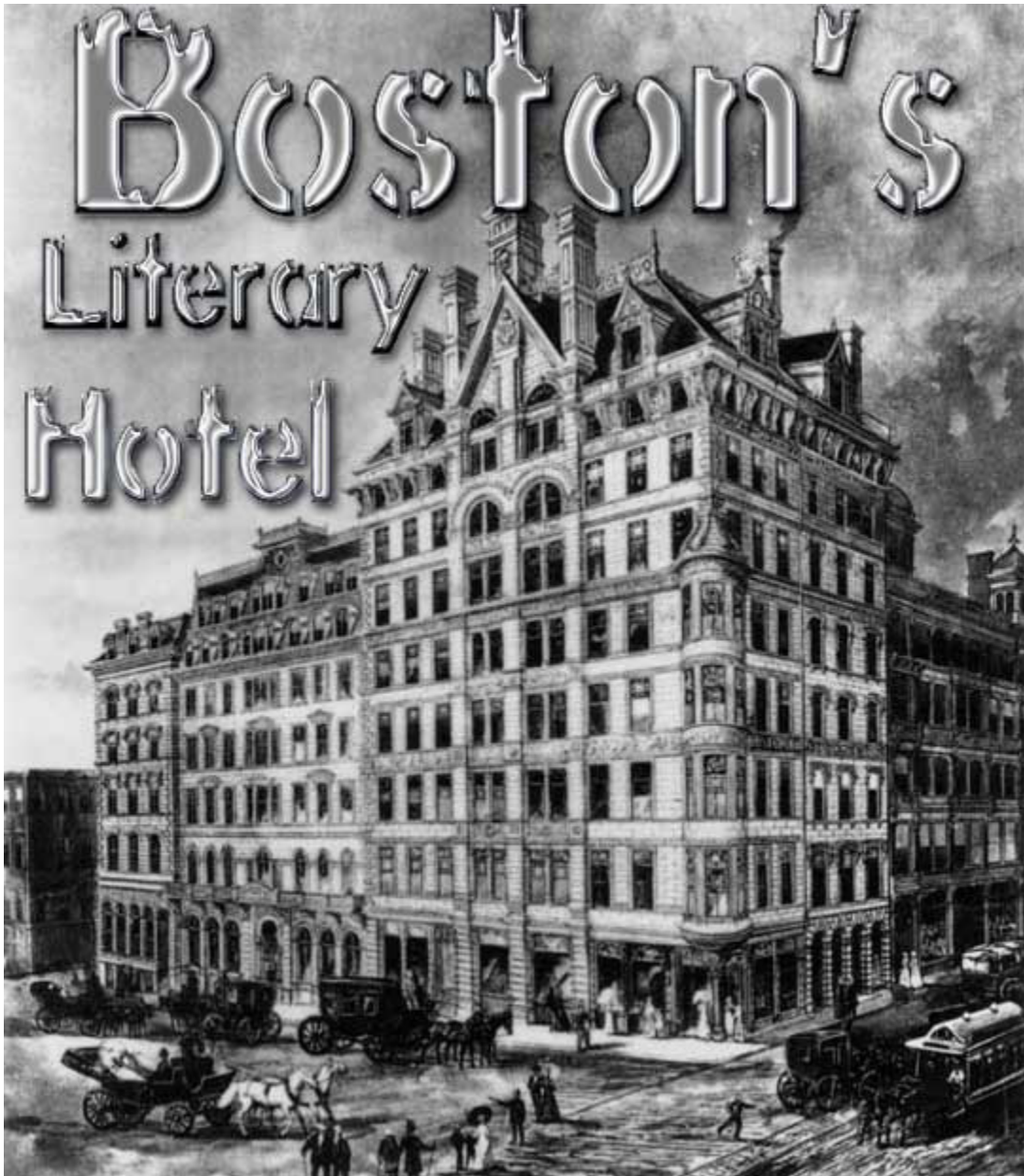


## THE PARKER HOUSE<sup>1</sup>



And yet – in fact you need only draw a single thread at any point you choose out of the fabric of life and the run will make a pathway across the whole, and down that wider pathway each of the other threads will become successively visible, one by one.

– Heimito von Doderer, *DIE DÄMONEN*



1. Now “Omni Parker House,” this facility would in 1886 be expanded and in 1927 rebuilt by the J.R. Whipple Corporation.



**HARVEY D. PARKER**

**PARKER HOUSE**

**1805**



May 10, Friday: [Harvey D. Parker](#) was born in Temple, Maine, in a family that had originated with the coming to Lynn, Massachusetts of 30-year-old Thomas Parker aboard the *Susan and Ellen* in 1635. It is unknown, what Harvey's middle initial "D" stood for. He would spend much of his youth in Paris, Maine, where it is on record that he "mowed and hoed and held the plough" on his father's farm.

**NEVER READ AHEAD! TO APPRECIATE MAY 10TH, 1805 AT ALL ONE MUST APPRECIATE IT AS A TODAY (THE FOLLOWING DAY, TOMORROW, IS BUT A PORTION OF THE UNREALIZED FUTURE AND IFFY AT BEST).**

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## PARKER HOUSE

## HARVEY D. PARKER

1825



[Harvey D. Parker](#) came in a coastal packet boat from Maine to [Boston](#), bringing with him \$4 in cash. His initial employment in his new locale would be taking care of a horse and cow for \$8 per month, but he would then hire out as a coachman for a wealthy Watertown woman.

Mayor Josiah Quincy, Sr. laid the cornerstone of a new Market House above where the Old Town Dock used to be. It was a two-story brick building with a classic Greek portico at each end, and a dome nicely sheathed in copper.



Also, by selling their almshouse out from underneath them, the Mayor got rid of the board known as “Overseers of the Poor” and packed the city’s indigent and criminal elements into a new “House of Industry” in which he could seek to separate out two classes of prisoners, to be treated in two different ways:

- the respectable and honest, and the youthful, potential candidates for a “House of Reform”
- the idle and vicious — the rogues and vagabonds and hardened criminals



HARVEY D. PARKER

PARKER HOUSE

1832



The Great Elm (*Ulmus americana*) on Boston Common, to which the popular tradition had assigned a great and significant antiquity, was badly damaged in a storm.

[Harvey D. Parker](#) began working at John E. Hunt's cellar cafe on Court Square in [Boston](#). In a few months he would buy out the owner for \$432.

THE TASK OF THE HISTORIAN IS TO CREATE HINDSIGHT WHILE  
INTERCEPTING ANY ILLUSION OF FORESIGHT. NOTHING A HUMAN CAN  
SEE CAN EVER BE SEEN AS IF THROUGH THE EYE OF GOD.

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## PARKER HOUSE

HARVEY D. PARKER

1833



With financing from the government, the first major landfill project was begun in [Boston](#).  
This was the filling in of South Cove to create the district known as the South End.



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## HARVEY D. PARKER

## PARKER HOUSE

[Harvey D. Parker](#) opened Parker's Restaurant in the basement of 4 Court Square.<sup>2</sup>



2. At this establishment one might for 12½¢ (which in the currency of the time would be one nine-pence Spanish silver coin), boiled, fried, or scrambled eggs, lobster salad, welsh rarebit, or the house soup. For two of those coins, which is to say, 25¢, one might have lobster, or lobster salad, and for three, which is to say, 37½¢, green turtle soup, the boiled halibut, the broiled mutton, the corned beef, the roast chicken, tenderloin steak, a dozen oysters on the half shell, or green goose, with a variety of vegetables and bread and butter. The tableware was solid silver (up to the point at which the civil war tripled the price of silver, necessitating a changeover to plated ware).



**PARKER HOUSE**

**HARVEY D. PARKER**

**1839**



George W. Boynton engraved, for Nathaniel Dearborn, an 18 inch by 17 inch plan of [Boston](#) similar to the Alonzo Lewis map of 1835.<sup>3</sup>

The Railway Express Company was founded in [Boston](#).

The restaurant proprietor [Harvey D. Parker](#) got married. Just as we have no idea as to his middle name, we do not know the name or family of his bride (there would not be surviving children of this union, and in the obituary the wealthy widow would be identified merely as “Mrs. Harvey D. Parker”).

3. This would be annually reissued by E.P. Dutton & Co., with alterations, from 1860 to 1867.





**HARVEY D. PARKER**

**PARKER HOUSE**

**1845**

Ten years earlier, the Common Council of Philadelphia had considered the banning of wintertime bathing, for reasons of health (the proposed ordinance failed by two votes). In this year [Boston](#) forbade unseasonable bathing except in obedience to specific medical advice.

The restaurateur [Harvey D. Parker](#) and the hotelkeeper [John F. Mills](#) established in [Boston](#) the firm of Parker & Mills (this partnership would continue until Mills's death in 1876; Mills would take care of the hotel part while Parker took care of the restaurant part).

**“HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE” BEING A VIEW FROM A PARTICULAR POINT IN TIME (JUST AS THE PERSPECTIVE IN A PAINTING IS A VIEW FROM A PARTICULAR POINT IN SPACE), TO “LOOK AT THE COURSE OF HISTORY MORE GENERALLY” WOULD BE TO SACRIFICE PERSPECTIVE ALTOGETHER. THIS IS FANTASY-LAND, YOU’RE FOOLING YOURSELF. THERE CANNOT BE ANY SUCH THINGIE, AS SUCH A PERSPECTIVE.**



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## PARKER HOUSE

HARVEY D. PARKER

1849

July 23, Monday: The last stronghold of [German](#) democratic-revolutionaries, Rastatt, fell to Prussian troops. The Prussians would execute most of those associates with the leftist army, essentially ending the [German](#) revolution.

The New York Protection Insurance Company of Rome, New York, was chartered.

The Venetian government issued food ration cards.



[James Russell Lowell](#) wrote from Elmwood (above) to [Thomas Wentworth Higginson](#) in regard to his suspicion of a [Waldo Emerson](#) blacklist against the attendance of Frederick Douglass at the dinner meetings



**HARVEY D. PARKER**

**PARKER HOUSE**

of Town and Country Club in downtown Boston:

*MY DEAR FRIEND,*

*I agree with you entirely as to the importance of getting Frederick D. quietly into the T. and C. Club. I intended to have paid his entrance fee when I paid my own, but had not the money at that time. But I will see that it is done before the 1<sup>st</sup> October. I was surprised, I confess, that there should have been any opposition to so entirely desirable a member. Especially was I astonished at the quarter from which it came, for, if I am not mistaken, Emerson would have blackballed him, had it been put to the vote.*



*I cannot help thinking that the presence of a man cast in so large a mould as D. certainly is, & with such a fine tropical exuberance of mental & physical development, will do a great deal in ridding many worthy persons of a very unworthy prejudice. I am quite sure that I, for one, am an unfit companion for people too good to associate with him. Our American chromatic scale is a very complicated affair.*

*You will be glad to hear that God has sent us another little daughter – outwardly perfect. She was born just a week ago today, & both mother [Maria Lowell] & child are prospering.*

*As soon as Maria is up again, I am to fulfil my long delayed purpose of paying Levi [Lincoln Thaxter] a visit at the Shoals. I shall hope to see you as I pass through Newburyport.*

*I remain affectionately yours  
J.R. LOWELL.*

**“NARRATIVE HISTORY” AMOUNTS TO FABULATION,  
THE REAL STUFF BEING MERE CHRONOLOGY**



## PARKER HOUSE

HARVEY D. PARKER

1854

Two municipal housing issues, the first pleasantly high-rent, the second unpleasantly low-rent:

- The doors of [Parker House](#) at 60 School Street in [Boston](#) opened for its upscale clientele. (And these doors've evidently been open ever since, for this edifice, now the "Omni Parker House," lays claim to being the oldest continuously operating hotel in the US of A.)<sup>4</sup>
- [Boston](#) began to house its paupers on Deer Island in Boston Harbor (where Native American Christian hostages used to be kept to starve while awaiting sale as slaves to the Azores Islands, and where Boston's prisoners would be kept to rot, and Boston's sewage processed).



4. The establishment, which has since positioned itself as "Boston's Literary Hotel," would be distinguished more by the quality of its lowly help than by that of its uppity clientele: although a prominent actor named John Wilkes Booth would indeed stop overnight in 1865 while on a journey toward the District of Columbia, during 1912/1913 the establishment would employ [Hô Chi Minh](#) in its bakeshop, and in the early 1940s a busboy named Malcolm Little ([Malcolm X](#)).

The founder [Harvey D. Parker](#) would pioneer the deployment of the term "scrod" to describe a fish dish that might be cod but maybe was instead halibut, or any other young whitefish being sold on the docks that morning. His hotel would be the venue for the creation of Boston Cream Pie (Massachusetts's official desert), would pioneer the Parker House Roll (appropriate for Boston both because shaped like a purse and due to its ability to absorb an infinite amount of real butter), would be the 1st hotel in Boston to boast hot and cold running water (although subsequent to the Tremont House's installation of indoor plumbing and a rooftop water tank, with toilets on the ground floor and customer bathing in the basement), and the 1st in Boston to have a powered passenger elevator (although subsequent to the 1857 steam-powered passenger elevator in the 5-story department store of E.W. Haughtwhat & Company on Broadway in Manhattan, the 1859 passenger elevator in the Fifth Avenue Hotel in Manhattan, and the 1868 rope elevator designed by Otis Tufts for the American House on Hanover Street in Boston).



**HARVEY D. PARKER**

**PARKER HOUSE**

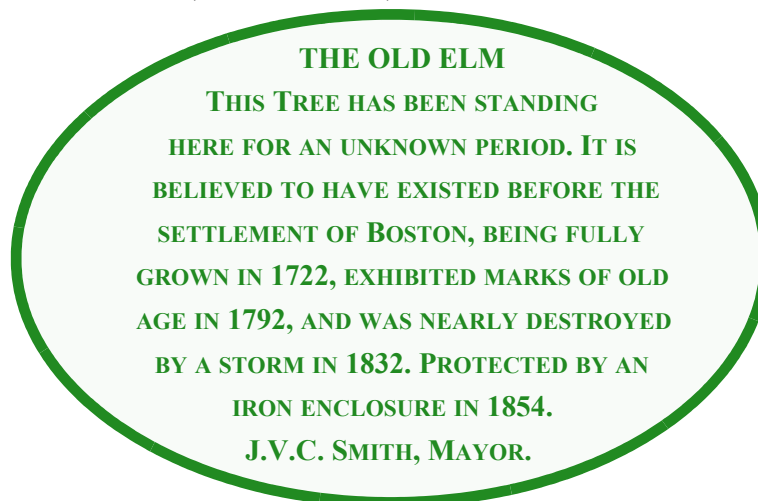
An Irish priest, to an immigrant: “[Boston](#) is a dreadful place for making Protestants of people, and you must be careful, especially of the children, or they will get them from you.”

A group of German Jews separated from the Ohabai Shalom congregation in [Boston](#), which was mainly Polish in background, to form the Temple Israel congregation.

A man with a horn, who called himself Gabriel, was making quite a nuisance of himself in beautiful downtown [Boston](#). He would attract attention with his horn and then deliver a nearly incoherent quasipolitical speech which would wind up with his passing the hat. (Eventually collections would fall off, this man would be unable to pay for his lodgings, and he would take ship for Santo Domingo where, after being detained as a disturber of the police, he would die in jail.)



Perhaps to protect the tree from men with horns, Mayor J.V.C. Smith ordered that an iron grillwork fence be installed around the Great Elm (*Ulmus americana*) on Boston Common.<sup>5</sup>



December 16, Saturday: What would come to be known as the first meeting of the Saturday Club. [Richard Henry Dana, Jr.](#) recorded in his journal that he dined at the Albion Hotel “in a select company,” which is to say [Waldo Emerson](#), [James Russell Lowell](#), Amos Bronson Alcott, a visiting lecturer Charles H. Goddard from Cincinnati, Thomas Cholmondeley, [Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#), and the Boston attorney Horatio Woodman.<sup>6</sup> “Emerson is an excellent dinner table man, always a gentleman, never bores or preaches, or dictates, but drops & takes up topics very agreeably, & has even skill & tact in managing his conversation. So, indeed, has Alcott, & it is quite surprising to see these [transcendentalists](#) appearing well as men of the world.”

The [National Anti-Slavery Standard](#) suggested that neither [Henry Thoreau](#)’s [A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS](#) nor [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) had “received ... adequate notice in our Literary Journals.”



5. One account has it that after 1658 and before 1674 one Hezekiah Henchman had transplanted this Great Elm from the North End.

6. Woodman would be one of the small number purchasing [Thoreau](#)’s [WALDEN](#). Whether he would read it, we wish we knew.



**HARVEY D. PARKER**

**PARKER HOUSE**

**1855**

January 27, Saturday: [Richard Henry Dana, Jr.](#) dined again with the Saturday Club at the Albion Hotel in downtown [Boston](#), with [James Russell Lowell](#), [Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe](#), Edwin Percy Whipple, and [Waldo Emerson](#). Either before or after this meal Emerson was lecturing in Worcester.

