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The Hall of Fantasy

Nathaniel Hawthorne

*1 It has happened to me, on various occasions, to find myself in a certain edifice which would appear to have some of the characteristics of a public exchange. Its interior is a spacious hall, with a pavement of white marble. Overhead is a lofty dome, supported by long rows of pillars of fantastic architecture, the idea of which was probably taken from the Moorish ruins of the Alhambra, or perhaps from some enchanted edifice in the Arabian tales. The windows of this hall have a breadth and grandeur of

1 **"The Hall of Fantasy"** was originally published in the *Pioneer* in 1843. It was collected in *Mosses from an Old Manse* (1846), upon the second edition of which (1854) this text is based. *Pioneer* released only three issues, in January, February, and March of 1843, in two of which Hawthorne's work appeared: "The Hall of Fantasy" in the second issue, and "The Birth-mark" in the third. (See Edwin D. Mead, "Lowell's *Pioneer*," *New England Magazine*, volume V, October 1891, pp. 235-248, available at http://books.google.com/books?id=TbUVAAAAYAAJ.) The original *Pioneer* edition differed substantially from later versions, mainly in that it included some short phrases and two long sections that were altered or cut from subsequent editions; those smaller changes are described in these footnotes, and the two long sections are reproduced in the Appendix below.

a public exchange – a building where local merchants meet to buy, sell, and do business

fantastic – fantastical; fanciful, whimsical, marvelous

the Moorish ruins of the Alhambra – Alhambra (the "red palace" in Arabic) was for several centuries the castle and fortress of the Moorish rulers of Granada in southern Spain. It is known as a masterpiece of Islamic architecture for its arches, columns, fountains, gardens, and intricate geometrical ornamentation. Washington Irving, a contemporary of Hawthorne's, immortalized the site in his book *Tales of the Alhambra* (1832), in which he attempted "to depict its half Spanish, half Oriental character; its mixture of the heroic, the poetic, and the grotesque; to revive the traces of grace and beauty fast fading from its walls; to record the regal and chivalrous traditions concerning those who once trod its courts; and the whimsical and superstitious legends of the motley race now burrowing among its ruins." According to Irving, Moorish tradition held that the king who founded Alhambra conjured by magic and alchemy the treasury of gold needed to build the palace.

Arabian tales – The *Arabian Nights*, or *One Thousand and One Nights*, a collection of Middle Eastern and South Asian folk tales. Hawthorne had read these stories by the age of fifteen. (See Luther S. Luedtke, *Nathaniel Hawthorne and the Romance of the Orient* [Indiana, 1989], p. 51.)

design and an elaborateness of workmanship that have nowhere been equalled except in the Gothic cathedrals of the old world. Like their prototypes, too, they admit the light of heaven only through stained and pictured glass, thus filling the hall with many-colored radiance and painting its marble floor with beautiful or grotesque designs; so that its inmates breathe, as it were, a visionary atmosphere, and tread upon the fantasies of poetic minds. These peculiarities, combining a wilder mixture of styles than even an American architect usually recognizes as allowable,—Grecian, Gothic, Oriental, and nondescript,—cause the whole edifice to give the impression of a dream, which might be dissipated and shattered to fragments by merely stamping the foot upon the pavement. Yet, with such modifications and repairs as successive ages demand, the Hall of Fantasy is likely to endure longer than the most substantial structure that ever cumbered the earth.

*2 It is not at all times that one can gain admittance into this edifice, although most persons enter it at some period or other of their lives; if not in their waking moments, then by the universal passport of a dream. At my last visit I wandered thither unawares while my mind was busy with an idle tale, and was startled by the throng of people who seemed suddenly to rise up around me.

3 "Bless me! Where am I?" cried I, with but a dim recognition of the place.

*4 "You are in a spot," said a friend who chanced to be near at hand, "which occupies in the world of fancy the same position which the Bourse, the Rialto, and the Exchange do in the commercial world. All who have affairs in that mystic region, which lies above, below, or beyond the actual, may here meet and talk over the business of their dreams."

5 "It is a noble hall," observed I.

*6 "Yes," he replied. "Yet we see but a small portion of the edifice. In its upper stories are said to be apartments where the inhabitants of earth may hold converse with those of the moon; and beneath our feet are gloomy cells,

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inmates – inhabitants, dwellers. Note that the word was not used at this time to refer to prisoners in particular.

cumbered – encumbered; cluttered up, burdened

2 **if not in their waking moments, then by the universal passport of a dream** – This passage was added in editions subsequent to the original *Pioneer* version. (This is the only significant *addition* made after the *Pioneer* version; all of the other substantial revisions consisted of cuts.)

4 **the Bourse, the Rialto, and the Exchange** – places of commercial exchange in Paris, Venice, and Bristol, respectively

6 **converse** – conversation

which communicate with the infernal regions, and where monsters and chimeras are kept in confinement and fed with all unwholesomeness."

*7 In niches and on pedestals around about the hall stood the statues or busts of men who in every age have been rulers and demigods in the realms of imagination and its kindred regions. The grand old countenance of Homer; the shrunken and decrepit form but vivid face of Æsop; the dark presence of Dante; the wild Ariosto; Rabelais' smile of deep-wrought mirth; the profound, pathetic humor of Cervantes; the all-glorious Shakspeare; Spenser, meet guest for an allegoric structure; the severe divinity of Milton; and Bunyan, moulded of homeliest clay, but instinct

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the infernal regions – hell, the underworld

chimeras – mythical creatures composed of portions of different animals (for example, the body of a lion with a goat head on its back and a serpent for a tail)

