishing out of the world, and will certainly never be found in America, where all the girls, whether daughters of the upper-tendons, the mediocrity, the cottage, or the kennel, aim at one standard of dress and deportment, seldom accomplishing a perfectly triumphant hit or an utterly absurd failure. Those words, "genteel" and "ladylike," are terrible ones, and do us infinite mischief, but it is because (at least, I hope so) we are in a transition state, and shall emerge into a higher mode of simplicity than has ever been known to past ages.35

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33 Ibid., p. 576.

34 Nathaniel Hawthorne, Our Old Home, pp. 284-285.

35 Ibid., pp. 335-336.

Hawthorne was by no means blind to the charms of an attractive woman. He gave an exact description of a young lady who sat across the table from him at the Lord Mayor's dinner in London. Her pure and fine complexion, black hair, and beautiful features attracted Hawthorne's eyes.

> She was slender and youthful, and yet had a stately and cold, though soft and womanly grace; and, looking at her, I saw what were the wives of the old patriarchs in their maiden or early-married days,--what Judith was, for, womanly as she looked, I doubt not she could have slain a man in a just cause,--what Bathsheba was, only she seemed to have no sin in her, --perhaps what Eve was, though one could hardly think her weak enough to eat the apple. . . . Whether owing to distinctness of race, my sense that she was a Jewess, or whatever else, I felt a sort of repugnance, simultaneously with my perception that she was an admirable creature.[36]

Hawthorne admired the finer qualities of womanhood such as quietness, gentleness, sweetness, sincerity, and good manners. In assessing personal qualities to women whom he came in contact with, he notices these characteristics over and over again. Hawthorne met the famous Jenny Lind while he was in London and recorded his impressions of her:

> Jenny Lind is rather tall,--quite tall, for a woman, --certainly no beauty, but with sense and self-reliance in her aspect and manners. She was suffering under a severe cold, and seemed worn down besides, so probably I saw her under disadvantages. Her conversation is quite simple, and I should have great faith in her sincerity; and there is about her the manner of a person who knows the world, and has conquered it. . . . Her conversational voice is an agreeable one, rather deep, and not particularly smooth.[37]

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36 Nathaniel Hawthorne, English Notebooks, II, p. 239. Entry for April 8, 1856.

37 Ibid., p. 318. Entry for July 9, 1856.

Jenny Lind talked of the ill-health of American women, but Hawthorne opposed this view. He thought the women of England "as generally out of health as those of America; always something has gone wrong with them; and as for Jenny Lind, she looks wan and worn enough to be an American herself."[38]

At dinner one evening in London, Hawthorne sat by a Mrs. M____ who was "of noble blood, and therefore not snobbish,--quite unaffected, gentle, sweet, and easy to get on with, reminding me of the best-mannered American women."[39]

Hawthorne felt quite at ease with Elizabeth Barrett Browning. He commented favorably on their conversation,

> for she is of that quickly appreciative and responsive order of women with whom I can talk more freely than with any man; and she has, besides, her own originality, wherewith to help on conversation, though, I should say, not of a loquacious tendency.[40]

He liked her very much although he could not understand how "so fine a spirit as hers could be stirred about spiritualism."[41]

By the tone of the language which Hawthorne used one might conclude from the passages in the American and English Notebooks that he favored the natural simplicity of women who possessed sweet, kind, and modest ways. It is clear that the coarse, rowdy, forward woman was repulsive and irritating to Hawthorne's sensitive nature.

The evidence of the notebooks is not what might have been

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38 Ibid., pp. 318-319.

39 Ibid., p. 321. Entry for July 10, 1856.

40 Ibid., p. 327. Entry for July 13, 1856.

41 Ibid., p. 327.

expected. Although Hawthorne described physical characteristics of women in his notebooks, he very sparingly made comments on what he considered woman's proper place in educational and intellectual activities. He made the following statement about an English literary woman who came to visit him at Liverpool: "Her talk was sensible, but not particularly brilliant nor interesting; a good, solid personage, physically and intellectually."[42] He commented on a Mrs. Hall in England who was a literary lady "unspoilt by a literary career."[43] Aside from these incidents his emphasis was more on the physical and social characteristics of women than on their intellectual aspirations and activities.

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[42] Nathaniel Hawthorne, English Notebooks, I, p. 432. Entry for August 24, 1853.

[43] Nathaniel Hawthorne, English Notebooks, II, p. 237. Entry for April 8, 1856.