**LIFE IS LIVED FORWARD BUT UNDERSTOOD BACKWARD?  
— NO, THAT’S GIVING TOO MUCH TO THE HISTORIAN’S STORIES.  
LIFE ISN’T TO BE UNDERSTOOD EITHER FORWARD OR BACKWARD.**

April 22: [Harvey D. Parker](#) purchased a property west of School House Lane in Boston, directly across the street from the 1749/1754 King’s Chapel and just down the road from the domed Massachusetts State House, and tore down the mansion built there in 1704 by John Mico, that had been inhabited in turn by Colonel Jacob Wendall, Governor Moses Gill, and the Boylston family and had then fallen into decrepitude as a boarding house. He began construction of a brick hotel faced in white marble. The 1st and 2d floors of this 5-story Italianate structure would be provided with arched windows.



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## PARKER HOUSE

HARVEY D. PARKER

1855

A group of 150 [Harvard](#) alums who were capital fellas met at [Boston](#)'s Tremont House to establish the "Harvard Club" in order to celebrate themselves as capital fellas. To make of their new club a going concern they of course determined that they would establish the sort of membership committee which could exclude "bores," and they proceeded to vote the sort of stiff membership fee which would be anticipated to discourage "country graduates."<sup>7</sup>



7. They may or may not have meant Harvard alums such as [Henry Thoreau](#), in the category "bores," but the category "country graduates" was specifically aimed not only at those alums who had become impecunious rural parsons but also at alums such as he, living away from the centers of civilization and with no real situation or real prospect of preferment.



## HARVEY D. PARKER

## PARKER HOUSE

The New-York Herald newspaper first referred to a menu item at the restaurant of Harvey D. Parker associated with the Parker House in beautiful downtown Boston, designated there as “Parker House Chocolate Cream Pie,” as “Boston Cream Pie.”<sup>8</sup>



This confection had been created by a French chef named Sanzian (his given name lost to history). At a time when one could hire a good Boston cook for \$416 per year, M. Sanzian’s salary was \$5,000.

A 16 inch by 13 inch map of Boston similar to that created by George W. Boynton was published in New-York by J.H. Colton.

**MAPS OF BOSTON**

8. The Omni Parker House (current name of this establishment) now bakes about 25 of these layered yellow cakes with custard placed between the layers, covered with chocolate icing, per day. Although the Boston cream pie you now purchase in the supermarket runs to about 300 calories per slice, with about 10 grams of fat, the traditional heavyweight version produced there weighs in at up to 700 calories per slice, with up to 40 grams of fat — and even that would be a likely lightweight compared with what Chef Sanzian presumably had created for the hearty businessman’s downtown appetite as of this Year of our Lord 1855.





**PARKER HOUSE**

**HARVEY D. PARKER**

Summer: [Richard Henry Dana, Jr.](#) joined the Saturday Club as one of its original members.



**THE FALLACY OF MOMENTISM: THIS STARRY UNIVERSE DOES NOT  
CONSIST OF A SEQUENCE OF MOMENTS. THAT IS A FIGMENT, ONE WE  
HAVE RECOURSE TO IN ORDER TO PRIVILEGE TIME OVER CHANGE,  
A PRIVILEGING THAT MAKES CHANGE SEEM UNREAL, DERIVATIVE, A  
MERE APPEARANCE. IN FACT IT IS CHANGE AND ONLY CHANGE WHICH  
WE EXPERIENCE AS REALITY, TIME BEING BY WAY OF RADICAL  
CONTRAST UNEXPERIENCED — A MERE INTELLECTUAL CONSTRUCT.  
THERE EXISTS NO SUCH THING AS A MOMENT. NO MOMENT HAS EVER  
EXISTED.**



**HARVEY D. PARKER**

**PARKER HOUSE**

October: During race war in the Oregon Territory, Captain Smith, the Army commandant, protected native American women and children at Fort Lane while white settlers raided a village and killed 27 who had remained. In response the natives then killed 27 whites (nevertheless, these attacks on native villages would be continuing through the winter).

The [Boston Transcript](#) reported that the [Parker House](#) had staged a Saturday open house for the general public. The facility was to be operated under the “European Plan,” which meant, separate billing for lodging and meals.

**THE FUTURE CAN BE EASILY PREDICTED IN RETROSPECT**



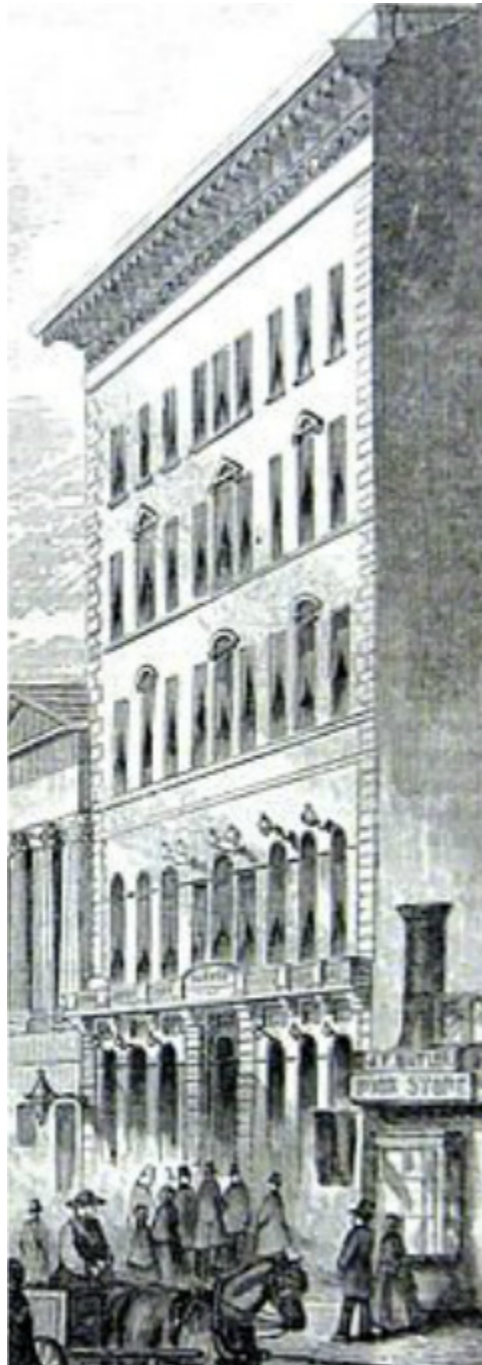
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## PARKER HOUSE

HARVEY D. PARKER





HARVEY D. PARKER

PARKER HOUSE

1856

May 14, Wednesday: [Henry Wadsworth Longfellow](#) wrote to Thomas Gold Appleton, his brother-in-law, in Paris (Appleton happens to have been the Boston wit who originated the famous comment “Good Americans, when they die, go to Paris”) that “We have formed a Dinner Club, once a month, at [Parker](#)’s. [Agassiz](#), Motley, [Emerson](#), [Peirce](#), [Lowell](#), Whipple, Sam Ward, Holmes, Dwight, Woodman, myself, and yourself. We sit from three o’clock till nine, generally, which proves it to be very pleasant.”<sup>9</sup>



May 14. Air full of golden robins. Their loud clear note betrays them as soon as they arrive. Yesterday and to-day I see half a dozen tortoises on a rail, — their first appearance in numbers. Catbird amid shrub oaks. Female red-wing [**Red-winged Blackbird** [Agelaius phoeniceus](#)]. Flood tells me he saw cherry-birds am the 12th of April in Monroe’s garden.

October 11, Saturday: At table at the [Parker House](#) in [Boston](#):

<a href="#">LOUIS AGASSIZ</a>	<a href="#">HAMMATT BILLINGS</a>
<a href="#">RALPH WALDO EMERSON</a>	<a href="#">EBENEZER ROCKWOOD HOAR</a>
<a href="#">JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL</a>	<a href="#">BENJAMIN PEIRCE</a>
<a href="#">FRANKLIN BENJAMIN SANBORN</a>	<a href="#">SAMUEL GRAY WARD</a>
<a href="#">EDWIN PERCY WHIPPLE</a>	<a href="#">HORATIO WOODMAN</a>

CHANGE IS ETERNITY, STASIS A FIGMENT

Harvey D. Parker

“Stack of the Artist of Kouroo” Project

9. Longfellow overlooked to mention that [Richard Henry Dana, Jr.](#), Ebenezer Rockwood Hoar, and [Cornelius Conway Felton](#) would soon join.

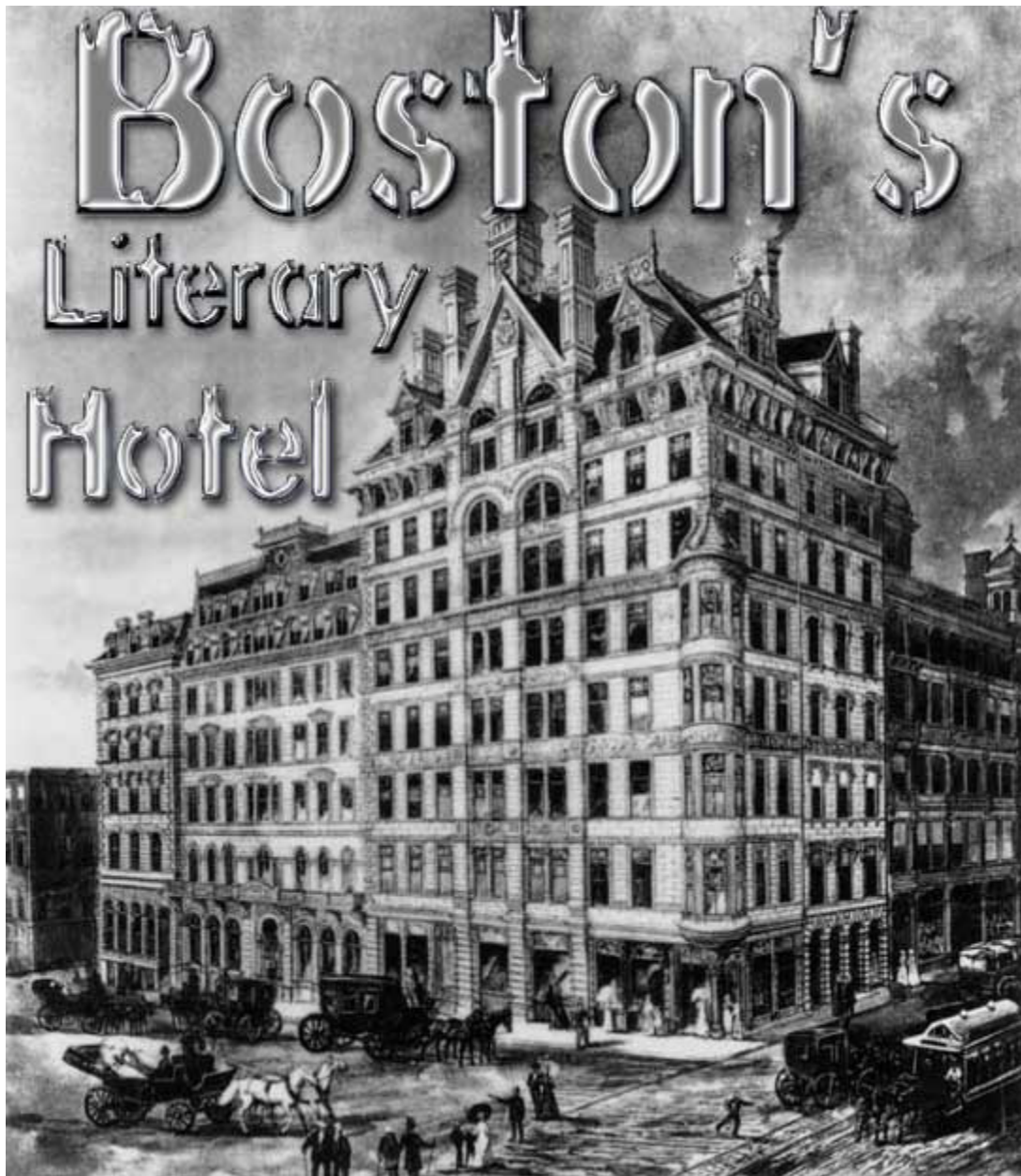
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**PARKER HOUSE**

**HARVEY D. PARKER**





## PARKER HOUSE

HARVEY D. PARKER

1859



May 1, Sunday: A revolution against Austrian rule began in Parma.

In the Ungers Casino of Vienna, Nachtigall-Polka op.222 by Johann Strauss was performed for the initial time.

[New York State](#) began directly letting its contracts on [canal](#) work, no longer allowing that function to be performed by the supervisor of the Contracting Board.

At this point the Unitarian congregation of the Reverend [Moncure Daniel Conway](#), in Cincinnati, Ohio was at a low of a couple hundred, since the BIBLE believers of his congregation had recently separated themselves to constitute a “Church of the Redeemer,” and so he delivered his “East and West” sermon in which he described the Redeemer concept of [Jesus Christ](#) as “an idea out of the dark ages.” The Reverend Conway confessed he was no “believer in what the churches call Christianity” as it would be a “pious insult to the holiest relations of life” to suppose Jesus to have lacked a human biological father.<sup>10</sup>



[Waldo Emerson](#) lectured on ““WEALTH”,” a topic appropriate for downtown Boston, to the Parker Fraternity<sup>11</sup> in the 1,500 comfortable seats of the Boston Music Hall, and wrote to [Thomas Carlyle](#) on the American race

10. [Moncure Daniel Conway](#). EAST AND WEST: AN INAUGURAL DISCOURSE, DELIVERED IN THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, CINCINNATI, O., MAY 1, 1859, BY M.D. CONWAY, MINISTER OF THE CHURCH. Pamphlet. Cincinnati: Truman & Spofford, 1859.

READ THE FULL TEXT



11. The megachurch “28th Congregational Society” established by the Reverend [Theodore Parker](#), who had gone to live in Italy in an attempt to recover his health.



**HARVEY D. PARKER**

**PARKER HOUSE**

problem:

I flatter myself I see some emerging of our people from the poison of their politics the insolvency of slavery begins to show, & we shall perhaps live to see that putrid Black Vomit extirpating by mere diking & planting. Another ground of contentment is the mending of the race here.



My curiosity about the origins and literary uses of this carefully observed, and carefully invented, Africanist presence has become an informal study of what I call American Africanism. It is an investigation into the ways in which a nonwhite, Africanlike (or Africanist) presence or persona was constructed in the United States, and the imaginative uses this fabricated presence served. I am using the term "Africanism" not to suggest the larger body of knowledge on Africa that the philosopher Valentine Mudimbe means by the term "Africanism," nor to suggest the varieties and complexities of African people and their descendants who have inhabited this country. Rather I use it as a term for the denotative and connotative blackness that African peoples have come to signify, as well as the entire range of views, assumptions, readings, and misreadings that accompany Eurocentric learning about these people. As a trope, little restraint has been attached to its uses. As a disabling virus within literary discourse, Africanism has become, in the Eurocentric tradition that American education favors, both a way of talking about and a way of policing matters of class, sexual license, and repression, formations and exercises of power, and meditations on ethics and accountability. Through the simple expedient of demonizing and reifying the range of color on a palette, American Africanism makes it possible to say and not say, to inscribe and erase, to escape and engage, to act out and act on, to historicize and render timeless. It provides a way of contemplating chaos and civilization, desire and fear, and a mechanism for testing the problems and blessings of freedom.

This "putrid Black Vomit" of which the Sage of Concord here speaks is of course the [yellow fever](#), an infection which needs to be extirpated. The disease was called Yellow Fever because it damages the liver in such manner as to cause jaundicing of skin and eyes, and was called [black vomit](#) because a classic manifestations of severe





## PARKER HOUSE

## HARVEY D. PARKER

infection was hemorrhage into the mucous membranes, with frightful vomiting of dark blood.



However, putrid Black vomit also was, of course, in the opinion of the Sage of Concord, the words that were coming out of the mouths of Americans of color, whose infectious thoughts and presumptions were as delusion-provoking in the white man as the fevers of this plague. What we would regard as two separate topics, the prevention of the tropical disease and the prevention of the tropical human, were quite conflated for a 19th-Century white man of Emerson's mentality. The dark man and the dark vomit were predicting the same thing: the blackness of death. Preventing the one was preventing the other.

(Is it any wonder that this [Emerson](#) had blacklisted Frederick Douglass a decade earlier for membership in the Town and Country Club? His dark words would have been a "disabling virus" within polite literary discourse. Society, meaning white society, was not ready for that.)



May 1: Hear the ruby-crowned wren.