7 **countenance** – face; facial appearance or expression

Homer ... Arthur Mervyn. – References to various canonical and recently contemporary Western storytellers: Homer (ca. 8th century B.C.), ancient Greek author of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*; Æsop or Aesop (ca. 620–564 B.C.), ancient storyteller of *Aesop's Fables*; Dante Alighieri (ca. 1265–1321), Italian author of the *Divine Comedy*; Ludovico Ariosto (1474–1533), Italian author of *Orlando Furioso*; François Rabelais (ca. 1494–1553), French Renaissance author of *Gargantua and Pantagruel*; Miguel de Cervantes (1547–1616), Spanish author of *Don Quixote*; Shakspeare, an alternate spelling of the name of William Shakespeare (1564–1616); Edmund Spenser (ca. 1552–1599), English author of *The Faerie Queene*; John Milton (1608–1674), English author of *Paradise Lost*; John Bunyan (1628–1688), English author of *The Pilgrim's Progress*; Henry Fielding (1707–1754), English author and dramatist best known for the novel *Tom Jones*; Samuel Richardson (1689–1761), English novelist; Sir Walter Scott (1771–1832), Scottish novelist, playwright, and poet; and Charles Brockden Brown (1771–1810), American novelist, author of *Arthur Mervyn*.

mirth – the emotion usually following jest; cheer, merriment

pathetic – evocative of feeling and passion, especially sadness and sympathy

Spenser, meet guest for an allegoric structure – An allegory is a kind of symbol or metaphor. The "allegoric structure" here has at least two intertwined meanings. It refers to the building that is the setting for the story—a hall which is a physical structure for housing, among other things, authors and works of allegory. Meanwhile, this physical structure is itself an allegorical literary structure of the story (and, likewise, the whole story itself is structured as an allegory). In other words, the story is an allegorical depiction of a building for allegories—as also suggested by the play on words in the title "The Hall of Fantasy." "Meet" here means *fitting*; so to describe the poet Edmund Spenser, whose own works were heavily allegorical, as a "meet guest for an allegoric structure" is to joke that he is a suitable visitor to the Hall of Fantasy, as well as a suitable character for a story like "The Hall of Fantasy."

instinct – filled, imbued; inflamed

with celestial fire,—were those that chiefly attracted my eye. Fielding, Richardson, and Scott occupied conspicuous pedestals. In an obscure and shadowy niche was deposited the bust of our countryman, the author of Arthur Mervyn.

8 "Besides these indestructible memorials of real genius," remarked my companion, "each century has erected statues of its own ephemeral favorites in wood."

**9* "I observe a few crumbling relics of such," said I. "But ever and anon, I suppose, Oblivion comes with her huge broom and sweeps them all from the marble floor. But such will never be the fate of this fine statue of Goethe."

**10* "Nor of that next to it—Emanuel Swedenborg," said he. "Were ever two men of transcendent imagination more unlike?"

**11* In the centre of the hall springs an ornamental fountain, the water of which continually throws itself into new shapes and snatches the most diversified hues from the stained atmosphere around. It is impossible to conceive what a strange vivacity is imparted to the scene by the magic dance of this fountain, with its endless transformations, in which the imaginative beholder may discern what form he will. The water is supposed by some to flow from the same source as the Castalian spring, and is extolled by others as uniting the virtues of the Fountain of Youth with those of many other enchanted wells long celebrated in tale and song. Having never tasted it, I can bear no testimony to its quality.

12 "Did you ever drink this water?" I inquired of my friend.

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deposited – The original *Pioneer* edition here used the word "reposited," which generally refers to a *thing* deposited or stored for safekeeping, whereas "deposited" often refers specifically to the storage of money. The word was changed in subsequent editions approved by Hawthorne. Some modern editions opt to use the original "reposited."

9 **ever and anon** – every now and then

Goethe – Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832), German writer, artist, and politician, best known for the epic poem *Faust*

10 **Emanuel Swedenborg –** 1688–1772; Swedish scientist, philosopher, and Christian theologian, sometimes described as a mystic. He founded a religious sect that still exists today.

11 **vivacity** – vivaciousness; an aesthetic quality of vibrance, liveliness, or spiritedness

the Castalian spring – a spring near the sanctuary of Delphi used for ritual cleansing and poetic inspiration

the Fountain of Youth – a legendary spring that restores youth to anyone who drinks from it (see also Hawthorne's story "Dr. Heidegger's Experiment")

13 "A few sips now and then," answered he. "But there are men here who make it their constant beverage—or, at least, have the credit of doing so. In some instances it is known to have intoxicating qualities."

14 "Pray let us look at these water drinkers," said I.

*15 So we passed among the fantastic pillars till we came to a spot where a number of persons were clustered together in the light of one of the great stained windows, which seemed to glorify the whole group as well as the marble that they trod on. Most of them were men of broad foreheads, meditative countenances, and thoughtful, inward eyes; yet it required but a trifle to summon up mirth, peeping out from the very midst of grave and lofty musings. Some strode about, or leaned against the pillars of the hall, alone and in silence; their faces wore a rapt expression, as if sweet music were in the air around them or as if their inmost souls were about to float away in song. One or two, perhaps, stole a glance at the bystanders, to watch if their poetic absorption were observed. Others stood talking in groups, with a liveliness of expression, a ready smile, and a light, intellectual laughter, which showed how rapidly the shafts of wit were glancing to and fro among them.

*16 A few held higher converse, which caused their calm and melancholy souls to beam moonlight from their eyes. As I lingered near them,—for I felt an inward attraction towards these men, as if the sympathy of feeling, if not of genius, had united me to their order,—my friend mentioned several of their names. The world has likewise heard those names; with some it has been familiar for years; and others are daily making their way deeper into the universal heart.