Chapter V

HAWTHORNE'S FEMINIST IDEAS AS REVEALED IN HIS WRITINGS

To Hawthorne, the secret of woman's power was not in her intellectual ability and activities. He could never bring himself to believe in intellectual women. He could never praise any woman he considered, from Mrs. Hutchinson on, if her mind had triumphed over her femininity. Amy Louise Reed points out the following:

> In "Mrs. Hutchinson," an early sketch, Hawthorne deplores the entry of woman into the profession of authorship on the ground that "there is a delicacy--that perceives, or fancies, a sort of impropriety in the display of woman's natal mind to the gaze of the world, with indications by which its inmost secrets may be searched out." If she possesses genius and obeys its promptings, she must realize that she does so at a great price-- "relinquishing a part of the loveliness of her sex."[1]

Miss Jane Lundblad makes the observation that it was an audacious undertaking for Hawthorne "to introduce these beautiful, intelligent, and passionate women, conscious of their own superiority, into the American literature of the eighteen fifties."[2]

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1 Amy Louise Reed, "Self-Portraiture in the Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne," Studies in Philology, XXIII (January, 1926), 40-54.

2 Jane Lundblad, Nathaniel Hawthorne and European Literary Tradition, p. 165.

Hester, in The Scarlet Letter, Zenobia in The Blithedale Romance, and Miriam in The Marble Faun are beautiful and intelligent, and they are zealous in advocating the rights of their sex.

In his introduction to Hawthorne's Notebooks, Randall Stewart points out that Hester, Zenobia, and Miriam are marked in similarity for their physical appearance as well as for their mental traits.[3] They are the women in Hawthorne's stories who have a "marked intellectual ability."

> Hester, in the solitude of her cottage, enjoyed 'a freedom of speculation'. . . . With the future improvement of the world, Hester was hopeful that 'the whole relations between man and woman' would be established 'on a surer ground of mutual happiness.' Zenobia 'made no scruple of oversetting all human institutions, and scattering them as with a breeze from her fan.' She was ready to take an active part 'in behalf of woman's wider liberty'. . . . Miriam, likewise, is a woman of independent and subversive thought, which is contrasted with the simple, trusting orthodoxy of Hilda.[4]

The women whose personalities are characterized by Randall Stewart's term, "exotic richness," are portrayed vividly by Hawthorne. They are outstanding. They make a name for themselves in fiction just as Hawthorne knew that some women of his time were trying to make a name for themselves in the world of reality. At this time women were struggling heroically to become loosed from the bonds which had held them down. Hawthorne did not believe that women should be emancipated from their

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3 Randall Stewart, Introduction to The American Notebooks, p. lx.

4 Ibid., p. lx.

rightful sphere, the home; accordingly his heroines who were trying to loose the yoke always met with unhappy circumstances. It was Hawthorne's way of saying that women must be satisfied to leave the world of affairs to the stronger sex.

The Scarlet Letter is not without implied reference to the discussion of feminism in Hawthorne's own day. Cantwell has come to the following conclusion:

> It seems doubtful that all the tracts of the feminists accomplished so much to improve the position of women in American society as the single powerful scene of Hester Prynne walking from the jail to the scaffold, and enduring the gaze of a thousand unrelenting eyes, all fastened upon her, and concentrated at her bosom.[5]

Neal F. Doubleday says that it has almost become a convention to insist that Hawthorne meant to advocate a new standard of sex morality in passages like Hester's words, "What we did had a consecration of its own. We felt it so! We said so to each other!" Mr. Doubleday says also that Hester represents feminist thought in Hawthorne's time, but if Hester is a feminist Hawthorne would not have identified her views with his own.[6]

It seems probable that Mr. Doubleday is right in concluding that what Hester says does not express Hawthorne's own view. Hester's errors were errors that were being made in Hawthorne's time, and that was the error of being bold enough to speculate on women's sphere. "The world's law was no law for her mind."[7]

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5 Robert Cantwell, Nathaniel Hawthorne, p. 427.

6 N. F. Doubleday, "Hawthorne's Hester and Feminism," PMLA, LIV (September, 1939), 825-826.

7 Nathaniel Hawthorne, The Scarlet Letter, p. 199.

Hester considers the injustice of society and speculates

> with reference to the whole race of womanhood. Was existence worth accepting, even to the happiest among them? As concerned her own individual existence, she had long ago decided in the negative, and dismissed the point as settled. A tendency to speculation, though it may keep woman quiet, as it does man, yet makes her sad.[8]

Hawthorne narrates the almost impossible task of the feminist as he sees it:

> She discerns, it may be, such a hopeless task before her. As a first step, the whole system of society is to be torn down, and built up anew. Then, the very nature of the opposite sex, or its long hereditary habit, which has become like nature, is to be essentially modified, before woman can be allowed to assume what seems a fair and suitable position.[9]

For woman to take advantage of these reforms, she will have to change her nature; and then, Hawthorne says,

> perhaps, the ethereal essence, wherein she has her truest life, will be found to have evaporated. A woman never overcomes these problems by any exercise of thought. They are not to be solved, or only in one way. If her heart chance to come uppermost, they vanish. Thus, Hester Prynne, whose heart had lost its regular and healthy throb, wandered without a clew in the dark labyrinth of mind: now turned aside by an insurmountable precipice; now starting back from a deep chasm. There was wild and ghastly scenery all around her, and a home and comfort nowhere.[10]

This is a picture of a thwarted woman who had a desire to bring about a new relationship between the sexes. Hester and Dimmesdale agree that "What we did had a consecration of its own."[11]

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8 Ibid., p. 200.

9 Ibid., p. 200.

10 Ibid., p. 201.

11 Ibid., p. 234.

It seems that Hester wished that her society were so broadminded that it would not look upon the committed act as a sin. Hester had been sent to America to live until her husband could join her. No doubt she was expected to live quietly until her husband came, but the beautiful, passionate Hester could not be content after two years of loneliness. She strayed and had to suffer the consequences. Carl Van Doren points out that "a harder woman might have become an active rebel; a softer woman might have sunk passively down into unavailing penitence. Hester stands erect, and thinks!"[12] Hester was a type of the new woman in the nineteenth century in that she was interested in breaking the stiff standards of the age's code.

Austin Warren has pointed out that Hawthorne is careful to characterize the rebellion of Hester as the rebellion of one who "had wandered without rule or guidance, in a moral wilderness, whose teachers--Shame, Despair, and Solitude--had made her strong, but taught her much amiss."[13]

Hawthorne was interested in showing what happens to women who take the freedom to speculate too boldly. He tries to show that Hester's action does not pay. At the end of her life she comes to the conclusion that her sin has left a lasting mark upon her:

> Earlier in life, Hester had vainly imagined that she herself might be the destined prophetess, but had long since recognized the impossibility that any

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12 Carl Van Doren, The American Novel, p. 69.

13 Introduction to Nathaniel Hawthorne: Representative Selections, p. xxxlv.

> mission of divine and mysterious truth should be confided to a woman stained with sin, bowed down with shame, or even burdened with a life-long sorrow. The angel and apostle of the coming revelation must be a woman indeed, but lofty, pure, and beautiful; and wise, moreover, not through dusky grief, but the ethereal medium of joy; and showing how sacred love should make us happy, by the truest test of a life successful to such an end![14]

To women afflicted by conflicts who sought her counsel, Hester expressed her

> firm belief, that, at some brighter period, when the world should have grown ripe for it, in Heaven's own time, a new truth would be revealed, in order to establish the whole relation between man and woman on a surer ground of mutual happiness.[15]

Miss Jane Lundblad points out that the above quotation sounds as if it were "an echo of the gospel of Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft;" and Margaret Fuller, "the American interpreter of the Godwinian teachings about women's rights," surely "had not failed to impress her written and spoken word on Hawthorne."[16]

It seems that some of the traits of the intellectually-minded women were given to Hester, but she seems to be freer from literary influence than Zenobia in The Blithedale Romance. Zenobia had a small bit of literary talent according to Coverdale who made this observation: "It did one good to see a fine intellect (as hers really was, although its natural tendency lay in another direction than towards literature) so fitly cased." Zenobia had created a name for herself as an authoress and an

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14 Nathaniel Hawthorne, The Scarlet Letter, p. 311.

15 Ibid., p. 311.

16 Jane Lundblad, Nathaniel Hawthorne and European Literary Tradition, p. 154.

artist in conversation.

> Zenobia had the gift of telling a fanciful little story, off-hand, in a way that made it greatly more effective than it was usually found to be when she afterwards elaborated the same production with her pen.[17]

Again Coverdale remarks that "her poor little stories and tracts never half did justice to her intellect. It was only the lack of a fitter avenue that drove her to seek development in literature."[18]

The vigorous personality of Zenobia illumines The Blithedale Romance merely with her presence. She is proud and beautiful and is empowered with an overzealous ambition of reform. Relating the duties of the farm to the newcomers, Zenobia speaks as if she had revolutionary ideas in mind. She was an extreme feminist taking an extreme look into the future. She relates that the domestic part of the business will be the feminine duties for the present, but, "perhaps, when our individual adaptations begin to develop themselves, it may be that some of us who wear the petticoat will go a-field, and leave the weaker brethren to take our places in the kitchen."[19] Coverdale is amused at how trustingly Priscilla admires Zenobia, the "brilliant woman." He could not understand it, "except by supposing that she had read some of Zenobia's stories (as such literature goes everywhere), or her tracts in defence of the sex, and had come hither

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17 Nathaniel Hawthorne, The Blithedale Romance, p. 12.