**HARVEY D. PARKER**

**PARKER HOUSE**

We accuse savages of worshipping only the bad spirit, or devil, though they may distinguish both a good and a bad; but they regard only that one which they fear and worship the devil only. We too are savages in this, doing precisely the same thing. This occurred to me yesterday as I sat in the woods admiring the beauty of the blue butterfly. We are not chiefly interested in birds and insects, for example, as they are ornamental to the earth and cheering to man, but we spare the lives of the former only on condition that they eat more grubs than they do cherries, and the only account of the insects which the State encourages is of the "Insects Injurious to Vegetation." We too admit both a good and a bad spirit, but we worship chiefly the bad spirit, whom we fear. We do not think first of the good but of the harm things will do us.

The catechism says that the chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy him forever, which of course is applicable mainly to God as seen in his works. Yet the only account of its beautiful insects—butterflies, etc.—which God has made and set before us which the State ever thinks of spending any money on is the account of those which are injurious to vegetation! This is the way we glorify God and enjoy him forever. Come out here and behold a thousand painted butterflies and other beautiful insects which people the air, then go to the libraries and see what kind of prayer and glorification of God is there recorded. Massachusetts has published her report on "Insects Injurious to Vegetation," and our neighbor the "Noxious Insects of New York." We have attended to the evil and said nothing about the good. This is looking a gift horse in the mouth with a vengeance. Children are attracted by the beauty of butterflies, but their parents and legislators deem it an idle pursuit. The parents remind me of the devil, but the children of God. Though God may have pronounced his work good, we ask, "Is it not poisonous?"

Science is inhuman. Things seen with a microscope begin to be insignificant. So described, they are as monstrous as if they should be magnified a thousand diameters. Suppose I should see and describe men and houses and trees and birds as if they were a thousand times larger than they are! With our prying instruments we disturb the balance and harmony of nature.

P.M.— To Second Division.

Very warm. Looking from Clamshell over Hosmer's meadow, about half covered with water, see hundreds of turtles, chiefly picta, now first lying out in numbers on the brown pieces of meadow which rise above the water. You see their black backs shine on these hummocks left by the ice, fifty to eighty rods off. They would rapidly tumble off if you went much nearer. This heat and stillness draws them up. It is remarkable how surely they are advertised of the first warm and still days, and in an hour or two are sure to spread themselves over the hummocks. There is to-day a general resurrection of them, and there they bask in the sun. It is their sabbath. At this distance, if you are on the lookout, especially with a glass, you can discover what numbers of them there are, but they are shy and will drop into the water on a near approach. All up and down our river meadows their backs are shining in the sun to-day. It is a turtle day.

As we sat on the steep hillside south of Nut Meadow Brook Crossing, we noticed a remarkable whirlwind on a small scale, which carried up the oak leaves from that Island copse in the meadow. The oak leaves now hang thinly and are very dry and light, and these small whirlwinds, which seem to be occasioned by the sudden hot and calm weather (like whirlpools or dimples in a smooth stream), wrench them off, and up they go, somewhat spirally, in countless flocks like birds, with a rustling sound; and higher and higher into the clear blue deeps they rise above our heads, till they are fairly lost to sight, looking, when last seen, mere light specks against the blue, like stars by day, in fact. I could distinguish some, I have no doubt, five or six hundred feet high at least, but if I looked aside a moment they were lost. The largest oak leaves looked not bigger than a five-cent-piece. These were drifting eastward,—to descend where? Methought that, instead of decaying on the earth or being consumed by fire, these were being translated and would soon be taken in at the windows of heaven. I had never observed this phenomenon so remarkable. The flight of the leaves. This was quite local, and it was comparatively still where we sat a few rods on one side. Thousands went up together in a rustling flock.

Many of the last oak leaves hang thus ready to go up. I noticed two or more similar whirlwinds in the woods elsewhere this afternoon. One took up small twigs and clusters of leaves from the ground, matted together. I could easily see where it ran along with its nose (or point of its tunnel) close to the ground, stirring up the leaves as it travelled, like the snout of some hunting or rooting animal.

See and hear chewink.

See a little snake on the dry twigs and chips in the sun, near the arbutus, uniformly brown (or reddish-brown) above except a yellowish ring on the occiput, the head also lighter than the body; beneath vermilion, with apparently a row of light dots along each side. It is apparently *Coluber amaenus* (?), except that it has the yellowish ring.

*Luzula campestris*. Also the *Oryzopsis Canadensis* by the Major Heywood path-side, say a day, or April 30th, six inches high or more, with fine bristle-like leaves. See a thrasher.

What is that rush at Second Division? It now forms a dense and very conspicuous mass some four rods long and



**PARKER HOUSE**

**HARVEY D. PARKER**

one foot high. The top for three inches is red, and the impression at a little distance is like that made by sorrel. Certainly no plant of this character exhibits such a growth now, i. e. in the mass. It surprises you to see it, carries your thoughts on to June.  
The climbing fern is persistent, i.e. retains its greenness still, though now partly brown and withered.

**DO I HAVE YOUR ATTENTION? GOOD.**



**HARVEY D. PARKER**

**PARKER HOUSE**

**1863**

September 7, Monday: With the Confederate forces having evacuated Fort Wagner and Battery Gregg, Federal troops were able to occupy all of Morris Island in Charleston Harbor.

Calvin H. Greene went for a walk outside [Concord](#) and found a young maple that had already turned fire-red. He broke off a branch with leaves and, on his return to the Thoreau home, tossed this up into an evergreen tree where it could be seen from the windows of the house. "It caught Mrs T's eyes — after breakfast, & she went to wondering what it meant. When I showed her, she exclaimed, "There that was just like my son, Henry" (Calvin of course felt most highly honored by such a comparison of himself by the mother [Cynthia Dunbar Thoreau](#) with her beloved son [Henry Thoreau](#) — as she undoubtedly had grasped full well that her house guest would be — she was slathering the icing onto the cake of his trip to Concord). After dinner with the Thoreaus, and sad farewells, he went on the train to Boston and put up at the [Parker House](#).

[Sophia Elizabeth Thoreau](#) and [Waldo Emerson](#) met to plan for Emerson to represent her interests before [James Thomas Fields](#) in contracting for the publication of EXCURSIONS:

Boston MA: Ticknor and Fields, 1863 (stereotyped and printed by H.O. Houghton in Cambridge MA).

First edition.

Edited by Ralph Waldo Emerson and Sophia Thoreau.

Biographical sketch [by Emerson] — Natural history of Massachusetts. — A walk to Wachusett.

— The landlord. — A winter walk. — The succession of forest trees. — Walking. — AUTUMNAL TINTS.

— Wild apples. — Night and moonlight.

319 p. incl. front. (port.) 18 cm.

PS3045 .A1 1863



I learn from Topsell's Gesner, whose authority appears to be Albertus, that the following is the way in which the hedgehog collects and carries home his apples. He says,—

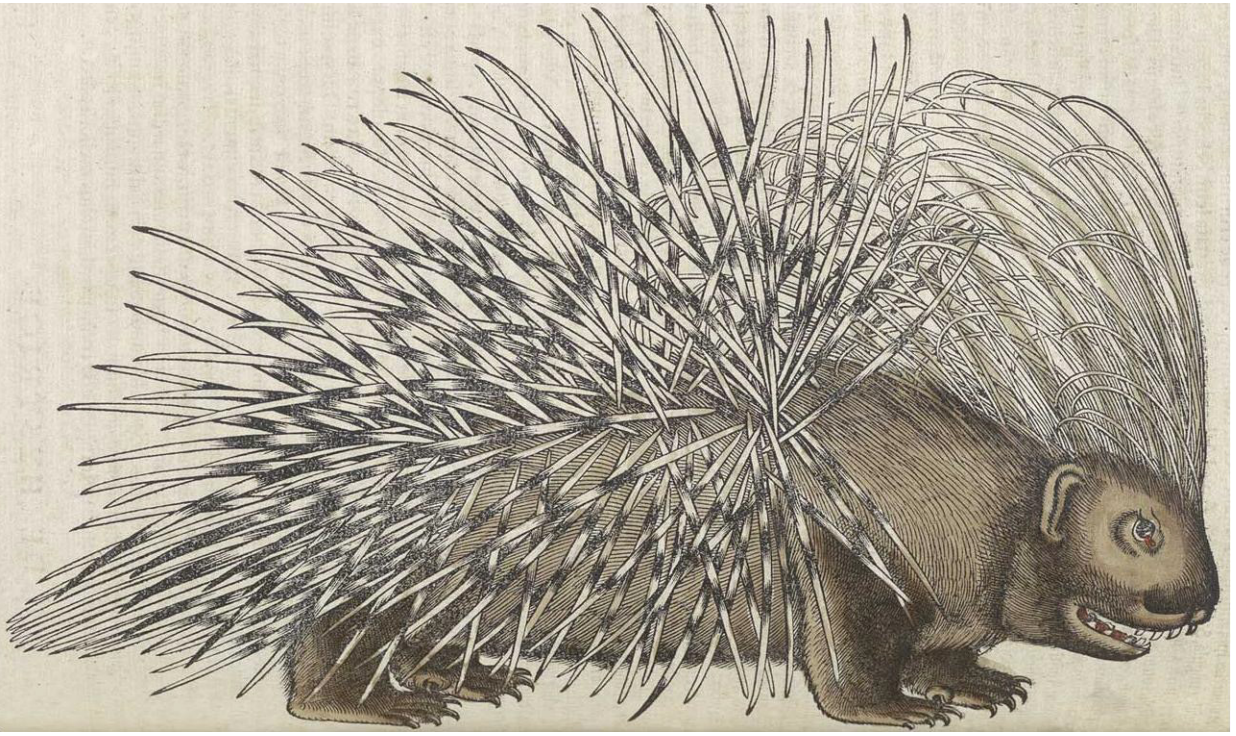
His meat is apples, worms, or grapes: when he findeth apples or grapes on the earth, he rolleth himself upon them, until he have filled all his prickles, and then carrieth them home to his den, never bearing above one in his mouth; and if it fortune that one of them fall off by the way, he likewise shaketh off all the residue, and walloweth upon them afresh, until they be all settled upon his back again. So, forth he goeth, making a noise like a cart-wheel; and if he have any young ones in his nest, they pull off his load wherewithal he is loaded, eating thereof what they please, and laying up the residue for the time to come.



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o, & habet spinas in modum acuum: confinis in medendo facultatis, præstantior incho-  
macho & nonnulla morie molle: inchoantur, ut offe: Hæc raffe & Alherius. Sed quid







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**PARKER HOUSE**

**1865**

[Boston](#)'s City Hall was built facing the School Street entrance to the [Parker House](#).

Chief of Police Edward H. Savage's A CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY OF THE BOSTON WATCH AND POLICE, FROM 1631 TO 1865; TOGETHER WITH THE RECOLLECTIONS OF A BOSTON POLICE OFFICER, OR BOSTON BY DAYLIGHT AND GASLIGHT, FROM THE DIARY OF AN OFFICER FIFTEEN YEARS IN THE SERVICE. (Boston: Published and sold by the author. 1865).



**BOSTON WATCH AND POLICE**

**THE FUTURE IS MOST READILY PREDICTED IN RETROSPECT**





## PARKER HOUSE

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April 7, Friday: There was fighting at Cumberland Church / Farmville.

An actor named John Wilkes Booth stopped overnight at the upscale [Parker House](#) at 60 School Street in downtown [Boston](#), while on a journey toward [Washington DC](#).



**NOBODY COULD GUESS WHAT WOULD HAPPEN NEXT**





HDT

WHAT?

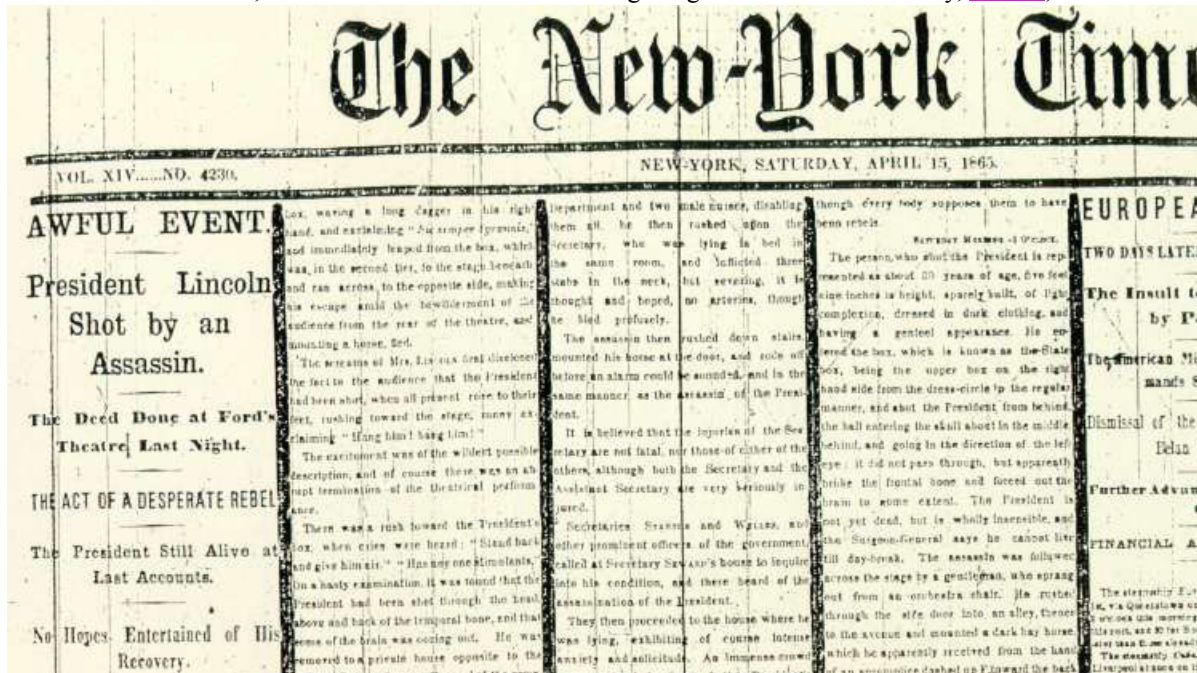
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April 15, Saturday, 7:22AM: The [Boston Evening Transcript](#) reported that an informant named Borland had claimed to have seen the well-known actor John Wilkes Booth at Edwards's shooting gallery near the [Parker House](#), practicing firing a pistol "in various difficult ways such as between his legs, over his shoulder and under his arms."

Abraham Lincoln, who had in 1830 been constructing a log cabin in Macon County, [Illinois](#), died:



Vice President Andrew Johnson, a Tennessee Democrat, was sworn in to succeed him as president.<sup>12</sup>

12. Shortly after this assassination, the President's admirer Phineas Taylor Barnum would position a cabin replica in his American Museum in New-York, for display with "a playbill of Ford's Theater picked up in President Lincoln's box on April 14th."



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**PARKER HOUSE**

**NO-ONE'S LIFE IS EVER NOT DRIVEN PRIMARILY BY HAPPENSTANCE**



That evening Frederick Douglass would speak at a memorial meeting in Rochester, New York.