*17 "Thank Heaven," observed I to my companion, as we passed to another part of the hall, "we have done with this techy, wayward, shy, proud,

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15 **broad foreheads** – (seen as a sign of intelligence)

shafts – *as of light*: beams, rays

... glancing to and fro among them. – In the original 1843 *Pioneer* edition, another sentence followed this: "In the most vivacious of these, I recognised Holmes." This was presumably a reference to Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr. (1809–1894), the physician, poet, author, and later friend of Hawthorne. The passage was removed from subsequent editions.

16 **... others are daily making their way deeper into the universal heart.** – In the original 1843 *Pioneer* edition, this passage continued with several more paragraphs. See "Deletion A" in the Appendix below.

17 **have done with** – *that is*, are done with

techy – tetchy: testy or touchy; easily irritated or annoyed

unreasonable set of laurel gatherers. I love them in their works, but have little desire to meet them elsewhere."

*18 "You have adopted an old prejudice, I see," replied my friend, who was familiar with most of these worthies, being himself a student of poetry, and not without the poetic flame. "But, so far as my experience goes, men of genius are fairly gifted with the social qualities; and in this age there appears to be a fellow-feeling among them which had not heretofore been developed. As men, they ask nothing better than to be on equal terms with their fellow-men; and as authors, they have thrown aside their proverbial jealousy, and acknowledge a generous brotherhood."

19 "The world does not think so," answered I. "An author is received in general society pretty much as we honest citizens are in the Hall of Fantasy. We gaze at him as if he had no business among us, and question whether he is fit for any of our pursuits."

*20 "Then it is a very foolish question," said he. "Now, here are a class of men whom we may daily meet on 'Change. Yet what poet in the hall is more a fool of fancy than the sagest of them?"

*21 He pointed to a number of persons, who, manifest as the fact was, would have deemed it an insult to be told that they stood in the Hall of Fantasy. Their visages were traced into wrinkles and furrows, each of which seemed the record of some actual experience in life. Their eyes had the shrewd, calculating glance which detects so quickly and so surely all that it concerns a man of business to know about the characters and purposes of his fellow-men. Judging them as they stood, they might be honored and trusted members of the Chamber of Commerce, who had found the genuine secret of wealth and whose sagacity gave them the command of fortune. There was a character of detail and matter of fact in their talk which concealed the extravagance of its purport, insomuch that the wildest schemes had the aspect of every-day realities. Thus the listener was not startled at the idea of cities to be built, as if by magic, in the heart of pathless forests; and of streets to be laid out where now the sea was tossing; and of mighty rivers to be staid in their courses in order to turn the machinery of a cotton mill. It was only by an effort, and scarcely then, that the mind convinced itself that such speculations were as

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laurel – an emblem of distinction or achievement

18 **worthies** – esteemed persons

20 **'Change** – the Exchange (see notes for paragraphs 1 and 4)

21 **purport** – purpose or meaning

staid – stayed

much matter of fantasy as the old dream of Eldorado, or as Mammon's Cave, or any other vision of gold ever conjured up by the imagination of needy poet or romantic adventurer.

22 "Upon my word," said I, "it is dangerous to listen to such dreamers as these. Their madness is contagious."

23 "Yes," said my friend, "because they mistake the Hall of Fantasy for actual brick and mortar and its purple atmosphere for unsophisticated sunshine. But the poet knows his whereabout, and therefore is less likely to make a fool of himself in real life."

24 "Here again," observed I, as we advanced a little farther, "we see another order of dreamers, peculiarly characteristic, too, of the genius of our country."

**25* These were the inventors of fantastic machines. Models of their contrivances were placed against some of the pillars of the hall, and afforded good emblems of the result generally to be anticipated from an attempt to reduce daydreams to practice. The analogy may hold in morals as well as physics; for instance, here was the model of a railroad through the air and a tunnel under the sea. Here was a machine—stolen, I believe—for the distillation of heat from moonshine; and another for the condensation of morning mist into square blocks of granite, wherewith it was proposed to rebuild the entire Hall of Fantasy. One man exhibited a sort of lens whereby he had succeeded in making sunshine out of a lady's smile; and it was his purpose wholly to irradiate the earth by means of this wonderful invention.

26 "It is nothing new," said I; "for most of our sunshine comes from woman's smile already."

27 "True," answered the inventor; "but my machine will secure a constant supply for domestic use; whereas hitherto it has been very precarious."

**28* Another person had a scheme for fixing the reflections of objects in a pool of water, and thus taking the most lifelike portraits imaginable; and the same gentleman demonstrated the practicability of giving a permanent dye to ladies' dresses, in the gorgeous clouds of sunset. There were at least fifty kinds of perpetual motion, one of which was applicable to the wits

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Eldorado – El Dorado (Spanish for "the golden one"), a legendary lost city of riches

Mammon's Cave – the cave full of treasures in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*

25 **afforded** – provided

emblems – representations

28 **fixing** – setting in place

in the gorgeous clouds ... – *that is*, from the gorgeous clouds

of newspaper editors and writers of every description. Professor Espy was here, with a tremendous storm in a gum-elastic bag. I could enumerate many more of these Utopian inventions; but, after all, a more imaginative collection is to be found in the patent office at Washington.

*29 Turning from the inventors we took a more general survey of the inmates of the hall. Many persons were present whose right of entrance appeared to consist in some crotchet of the brain, which, so long as it might operate, produced a change in their relation to the actual world. It is singular how very few there are who do not occasionally gain admittance on such a score, either in abstracted musings, or momentary thoughts, or bright anticipations, or vivid remembrances; for even the actual becomes ideal, whether in hope or memory, and beguiles the dreamer into the Hall of Fantasy. Some unfortunates make their whole abode and business here, and contract habits which unfit them for all the real employments of life. Others—but these are few—possess the faculty, in their occasional visits, of discovering a purer truth than the world can impart among the lights and shadows of these pictured windows.