18 Ibid., p. 40.

19 Ibid., p. 13.

with the one purpose of being her slave."[20]

In his preface to The Blithedale Romance, Hawthorne described Zenobia as a "high-spirited woman, bruising herself against the narrow limitations of her sex,"[21] and he embodies in her career and in his comments his criticism of feminism. Coverdale, the observer, is likely Hawthorne, the observer. Coverdale recognized that Zenobia's "mind was full of weeds."[22] He was startled at her boldness, but reflected that "a female reformer . . . has an instinctive sense of where the life lies, and is inclined to aim directly at that spot. Especially the relation between the sexes is naturally among the earliest to attract her notice."[23] Zenobia's mind is saturated with the idea of more freedom for women. In reply to Coverdale's remark that a "feminine creature" is always happier than "male creatures," Zenobia says, "How can she be happy, after discovering that fate has assigned her but one single event, which she must contrive to make the substance of her whole life? A man has his choice of innumerable events."[24] Zenobia declaimed with great earnestness

> on the injustice which the world did to women, and equally to itself, by not allowing them, in freedom and honor, and with the fullest welcome, their natural utterance in public.

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20 Ibid., p. 29.

21 Ibid., p. vi.

22 Ibid., p. 40.

23 Ibid., p. 41.

24 Ibid., p. 57.

> "It shall not always be so!" cried she. "If I live another year, I will lift up my own voice in behalf of woman's wider liberty!"[25]

Coverdale's smile made her angry, and she thought it betrayed "shallow thought." It was Zenobia's belief and prophecy

> "that, when my sex shall achieve its rights, there will be ten eloquent women where there is now one eloquent man. Thus far, no woman in the world has ever once spoken out her whole heart and her whole mind. The mistrust and disapproval of the vast bulk of society throttles us, as with two gigantic hands at our throats! We mumble a few weak words, and leave a thousand better ones unsaid. You let us write a little, it is true, on a limited range of subjects. But the pen is not for woman. Her power is too natural and immediate. It is with the living voice alone that she can compel the world to recognize the light to her intellect and the depth of her heart!"[26]

Coverdale's reflection must be Hawthorne's:

> Now,--though I could not well say so to Zenobia,-- I had not smiled from any unworthy estimate of woman, or in denial of the claims which she is beginning to put forth. What amused and puzzled me was the fact, that women, however intellectually superior, so seldom disquiet themselves about the rights or wrongs of their sex, unless their own individual affections chance to lie in idleness, or to be ill at ease. They are not natural reformers, but become such by the presence of exceptional misfortune. I could measure Zenobia's inward trouble by the animosity with which she now took up the general quarrel of woman against man.[27]

In the light of the above reflection it seems that Coverdale is being deceitful when he tells Zenobia:

> "I will give you leave, Zenobia," replied I, "to fling your utmost scorn upon me, if you ever hear me utter a sentiment unfavorable to the widest liberty which woman has yet dreamed of. I would give her all

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25 Ibid., p. 119.

26 Ibid., p. 120.

27 Ibid., p. 120.

> she asks, and add a great deal more, which she will not be the party to demand, but which men, if they were generous and wise, would grant of their own free motion. For instance, I should love dearly,--for the next thousand years, at least,--to have all government devolve into the hands of women. I hate to be ruled by my own sex. . . . But how sweet the free, generous courtesy, with which I would kneel before a woman-ruler!"[28]

What Hawthorne gives Hollingsworth to say about the rightful sphere of women seems to be Hawthorne's true idea of woman's place in the world:

> "She is the most admirable handiwork of God, in her true place and character. Her place is at man's side. Her office, that of the sympathizer; the unreserved, unquestioning believer. . . . All the separate action of woman is, and ever has been, and always shall be, false, foolish, vain, destructive of her own best and holiest qualities, void of every good effect, and productive of intolerable mischiefs! . . . Were there any possible prospect of woman's taking the social stand which some of them--poor, miserable, abortive creatures, who only dream of such things because they have missed woman's peculiar happiness or because nature made them really neither man nor woman!--if there were a chance of their attaining the end which these petticoated monstrosities have in view, I would call upon my own sex to use its physical force, that unmistakable evidence of sovereignty, to scourge them back within their proper bounds! But it will not be needful. The heart of true womanhood knows where its own sphere is, and never seeks to stray beyond it."[29]

Zenobia sacrifices her belief in the cause of women to Hollingsworth's greedy philanthropy. She becomes meek before his proclamation of the superiority of man and his cruel contempt for women except as the consolers of men. When her labors for the cause of women prove useless, and her love to Hollingsworth

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28 Ibid., pp. 120-121.