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**1872**

July: During this month [Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#) had an article "John Brown and His Friends" in [The Atlantic Monthly](#) about the Harpers Ferry raid:

At the beginning of the year 1858, nobody in Massachusetts, except here and there a fugitive slave perhaps, had heard of John Brown's plan for the invasion of Virginia though he had made much progress toward its execution. He had enlisted men and engaged the English Garibaldian, Hugh Forbes, to drill them; but this engagement was quite unknown to John Brown's Massachusetts friends, who had never seen Hugh Forbes, and only heard of him casually and incidentally. They had never been consulted by John Brown in regard to paying Hugh Forbes, nor, of course, had John Brown given Hugh Forbes any assurances that they would pay him the salary stipulated, between Hugh Forbes and John Brown; of which in fact, they knew nothing whatever. It was therefore with much surprise and mystification that, about Christmas-time, 1857, Dr. S.G. Howe and Mr. Sanborn began to receive passionate and denunciatory letters, written by Hugh Forbes, complaining of ill-treatment at their hands, and assuming to hold them responsible for the termination of his engagement with John Brown, by which, he said, he had been reduced to poverty, and his family in Paris, deprived of pecuniary aid from him, had suffered great hardship. Two of these letters were addressed to Senator Sumner, and were forwarded by him to Dr. Howe and Mr. Sanborn, who in great ignorance as to what such abusive epistles meant, answered them with some curtness and severity. This correspondence temporarily closed in January, 1858, and the substance of it was communicated to John Brown, then in Kansas, with the request that he would explain the meaning of Hugh Forbes's anger, and state what their real relations with each other were. Before replying to this request, which probably was not received till weeks afterward, John Brown suddenly left Kansas without the knowledge of his friends there, and appeared, in the beginning of February, 1858, at the house of Frederick Douglass in Rochester, New York. From there he wrote, February 2, to Theodore Parker, George L. Stearns, F.B. Sanborn, and Thomas Wentworth Higginson, asking them to aid him in raising a small sum of money to carry out "an important measure in which the world has a deep interest." This, he tells Mr. Parker, is his only errand at the East, and he goes on: "I have written some of our mutual friends in regard to it, but none of them understand my views so well as you do, and I cannot explain without their committing themselves more than I know of their doing. I have heard that Parker Pillsbury, and some others, in your quarter, hold out ideas similar to those on which I act, but I have no personal acquaintance with them, and know nothing of their influence or means. Do you think any of our Garrisonian friends, either at Boston, Worcester, or in any other place, can



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be induced to supply a little 'straw,' if I will absolutely make 'bricks'? I must beg of you to consider this communication strictly confidential, unless you know of parties who will feel and act and hold their peace."<sup>13</sup>

John Brown's letters of the same date and for a few weeks after, to Colonel Higginson and Mr. Sanborn, were of a similar tenor, though rather more explicit, but they conveyed no distinct intimation of his plans. He wrote to Higginson, February 2, from Rochester: "I am here, concealing my whereabouts for good reasons (as I think), not, however, from any anxiety about my personal safety. I have been told that you are both a true *man* and a true *abolitionist*, and I partly believe the whole story. Last fall I undertook to raise from five hundred to one thousand dollars for *secret service*, and succeeded in getting five hundred dollars. I now want to get, for the perfecting of *by far* the most important undertaking of my whole life, from five hundred to eight hundred dollars within the next sixty days. I have written Rev. Theodore Parker, George L. Stearns, and F.B. Sanborn, Esquires, on the subject, but do not know as either Mr. Stearns or Mr. Sanborn are abolitionists. I suppose they are." On the 12th of February he wrote again in response to a remark in Higginson's reply about the Underground Railroad in Kansas: "Railroad business on a somewhat extended scale is the identical object for which I am trying to get means. I have been connected with that business, *as commonly conducted*, from my boyhood, and never let an opportunity slip. I have been operating to some purpose the past season, but I now have a measure on foot that I feel sure would awaken in you something more than a common interest, if you could understand it. I have just written my friends G.L. Stearns and F.B. Sanborn, asking them to meet me for consultation at ----. I am very anxious to have you come along, certain as I feel that you will never regret having been one of the council." It was inconvenient for any of the persons addressed to take the long journey proposed, and on the 13th Mr. Sanborn wrote for himself and Mr. Stearns, inviting John Brown to visit Boston, and offering to pay his travelling expenses. To this request John Brown replied, February 17th: "It would be almost impossible for me to pass through Albany, Springfield MA, or any of those parts, on my way to Boston, and not have it known; and my reasons for keeping quiet are such that, when I left Kansas, I kept it from every friend there; and I suppose it is still understood that I am hiding somewhere in the Territory; and such will be the idea until it comes to be generally known that I am in these parts. I want to continue that impression as long as I can, or for the present. I want very much to see Mr. Stearns, and also Mr. Parker, and it may be that I can before long; but I must decline accepting your kind offer at present, and, sorry as I am to do so, ask you both to meet me by the middle of next week at the furthest. I wrote Mr. Higginson of Worcester to meet me also. It may be he would come on with you. My reasons for keeping still are sufficient

13. Weiss's LIFE OF THEODORE PARKER, Vol. II. pp. 163,164.



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to keep me from seeing my wife and children, much as I long to do so. I will endeavor to explain when I see you." This letter was written from Rochester.

There was no doubt in the mind of Mr. Sanborn that the promised explanation would clear up the mystery of Hugh Forbes's letters, which had grieved as well as annoyed him and the few friends of John Brown in Boston who had seen them. Therefore, when Mr. Stearns was still unable to accept this second and pressing request from John Brown for a meeting in Central New York, Mr. Sanborn determined to go, and invited Colonel Higginson to join him at Worcester on the 20th, but in fact he made the journey alone, and reached the place of meeting on the evening of Washington's birthday, February 22d. A few friends of John Brown were there gathered, among them another Massachusetts man, Mr. Edwin Morton of Plymouth, now of Boston, but then residing in the family of Mr. Gerrit Smith as tutor and private secretary.<sup>14</sup> In the long winter evening which followed, the whole outline of John Brown's campaign in Virginia was laid before the little council, to the astonishment and almost the dismay of all present. The constitution which he had drawn up for the government of his men, and such territory as they might occupy, and which was found among his papers at the Kennedy Farm, was exhibited by John Brown, its provisions recited and explained, the proposed movements of his men indicated, and the middle of May was named as the time of the attack. To begin this hazardous adventure he asked for but eight hundred dollars, and would think himself rich with a thousand. Being questioned and opposed by his friends, he laid before them in detail his methods of organization and fortification; of settlement in the South, if that were possible, and of retreat through the North, if necessary; and his theory of the way in which such an invasion would be received in the country at large. He desired from his Massachusetts friends a patient hearing of his statements, a candid opinion concerning them, and, if that were favorable, then that they should co-operate with him and persuade others to do so. This was the important business which he had to communicate on the anniversary of Washington's birthday.

After what has passed in the last ten years, no one can picture to himself the startling effect of such a plan, heard for the first time in the dismal days of Buchanan's administration, when Floyd was Secretary of War, and Jefferson Davis and Senator Mason omnipotent in Congress. Those who listened to Captain John

14. Edwin Morton and [Sanborn](#) had been classmates at [Harvard College](#), where they graduated in 1855, and have ever since been intimate friends and correspondents. Much of the subsequent correspondence with John Brown and his friends passed through their hands, and it is probable they may have the key to anything that is still unexplained in the movements of Captain John Brown, during the twenty months that followed the February conference about to be described. Both were young men, Sanborn being twenty-six and Morton a year younger; and both had been abolitionists from boyhood. Both also were of unmixed New England descent, as John Brown was; Morton being descended from a kinsman of Nathaniel Morton, the first secretary of Plymouth Colony, and his friend from the founder and first minister of the old New Hampshire plantation of Hampton. The other Massachusetts members of John Brown's secret committee, Parker, Higginson, Stearns, and Howe were of the same Puritan ancestry; and it may be worth mentioning that while Higginson's earliest American ancestor was the first minister of Salem, Sanborn's ancestor, Rev. Stephen Bachiler, was the first minister of Lynn, and probably had among his parishioners there, in 1635-36, Thomas Parker, the first American ancestor of Theodore Parker.





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Brown had been familiar with the bold plots and counter-plots of the Kansas border, and had aided the escape of slaves in various parts of the South. But to strike at once at the existence of slavery, by an organized force, acting for years, if need be, on the dubious principles of guerilla warfare, and exposed, perhaps, to the whole power of the country, was something they had never contemplated. That was the long-meditated plan of a poor, obscure, old man, uncertain at best of another ten years' lease of life, and yet calmly proposing an enterprise which, if successful, might require a whole generation to accomplish. His friends listened until late at night, proposing objections and raising difficulties, but nothing shook the purpose of the old Puritan. To every objection he had an answer; every difficulty had been foreseen and provided for; the great difficulty of all, the apparent hopelessness of undertaking anything so vast with such slender means, he met with the words of Scripture, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" and "Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain."

To all suggestions of delay until a more favorable time, he would reply, "I am nearly sixty years old; I have desired to do this work for many years; if I do not begin soon, it will be too late for me." He had made nearly all his arrangements; he had so many hundred weapons, so many men enlisted, all that he wanted was the small sum of money. With that he would open his campaign with the spring, and he did not doubt that his enterprise would pay. But those who heard him, while they looked upon the success of John Brown's undertaking as a great blessing and relief to the country, felt also that to fail, contending against such odds, might hazard for many years the cause of freedom and union. They had not yet fully attained the sublime faith of John Brown when he said, "A few men in the right, and knowing they are right, can overturn a king. Twenty men in the Alleghanies could break slavery to pieces in two years."

On the 23d of February the discussion was renewed, and, as usually happened when he had time enough, Captain John Brown began to prevail over the objections of his friends. At any rate, they saw that they must either stand by him, or, leave him to dash himself in pieces alone against the fortress which he was determined to assault. To withhold aid would only delay him, not prevent him; nothing, short of betraying him to the enemy would do that. As the sun was setting over the snowy hills of the region where they met, the Massachusetts delegate walked for an hour with the principal person in the little council of war, leaving Captain John Brown to discuss religion with an old captain of Wellington's army who, by chance, was a guest in the house. The elder of the two, of equal age with John Brown and for many years a devoted abolitionist, said, "You see how it is; our old friend has made up his mind to this course of action and cannot be turned from it. We cannot give him up to die alone; we must stand by him. I will raise so many hundred dollars for



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him; you must lay the case before your friends in Massachusetts and see if they will do the same. I see no other way." The same conclusion had been reached by his younger companion, for himself, and he engaged to bring the scheme at once to the attention of the three Massachusetts men to whom John Brown had written, and also of Dr. S. G. Howe, who had sometimes favored action almost as extreme as this proposed by John Brown.

Sanborn returned to Boston on the 25th of February, and on the same day communicated the enterprise to Theodore Parker and Colonel Higginson. At the suggestion of Parker, John Brown, who had gone to Brooklyn, New York, was invited to visit Boston secretly, and did so early in March, taking a room at the American House, in Hanover Street. He registered himself as "J. Brown," instead of writing out the customary "John" in full, and remained for the most part in his room (No. 126) during the four days of his stay. Parker was one of the first persons to call on him, and promised aid at once. He was deeply interested in the project, but not very sanguine of its success; he wished to see it tried, however, and gave John Brown substantial proof of his interest and support; while John Brown in return gave him the fullest confidence in respect to the whole movement. Parker left the country, never to return, early in the following year; but he was kept informed in a general way of the progress of the affair, and as late as September 29, 1859, three weeks before the outbreak at Harper's Ferry, he wrote to inquire what Captain John Brown was doing, and said: "I wish I had something now to drop into the hat for the same end. Tell me how our little speculation in wool goes on, and what dividend accrues therefrom."

Two years after the death of Parker, in 1860, one of his executors found among his papers this letter of John Brown's, which has never been printed, written just before his visit to Boston, in March, 1858. It was not addressed to Mr. Parker, but had been sent to him by the person who received it.

-- N. Y. 24th Feb'y, 1858

MY DEAR FRIEND: -- Mr. X. has taken the liberty of saying to me that you felt half inclined to make a common cause with me. I *greatly rejoice* at this for I believe when you come to look at the *ample field* I labor in, and the rich harvest which (not only this entire country, but) the whole world during the present and future generations *may reap* from its successful cultivation, you will feel that you are out of your element, until you find you are in it, an entire unit. What an inconceivable amount of good you might so effect, by your *counsel*, your *example*, your *encouragement*, your *natural and acquired ability* for active service. And then, how very little we can possibly lose? Certainly the cause is enough to *live* for, if not to ---- for. I have only had *this one* opportunity in a life of nearly sixty years; and could I be continued ten times as long again, I might not again have another equal opportunity. God has honored but





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comparatively a very *small* part of mankind with any possible chance for such mighty and soul-satisfying rewards. But, my dear friend, if you should make up your mind to do so, I trust it will be wholly from the promptings of your own spirit, after having *thoroughly counted* the cost. I would *flatter no man* into such a measure, if I could do it ever so easily.

I *expect nothing* but to "endure hardness," but I expect to effect a mighty conquest, even though it be like the last victory of Samson. I felt for a number of years *in earlier life*, a steady, strong desire to *die*, but since I saw any prospect of becoming a "reaper" in the great harvest, I have not only felt quite willing to *live*, but have enjoyed life much; and am now rather anxious to live for a *few years* more.

Your sincere Friend,

JOHN BROWN.<sup>15</sup>

In a collection of John Brown's letters, this would rank among the first for the light it sheds on his life and character. The reference to his longing for death in his youth is one of the few revelations made by him of his early mental struggles, and, no doubt, means that he was unfortunate in love, and in other ways found the world a melancholy place. His early religious experiences, occurring at the same period, must have deepened the sadness which sprang from disappointed affection; but the strength of his religious faith finally overcame it, and gave him peace of mind. The allusion to the last victory of Samson is repeated in one of his letters from prison, in November, 1859, when he wrote to his old schoolmaster, Rev. H. L. Vaill, "Had Samson kept to his determination of not telling Delilah wherein his great strength lay, he would probably have never overturned the house." This comparison of himself to Samson was not from vanity, but under a profound sense of a divine mission, like that of the Hebrew champion; and he never entered upon his dangerous expeditions in Kansas or elsewhere, without thoughts to which Milton has given utterance in his "Samson Agonistes":

--

"Happen what may, of me expect to hear  
Nothing dishonorable, impure, unworthy  
Our God, our law, my nation or myself, --  
The last of me or no I cannot warrant."

Captain John Brown reached Boston Thursday, March 4, 1858, and left it Monday, the 8th, for Philadelphia. On Friday and Saturday, in Boston, he had seen at his hotel Theodore Parker, Dr. Howe, Messrs Sanborn, Stearns, and Higginson, and perhaps one or two other persons. He kept himself private, however, and did not, as when he was in Boston a year before, go to the Sunday-evening reception at Mr. Parker's in Exeter Place, where he had met Mr. Garrison, Wendell Phillips, and other antislavery

15. The original of this letter is now in the possession of Mrs. Mary E. Stearns of Medford, the wife of George L. Stearns, who, not less than her lamented husband, was a generous and true friend of John Brown. To her we are indebted for Brackett's noble bust of John Brown, which stands in her house.



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leaders in 1857. He therefore communicated with Parker on Sunday, March 7th, by letter; and this letter, an unusually long one for John Brown, is printed in Weiss's "Life of Parker."<sup>16</sup> He begins by an apology for writing letters on Sunday, and goes on to ask Parker to draw up for him an address to the officers and soldiers of the United States Army, whom he soon expected to meet as opponents, as he had in Kansas. Such an address had been prepared six months before by Hugh Forbes, and a copy sent to Parker; but John Brown was not satisfied with this, and in this letter gives directions for composing a better address, and also another paper "intended for all persons, old and young, male and female, slaveholding and non-slaveholding"; and a third tract "for every male and female" prisoner on being set at liberty, and to be read by them during confinement." It does not appear that Parker ever tried his hand at these papers, or that they were prepared by any person. It may be worth mentioning, however, that Parker sent John Brown from his library on this Sunday the report of McClellan on the European armies, which was then a new book, and was thought likely to be of service to John Brown. At the same time John Brown praised Plutarch's Lives as a book he had read with great profit for its military and moral lessons, and particularly mentioned the life of Sertorius, the Roman commander who so long carried on a partisan warfare in Spain. He wished to get a few copies of Plutarch for his men to read in camp, and inquired particularly about the best edition.

Although John Brown communicated freely to the persons above named his plans of attack and defence in Virginia, it is not known that he spoke to more than one person in Boston of his purpose of surprising the arsenal and town of Harper's Ferry. Both Dr. Howe and Mr. Stearns testified before Mason's committee, in 1860, that they were ignorant of John Brown's plan of attack, which was true so far as the place and manner of beginning the campaign were concerned. It is probable that in 1858 John Brown had not definitely resolved to seize Harper's Ferry, since, when he spoke of it to the person referred to, he put it as a question, and did not seem to have made up his mind to a course of action so immediately hazardous. He then argued that it would strike great terror into the whole slaveholding class to find that an armed force had strength enough to capture a place so important and so near Washington; and it was to inspire terror, rather than to possess himself of the arms there, that he then proposed to capture the arsenal. It is believed that Theodore Parker was aware of this half-formed plan of John Brown's, but it was not communicated to his men until a year and a half later, or just before the attack was actually made. Charles Plummer Tidd, one of John Brown's men, who escaped from Harper's Ferry, afterwards enlisted in a Massachusetts regiment under the name of Plummer, and died under Burnside in North Carolina, is authority for this statement. He said that when John Brown called his small company together in October,

16. Vol. II p. 164. The "address you saw last season," mentioned in this letter, is the same spoken of in the letter of September 11, 1857, on page 162.



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1859, on the Maryland shore of the Potomac, and disclosed to them his plan for the capture of the town, they all declared that it would be fatal to attempt it, and refused to take part in it; even his own sons, except Owen, being unwilling to follow their father to what they said would be certain defeat and death. But John Brown had now decided upon his course, and adhered to it inflexibly; he would make the attack with a single man, if only one man would obey him. His sons, finding their father so determined, and knowing how impossible it was to change his purpose, first gave in their adhesion; they believed it to be a fatal scheme, but they would not desert him. Gradually all the others came round to the same opinion, and the attack was made with precisely the result that John Brown's followers had predicted. We have no reason to doubt that Tidd's statement was true in substance.