*30 And with all its dangerous influences, we have reason to thank God that there is such a place of refuge from the gloom and chillness of actual life. Hither may come the prisoner, escaping from his dark and narrow cell and cankerous chain, to breathe free air in this enchanted atmosphere. The sick man leaves his weary pillow, and finds strength to wander hither, though his wasted limbs might not support him even to the threshold of his chamber. The exile passes through the Hall of Fantasy to revisit his native soil. The burden of years rolls down from the old man's shoulders the moment that the door uncloses. Mourners leave their heavy sorrows at the entrance, and here rejoin the lost ones whose faces would else be seen no more, until thought shall have become the only fact. It may be said, in truth, that there is but half a life—the meaner and earthlier half—for those who never find their way into the hall. Nor must I fail to mention that in the observatory of the edifice

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Professor Espy – James Pollard Espy (1785–1860), an American meteorologist known as the Storm King

29 **crotchet** – a whimsical or strange idea, typically trivial but opposed to conventional wisdom (*as in* crotchety)

singular – remarkable

30 **cankerous** – *here meant both literally and figuratively*: causing sores or rot

meaner – lower; shabbier; less important

is kept that wonderful perspective glass, through which the shepherds of the Delectable Mountains showed Christian the far-off gleam of the Celestial City. The eye of Faith still loves to gaze through it.

*31 "I observe some men here," said I to my friend, "who might set up a strong claim to be reckoned among the most real personages of the day."

*32 "Certainly," he replied. "If a man be in advance of his age, he must be content to make his abode in this hall until the lingering generations of his fellow-men come up with him. He can find no other shelter in the universe. But the fantasies of one day are the deepest realities of a future one."

33 "It is difficult to distinguish them apart amid the gorgeous and bewildering light of this hall," rejoined I. "The white sunshine of actual life is necessary in order to test them. I am rather apt to doubt both men and their reasonings till I meet them in that truthful medium."

34 "Perhaps your faith in the ideal is deeper than you are aware," said my friend. "You are at least a democrat; and methinks no scanty share of such faith is essential to the adoption of that creed."

*35 Among the characters who had elicited these remarks were most of the noted reformers of the day, whether in physics, politics, morals, or religion. There is no surer method of arriving at the Hall of Fantasy than to throw one's self into the current of a theory; for, whatever landmarks of fact may be set up along the stream, there is a law of nature that impels it thither. And let it be so; for here the wise head and capacious heart may do their work; and what is good and true becomes gradually hardened into fact, while error melts away and vanishes among the shadows of the hall. Therefore may none who believe and rejoice in the progress of mankind be angry with me because I recognized their apostles and leaders amid the fantastic radiance

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perspective glass ... gleam of the Celestial City – References to John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* (1678), whose protagonist is named Christian. The Delectable Mountains are a place of rest for travelers on their way to the Celestial City, a symbol for Heaven. When the pilgrims stop there, the shepherds of the Mountains give them a telescope (perspective glass). Through it, they catch a glimpse of the Celestial City, though their shaking hands prevent them from seeing clearly. Then the travelers sing this song:

Thus by the shepherds secrets are reveal'd,
Which from all other men are kept concealed:
Come to the shepherds then, if you would see
Things deep, things hid, and that mysterious be.

31 **personages** – notable persons

32 **in advance of his age** – *that is*, ahead of his time

35 **capacious** – spacious; big

of those pictured windows. I love and honor such men as well as they.

*36 It would be endless to describe the herd of real or self-styled reformers that peopled this place of refuge. They were the representatives of an unquiet period, when mankind is seeking to cast off the whole tissue of ancient custom like a tattered garment. Many of them had got possession of some crystal fragment of truth, the brightness of which so dazzled them that they could see nothing else in the wide universe. Here were men whose faith had imbodied itself in the form of a potato; and others whose long beards had a deep spiritual significance. Here was the abolitionist, brandishing his one idea like an iron flail. In a word, there were a thousand shapes of good and evil, faith and infidelity, wisdom and nonsense—a most incongruous throng.

*37 Yet, withal, the heart of the stanchest conservative, unless he abjured his fellowship with man, could hardly have helped throbbing in sympathy with the spirit that pervaded these innumerable theorists. It was good for

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... I love and honor such men as well as they. – In the original 1843 *Pioneer* edition, this passage continued with several more paragraphs. See "Deletion B" in the Appendix below.

36 **peopled** – populated

tissue – A fabric, made of fine or rich material, intricately interwoven. The figurative use refers especially to a tangled web of falsehoods or absurdities.

men whose faith had imbodied itself in the form of a potato – "imbodied": embodied; gave concrete form to. This sentence gives a literal depiction to the utopian reformers of Hawthorne's day who sought piety in a life of farming. Hawthorne himself was a founding member of Brook Farm, one of many experimental communes devoted to such a life; he left after less than a year.

flail – A manual threshing device composed of a long handle, usually wooden, and a free-swinging stick attached to its end. The flail is an ancient tool, and alongside the shepherd's crook it served in Ancient Egypt as a symbol for the power of the pharaoh. Considering the ends to which that power was put—along with the alternate meaning of "flail" as a lash or whip, or as a verb for whipping—this is a harshly ironic metaphor for the zeal of opponents of slavery.

... —a most incongruous throng. – In the original 1843 *Pioneer* edition, this sentence concluded, "—a most incongruous throng, among whom I must not forget to mention Mrs. Abigail Folsom, though by no means as a type of the whole." Folsom (ca. 1792–1867) was a reformer "notorious for disrupting antislavery meetings in high-pitched rants," as the modern scholar Charles E. Morris III puts it. As with all of the other references to contemporary figures in the original *Pioneer* edition, this one was removed when the story was collected in *Mosses from an Old Manse*.