29 Ibid., pp. 122-123.

is without response, she says:

> "At least I am a woman, with every fault, it may be, that a woman ever had,--weak, vain, unprincipled (like most of my sex; for our virtues, when we have any, are merely impulsive and intuitive), passionate, too, and pursuing my foolish and unattainable ends by indirect and cunning, though absurdly chosen means, as an hereditary bondslave must; false, moreover, to the whole circle of good, in my reckless truth to the little good I saw before me,--but still a woman! A creature whom a little change of earthly fortune, a little kinder smile of Him who sent me hither, and one true heart to encourage and direct me, might have made all that a woman can be! But how is it with you? Are you a man? No, but a monster! A cold, heartless, self-beginning and self-ending piece of mechanism!"30

By experience Zenobia learns the place of woman too late to occupy it. Exasperated by despair, her ideas are lost in her self-sought death. Zenobia thus exemplifies the fate which Hawthorne saw as inevitable for the highly intellectual woman.

When Hester and Zenobia suffer their losses, both could say with Zenobia what she says to Coverdale:

> "In the battle-field of life, the downright stroke, that would fall only on a man's steel headpiece, is sure to light on a woman's heart, over which she wears no breastplate, and whose wisdom it is, therefore, to keep out of the conflict. . . . The whole universe, her own sex and yours, and Providence, or Destiny, to boot, make common cause against the woman who swerves one hair's breadth, she goes all astray, and never sees the world in its true aspect afterwards!"31

Conjecture has continued to identify Zenobia with Margaret Fuller. William P. Randel has reached the following conclusion:

> The apparent identification is far from complete: Zenobia was beautiful, Margaret hardly so; Zenobia's body was recovered, Margaret's not. Moreover,

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30 Ibid., p. 218.

31 Ibid., p. 224.

> Zenobia was a member of Brook Farm, while Margaret was only a visitor. . . . Sophia, always zealous for her husband's reputation, and a close friend of Margaret, made no known effort to dissuade him from publishing the book. When Julian Hawthorne published Nathaniel Hawthorne and His Wife, which contains the only record of Hawthorne's late judgment of Margaret, F. T. Fuller, her nephew, criticized him for casting a slur on the relation of the two. His reproaching Julian for challenging an established friendship shows that to him at least Zenobia was not meant as Margaret Fuller satirized.[32]

Mark Van Doren says that the subject of The Blithedale Romance is

> Brook Farm, and the heroine is perhaps Margaret Fuller. Hawthorne always denied this, pointing to a passage in which Priscilla, not her more splendid sister, was said in so many words to resemble that intellectual lady. But Priscilla does not resemble Margaret Fuller; and if Zenobia in some aspects does--being eloquent, lofty, and proud--it still remains doubtful whether as a person in the book she lives.[33]

Randall Stewart points out that

> Zenobia (in The Blithedale Romance) was perhaps suggested in part by Margaret Fuller, but the view of Margaret in the passage just quoted [see footnote 102, chapter III] is broadly representative of Hawthorne's views of human nature generally, and the difficulty of transforming it by an artificial culture. Sometimes thought merely malicious, the passage actually moves beyond the personal to the philosophical.[34]

The fact remains that Zenobia does resemble Margaret Fuller. While it may be true that Zenobia's zealous advocacy of woman's rights may have been suggested by Margaret's active interest in the subject, it is not necessarily true that Hawthorne was trying

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32 William P. Randel, "Hawthorne, Channing, and Margaret Fuller," American Literature, X (January, 1939), 472-476.

33 Mark Van Doren, Nathaniel Hawthorne, p. 189.

34 Randall Stewart, Nathaniel Hawthorne, pp. 195-196.

to satirize her, although he was sure to have had her in mind. Evidently he was using Zenobia as a prototype of all women who were engaged in the Woman's Rights Movement. Margaret Fuller was a frequent guest at Brook Farm, and Hawthorne, who had known her previously and was a member of the community when she visited there, was doubtless fully aware of her interest in and advocacy of Women's Rights. Hawthorne probably permitted his acquaintance with Margaret to color his opinion when he drew the character of Zenobia, the female reformer; but even if Zenobia was modeled at certain points on Margaret, it would be rash to conclude that the identification was complete.