On the departure of John Brown from Boston in March, 1858, the five persons mentioned -- Parker, Howe, Higginson, Sanborn, and Stearns -- formed themselves into a secret committee to raise for him the money (now set at \$1,000) which it was agreed should be raised in New England. Each of the five was to raise \$100, and as much more as he could, Dr. Howe having hopes of securing a larger subscription from his friend Mr. George R. Russell. Mr. Stearns was made treasurer of the committee, and ten days after John Brown's departure \$250 had been paid in. By the 1st of April \$375 had been collected, and on the 20th of April \$410, Of which Stearns, Parker, and Higginson had each paid \$100, Sanborn \$60, and Howe \$50. Stearns pledged \$200 more, and John Brown had collected \$260 outside of New England; so that the small sum judged necessary for beginning the enterprise was nearly made up, either in money or pledges, before the 1st of May, at which time John Brown was on his way from Iowa to Ohio, with the arms that had been stored in Iowa, and with some of his men. He was to enlist others in Canada about May 8th, and to strike his first blow in the latter part of the same month. On the 28th of April John Brown was in Chicago; on the 2d of May at Chatham, in Canada. But, meanwhile, a formidable obstacle had appeared. Hugh Forbes interposed again, writing from Washington, and threatened to disclose the whole plan to the Republican leaders, and even to the government.

Hugh Forbes's letters, as before, were addressed to Howe and Sanborn, neither of whom had yet seen him, but who both knew now, from John Brown, what the relation had been between Hugh Forbes and himself. In these letters of April and May Hugh Forbes insisted that John Brown's enterprise should stop, that John Brown himself should be dismissed as the leader of the movement, and Hugh Forbes be put in his place; and these demands were accompanied by a threat of making public the whole transaction, so far as it had gone. To increase the difficulties of the situation, Hugh Forbes had evidently learned, from some quarter, of the countenance given to John Brown, since the 1st of March, by his Boston committee. On the 2d of May these letters were



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submitted to this committee, Howe, Parker, Sanborn, and Stearns being present, and Higginson being informed of them by mail. Parker, Sanborn, and Stearns at once said that the blow must be deferred till another year, and in this opinion Howe partially coincided. Higginson thought otherwise, and so did John Brown, who declared that he would go forward, in spite of Hugh Forbes and his threats, if the money promised him should be furnished. Here, however, another difficulty sprang up. Hugh Forbes, early in May, carried out his threat so far as to inform, Senators Hale, Seward, and Wilson and Dr. Bailey, in general terms, of John Brown's purposes, and Wilson wrote to Dr. Howe, earnestly protesting against any such demonstration. As the rifles which had been purchased by the Massachusetts Kansas Committee and intrusted to John Brown by them were still, so far as Senator Wilson and the public knew, the property of that committee (though really, as has been explained, the personal property of Mr. Stearns, the chairman), it would expose the Kansas Committee, who were ignorant of John Brown's later plans, to suspicions of bad faith, if those arms were used by him in any expedition to Virginia. This awkward complication seems to have decided Dr. Howe in favor of postponing the attack, and both he and Mr. Stearns, as members of the Kansas Committee, wrote to John Brown that the arms must not be used for the present, except for the defence of Kansas.<sup>17</sup> John Brown saw that nothing further could then be done, and yielded, though with regret, to the postponement. About the 20th of May Mr. Stearns met John Brown in New York, and arranged that hereafter the custody of the Kansas rifles should be John Brown's, as the agent of Stearns, the real owner, and not of the nominal owners, the Kansas Committee. On the 24th of May a meeting of the Boston secret committee, with one of the principal friends of John Brown's plan outside of New England, took place at the Revere House in Boston, -- Parker, Howe, Sanborn, and Stearns being present, as before; and it was agreed that the execution of the plan should be postponed till the spring of 1859. In the mean time a larger sum of money -- from two to three thousand dollars -- was to be raised, and John Brown was to throw **Hugh Forbes** off his track by returning to Kansas and engaging in the defence of the Free-State men on the border; the alleged property of the Kansas Committee was to be so transferred as to relieve that committee of all responsibility, and the secret committee were, in future, to know nothing in detail of John Brown's plans. John Brown was not himself present at this Revere House meeting, but came to Boston the next week, and was at the American House May 31st. Here he met all the committee, Higginson included; and, in the two or three days that he stayed, the Revere House arrangement was completed. He received the sole custody of the arms which had belonged to the Kansas Committee, and five hundred dollars beside; was to go to Kansas at once, but after that to use his own discretion; and, though still believing the postponement unwise, he left New England in good spirits the first week in

17. The letters on this subject are printed in Senator Mason's Report (36th Cong. Senate Rep. Com No. 278), pp. 176, 177.

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June. He reached Kansas June 26th, with about ten men, and in a week or two after was on the border, near the scene of the Marais des Cygnes murders of May 11th. Remaining in that vicinity, guarding the Free-State settlers for about two months, most of that time he was himself ill with ague. On the 10th of September he was at Osawatomie, whence he wrote, "I have often met the 'notorious' Montgomery,<sup>18</sup> and think very favorably of him."



He was associated with Montgomery in the border warfare of the autumn and winter of 1858, and finally just before Christmas, made his famous incursion into Missouri, and brought away a party of slaves, with whom he travelled in January and February, 1859, from the border of Southern Kansas, through Nebraska, Iowa, Illinois, and Michigan, to Detroit, where he arrived March 12th, and landed his fugitives safely in Canada. In the latter part of March, 1859, he was at Cleveland, where he sold publicly the horses he had brought from Missouri. In April he visited his family at North Elba, and in the early part of May was in Boston, where he remained for more than three weeks, visiting his friends in the city and its vicinity, and making final arrangements for his Virginia expedition. Before leaving Boston for the last time, Wednesday, June 1, 1859, the sum of \$2,000, which had been promised him at the Revere House meeting a year before, was made up and placed to his credit. More than half this sum - \$1,200- was the gift of George L. Stearns, who must have furnished the old hero, first and last, at least \$10,000 in money and arms. Of the other \$800, half was raised in Massachusetts, by private subscription or at public meetings, of which he held several during this visit. He spoke in the Town

18. This was James Montgomery of Kansas, a brave partisan, afterwards colonel of a colored regiment in South Carolina. He has lately died in Kansas.





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Hall at [Concord](#) (where he spent a portion of his last birthday<sup>19</sup>)



on Sunday evening, May 8th, to a large audience, hastily gathered; for he had arrived in town unexpectedly the night before, from North Elba. The fame of his last exploit in Kansas had preceded him everywhere, and there was much eagerness to hear what he would say about it. He described briefly his expedition into Missouri, and the way in which he had brought off the party of slaves; but when he went on to assert that it was right to repeat such incursions, and to take property, or even life, in forcibly setting slaves free, his audience winced under it. They applauded his successful deed, but were not ready to encourage its repetition. Some agreed with him, however, and a small contribution was raised at the meeting. He left Concord at noon the next day, -- his birthday, -- and never returned thither.

John Brown also spoke at one of the Boston Anniversary meetings in Tremont Temple, the last week in this same May, and was present on Saturday, May 28th, at the weekly dinner of the "Bird Club," which then met at the [Parker House](#). The late Governor Andrew was a member of this club, as were Dr. Howe and Mr. Sanborn, and Mr. Stearns joined it on this particular day, having gone there to meet or escort his friend John Brown. Governor Andrew was not present at this meeting of the club, but it was probably on the following Sunday evening that he met John Brown for the first and last time, at a friend's house. In his testimony before Senator Mason's committee, in February, 1860, Mr. Andrew made this statement respecting his own contribution to John Brown's fund:<sup>20</sup> —

"After having met Captain Brown one Sunday evening at a lady's house, where I made a social call with my wife, I sent him twenty-five dollars as a present. I did it because I felt ashamed, after I had seen the old man and talked with him, and come within the reach of the personal impression which I find he very generally made on people, that I had never contributed

19. John Brown was born May 9, 1800, and was in his sixtieth year at his death.

20. Senate Rep. Com., No. 278, 36th Congress, page 192.





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anything direct towards his assistance, as one who I thought had sacrificed and suffered so much for the cause of freedom and of good order and good government in the Territory of Kansas. He was, if I may be allowed to use that expression, a very magnetic person, and I felt very much impressed by him. I confess I did not know how to understand the old gentleman fully, because when I hear a man talk upon great themes, touching, which I think he must have deep feeling, in a tone perfectly level, without emphasis and without any exhibition of feeling, I am always ready to suspect that there is something wrong in the man's brain. I noticed that the old gentleman, in conversation, scarcely regarded other people, was entirely self-poised, self-possessed, sufficient to himself, and appeared to have no emotion of any sort, but to be entirely absorbed in an idea which preoccupied him and seemed to put him in a position transcending an ordinary emotion and ordinary reason. In parting with him, as I heard he was a poor man, I expressed my gratitude to him for having fought for a great cause with earnestness, fidelity, and conscientiousness, while I had been quietly at home, earning my money and supporting my family in Boston, under my own vine and fig-tree, with nobody to molest or make me afraid.... I am constitutionally peaceable, and by opinion very much of a peace man, and I have very little faith in deeds of violence, and very little sympathy with them, except as the extremest and direst necessity. My sympathy, so, far as I sympathized with Captain Brown, was on account of what I believed to be heroic and disinterested services in defence of a good and just cause, and in support of the rights of persons who were treated with unjust aggression."

This is a statement truly characteristic, not only of Governor Andrew, but of John Brown as he was viewed by many people in Massachusetts; and such small sums as were given him in 1858 and 1859, by persons not acquainted with his plans, were mostly given under such impressions as are here so generously described. The whole amount of these contributions, however, did not exceed five hundred dollars in Massachusetts, and probably were less than half that sum. Out of a little more than four thousand dollars in money which passed through the hands of the secret committee, in aid of his Virginia enterprise, or was known to them as contributed, at least thirty-eight hundred dollars were given with a clear knowledge of the use to which it would be put. The gifts of arms made by Mr. Stearns amounted in value to twice as much perhaps, and these also were contributed with a full understanding that they might be used as they were.<sup>21</sup>

John Brown's hotel, during his last visit to Boston, was the United States House. He was attended, generally, in his movements about the city and its neighborhood, by a faithful henchman, Jerry Anderson, a youth from Indiana who was shot at Harper's Ferry. Both were in rustic dress, but John Brown, from

21. The biographer of George Stearns, when his LIFE shall be written, should not omit the list of his contributions to John Brown and his cause.



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his marked aspect and his flowing gray beard (which he first began to wear in Kansas in the summer of 1858), attracted much attention in the streets. He has been described by Judge Hoar (who had seen him in Concord, and perhaps had contributed to his fund from the same motives as Governor Andrew), in one of these street rambles, as calmly walking up Court Street in the midst of the hurrying throng, with his jack-knife in one hand and an apple in the other, which he was peeling and eating, quite unconscious of observation, while his young henchman, less accustomed to cities, walked a little behind him, gazing up at the signs and windows. Another remembers him plodding his way to the Providence Railroad Station, burdened with a heavy carpet-bag, and still escorted by his body-guard. At this time he always went heavily armed, being proclaimed an outlaw by President Buchanan, who offered three thousand dollars for his arrest, and by the governor of Missouri, who offered two hundred and fifty dollars more. When this fact was mentioned to John Brown, he sometimes said, in his dry way, that he would pay two dollars and fifty cents to anybody who would safely lodge James Buchanan in any jail in the free States. He moved about in Massachusetts entirely without fear or precaution, except his pistols and his henchman, and at this time always went by his own name. It is believed that no effort to arrest him was made outside of Kansas.

In course of his stay in Boston he spent an evening at the house of a gentleman where William Hunt, the painter, was also a guest, and an appointment was made with John Brown that he should give Hunt a sitting for his portrait. It is unfortunate that this sitting never took place, for his portrait by Hunt would now be the best representation of him in his last year. Brackett the sculptor, whose fine bust of him has already been mentioned, also met him at this time; but the studies and measurements for his bust were made in a brief visit to John Brown in his cell at Charlestown in the following November. John Brown sat for his photograph to a Boston artist named Heywood, and it is from this picture, a half-length standing figure, with the hands behind the back, and the face turned a little aside from a front view, that all the common portraits of him are taken. It was used by Brackett in modelling his bust, in which, however, the features are somewhat idealized. The suit in which this picture was taken is the same that he wore in Boston two years before, and he was wearing a portion of it when captured at Harper's Ferry. The attitude chosen was a common one with him, and some of our readers may remember him pacing a ball, a prairie, or a hotel corridor with his hands thus clasped behind him.

Leaving Boston on the first day of June, 1859, John Brown went to Collinsville in Connecticut, where he arrived June 3d, and renewed his old contract for a thousand pikes, which were made by Charles Blair of that town, and forwarded in August and September, to Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, whence they were taken to the neighborhood of Harper's Ferry. In the interval between



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June and September John Brown had moved his men and arms from Canada and Ohio to Chambersburg, and thence to the Kennedy Farm, on the Maryland side of the Potomac, about five miles from Harper's Ferry. This farm was rented by John Brown early in July, and its two farm-houses were occupied by him and his men for the three months preceding his attack, October 16th. During this time John Brown was frequently absent, often in Chambersburg, to which place all his letters were sent. About a month after he took possession of the Kennedy Farm his supply of money gave out, and he wrote earnestly to his Boston committee for three hundred dollars, with which he could begin his campaign. He made no further communication of his plans, nor was it known to any of his Massachusetts friends exactly where he was or what he was doing. The money asked for was raised by Howe, Stearns, Sanborn, and Higginson, and sent to Chambersburg in small drafts, as requested, the last of it reaching John Brown about the 20th of September. In the mean time he had been visited at Chambersburg by Frederick Douglass, who was previously acquainted with the general plan of action, but does not seem to have been wholly satisfied with what John Brown communicated to him at their last interview. The time for striking the blow was still delayed, more from want of money than for any other reason; and it might have been postponed till the spring of 1860, perhaps, but for another remittance from Massachusetts under circumstances so singular as to be regarded by John Brown's friends as providential.

There was then in Boston a young man, who afterwards died as a soldier in the Union Army, a grandson of Francis Jackson, the famous antislavery leader. He was named for his grandfather, Francis Jackson Merriam. His father was dead, and he had inherited a small property, which he was eager to devote to some practical enterprise for freeing the slaves. He was at this time twenty-two years old, enthusiastic and resolute, but with little judgment, and in feeble health; altogether, one would say, a very unfit person to take part actively in John Brown's enterprise. He had heard something of this from James Redpath, with whom he had travelled in Hayti, and was fully determined to join John Brown's party. Early in October, having learned in some way that John Brown was to be seen at Chambersburg, young Merriam called upon Sanborn, who had never seen him before, though acquainted with his family, and declared his purpose of visiting John Brown, offering himself and his little fortune for his cause. Sanborn tried in vain to dissuade him from going, and suggested that he should first invest a portion of his money, and be guided by circumstances as to the future. This good advice Merriam declined, and insisted that he should start at once to find John Brown, which he did, leaving Boston on the 7th of October. By Sanborn's advice, he called to see Colonel Higginson at Worcester, on his way, and was still more unfavorably received by that gentleman, who strongly opposed his wild scheme. He went on, however, met John Brown at Chambersburg about a week before the attack was made, gave him six hundred



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dollars in gold, and joined the little band at Kennedy's. His money reached John Brown but a day or two before the attack, and was probably nearly all that the military chest of the invaders of Virginia contained when they crossed the Potomac on Sunday evening October 16, 1859, to capture the town of Harper's Ferry. Merriam himself was not in the attacking party, but remained to guard the arms, with Cook, Tidd, Owen Brown, Barclay Coppoc, and O.P. Anderson, at the school-house on the Maryland side. He escaped with his companions, all of whom, except Cook, got safely away.

Merriam, after many adventures, reached Canada safely; but the scenes he had witnessed, and the fate of his leader and comrades, unsettled his mind completely. He planned another raid into the slave States, and at the risk of his life, if captured, he returned to Boston early in December to urge John Brown's friends there to aid him in the mad enterprise. It so happened that he reached Boston at the very time of John Brown's execution. He took refuge with his physician, Dr. David Thayer, and sent for his uncle, James Jackson, Mr. Wendell Phillips, and Mr. Sanborn to call and see him. They found him full of his new scheme, and very unwilling to obey their earnest injunctions to return at once to Canada. He finally consented to do so, and went to the Fitchburg Railroad station to take the night express train for Montreal. But, in his distracted state of mind, he took the wrong train and was left at Concord early in the evening, where he must pass the night. He had presence of mind enough to go to Sanborn's house, where he was sheltered and provided for; but his host, out of regard for the young man's safety, refused to see him, or to recognize him by any name but that of Lockwood, which he had assumed. He passed the night in Concord, and early in the morning was driven in a friend's carriage by [Henry Thoreau](#) to the neighboring railroad station of South Acton, where he took the first train for Montreal, and safely arrived there. Mr. Thoreau only knew his companion as "Lockwood," and, though suspecting him to be one of the Harper's Ferry fugitives, was cautious not to inquire his true name of any person, until shortly before his own death in 1862, when the story was told him.