37 **withal** – nevertheless

stanchest – staunchest

abjured – forswore, solemnly renounced

the man of unquickened heart to listen even to their folly. Far down beyond the fathom of the intellect the soul acknowledged that all these varying and conflicting developments of humanity were united in one sentiment. Be the individual theory as wild as fancy could make it, still the wiser spirit would recognize the struggle of the race after a better and purer life than had yet been realized on earth. My faith revived even while I rejected all their schemes. It could not be that the world should continue forever what it has been; a soil where Happiness is so rare a flower and Virtue so often a blighted fruit; a battle field where the good principle, with its shield flung above its head, can hardly save itself amid the rush of adverse influences. In the enthusiasm of such thoughts I gazed through one of the pictured windows, and, behold! the whole external world was tinged with the dimly glorious aspect that is peculiar to the Hall of Fantasy, insomuch that it seemed practicable at that very instant to realize some plan for the perfection of mankind. But, alas! if reformers would understand the sphere in which their lot is cast they must cease to look through pictured windows. Yet they not only use this medium, but mistake it for the whitest sunshine.

*38 "Come," said I to my friend, starting from a deep revery, let us hasten hence or I shall be tempted to make a theory, after which there is little hope of any man."

39 "Come hither, then," answered he. "Here is one theory that swallows up and annihilates all others."

*40 He led me to a distant part of the hall where a crowd of deeply attentive auditors were assembled round an elderly man of plain, honest, trustworthy aspect. With an earnestness that betokened the sincerest faith in his own doctrine, he announced that the destruction of the world was close at hand.

*41 "It is Father Miller himself!" exclaimed I.

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unquickened – hard; unlively

aspect – appearance; also, way of looking

38 **starting** – suddenly awaking or jumping from a state of rest

40 **auditors** – listeners

41 **Father Miller** – William Miller (1782–1849) was an American preacher and the founder of the Adventist movement. Starting in the 1820s, he predicted the return of Christ—eventually estimating that the Second Coming would fall between March 1843 and March 1844. In preparation for His return, Miller held revivals around the United States—but when March 1844 came and went, he admitted that his calculations were a little off and revised his prediction of the Advent to October 22, 1844. Many Adventists sold all their belongings and neglected to harvest their crops that year. Signs and wonders were enthusiastically reported. But October 23 dawned to no new millennium. Today's Seventh-day Adventist Church is descended from the movement Miller began.

42 "No less a man," said my friend; "and observe how picturesque a contrast between his dogma and those of the reformers whom we have just glanced at. They look for the earthly perfection of mankind and are forming schemes which imply that the immortal spirit will be connected with a physical nature for innumerable ages of futurity. On the other hand, here comes good Father Miller, and with one puff of his relentless theory scatters all their dreams like so many withered leaves upon the blast."

**43* "It is, perhaps, the only method of getting mankind out of the various perplexities into which they have fallen," I replied. "Yet I could wish that the world might be permitted to endure until some great moral shall have been evolved. A riddle is propounded. Where is the solution? The sphinx did not slay herself until her riddle had been guessed. Will it not be so with the world? Now, if it should be burned tomorrow morning, I am at a loss to know what purpose will have been accomplished, or how the universe will be wiser or better for our existence and destruction."

44 "We cannot tell what mighty truths may have been imbodied in act through the existence of the globe and its inhabitants," rejoined my companion. "Perhaps it may be revealed to us after the fall of the curtain over our catastrophe; or not impossibly, the whole drama, in which we are involuntary actors, may have been performed for the instruction of another set of spectators. I cannot perceive that our own comprehension of it is at all essential to the matter. At any rate, while our view is so ridiculously narrow and superficial it would be absurd to argue the continuance of the world from the fact that it seems to have existed hitherto in vain."

45 "The poor old earth," murmured I. "She has faults enough, in all conscience, but I cannot bear to have her perish."

**46* "It is no great matter," said my friend. "The happiest of us has been weary of her many a time and oft."

**47* "I doubt it," answered I, pertinaciously; "the root of human nature strikes down deep into this earthly soil, and it is but reluctantly that we submit to be transplanted, even for a higher cultivation in heaven. I query whether the destruction of the earth would gratify any one individual,

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43 **sphinx –** According to Greek mythology, the Sphinx was a half-cat, half-woman who guarded the gate to Thebes. Anyone who wished to pass had to answer a riddle posed by the Sphinx. If the traveler was wrong, the Sphinx killed him; if he succeeded, the Sphinx would kill herself.

46 **oft** – often

47 **pertinaciously** – tenaciously, obstinately, stubbornly

except perhaps some embarrassed man of business whose notes fall due a day after the day of doom."

*48 Then methought I heard the expostulating cry of a multitude against the consummation prophesied by Father Miller. The lover wrestled with Providence for his foreshadowed bliss. Parents entreated that the earth's span of endurance might be prolonged by some seventy years, so that their new-born infant should not be defrauded of his lifetime. A youthful poet murmured because there would be no posterity to recognize the inspiration of his song. The reformers, one and all, demanded a few thousand years to test their theories, after which the universe might go to wreck. A mechanician, who was busied with an improvement of the steam engine, asked merely time to perfect his model. A miser insisted that the world's destruction would be a personal wrong to himself, unless he should first be permitted to add a specified sum to his enormous heap of gold. A little boy made dolorous inquiry whether the last day would come before Christmas, and thus deprive him of his anticipated dainties. In short, nobody seemed satisfied that this mortal scene of things should have its close just now. Yet, it must be confessed, the motives of the crowd for desiring its continuance were mostly so absurd that unless infinite Wisdom had been aware of much better reasons, the solid earth must have melted away at once.

49 For my own part, not to speak of a few private and personal ends, I really desired our old mother's prolonged existence for her own dear sake.