Like her fictional sisters, Hester and Zenobia, Miriam in The Marble Faun "assumed a freedom of speculation."[35] Miriam's speculation was in a different direction, not so much on woman's place in the world as upon woman's independent and subversive thinking. Miriam finds that through sin sorrow comes into the world. She says,

> "The story of the fall of man! Is it not repeated in our romance of Monte Beni? And may we follow the analogy yet further? Was that very sin,--into which Adam precipitated himself and all his race,--was it the destined means by which, over a long pathway of toil and sorrow, we are to attain a higher, brighter, and profounder happiness, than our lost birthright gave? Will not this idea account for the permitted existence of sin, as no other theory can?"[36]

Austin Warren makes the observation that the audacious Miriam speculates on the career of Donatello. Miriam believes

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35 Nathaniel Hawthorne, The Scarlet Letter, p. 199.

36 Nathaniel Hawthorne, The Marble Faun, p. 491.

that by sinning Donatello has become a man, "with an inestimable treasure of improvement won from an experience of pain." Still Miriam, bold, but cautious, says, "I tremble at my own thoughts," while yet she must "probe them to their depths." Again she says,

> "was the crime . . . a blessing, in that strange disguise? Was it a means of education, bringing a simple and imperfect nature to a point of feeling and intelligence which it could have reached under no other discipline?"[37]

Kenyon believes that Miriam is thinking dangerous thoughts, but Miriam is a thinking woman and will not be silenced. She concludes:

> "At least . . . that sin which man chose instead of good--has been so beneficently handled by omniscience and omnipotence, that, whereas our dark enemy sought to destroy us by it, it has really become an instrument most effective in the education of intellect and soul."[38]

Hawthorne sees that Miriam's speculative intellect is running away with itself. The woman has thrown the reins away, and she must pay for not conforming to the accepted opinions of society. Hawthorne sees that Miriam and Donatello will be "a remorseful man and woman, linked by a marriage-bond of crime," as they "set forth towards an inevitable goal."[39]

Randall Stewart brings out the fact that it is perhaps significant of his moral judgments that Hawthorne should ascribe sin "to these women of exotic physical beauty and speculative

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37 Austin Warren, Nathaniel Hawthorne: Representative Selections, p. xxix.

38 Hawthorne, op. cit., pp. 491-492.

39 Ibid., p. 492.

minds."[40]

> Hester's sin alone is explicitly stated. . . . It is vaguely hinted that in Zenobia's past life there was some culpable relationship with Westervelt which placed her in his power. Miriam's sin is concealed by the deliberate obscurity of the author's method.[41]

Sin seemed to have a glamour for these women because of its liberation from convention; however each had to pay a dear price for her wrong doing.

Hawthorne just could not bring himself to believe in the woman who became discontented with her natural situation in life. There are evidences of this fact in a few of Hawthorne's short stories. In "Rappaccini's Daughter" Rappaccini instructed his daughter "deeply in his science, and that, young and beautiful as fame reports her, she is already qualified to fill a professor's chair."[42] Her education and deep interest in science brought about her tragedy. "There was an awful doom," she said, "the effect of my father's fatal love of science, which estranged me from all society of my kind."[43] It might be straining the point to say that her education produced her untimely death, for as Mark Van Doren states: "She did not will to be a poison flower as Hester once consented to break the Puritan laws."[44]

In "The Gentle Boy" Hawthorne had no sympathy with the Quaker

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[40] Randall Stewart, Introduction to The American Notebooks, p. lx.

[41] Ibid., p. lx.

[42] Nathaniel Hawthorne: Representative Selections, p. 315.

[43] Ibid., p. 334.

[44] Nathaniel Hawthorne, p. 132.

woman who appalled those in the congregation with her boldness in usurping the pulpit. The clergyman sternly addressed her: "Get you down, woman, from the holy place which you profane. Is it to the Lord's house that you come to pour forth the foulness of your heart and the inspiration of the devil?"[45] Hawthorne had no respect for the women who were so bold as to put themselves before the public to speak.