It is unnecessary to speak here of the events at Harper's Ferry, or the subsequent history of the affair. Our purpose has been simply to put on record a few facts which have come to our knowledge concerning the origin and progress of the plan of attack there made, and the relation which a few persons, living or dead, bore to John Brown and his great enterprise. We have shown it to be exclusively his own, carried out by him with the help of a few men and women whom his strong purpose and magnetic personality attracted to his assistance. It is not known that any of these friends regret or blush for the aid they were able to render to a hero as undaunted, as patient, and as completely under Divine guidance as any whom history or romance describes. Those who are dead did not; those who are still living need not.



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But if an imagined regard for the reputation of the living or the dead should tempt kinsmen or friends to forget or disown the share of any man in this mysterious affair, let them remember what Sir Kenelm Digby says of his father's connection with the Gunpowder plot of Guy Fawkes. "All men know," pleads the fair Stelliana, in Sir Kenelm's Private Memoirs, "that it was no malicious intent or ambitious desires that brought Sir Everard Digby into that conspiracy, but his too inviolable faith to his friend that had trusted him with so dangerous a secret, and his zeal to his country's ancient liberties."

**WHAT I'M WRITING IS TRUE BUT NEVER MIND  
YOU CAN ALWAYS LIE TO YOURSELF**

HDT

WHAT?

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1873

May 31, Saturday: The Boston Public Library has preserved a seating chart that the Reverend John Sullivan Dwight prepared for a meal of the Saturday Club at the [Parker House](#) in [Boston](#):

*Sat. Club (Parker House) May 31, 1873.*  
*Longfellow*

<i>R. B. Chase</i>		<i>Emergency</i>
<i>F. Parker</i>		<i>H. W. Bellows</i>
<i>G. W. Parker</i>		<i>Rev. Dr. Hodge</i>
<i>H. H. Bangs</i>		<i>Mary Jones</i>
<i>T. G. Appleton</i>		<i>J. T. Fields</i>
<i>J. S. Dwight</i>		<i>Mrs. Eliot</i>
<i>Judge Kent</i>	<i>Present:</i>	<i>Judge Howe</i>
<i>O. W. Holmes</i>	<i>21 members</i>	<i>Conat Corti</i>
<i>Chas. F. Adams</i>	<i>&amp; guests</i>	<i>C. C. Perkins</i>
<i>Sen. Boutwell</i>		<i>J. Eliot Cabot</i>
<i>J. H. Forbes</i>		<i>Rev. Chas. Briggs</i>
<i>Jeffie Wyman</i>		<i>H. G. O'Connell</i>
<i>Prof. Quincy</i>		<i>E. P. Whipple</i>
<i>Dr. E. H. Clark</i>		
<i>Agassiz</i>		<i>Absent:</i>
<i>J. A. Andrews</i>		<i>Mrs. B. Pierce</i>
<i>C. E. Felt</i>		<i>Rev. Dr. Pierce</i>
<i>N. Hawthorne</i>		<i>S. W. Austin</i>
		<i>Chas. Sumner</i>
		<i>S. G. Ward</i>
		<i>H. W. Henshaw</i>





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**1876**

April 9, Sunday: [John F. Mills](#), [Harvey D. Parker](#)'s longtime partner, died in his home at 39 Hancock Street in [Boston](#).

At some earlier point a German baker named Ward, working under Chef John Bonello at the [Parker House](#), had pioneered the Parker House Roll:



(We do not know the date, but it must have been prior to this year because the French composer Jacques Offenbach noted them there and was enthusiastic about them during a US performance tour.)



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**1879**

October 7, Tuesday: Austria-Hungary and [Germany](#) agreed in secret to a mutual defense, should either be attacked by Russia.

**READ THE FULL TEXT**

The [Parker House](#) had been the 1st in [Boston](#) to have elevators. It would seem, then, the plausible venue for demonstration of a new type of safety elevator being pioneered by the Air-Cushion Company, one possessing the extra safety of the recently patented “air cushion.” The device was prepared at the hotel by the inventor himself, Colonel A.C. Ellithorpe, a practical engineer and mechanic of Chicago, and its “air cushion” consisted solely of a pit at the bottom of the elevator shaft, containing trapped air that was to gradual escape as the elevator car plunged downward. He fitted a narrow piece of rubber about the sides of the car to prevent too sudden escape of this cushioning air. At 4PM, when the cable was cut and the drop began at the 5th floor, the car and its cargo of seven notable personages plus a boy operator named Waldo Robinson was estimated at some 4,500 pounds. Everything went well for the first 85 feet — but as they say, the proof is in the Boston Cream Pie. As this plunging car neared the bottom of its shaft the increasing air pressure blew out the side of the shaft and the doors at the lower landing in a great cloud of dust, with a blast that was heard a block away. The New-York [Times](#) would report that no-one had been killed but several notables were alleging spinal pain and were under observation by their personal physicians who had not as yet been able to detect anything seriously wrong with them (the boy sustained cuts and bruises).



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**1884**

May: [Professor Asa Gray](#) traveled to St. Louis.

[Harvey D. Parker](#) died in his home at 141 Boylston Street, at the age of 79. the facade of the [Parker House](#) would be “heavily draped” in mourning. From his fortune, \$100,000 would go to the Museum of Fine Arts in [Boston](#), which now features a Harvey D. Parker Collection. The funeral service would be at the Arlington Street Church that the deceased had attended, and the body would be deposited in the Mount Auburn Cemetery.

The following appeared in [Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine](#), Volume 28, Numder 1, on pages 3-17 :

### **The Salem of Hawthorn**

**By [Julian Hawthorne](#)**

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE’S instinct for localities was not strongly developed; wherever he walked, in city or country (and he was very fond of walking), he constantly missed his way; This trait, or deficiency, is not without its reflection in his writings. It is of small importance to him what the topography of his story may be, — whether his house faces north or south, whether his street turns to the right or to the left. He is willing to let these and analogous matters take care of themselves; and herein he differs markedly from the great French novelist Balzac, who wrote by the map and the rule, and who always knew precisely the income of all his people, and from what investments it was derived. On the other hand, the American possessed, to quite as great a degree as the Frenchman, the perception of the picturesque; his light and shadow, his color and atmosphere, have never been surpassed. But he shunned rather than sought to make his outlines and directions correspond too closely with palpable reality.

The intensity with which he could convey the feeling of a place, a character, or a situation, was almost in inverse ratio to its literal resemblance to any material prototype; he was essentially a romancer, and the world of his imagination was like the material world only as the mind of man is like his body: a spiritual world of types, elements, and harmonies, rather than a physical world of accidents, individuals, and technicalities. When I was lately visiting the scenes of his stories, I was impressed by nothing more than by the manner in which he had contrived to escape from the rigid flesh and blood of his scenes, and to make everything plastic and significant, while fully preserving and indeed intensifying the spirit and sentiment which the scenes embodied. The subtle, artistic balance and structure of his compositions would have been distorted by the intrusion of photographic facts. His characters and his scenery bore an organic relation to the theme or plot in which they appeared and acted. It has been surmised that what is



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technically termed construction was Hawthorne's weak point; and, in the Wilkie Collins sense of construction, this is true. But the author of "The Scarlet Letter" took a view of artistic proportion – the answering of part to part, the culmination and the catastrophe – indefinitely deeper than Mr. Collins's, because moral and spiritual. His episodes are of the mind and heart, not of the body; and on this plane the construction of his romances is as nearly perfect as, on another plane, is that of "Tom Jones" or "The Moonstone."

What has been said suggests the conclusion that there is comparatively little to be gained by the most conscientious consideration of the localities in which for lack of better, the characters of Hawthorne's stories are seen and developed. The true localities of the stories are in the characters themselves. who, secondarily, are reflected in their surroundings. In the case of Dickens it was quite otherwise; and that curious sort of entertainment which is found by many people – in the autographs, the birthplaces, the old hats and snuff-boxes, the inns and the graves of great or notorious personages, may receive a similar gratification in hunting out the houses and the streets of Dickens's fictitious society, and noticing how closely the fiction coincides with the reality. This pleasure has, I believe, already been tasted by the readers of this magazine; but they must not anticipate anything quite comparable to it in the present instance. What I have to report may augment their appreciation of Hawthorne's power of making bricks without straw, and even without clay upon occasion, but will do little to enhance his reputation as a Chinese copyist. Some people will not regard this as a defect; but there is some ground for believing that Hawthorne himself aimed rather to increase than to diminish the external verisimilitude of his pictures. It would otherwise be difficult to account for the existence of his journals and note-books, from which imagination is, as much as possible, excluded, and a constant effort is made to give an accurate and dispassionate record and representation of things as they are. The impression produced by the note-books is oddly different from that of the romances – a difference comparable in kind and degree to that between the voice in ordinary speech and in singing. The descriptions in the books are conscientious and laborious, and strike one, perhaps, as having been written coldly and somewhat against the grain – written not for their own sake, but as auxiliary to an ulterior purpose. It is often edifying to observe how a passage from these records has been transmuted from commonplace metal into fine gold on being incorporated with the living organism of the romance. The specific accuracy has become less, but the fidelity to essential truth has become greater. On the whole, however, the illusion of reality is doubtless greater in Hawthorne's later works than in the "Twice-told Tales" and the "Mosses from an Old Manse." The substance of the later works is wrought out of a wider experience and observation of actualities than is the case with the earlier ones. Yet the imagination has gained power



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proportionate to the increased observation and experience, and is as far as ever from being dominated by them. The work is richer and more minute, but it is just as truly creative as before; the fusion of the elements is no less complete. "The Marble Faun" is as thoroughly Hawthorne, to the outermost particle, as is "The Gray Champion" or "Feathertop." So that, after all, the result of the note-books was different from their apparent aim (as I have supposed it), and much better worth the pains bestowed on producing them. I doubt if my father ever realized how searchingly powerful his imagination was. He did not perceive the ardor of his own fire; the magic of his own atmosphere was hidden from him. He fancied he was telling his story in quite a plain and obvious way, and was rather amused at the depths and splendors which other people thought they saw in it. Of course I do not mean to imply that he did not know what he was about. The "Grimshawe" studies, lately published in this magazine, show that no one comprehended the methods and art of fiction better than he. He was never careless, and he had the unmitigable conscience of a Puritan. He was not of that order of genius that yields itself up to vague, hysteric deliriums of inspiration, and in that condition evolves something which as often turns out silly as sublime. When he was warmed to his work, he was more himself – more in command of every faculty he possessed – than at any other time. He never wrote a sentence that he did not himself thoroughly understand. He could criticism his own processes, aims, and results as justly as the most dispassionate reviewer. But there was one quality, one faculty in himself that he could never estimate or criticism – the most important quality or faculty of all. It was the quality that no one else ever possessed, the faculty that no one else ever exercised, the thing, whatever it was, that makes him Hawthorne. Some years ago one of our magazines published a story, a translation from the German, entitled "The Face in the Rock" (or something of that kind). It was a literary curiosity, for it was neither more nor less than Hawthorne's "Great Stone Face," which had been translated into German and afterward turned back into English by some one who had never heard of the original. Here was the story, sentence for sentence the same, and yet as different from it as is a cabbage from a rose. I have often wondered what my father would have thought of it; whether he would have perceived as distinctly as another person the immeasurable superiority imparted by touches too fine and subtle to be described – the touches which no one else could give, and which even he gave, as it were, unconsciously, because it was the natural expression of his temperament and organization. I may return to this matter another time, for it is full of suggestion; but for the present it is enough to observe that the faculty of self-appreciation (not altogether strange to our later writers) is not precisely the most valuable element of the literary organization, inasmuch as it stands in the way of that genial unconsciousness, of that freedom from the sense of being overlooked and criticized, which is indispensable to the



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production of original and harmonious work. Though Hawthorne was humility itself in his estimate of his own powers, yet when once he was under the influence of his muse, not all the criticism of ancient and modern times could have made him swerve by so much as a hair's breadth from the path along which she led him. When he was at work he was in a region by himself, – alone with his art, – into which the voices of the exterior world could never penetrate, nor its presence intrude. The work being done, however, and sent forth, the worker would return to a colder and more skeptical state, in which he took, as it were, the part of the world against himself, and led the attack. So little is known of the man that it has always been the custom to paint his portrait from the same palette which he himself used for his pictures. But it is important to remember that the man and the writer were, in Hawthorne's case, as different as a mountain from a cloud. It was not until after his death that I read any of his romances; he had always told me that they were not suited to my age and requirements; and I remember, as I read on, being constantly unable to comprehend how a man such as I knew my father to be could have written such books. He did not talk in that way; his moods had not seemed to be of that color. The books gave me an enlarged though not a more powerful impression of him. He was a very strong man, in every application of the word. I have seen him in company with many of the great men of his time, and I was always made to feel that his was the loftier and dominant spirit – that he was to other men what Augustus Caesar is said to have been to Marc Antony. It is true that I was but a child; but I apprehend that the perceptions of a child in such matters, being mainly intuitive, are at least as apt to be just as those of mature persons. At all events, subsequent meditation and experience have served rather to augment than to lessen my estimate of his personal power and weight. As regards the books, it is difficult to state exactly the relation they bore to the general manifestation of his character; perhaps it might be said that they resulted from the immediate action of his spirit, in a spiritual plane; whereas in other matters it acted through his material part, in the physical plane. But there is more vanity than profit in such distinctions, and the topic is, moreover, not essential to the present inquiry, indefinite and vagabond though that be.

HAWTHORNE was born in Salem; it was mostly the scene of such of his earlier tales as pretend to any definite location at all; the "House of the Seven Gables" was erected there; and finally, at the close of his literary career, he returned to Salem to find the scene of "Doctor Grimshawe's Secret." Salem, consequently, might reasonably be presumed to be a singularly picturesque and interesting old town. In the matter of age, no doubt, it can court comparison with any settlement in New England; the place bore the name of Salem as long ago as 1629, after having been called Bastable in 1614, and Naum-Keag by the aboriginal Indians. Concerning this latter appellation, Cotton Mather, with that fondness for the miraculous which





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characterized his epoch, writes as follows in his "Magnalia" "Of which place I have somewhere met with an odd observation, that the name of it is rather Hebrew than Indian for Nahum signifies comfort, and Keik signifies an haven; and our English not only found it an haven of comfort, but happened also to put an Hebrew name upon it; for they called it Salem, for the peace which they had hoped in it."

That "odd observation" was probably met with in a publication called "The Planter's Plea," printed in London in 1630, in which it is written:

"It fals out, that the name of the place, which one late colony hath chosen for their seat, proves to bee perfect Hebrew, being called Nahum Keike; by interpretation, the bosom of consolation; which it were pittie that those which observed it not, should change into the name of Salem, though upon a fair ground, in remembrance of a peace settled upon a conference at a generall meeting betweene them and their neighbors, after expectance of some dangerous jarre."

This fanciful etymology, though never formally recognized or adopted by the body corporate of the citizens, is informally and sentimentally used by them to this day. I remember that my maternal grandmother, at the time she was living in Boston, used affectionately to speak of her native Salem by the title of "Old Naum-Keag."

Hawthorne himself, in his "Main Street," an article printed in the "Snow-Image" volume, has given the best antiquarian picture of the growth of his native town that is likely to be met with anywhere. He begins at the period when the site of the Main street (now called Essex street) was a tract of forest land, over which the dusty pavement of the thoroughfare was hereafter to extend. This tract, about a mile and a half in length by half a mile in breadth, and bounded on three sides by water, is hardly definable nowadays. Two hundred and seventy years ago, however, along through the vista of impending boughs, might have been seen a faintly-traced path, running nearly east and west, "as if a prophecy or foreboding of the future street had stolen into the heart of the solemn old wood."