*50 "The poor old earth!" I repeated. "What I should chiefly regret in her destruction would be that very earthliness which no other sphere or state of existence can renew or compensate. The fragrance of flowers and of new-mown hay; the genial warmth of sunshine, and the beauty of a sunset among clouds; the comfort and cheerful glow of the fireside; the deliciousness of fruits and of all good cheer; the magnificence of mountains, and seas, and cataracts, and the softer charm of rural scenery; even the fast falling snow and the gray atmosphere through which it descends—all these and innumerable other enjoyable things of earth, must perish with her. Then the country frolics; the homely humor; the broad, open-mouthed roar of

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48 **expostulating** – protesting
defrauded – swindled; deprived
mechanician – skilled mechanic; engineer
dolorous – sorrowful
dainties – delicacies; fancy foods

50 **cataracts** – waterfalls or river rapids

laughter, in which body and soul conjoin so heartily! I fear that no other world can show us any thing just like this. As for purely moral enjoyments, the good will find them in every state of being. But where the material and the moral exist together, what is to happen then? And then our mute four-footed friends and the winged songsters of our woods! Might it not be lawful to regret them, even in the hallowed groves of paradise?"

51 "You speak like the very spirit of earth, imbued with a scent of freshly turned soil," exclaimed my friend.

52 "It is not that I so much object to giving up these enjoyments on my own account," continued I, "but I hate to think that they will have been eternally annihilated from the list of joys."

53 "Nor need they be," he replied. "I see no real force in what you say. Standing in this Hall of Fantasy, we perceive what even the earth-clogged intellect of man can do in creating circumstances which, though we call them shadowy and visionary, are scarcely more so than those that surround us in actual life. Doubt not then that man's disimbodied spirit may recreate time and the world for itself, with all their peculiar enjoyments, should there still be human yearnings amid life eternal and infinite. But I doubt whether we shall be inclined to play such a poor scene over again."

54 "O, you are ungrateful to our mother earth!" rejoined I. "Come what may, I never will forget her! Neither will it satisfy me to have her exist merely in idea. I want her great, round, solid self to endure interminably, and still to be peopled with the kindly race of man, whom I uphold to be much better than he thinks himself. Nevertheless, I confide the whole matter to Providence, and shall endeavor so to live that the world may come to an end at any moment without leaving me at a loss to find foothold somewhere else."

55 "It is an excellent resolve," said my companion, looking at his watch. "But come; it is the dinner hour. Will you partake of my vegetable diet?"

**56* A thing so matter-of-fact as an invitation to dinner, even when the fare was to be nothing more substantial than vegetables and fruit, compelled us forthwith to remove from the Hall of Fantasy. As we passed out of the portal we met the spirits of several persons who had been sent thither in magnetic sleep. I

56 **magnetic sleep** – A contemporary term for hypnotism. The original *Pioneer* edition read, "…several persons whom Dr. Collyer had sent thither in magnetic sleep." This was a reference to the English-born Robert Hanham Collyer (1814–ca. 1891), a mesmerist, touring lecturer, and author of the 1842 *Manual of Phrenology*, who had some correspondence and acquaintance around this time with Edgar Allan Poe and Charles Dickens. The reference to Dr. Collyer was removed from subsequent editions.

looked back among the sculptured pillars and at the transformations of the gleaming fountain, and almost desired that the whole of life might be spent in that visionary scene where the actual world, with its hard angles, should never rub against me, and only be viewed through the medium of pictured windows. But for those who waste all their days in the Hall of Fantasy good Father Miller's prophecy is already accomplished, and the solid earth has come to an untimely end. Let us be content, therefore, with merely an occasional visit, for the sake of spiritualizing the grossness of this actual life, and prefiguring to ourselves a state in which the Idea shall be all in all.

grossness – materiality, tangibility, the coarse and solid reality of matter

prefiguring – foreshadowing; imagining beforehand

* * * * *

APPENDIX

Sections Cut from the story by Hawthorne

Hawthorne made a number of changes to his 1843 story "The Hall of Fantasy" when he collected it in the 1846 *Mosses from an Old Manse*—the lengthiest revisions he made to any of the stories included in that collection. The smaller changes are all reflected in the notes above. The text of two larger deletions is reproduced below.

Deletion A

[Continuing from Paragraph 16]

> Bryant had come hither from his editor's room, his face no longer wrinkled by political strife, but with such a look as if his soul were full of the Thanatopsis, or of those beautiful stanzas on the Future Life. Percival, whom to see is like catching a glimpse of some shy bird of the woods, had shrunk into the deepest shadow that he could find. Dana was also there; though, for a long time back, the public has been none the richer for his visits to the Hall of Fantasy; but, in his younger days, he descended to its gloomiest caverns, and brought thence a treasure of dark, distempered stories. Halleck, methought, had strayed into this purple atmosphere rather by way of amusement, than because the strong impulse of his nature compelled him hither; and Willis, though he had an indefeasible right of entrance, looked so much like a man of the world, that he seemed hardly to belong here. Sprague had stept across from the Globe Bank,

with his pen behind his ear. Pierpont had come hither in the hope, I suppose, of allaying the angry glow of controversy; a fire unmeet for such an altar as a poet's kindly heart.

In the midst of these famous people, I beheld the figure of a friend, whom I fully believed to be thousands of leagues away. His glance was thrown upward to the lofty dome, as who should say, Excelsior.

"It is Longfellow!" I exclaimed. "When did he return from Germany?"

"His least essential part—that is to say, his physical man—is probably there at this moment, under a water-spout," replied my companion. "But wherever his body may be, his soul will find its way into the Hall of Fantasy. See; there is Washington Irving too, whom all the world supposes to be enacting the grave character of Ambassador to Spain."