In "The Seven Vagabonds" Hawthorne throws a sneering remark at women who long for literary fame. The young scholar selling books from the showman's wagon would be proud when,

> talking poetry while he sold spelling-books, he should charm the mind, and haply touch the heart, of a fair country schoolmistress, herself an unhonored poetess, a wearer of blue stockings which none but himself took pains to look at.[46]

Hawthorne satirized women's trying to leave the domestic sphere when in "Earth's Holocaust," he said:

> It somewhat startled me to overhear a number of ladies, highly respectable in appearance, proposing to fling their gowns and petticoats into the flames, and assume the garb, together with the manners, duties, offices, and responsibilities, of the opposite sex.[47]

There was a perception of feminine tenderness expressed by Hawthorne in his writings even though he could not bring himself to believe in intellectual women. Hawthorne's heroines who were content to be the helpers and companions of men are observed in some of the more passive, gentle souls in his novels:

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45 Nathaniel Hawthorne: Representative Selections, p. 131.

46 Ibid., p. 36.

47 Ibid., p. 93.

Ellen Langton in Fanshawe, Phoebe in The House of the Seven Gables, and Hilda in The Marble Faun. Randall Stewart gives an adequate discussion of these heroines.

> Ellen possessed both "a large fund of plain sense, and an esthetic faculty which was expressed in the daily decoration of her room with wild flowers . . . Ellen prefers reading an old romance to pursuing a course of instruction in the learned languages, proffered by Dr. Melmoth."
>
> Just as Ellen Langton promptly assumes a large share of the domestic duties in Mrs. Melmoth's household, so Phoebe "by the magnetism of innate fitness" takes Hepzibah's place in the kitchen. Phoebe and Ellen are alike, also, in their lack of bookishness: the educational qualifications of the former do not extend beyond those of the mistress of the village school.
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> Hilda is described as "pretty at all times, in our native New England style." In her religious orthodoxy and in her moral purity, symbolized by the doves which circle about her tower, she derives from both Phoebe and Mrs. Hawthorne herself.[48]

Phoebe is a natural, unaffected, pleasant young girl who takes care of the domestic duties of the Pyncheon household. Neal F. Doubleday makes the observation that Phoebe is the country cousin who is quite untouched by the currents of thought which have thrown Holgrave out of balance.[49] By her simplicity and sympathetic nature, Phoebe is able to restore Holgrave to contact with his fellows and a sympathy for them which is not deceptive.

Priscilla in The Blithedale Romance is never quite impressive. She is just a helper and comforter of men as Hollingsworth

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48 Randall Stewart, Introduction to The American Notebooks, pp. lv-lvii.

49 Neal F. Doubleday, "Hawthorne's Criticism of New England Life," College English, II (April, 1941), 647.

wished all women would be satisfied to be. Priscilla is a delicate little seamstress who earns her own living and is satisfied to be a spectator rather than a participant.

Hilda is a perfect specimen of the idealized woman that Hawthorne often praises. She is a beautiful character, almost too pure to be human. She cannot bear moral evil. After Miriam's and Donatello's crime, Miriam goes to Hilda's tower. Hilda accuses the unhappy Miriam and disowns her.[50] One would think it quite natural that Hawthorne would have a pure, moral girl like Hilda recoil from the creed that sin educated one--a creed which Miriam had speculated upon and Kenyon had played with. She asks Kenyon:

> "Do not you perceive what a mockery your creed makes, not only of all religious sentiments, but of moral law? and how it annuls and obliterates whatever precepts of Heaven are written deepest within us? You have shocked me beyond words!"[51]

Hawthorne admired the woman who would be shocked at new intellectual thought. It was the daring woman whom he exposed unfavorably--the woman who dared to go beyond woman's rightful limits.

In Hawthorne's treatment in his writings of the women who advocated the rights of their sex, he embodies his criticism of a movement contemporary with him. He is quite aware of the life and thought about him, but he keeps detached from actual participation in the intellectual movements. By rebelling against

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50 Nathaniel Hawthorne, The Blithedale Romance, p. 247.

51 Nathaniel Hawthorne, The Marble Faun, p. 520.

the conventional, Hawthorne's strong heroines suffer the consequences of their acts. Hester carried the mark of an adultress. Zenobia, disappointed in love and in her fruitless labor for her sex, sought suicide by drowning. Miriam carried with her a sense of guilt for some sin in the past. All carry guilt--these independent, thinking women.

Chapter VI

SIGNIFICANCE OF HAWTHORNE'S INTEREST IN AND RELATION TO MOVEMENTS FOR THE EMANCIPATION OF WOMEN

Although Nathaniel Hawthorne is not best known today for his role in reform movements, this study relates him to the movement for the emancipation of women. The question of woman's rights resulted in a Reform Movement which stirred New England life during the 1840's and 50's. The Woman's Rights Movement among other reform ventures shook the social life around Hawthorne. Although his interest in the new ideas was slight, his writings are proof that he did bring his mind to bear critically on the current agitation for women's rights. Of course, he was more observer than participant, but he did not remain completely aloof from the reforms of his day.