The great Squaw Sachem and the red Chief Wappacowet pass on beneath the tangled shade, imagining, doubtless, that their own system of affairs will endure forever; the squirrel rustles in the trees, the deer leaps in his covert; we catch the cruel and stealthy eye of a wolf, as he draws back into yonder imperious density of underbrush; a momentary streak of sunlight finds its way down through the gloom of the broad wilderness and glimmers among the feathers of the Indian's dusky hair. Can it be that the thronged street of a city will ever pass into this twilight solitude? Casting our eyes again over the scene, we behold a stalwart figure, clad in a leathern jerkin and breeches of the same, striding sturdily onward with his gun over his shoulder, bringing home the choice portions of a deer. This is Roger Conant, the first settler of Naum-Keag, "a man of thoughtful



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strength." There stands his habitation, "showing in its rough architecture some features of the Indian wigwam, and some of the log-cabin, and somewhat, too, of the straw-thatched cottage in Old England, where this good yeoman had his birth and breeding." A few years more, and "the forest track trodden more and more by the hob-nailed shoes of these sturdy and ponderous Englishmen, has now a distinctness which it never would have acquired from the light tread of hundred times as many Indian moccasins. It will be a street anon. It goes onward from one clearing to another, here plunging into a shadowy strip of woods, there open to the sunshine, but everywhere showing a decided line, along which human interests have begun to note their career. Over yonder swampy spot two trees have been felled, and laid side by side to make a causeway." This "swampy spot," by the bye, was at or about the junction of the present Essex and Washington streets, and the track of the Eastern Railway runs through it. In the course of time, John Endicott, the first governor of the new settlement, enters upon the scene. "Two venerable trees unite their branches high above his head, thus forming a triumphal arch of living verdure, beneath which he pauses, with his wife leaning on his arm, to catch the first impression of their new-found home."

In a copy of Felt's "Annals of Salem" which belonged to my father, I have seen a lithographed portrait of this famous Puritan, with a facsimile of his signature - "Jo: Endecott" underneath. He wears a black skull-cap; his head and face are round and full; the hair that curls down on either side his visage is white, and so are his mustache and pointed beard. His expression is grave and resolute, but serene and kindly; scarcely the man, in appearance, to cut the Red Cross out of the banner of England, as is described in the sketch called "Endicott and the Red Cross." He is there described as "a man of stern and resolute countenance, the effect of which was heightened by a grizzled beard that swept the upper portion of his breast-plate." When in anger, "a wrathful change came over his manly countenance. The blood glowed through it till it seemed to be kindled with an internal heat; nor was it unnatural to suppose that his breast-plate would likewise become red with the angry fire of the bosom which it covered." He brandished his sword, "thrust it through the cloth, and, with his left hand, rent the Red Cross completely out of the banner. He then waved the tattered ensign above his head.... With a cry of triumph, the people gave their sanction to one of the boldest exploits which our history records. And forever honored be the name of Endicott! We look back through the mist of ages, and recognize, in the rending of the Red Cross from New England's banner, the first omen of that deliverance which our fathers consummated, after the bones of the stern Puritan had lain more than a century in the dust." This sketch, which is scarcely more than half a dozen pages in length, is one of Hawthorne's earlier pieces; but it is full of fire and eloquence. Let us, however, return to the main street.



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Six or seven years after Roger Conant's appearance, "the street had lost the aromatic odor of the pine-trees, and of the sweet-fern that grew beneath them. Gardens are fenced in, and display pumpkin-beds and rows of cabbages and beans. No wolf, for a year past, has been heard to bark, or known to range among the dwellings, except that single one, whose grizzly head, with a splash of blood beneath it, is now affixed to the portal of the meeting-house." "Still later, the forest track has been converted into a dusty thoroughfare, which, being intersected with lanes and cross-paths, may fairly be designated as Main street. Houses of quaint architecture have now risen; most of, them have one huge chimney in the center, with flues so vast that it must have been easy for the witches to fly out of them. Around this great chimney the wooden house clusters itself, in a whole community of gable-ends, each ascending into its own separate peak; the second story, with its lattice windows, projecting over the first; and the door, which is perhaps arched, provided on the outside with an iron hammer, wherewith the visitor's hand may give a thundering rat-a-tat.... On the upper corner of that green lane, which shall hereafter be called North street, we see the Curwen House, newly built, with the carpenters still at work on the roof, nailing down the last sheaf of shingles. On the lower corner stands another dwelling, - destined, at some period of its existence, to be the abode of an unsuccessful alchemist, - which shall likewise survive to our generation."

There is a picture of the old Curwen House in Felt's "Annals," and it seems to have at least seven gables. It has gone through many transformations since its first erection in 1642, but the edifice, which is still to be seen on the corner of North and Essex streets, a few rods west of the railway station, is said to be substantially the same building. At the time of the persecution of the witches, several examinations of those unhappy persons were held in one of its apartments. The inquiry has often been made: which of the old Salem houses was the prototype of the "House of the Seven Gables"? and the Curwen House, among several others, has been pointed out as the one. Intelligent inquirers of this kind will probably be disappointed to learn that the old Pyncheon House had no prototype at all. It is itself a type of the kind of houses that were built in the latter half of the seventeenth century. "These edifices," says Hawthorne himself, "were built in one generally accordant style, though with such subordinate variety as keeps the beholder's curiosity excited, and causes each structure, like its owner's character, to produce its own peculiar impression." In the preface to the romance he "trusts not to be considered as unpardonably offending, by laying out a street that infringes upon nobody's private rights, and appropriating a lot of land which had no visible owner, and building a house of materials long used for constructing castles in the air."

No one with any understanding of the nature of Hawthorne's



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genius could believe it even possible for him to import into his stories true literal portraits, either of houses or persons; but he frequently alluded, with a certain arch lifting of the right eyebrow that was characteristic of him when amused, to the perverse determination of his friends and correspondents to believe that Zenobia, for example, was suggested by Margaret Fuller; that he himself was Miles Coverdale; that the Pyncheon House existed in wood and plaster; or that Judge Pyncheon was an enemy whom he had pilloried under that fictitious name. There is not a syllable of truth in any one of these surmises; but this is something which people devoid (as most of us are) of imagination can never be persuaded to credit or comprehend.

We have now arrived, in our review of the history of Main street, at the epoch of the persecutions of the Quakers, and here Hawthorne takes occasion to insert a passage of his own ancestral annals.

"There a woman — it is Ann Coleman, — naked from the waist upward, and bound to the tail of a cart, is dragged through the main street at the pace of a brisk walk, while the constable follows with a whip of knotted cords. He loves his business, faithful officer that he is, and puts his soul into every stroke, zealous to fulfill the injunction of Major Hawthorne's warrant, in the spirit and to the letter. There came down a stroke that has drawn blood! and with thirty such stripes of blood upon her is she to be driven into the forest. The crimson trail goes wavering along the main street; but Heaven grant that, as the rain of so many years has wept upon it time after time, and washed it all away, so there may have been a dew of mercy to cleanse this cruel blood-stain out of the record of the persecutor's life!" This Major Hawthorne, or Hawthorne, as the name was then spelt, was the first American emigrant of our family. It is very characteristic of his descendant to have made this prayer of vicarious penitence for his forefathers' sin. Their blood and temperament were strong in him; he felt the burden of their misdeeds almost as his own; and I have often heard him speak, half fancifully and half in earnest, of the curse invoked by one of the witches upon Colonel John Hawthorne and all his posterity, and of the strange manner in which it had taken effect. Following the Quakers come the witches. The witches always had a special interest or fascination for my father, as might be inferred from the character and tone of the allusions to them in his published writings. But it is perhaps not generally known that he wrote a number of tales having witches for their subject-matter, that were said by the one or two persons who saw them to be more powerful, as conceptions of weird and fantastic horror, than anything in the printed volumes of short stories. But these tales never emerged from the manuscript state, and were finally burned by their author, because, as my mother told me he had explained to her, he felt that they were not true. That is, I suppose, they embodied no moral truth; they were mere imaginative narratives, founded on



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history and tradition, and had not the spiritual balance and proportion of what Hawthorne would deem a work of art. But I cannot help regretting that the manuscripts were not accidentally preserved. His touch acquires a deeper vividness wherever witches come in his way "While we supposed the old man to be reading the Bible to his old wife, – she meanwhile knitting in the chimney-corner. – the pair of hoary reprobates have whisked up the chimney, both on one broomstick and flown away to a witch-communion, far into the depths of the chill, dark forest. How foolish! were it only for fear of rheumatic pains in their old bones, they had better have stayed at home. But away they went; and the laughter of their decayed, cackling voices has been heard at midnight, aloft in the air. Now, in the sunny noontide, as they go tottering to the gallows, it is the devil's turn to laugh." Next to the witches, the stern, gloomy, self-confident, and sometimes bloodthirsty Puritan character had the strongest attraction for him. "These scenes, you think," he says "are all too somber. So, indeed, they are; but the blame must rest on the somber spirit of our forefathers, who wove their web of life with hardly a single thread of rose-color or gold, – and not on me, who have a tropic love of sunshine, and would gladly gild all the world with it, if I knew where to find so much. That you may believe me," he continues, "I will exhibit one of the only class of scenes in which our ancestors were wont to steep their tough old hearts in wine and strong drink, and indulge in an outbreak of frisky jollity." And he introduces us to a funeral procession! "Even so; but look back through all the social customs of New England, in the first century of her existence, and read all her traits of character; and if you find one occasion, other than a funeral feast, where jollity was sanctioned by universal practice, I will set fire to my puppet-show without another word." In forming an estimate of Hawthorne, such passages as these must not be left out of account. The tropic love of sunshine belonged to him individually, but the somber web of Puritan life belonged to him likewise, by virtue of his descent; and from their marriage in his character was born that half-sportive, half-melancholy humor that glimmers along his pages, like the tender light of morning upon the stern surface of New England granite. The history of Main street is followed only as far as the great snow of 1717, and we have a parting glimpse of "Goodman Massey taking his last walk, – often pausing, – often leaning over his staff – and calling to mind whose dwelling stood at such and such a spot, and whose field or garden occupied the site of these more recent houses. He can render a reason for all the bends and deviations of the thoroughfare, which, in its flexible and plastic infancy, was made to swerve aside from a straight line in order to visit every settler's door. The main street is still youthful; the coëval man is in his latest age. Soon he will be gone, a patriarch of four-score; yet shall retain a sort of infantile life, in our local history, as the first town-born child."

Salem has probably changed as slowly and as little as any town



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in New England; and yet, when I visited it last winter, it no longer hinted of that New England which "must have been a dismal abode for the man of pleasure, since the only boon-companion was Death." The main street is now quite a lively and progressive-looking thoroughfare, lined with handsome, albeit unpretentious brick and stone buildings, and with a horse-car track lying complacently along its length, above the forgotten footsteps of Squaw Sachem and the red Chief Wappacowet, and the crimson trail of Ann Coleman. There are town-halls and music-halls, and advertisements of the last new dramatic and operatic celebrities. There were inviting shops, full of Christmas goods and finery, and numbers of young ladies and gentlemen, in quite un-Puritanical garb, tripping gayly along the sidewalks, and not at all afraid of bewitching one another. Elderly persons there were, also, with gray hair and wrinkled faces, and some of them looking unmirthful enough too, but not with the sturdy religious solemnity of their forefathers. The inhabitants of Salem, however, are much more a race apart – their features and demeanor belong much more to a special and recognizable type – than is the case in the neighboring city of Boston, for instance. A few faces I saw that, so far as their physical conformation was concerned, only needed the Puritan doublet and skull-cap to answer very well for the contemporaries of Winthrop and Roger Williams; and I remember a policeman, with a white pointed beard, a conical helmet, and a dark cloak, who might almost have walked out of the seventeenth century just as he was. But, upon the whole, had Salem not been my home in infancy, were I not tolerably familiar with its history and associations, and bound to it by ties of kindred, I doubt whether I should find in it anything more than a rather dull and monotonous town, in which one might live without living, and die almost without being aware of it. With the exception of the houses in Essex street, and a few structures of a public or commercial character scattered here and there, Salem seems principally composed of wooden clapboarded houses, of rather old-fashioned build, with hip roofs, and painted a sober drab or buff color. The larger number of these edifices must date back at least as far as the beginning of this century, and many doubtless much further. The more ancient portion of the town lies eastward from the railway station and southward from Essex street. Parallel with Essex street, and next to it, runs Charter street, on which is the old grave-yard mentioned in "The Dolliver Romance" and in "Doctor Grimshawe." Parallel with this again, and skirting the wharfs, extends Derby street, named after old King Derby, mentioned in "The Custom House," introductory to "The Scarlet Letter"; its eastern extremity is at the Custom House, its western merges at right angles with Centre street, and in the vicinity stands the Town Pump. Numerous cross streets go from Essex street toward two wharfs. One of these is called Union street, neat, quiet, and narrow, though with a sidewalk on each side. On the western side, within a hundred yards of the corner, stands the house in which Nathaniel Hawthorne was born. It is a plain clapboarded





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structure of small size, with a three-cornered roof, and a single large chimney in the midst. The front is flush with the sidewalk, and the high stone door-steps jut forth beyond. It has evidently been repaired, and now presents a very well-kept appearance; some additions have perhaps been built on in the rear, but it remains substantially unchanged, – an eight-roomed house, with an attic in the gable, painted a quiet drab hue, with pale-green shutters to the windows. A little yard or garden, about equal in area to the house, adjoins it on the north. There is, I am happy to say, no inscription above the door or elsewhere to arrest the curious attention of the passer-by. This spot was the birthplace of a genius, but the genius itself never had its abiding-place here. It belongs to a world in which there are no places, and no time, but only love and knowledge. Westward from Union street lies Herbert street; and the house in which Hawthorne lived with his widowed mother and sisters after his return from Bowdoin College stands here, the back yards of the two dwellings communicating. In the old time, Union and Herbert streets seem to have been practically one thoroughfare; for it was in the Herbert street house that the words, "In this dismal chamber FAME was won. – Salem, Union street," were written. The house is of more irregular form than the other, and has probably been subjected to greater alterations. The room in which Hawthorne wrote the "Twice-told Tales" is in the upper story or attic. The place was doubtless quiet enough in those days; but now there are a school and a church or chapel on the opposite side of the street. It was "recess" as I passed by, and forty or fifty boys were creating such a hubbub in the school-yard as would have destroyed the most genial inspiration. But it seems a marvel that such stories should have been written here, under conditions however favorable. They have, indeed, "the pale tint of flowers that have blossomed in too retired a shade"; but how, in such a shade, did they come to blossom at all? The mind, one would think, must have some external stimulus – some sympathy and enjoyment in surrounding objects – in order to become creative; but for Hawthorne there was nothing but the night and the day, the sunshine and the rain, the changes of the seasons, the leaves of the forest and the waves of the sea, – the simple features and processes of nature, in short, – to quicken and nourish his imagination. The human life around him was as nearly colorless as it could be. But there appears to be much the same sort of difference between some men and others that exists between a sun and its satellites. The former shines in itself, by its own resources; the latter are bright only by derivation. Hawthorne evolved his exquisite creations in a social desert, and the physical unresponsiveness and barrenness of his surroundings only served to render what he produced more pure and permanent. There is hardly any attempt at color in them; their beauty is in their form. The enjoyment inspired by form is perhaps loftier and less subject to change, albeit also less intense, than the delight of color, which is mainly dependent on temperament and



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emotion; but be that as it may, it is well for the artist, – whether he work with pen or pencil, profoundly to verse himself in the intellectual laws of form before venturing to admit the passionate license of color. The genius of Hawthorne seems to have been providentially protected and trained, so that it might attain its full growth and strength in an orderly manner, without haste or eccentricity. Those lonely years in Salem were wearisome, no doubt, and often somber; but they wrought a strength and a self-poise in the solitary writer which all the splendor and phantasmagory of the world afterward could enrich and sweeten, but not mislead. In one way or another, all men who are destined to enter deeply into the mysteries of human life are led through a probationary period of solitude and fasting. They must explore the lonely and appalling recesses of the world within themselves before they are admitted to the world without. Hawthorne, during those ten years, breathed and walked in the Salem of his day, but lived in the Salem of one and two centuries before. There he found a largeness of material, a ruggedness of light and shade, and an atmosphere that played into the hands, so to speak, of his native imagination. The historical scenes that he draws, as in "The Gray Champion," or the "Legends of the Province House," though they are as vivid and broad and full of movement as a picture by Meissonier, manifestly owe their charm and effect not to any realism or literalness of detail, but purely to the imaginative power of the writer. The real scene did not look like this, but this is the essence and purport of the real scene. It has the beauty and it gives the delight of a work of fine art: all the disproportionate elements, the obtrusive accidents, the insignificancies of matter-of-fact, are refined away. And the bulk of the tales belonging to this period have scarcely any foothold upon earth at all. They are not lyrical, – the record of moods; but they are the moral speculations, or rather conclusions, of a mind singularly penetrating, just, and mature, – of a mind so healthy and well-balanced that its lack of practical experience enhanced instead of diminishing its faculty of dispassionate analysis.