And, indeed, there stood the renowned Geoffry Crayon, in the radiance of a window, which looked like the pictured symbol of his own delightful fancy. Mr. Cooper had chosen to show himself in a more sombre light, and was apparently meditating a speech in some libel case, rather than a scene of such tales as have made him a foremost man in this enchanted hall. But, woe is me! I tread upon slippery ground, among these poets and men of imagination, whom perhaps it is equally hazardous to notice, or to leave undistinguished in the throng. Would that I could emblazon all their names in star-dust! Let it suffice to mention indiscriminately such as my eye chanced to fall upon. There was Washington Allston, who possesses the freedom of the hall by the threefold claim of painter, novelist, and poet; and John Neal, whose rampant muse belches wild-fire, with huge volumes of smoke; and Lowell, the poet of the generation that now enters upon the stage. The young author of Dolon was here, involved in a deep mist of metaphysical fantasies. Epes Sargent and Mr. Tuckerman had come hither to engage contributors for their respective magazines. Hillard was an honorary member of the poetic band, as editor of Spenser, though he might well have preferred a claim on his own account. Mr. Poe had gained ready admittance for the sake of his imagination, but was threatened with ejectment, as belonging to the obnoxious class of critics.

There were a number of ladies among the tuneful and imaginative crowd. I know not whether their tickets of admission were signed with the authentic autograph of Apollo; but, at all events, they had an undoubted right of entrance by courtesy. Miss Sedgwick was an honored guest, although the atmosphere of the Hall of Fantasy is not precisely the light in which she appears to most advantage. Finally, I saw Mr. Rufus Griswold, with pencil and memorandum-book, busily noting down the names of all the poets and poetesses there, and likewise of some, whom nobody but himself had suspected of ever visiting the hall.

The references here are to a variety of contemporary literary figures from the Northeast or nearby regions, most from Massachusetts or New England: William Cullen Bryant (1794–1878), poet of "Thanatopsis" (1817) and "The Future Life"

(1837); James Gates Percival (1795–1856), poet and sufferer of bipolar disorder; Richard Henry Dana, Sr. (1787–1879), author of a series of Gothic stories in the early 1820s, and early critic of the Transcendentalist and Romantic movements; Fitz-Greene Halleck (1790–1867), poet and satirist; Nathaniel Parker Willis (1806–1867), poet and playwright, later travel writer and magazine impresario, and for a time the most highly paid and among the most popular magazine writers in the U.S., although by this time his celebrity was already beginning to fade; Charles Sprague (1791–1875), poet and career banker, known as the "Banker Poet of Boston"; John Pierpont (1785–1866), poet and Unitarian minister, at the time a subject of controversy for his outspoken views in favor of temperance and abolition; Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807–1882), poet of "Excelsior" (1841), friend of Hawthorne, and frequent traveler to Europe, including from April to October 1842; Washington Irving (1783–1859), U.S. ambassador to Spain (1842–1846), author, and essayist, published frequently under the pseudonym Geoffrey Crayon (which Hawthorne misspells as "Geoffry"); James Fenimore Cooper (1789–1851), author of *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826), who filed a series of libel suits against his critics; Washington Allston (1779–1843), member of the Romantic movement and family friend of the Hawthornes (see also the note for paragraph 74 of "The Artist of the Beautiful"); John Neal (1793–1876), fiction author and art and literary critic, noted for his caustic tone and outspoken political views; James Russell Lowell (1819–1891), Romantic poet, coeditor and cofounder of the *Pioneer* (the journal in which this story was originally published; see the note above for paragraph 1), and member of the Fireside Poets, which also included Bryant, Longfellow, and Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr. (see the note for paragraph 15); Charles King Newcomb (1820–1894), a Brook Farm resident along with Hawthorne (see the note for paragraph 36), whose only published work, the story "The First Dolon," appeared under the name "N." in the July 1842 edition of Ralph Waldo Emerson's *Dial* magazine; Epes Sargent (1813–1880), author and editor of various literary magazines; Henry Theodore Tuckerman (1813–1871), also author and editor; George Stillman Hillard (1808–1879), magazine editor, editor of an 1839 collection Edmund Spenser's poetry, and friend of and onetime landlord to Hawthorne; Edgar Allan Poe (1809–1849), author, poet, and literary critic; Catharine Sedgwick (1789–1867), a novelist regarded as a sentimentalist; and Rufus Griswold (1815–1857), poet, literary critic, and editor of the anthology *The Poets and Poetry of America*, the 1842 first edition of which seems to have included some selections Hawthorne found of dubious merit. The mention of Apollo is a reference to the ancient Greek god of, among other things, poetry.

Not only were many of these figures Hawthorne's contemporaries, but some mentioned critically in this passage were also published in the short-lived *Pioneer*, namely—besides editor James Russell Lowell, who published several items in his own journal—John Neal and Edgar Allan Poe. Most notably, the latter's famous story "The Tell-Tale Heart" originally appeared in the first issue, and his poem "Lenore" appeared in the second, along with this story, which was the lead piece for the issue.

Scholar Harold P. Miller has argued that this section was originally included as a way for Hawthorne to make his stories more engaged with reality, and particularly with contemporary life, than they had been before: "Although the tale affirms the superiority of fantasy over actuality, it insists on the dangers of ignoring actuality altogether. This time Hawthorne saw to it that his readers should not accuse him of losing himself utterly in dreams; for in introducing a large group of living persons, he

went further than he had ever gone before in flavoring his fantasy with the spice of contemporary life."

All of the removed passages described contemporaries of Hawthorne, and after these removals, no references to any contemporary figures remained in the story. Miller claims these references were removed in part because many of the choices already seemed odd by the time Hawthorne was composing *Mosses from an Old Manse*—a concern Hawthorne's narrator acknowledges, admitting that he treads "upon slippery ground, among these poets and men of imagination, whom perhaps it is equally hazardous to notice, or to leave undistinguished in the throng." Moreover, in anticipation of the release of *Mosses*, Hawthorne was hoping to avoid alienating literary figures whose support he would need. Indeed, he would go on to receive positive reviews from some of the figures named in this section, and later publication from some of the editors mentioned.