Taking thus a slight interest in the reform movements which emphasized and cooperated in the broadening of woman's sphere, Hawthorne was either irritated to see women receiving recognition and praise when he remained obscure to the world, or he just consciously disliked literary women because of the impropriety of exposing their minds "to the gaze of the world."

Since it is clear that Hawthorne did not approve of the intellectual woman, one interested in the Woman's Rights Movement can find in his works an unfavorable picture of the woman reformer in the nineteenth century. Hawthorne was well acquainted

with the women of his own circle. All too soon, he realized that from a family of three women he had learned the habit of seclusion. It is not surprising that Hawthorne should choose a semi-invalid for his wife. She, too, knew the life of solitude; because of her frailty she was naturally destined to the home. He knew, too, Margaret Fuller and Elizabeth Peabody, who were active and bold in challenging to secure rights for their sex. Although Hawthorne might appreciate literary talent in a female writer, he did not, as a man, approve of too great frankness in intellectual women.

The student who is interested in the emerging woman can find material for thought in Hawthorne's characterizations of female reformers in The Scarlet Letter, The Blithedale Romance, and The Marble Faun. Despite his attitude toward the intellectual woman there is still a great womanly presence in these novels which unifies the narratives and focuses the light on the proud, emerging, modern woman. Hawthorne lived during the time when women were beginning gradually to break down the barriers which had barred them from entering pursuits previously unheard of. He knew, also, the bold women who were daring enough to speak from public platforms in the cause of slavery, prohibition, suffrage, and equal education for boys and girls. He was not complimentary in his attitude toward the majority of literary women, whom he spoke of as "scribblers." Pictures of the exotic, the frail, and the self-reliant type of woman he has drawn with the hand of one who had observed and known the personal characteristics of women. He formed definite opinions of woman's sphere

because he was a member of a family who helped form these opinions.

Aside from the social significance, Hawthorne's interest in the emancipation of women is interesting from a literary standpoint. Hawthorne's strong heroines are so clearly the result of his conscious dislike of intellectual women that they supply another proof that Hawthorne's works were the result of his environment and his acquaintances.

Another importance of Hawthorne's interest in woman's rights is the light that it throws upon the personality of this important American author. Every author in creating his characters reveals his own personality. Into Zenobia's words Hawthorne poured forth his reflections concerning the long strides which women were earnestly trying to take. It seems that he was the silent observer watching the weaker sex slowly rise, and all he could do about it was to scold and ridicule through the portrayal of strong-souled women. He was convinced that the persistence of these women in speculating upon woman's place in the world would not make the world better. He probably thought all such women would come to the same fatal destiny as Margaret Fuller, of whom he said: "She proved herself a very woman after all, and fell as the weakest of her sisters might."[1] Since Hawthorne was a shy and solitary man, he portrayed his passive, retiring, gentle heroines sympathetically. Since he detested boldness, daringness, and frankness in women, he drew his strong heroines

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1 Julian Hawthorne, Nathaniel Hawthorne and His Wife, I, p. 261.

with these qualities.

A study of these emancipated heroines--emancipated from domestic life--is a study of Hawthorne's idea of the tragedy an emancipated woman must meet. To Hawthorne she is living an abnormal life. He felt that a normal life for a woman consisted in her domestic happiness; so he permitted his tragic characters to lead an abnormal life. They once know love, lose it, and then they have to compensate for the loss by entering upon ventures of reform. These heroines, who were denied love and a normal life of marriage, are pictured as thwarted, frustrated women who become dreamers of a new order. Hester dreamed of a new moral order in which there would be a new relationship between the sexes. Zenobia fancied a new social order which would bring about an equality between the sexes. Miriam thought upon a new spiritual idea, the idea that sin is educative.

Finally, it seems somewhat significant that with the advancement of women in nearly every phase of life, there came to be a gradual acceptance of the fact that women were going to take their place in the world. The nineteenth-century woman possessed the same spirit as the colonial lady who would bob her hair because it "shackles me, abridges my freedom, and I must be free; so come off it must."[2]

It is apparent by the time of Hawthorne's death in 1864 that, although the cause of the advancement of women had not gained its desired goals, it had lost much of its criticism and

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2 An American Girl, as quoted by Clifton J. Furness, The Genteel Female, p. xliii.

the public was beginning to accept the inevitable. Nathaniel Hawthorne was a protesting voice aware of but reluctant to accept the new views of his age.

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