"In youth," Hawthorne remarks, "men are apt to write more wisely than they really know or feel; and the remainder of life may not be idly spent in realizing and convincing themselves of the wisdom which they uttered long ago." The experience of age should be interpreted by the intuitions of youth; and this is broadly the gist of Hawthorne's literary history, as traced in his literary achievements. The truth which he divined in his youth was the touchstone of his later knowledge, and gave unity to his career. From Herbert street it is but a few steps to the Custom House, in the upper apartments of which was made the momentous discovery of Mr. Surveyor Pue's literary remains, and of the original scarlet letter, the history whereof has become more or less familiar to the educated fraction of Christendom. The building is doubtless essentially the same as it was forty years ago. Here is still the spacious edifice of brick, with the banner of the Republic – the thirteen stripes turned vertically



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instead of horizontally, and thus indicating that a civil and not a military sort of Uncle Sam's government is here established – floating or drooping, in breeze. or calm, from the loftiest point of its roof. Over the entrance, moreover, still hovers the enormous specimen of the American eagle, with the thunderbolts and arrows in each claw; she is heavily gilded, and appears to be in a remarkably good state of preservation. Here too is the flight of wide granite steps descending toward the street; and the portico of half a dozen wooden pillars, supporting a balcony. The entrance door was closed at the time of my visit, and the neighborhood quite as deserted as it ever could have been in Hawthorne's day. As for the row of venerable figures, sitting in old-fashioned chairs, tipped on their hind legs back against the wall, I made no effort to discover them; nor did I attempt to explore a certain room or office, about fifteen feet square, and of a lofty height, decorated with cobwebs and dingy paint, and its floor strewn with gray sand. The room was doubtless there, but in these days of progress and Morris wall-papers, its interior might have been painfully unrecognizable. In truth, I forbore to enter the Custom House at all. A more forlorn, defunct, vacant-looking place I never beheld; and yet it is the scene of one of the most charmingly humorous and picturesque pieces of autobiographical writing in our language. The alchemy of genius never attempted to transmute baser metal than this into gold, or succeeded better. "The Custom House" is a fitting introduction to "The Scarlet Letter." The original depravity of matter in the former, and of the spirit in the latter, are respectively exalted by the magic of imagination into fascination and tragic beauty.

The rambling length of Derby street lay before me, and I traversed its lonely, mean, and uneventful extent as far as its junction with Central street. There is more liveliness here; the houses that surround the little square are less like dwellings of the dead, and the atmosphere is not so much that of a drab-colored Puritan Sunday as in other parts of the town. Here, as aforesaid, is the present town pump; but the original town pump, as appears by the stage direction at the beginning of that famous little monologue, stood at the corner of Essex and Washington streets. In Felt's "Annals" there is a wood engraving of the latter splendid thoroughfare, resembling the streets which children were wont to construct with the German toy houses that came packed in oval wooden boxes: a remarkable coach, foreshortened, with two trunks behind and a horse three or four yards in front, occupies the central foreground; the windows of the houses are five feet in height by eighteen inches in width, and are all furnished with black shutters, closed; eight or nine ladies, gentlemen, and children, in the poke bonnets and high-collared coats of the year 1839, are solemnly posed at different points along either sidewalk. Across the lower middle distance runs Essex street, indicated by two parallel lines; and on the corner at the spectator's right stands the town pump, with two symmetrical handles, and a large trough. "Little was it



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expected," writes the worthy Mr. Felt, "when this fountain was opened and fitted for use, that locomotives, like some monstrous leviathan, would sweep over the bed of its waters, and pour out fire and smoke, instead of the element designed to subdue them.... A cistern was ordered near the first church, in lieu of 'the old town pump,' which Mr. Hawthorne, one of our city's gifted sons, has given a prominent place among his eloquent and impressive tales." The fact was, that the Eastern Railway ran a tunnel underneath Washington street, and the fountains of the great pump were thus dried up, or at any rate diverted.

From Central street I took my way back along Charter street, and soon came to an open space on the right, some three acres in extent, filled with grave-stones, and known as the Charter street burying-ground. On one corner of the inclosure, fronting the street, but partly infringing on the grave-yard, stands an old house which was once occupied by Doctor Peabody, the father of Mrs. Hawthorne; but which, in the world of romance, was the abode of Doctor Grimshawe and the two mysterious children, Elsie and Ned, and possibly, also, of good old Grandsir Dolliver and little Pansie. The description given in "Grimshawe" is tolerably exact, — quite as nearly so as might be expected of a place which one had not seen for eight or ten years, and which needed a certain picturesque glamour to make it harmonize with the story. "Doctor Grimshawe's residence," we are told, "cornered on a grave-yard, with which the house communicated by a back door.... It did not appear to be an ancient structure, nor one that would ever have been the abode of a very wealthy or prominent family — a three-story wooden house, perhaps a century old, low-studded, with a square front, standing right upon the street; and a small inclosed porch, containing the main entrance, affording a glimpse up and down the street through an oval window on each side. Its characteristic was decent respectability, not sinking below the boundary of the genteel.... A sufficient number of rooms and chambers, low, ill-lighted, ugly, but not unsusceptible of warmth and comfort, the sunniest and cheerfulest of which were on the side that looked into the graveyard." All that applies well enough to the present Charter street house. It is of a whitish hue, irregular in plan, and about as commonplace as an old wooden house can well be. It seems, moreover, to have sunk somewhat below that genteel level which it held to in the doctor's day. It looks as if it might be unclean inside, though by no means with the appalling and portentous griminess that characterizes it in the Romance; and I doubt if there be a spider as big as a nickel in the whole building. Dreary the entire spot undeniably is, especially under such conditions as those in which I beheld it, — a cold, gray sky, a harsh, inclement breeze, and a dull whiteness of snow underfoot. The snow, however, did not prevent an examination of the grave-stones, for these were all upright; there were no horizontal ones, such as that which marked the resting-place of him of the Bloody Footstep. I suspect, moreover, that were the sexton to tell all he knows, it would transpire that some of



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these head-stones are not the bona fide original slabs that were erected at the dates engraved upon them. They are reproductions, more or less accurate; some archaeologist, desirous of preserving the historic records of the town, has perhaps resorted to this somewhat questionable mode of achieving his purpose. Most of the slabs are thin parallelograms of slate, the inscriptions being as fresh as if cut last week. The words, in order to carry out the illusion, are sometimes spelt in the old fashion, and the device of a death's head, or a cherub, is roughly traced on the top of the stone. One of the first graves I came upon was that of Doctor John Swinnerton, the famous quack physician, and predecessor of Grandsir Dolliver, — the man who concocted the drink of immortality, which was to have restored that venerable personage to the vigor and elasticity of his long-vanished youth. Doctor Swinnerton expired, according to this record, in the year 1690. Undoubtedly, he was a real person. In Felt's "Annals" it is stated that "a Brinsley Accidence, with the name of John Swinnerton, supposed to be the physician, of Salem, written in it in 1652, came into the possession of Rev. Dr. Bentley, who left it to William B. Fowle, Esq., of Boston." And in the chapter about the Salem schools, it appears that on the twenty-fifth of March, 1716, "John Swinnerton began to keep the English school by the town house, at the usual compensation," — a son, evidently, of the mystic doctor, and, so far as records go, the last of his tribe. The schoolteacher's salary, in those days, seems to have been about twenty-five dollars a year.

This use of a real Salem name, by the bye, constantly occurs in Hawthorne's writings. In my strolling about the town, I recognized several over the shop-windows; and others appear in the index of Felt's "Annals." Thus Ethan Brand, Mr. Bullfinch, Clifford, Dixey, Goldthwaite, Gookin, Holgrave, Hollingsworth, Jeffrey, Maule, Pinchion or Pynchon, and others, were all, at one time or another, residents of Salem. But Doctor John Swinnerton seems to have been, for some reason, a favorite personage with my father; mention of him occurs not only in "The Dolliver Romance," but also in "Grimshawe," in the introductory chapter to "The House of the Seven Gables," and, I think, in one or two of the shorter pieces. It is all of a piece with his predominating love of veracity, which, as he more than once intimates, is by no means inconsistent with the pursuit of fiction. The novel, he says, "is presumed to aim at a very minute fidelity, not merely to the possible, but to the probable and ordinary, course of man's experience." The romance, "while, as a work of art, it must rigidly subject itself to laws, and while it sins unpardonably so far as it may swerve aside from the truth of the human heart, has fairly a right to present that truth under circumstances, to a great extent, of the writer's own choosing or creation.... He will be wise, no doubt, to make a very moderate use of the privileges here stated and, especially, to mingle the marvelous rather as a slight, delicate, and evanescent flavor, than as a portion of the actual substance of



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the dish offered to the public." In another place he says that "he designed the story and the characters to bear, of course, a certain relation to human nature and human life, but still to be so artfully and airily removed from our mundane sphere, that some laws and proprieties of their own should be implicitly and insensibly acknowledged." Miss E. P. Peabody, in a letter referring to the "Twice-told Tales," writes: "Nathaniel Hawthorne made a discovery, which was that we might be taken out of the prose of life into the region of the 'perfect good and fair,' - and into the mysteries of the Inferno as well, - without transcending the common boundaries of daily life. He did not waste his imagination in making circumstances; he was deficient in invention; but all his imagination was employed in discovering what depths of passion, what agonies of conscience, what exquisite emotions underlie our nature, and witness to the ever present God. He left the vulgar ground invented by human will, and kept himself in that spiritual region where imagination is native and at home. He would take the most ordinary and probable circumstances imaginable, or an historical fact perhaps, and lift the veil and show and explain the play of eternal laws that made the facts and personages what they were." Some novelists, when in search of fresh and unhackneyed material, make journeys to foreign lands, or to out-of-the-way corners of their own. Hawthorne's journeys were always inward, beneath the surface of things; but, like Jason in his passage through the labyrinth of Crete, he found it well to hold in his hand the silken clew or cord which connected him with the daylight world without, and enabled him to shape his course aright, and not lose himself in vague wanderings and speculations. To bestow the names of actual persons upon his imaginary creations was perhaps one of the means that he adopted to this end, - one of his reminders to himself to keep, as he expresses it, "undeviatingly within his immunities."

The Matthew Maule of the "Seven Gables" has perhaps (and perhaps, not) a partial prototype in a certain Thomas Maule mentioned in the historic annals of Salem. This Thomas was a Quaker, and in 1669 Samuel Robinson and Samuel Shalocke were fined twenty shillings apiece for "entertayninge of him." Maule was warned to depart, but "he persevered, then and subsequently, in retaining his abode here." In 1714, "among claims for common land, Thomas Maule presented one for a place where his two shops were burnt; and in 1724 an order was issued for John Maule to pay eight pounds which his father left as a bequest to the town, three pounds of which were specified for the writing-school." Evidently Thomas Maule's fate was not so tragic as that of the fictitious Matthew; but he seems to have had a touch of the latter's obstinacy. The curse which Matthew is described as having launched against his enemy, the Puritan Colonel Pyncheon, "God will give him blood to drink!" is, however, historical, so far as the words go; but they were uttered by a woman, under circumstances mentioned, I think, in the note-books. Indeed, I am not sure that my own ancestor, Colonel John Hathorne, did not





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represent the Colonel Pyncheon of the occasion.

In the note-books, under date of 1838, allusion is made to the grave of this "Colonel John Hathorne, Esq.," and the head-stone is described as being sunk deep into the earth and leaning forward, with the grass growing very long around it; "and on account of the moss it was rather difficult to make out the date." But the stone, as I saw it fifty-four years later, was as upright as if it had been put in place yesterday, and the inscription was quite clear of moss and perfectly legible. The hand of the renovator must have been at work, but it has performed its office with unusual forbearance and discretion. The passage above quoted from goes on to say: "It gives strange ideas to think how convenient to Dr. Peabody's residence the burial-ground is – the monuments standing almost within reach of the side-windows of the parlor, and there being a little gate from the back yard through which we step forth upon those old graves aforesaid." So we read in "Doctor Grimshawe" how the grave-yard communicated with the house by a back door, "so that with a hop, skip, and jump from the threshold, across a flat tombstone, the two children were in the habit of using the dismal cemetery as their play-ground." A couple of old apple-trees are spoken of; but these have disappeared, and the ground is planted with a few young elms. The south side of the inclosure is occupied by a line of low out-houses.

I might have prolonged indefinitely my desultory rambles about Salem, or this description of them; but, as the reader will long ago have perceived, there is really little or nothing. to be said very pertinent to the matter ostensibly in hand. To repeat what I began with saying, material objects and associations are but the portals through which entrance is made into the region peopled and enriched by Hawthorne's genius. There is a certain pleasure – to the writer if not to the reader – in putting one's self; so far as may be practicable, in Hawthorne's physical stand-point, and thus testing, as it were, by practical experiment, the penetration of his insight and the creativeness of his imagination. But it is impossible, for me at least, as the foregoing pages abundantly testify, to adhere to the letter of my undertaking in this article, or to avoid taking up and discussing side-issues, and indulging in unpremeditated speculations. Hawthorne existed in Salem, but he lived, to all vital intents and purposes, somewhere else, whither no railway can convey the investigator, and whereof no guide-book hitherto published contains any information. In the paper still to come, I shall follow his foot-steps through

Concord, Boston, and Brook Farm.

Julian Hawthorne.



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July 14, Monday: A [German](#) protectorate was extended over Kamerun.

The [Boston Traveller](#) reported that the bulk of the estate of [Harvey D. Parker](#) would be utilized to pay debts and legacies, and there being no children, half the yearly income from the [Parker House](#) would sustain Mrs. Harvey D. Parker, the widow (that sum could be expected to amount to between \$25,000 and \$30,000).



**WHAT?**

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1891

January 31, Saturday: Here is a preserved menu from a dinner of the Saturday Club at the [Parker House](#) in [Boston](#):



(This depiction of a cabin at a lake was not intended to represent Thoreau's cabin at Walden Pond, for it had



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had but one window and its chimney had been against the wall at the rear.)

A republican insurrection in the Porto barracks was suppressed by Portuguese authorities.

Ivanhoe, a romantic opera by Arthur Sullivan to words of Sturgis after Scott, was performed for the initial time, for the opening of the Royal English Opera House. Present were the [Prince and Princess of Wales](#) and the Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh. The work would receive great initial success but the production would eventually lose money and D'Oyly Carte would be forced to sell the theater.

Hedda Gabler by Henrik Ibsen was performed for the initial time, in the Residenztheater, München.

Chant d'amour, number 3 of Rêves for piano was performed for the initial time, by its composer Isaac Albéniz in London.

There being a explosion of 3,000 pounds of dynamite scheduled in San Francisco, to level a rocky hill in the suburbs, scientists waited expectantly around improvised instruments in San Jose and a seismometer of the University of the Pacific at Mt. Hamilton. No tremor was noted at either of these remote locations. The scientists would be informed that the workmen had used common black blasting powder rather than dynamite (although it was not clear to them that it had been this that had produced their negative readings).



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**1918**

Dr. Edward Waldo Emerson's THE EARLY YEARS OF THE SATURDAY CLUB.

**AT THE PARKER HOUSE**



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**1996**

December 12, Thursday: In beautiful downtown [Chicago](#), McCormick Place South opened, adding 840,000 square feet to the McCormick Place complexes.

Victor Ciorbea replaced Nicolae Vacaroiu as Prime Minister of Romania.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts by act of its legislature adopted as its official state dessert the Boston Cream Pie that had been developed under the menu entry “Parker House Chocolate Cream Pie” at the [Parker House](#) in beautiful downtown [Boston](#):



In Baghdad, four men ambushed Uday Hussein, eldest son of Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein, firing 50 shots into his Porsche, 8 of which struck Uday. He would survive but be somewhat disabled for the remainder of his life (still fit enough to rape and videotape his rapes, he would be taken out by a Special Ops group in Mosul in 2003).

**“MAGISTERIAL HISTORY” IS FANTASIZING: HISTORY IS CHRONOLOGY**





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"It's all now you see. Yesterday won't be over until tomorrow and tomorrow began ten thousand years ago."

- Remark by character "Garin Stevens"  
in William Faulkner's INTRUDER IN THE DUST



**Prepared: August 21, 2015**



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# *ARRGH AUTOMATED RESearch REPORT*

## *GENERATION HOTLINE*



This stuff presumably looks to you as if it were generated by a human. Such is not the case. Instead, someone has requested that we pull it out of the hat of a pirate who has grown out of the shoulder of our pet parrot "Laura" (as above). What these chronological lists are: they are research reports compiled by ARRGH algorithms out of a database of modules which we term the Kouroo Contexture (this is data mining). To respond to such a request for information we merely push a button.



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Commonly, the first output of the algorithm has obvious deficiencies and we need to go back into the modules stored in the contexture and do a minor amount of tweaking, and then we need to punch that button again and recompile the chronology – but there is nothing here that remotely resembles the ordinary “writerly” process you know and love. As the contents of this originating contexture improve, and as the programming improves, and as funding becomes available (to date no funding whatever has been needed in the creation of this facility, the entire operation being run out of pocket change) we expect a diminished need to do such tweaking and recompiling, and we fully expect to achieve a simulation of a generous and untiring robotic research librarian. Onward and upward in this brave new world.

First come first serve. There is no charge.  
Place requests with <Kouroo@kouroo.info>. Arrgh.