For further discussion on these omitted sections, see Harold P. Miller, "Hawthorne Surveys his Contemporaries," *American Literature*, vol. 12, no. 2, May 1940, pp. 228-235, available at http://www.jstor.org/stable/2920479.

Deletion B

[Continuing from Paragraph 35]

> There was a dear friend of mine among them, who has striven with all his might to wash away the blood-stain from the statute-book; and whether he finally succeed or fail, no philanthropist need blush to stand on the same footing with O'Sullivan.
>
> In the midst of these lights of the age, it gladdened me to greet my old friends of Brook Farm, with whom, though a recreant now, I had borne the heat of many a summer's day, while we labored together towards the perfect life. They seem so far advanced, however, in the realization of their idea, that their sun-burnt faces and toil-hardened frames may soon be denied admittance into the Hall of Fantasy. Mr. Emerson was likewise there, leaning against one of the pillars, and surrounded by an admiring crowd of writers and readers of the Dial, and all manner of Transcendentalists and disciples of the Newness, most of whom betrayed the power of his intellect by its modifying influence upon their own. He had come into the hall, in search, I suppose, either of a fact or a real man; both of which he was as likely to find there as elsewhere. No more earnest seeker after truth than he, and few more successful finders of it; although, sometimes, the truth assumes a mystic unreality and shadowyness in his grasp. In the same part of the hall, Jones Very stood alone, within a circle which no other of mortal race could enter, nor himself escape from.
>
> Here, also was Mr. Alcott, with two or three friends, whom his spirit had assimilated to itself and drawn to his New England home, though an ocean rolled between. There was no man in the enchanted hall, whose mere presence, the language of whose look and manner, wrought such an impression as that of this great mystic innovator. So calm and gentle was he, so holy in aspect, so quiet in the utterance of what his soul brooded

upon, that one might readily conceive his Orphic Sayings to well upward from a fountain in his breast, which communicated with the infinite abyss of Thought.

"Here is a prophet," cried my friend, with enthusiasm—"a dreamer, a bodiless idea amid our actual existence. Another age may recognise him as a man; or perhaps his misty apparition will vanish into the sunshine. It matters little; for his influence will have impregnated the atmosphere, and be imbibed by generations that know not the original apostle of the ideas, which they shall shape into earthly business. Such a spirit cannot pass through human life, yet leave mankind entirely as he found them!"

"At all events, he may count you as a disciple," said I, smiling; "and doubtless there is the spirit of a system in him, but not the body of it. I love to contrast him with that acute and powerful Intellect, who stands not far off."

"Ah, you mean Mr. Brownson!" replied my companion. "Pray Heaven he do not stamp his foot or raise his voice; for if he should, the whole fabric of the Hall of Fantasy will dissolve like a smoke-wreath! I wonder how he came here?"

The references here are to John L. O'Sullivan (1813–1895), Hawthorne's close friend, the editor of and a columnist for the *United States Magazine and Democratic Review*—in which many of the stories later collected in *Mosses from an Old Manse* first appeared—and an opponent of capital punishment; Brook Farm, a utopian commune of which Hawthorne was a founding member and a resident in 1841, though he soon departed, eventually resigned, and fictionalized the experience in his book *The Blithedale Romance* (1852); Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–1882), editor of the *Dial* magazine and highly influential leader of the Transcendentalist movement, including in his description of the power of freshly revealed truth as "the newness"; Jones Very (1813–1880), poet, literary scholar, and mystic, and likely a sufferer of bipolar disorder; Amos Bronson Alcott (1799–1888), teacher, reformer, abolitionist, women's rights advocate, and author of the "Orphic Sayings," a set of Transcendentalist aphorisms—the reference to his location across an ocean is likely to a trip he took in the summer of 1842 to visit the Alcott House, a utopian community outside of London founded by his admirers in accordance with his educational principles; and Orestes Brownson (1803–1876), a reformer, editor, and essayist noted for his frequently and sharply changing yet ardently defended beliefs.

Duke University Professor of English Buford Jones, expanding on another point argued by Harold P. Miller, notes that the introductory essay to *Mosses from an Old Manse*, describing Hawthorne's time living in the titular house in Concord, includes an even lengthier discussion of Emerson, as well as appearances by a few of the other literary figures mentioned in the original version. Jones and Miller suggest that Hawthorne might have considered these added discussions in *Mosses* to be substitutes for the sections that he for other reasons wished to remove from "The Hall of Fantasy."

It is also worth noting that the description in this section of Brook Farm's members as soon perhaps no longer belonging in the Hall of Fantasy could be interpreted to mean that their concerns are chiefly pragmatic; this, however, would

be in tension with their depiction in paragraph 36 as farming-oriented spiritualist reformers. An alternate interpretation of the description in this deleted section is that the Brook Farmers are so close to realizing their ideal that it soon will not actually be a fantasy anymore, even if it was originally fantastical.

Jones also draws attention to another conspicuous feature of the original version of the story: the complete absence in that list of contemporary literary figures of any mention of Henry David Thoreau (1817–1862), a recent friend of Hawthorne's at the time this story was composed and already a more notable figure than some that Hawthorne did mention (although Thoreau's most famous work, *Walden*, wasn't published until over a decade after "The Hall of Fantasy" appeared in print). Jones argues that this omission is because the unnamed companion of the narrator is in fact meant to be a stand-in for Thoreau. (See Buford Jones, "'The Hall of Fantasy' and the Early Hawthorne-Thoreau Relationship," *PMLA*, vol. 83, no. 5, October 1968, pp. 1429-1438, available at http://www.jstor.org/stable/2920479.)