

**THE PROFESSOR'S
SISTER;
A ROMANCE**

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The professor's sister; a romance by Julian Hawthorne

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JULIAN HAWTHORNE

**THE PROFESSOR'S
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THE
PROFESSOR'S SISTER

A ROMANCE

BY

JULIAN HAWTHORNE,

AUTHOR OF

"A DREAM AND A FORGETTING," "GARTH,"
"FORTUNE'S FOOL," "JOHN PARMELEN'S
CURSE," ETC., ETC.

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THE
PROFESSOR'S SISTER.

CHAPTER I.

METAPHYSICS.

"WHAT is memory, I should like to know?" said Will Burlace, using the end of his broad middle finger as a tobacco-stopper. "How does it work, Ralph, my boy? Do we remember everything in our experience, as some philosophers hold, or does each of us take out of the past only that which belongs to his character and temperament, or are recollection and oblivion a mere lottery, over which we have no control, or—"

"And what is the exact difference between memory and imagination?" I broke in. "We say the past has no existence: neither have the conceptions of the imagination. And I have heard of people imagining things until they believed them true."

"Yes, why not?" added Burlace, with a grin. "We are taught that the external world itself is but a prejudice of the mind. There is no reality but thought and will. Our present is a dream; our past and future are the ghosts of dreams. You cannot make out imagination to be anything less than that. We talk about the creations of poets and novelists, and it is notorious that many of the personages of fiction from Homer to Balzac, live with a vitality that would put to shame Methuselah, or Augustus the Strong. Where shall we draw the line?"

"The senses originate in the brain," continued I: "don't they end there as well? we may admit that we feel sensations, but how do we know that the feeling and the thing felt are not two visions of the same thing?"

"Look at ghosts, spectres, and the supernatural generally," said Burlace, blowing a cloud of smoke into fantastic shapes and waving his big hand through them. "What is the difference between a ghost and an ordinary human being?"

"As a general rule," said Ralph, who had been sitting meanwhile on his back and shoulders, with his slippered feet broad against the tall porcelain stove which, as everywhere in Germany, dominated the apartment, "as a general rule, the difference between a ghost

and an ordinary human being is this:—only one person sees the ghost, whereas the ordinary human being has been, is, or can be seen by whomsoever chooses to look at him. And a similar distinction might be drawn as between the contents of the memory and those of the imagination. If I tell you an incident of my past life, and you don't believe it, I can adduce living witnesses in support of my statement: but if I tell you a story, or a lie, and you are incredulous, I can only keep on lying."

"I would confess and repent, if I were you," interposed Burlace.

"What is that theory of yours about apparitions?" I inquired.

"Oh, it would take me too far back to explain that," answered Ralph lazily.

"It's one the professor told him, and he's forgotten it," Burlace asserted, winking at me across the table.

"The professor is a Buddhist," said Ralph. "For my part, I believe neither in re-incarnation, Karma, Devachan, Nirvana, nor the Astral light."

Burlace grinned again. "Nor in anything else!"

"Yes," returned Ralph, in the same lazy tone, "I believe in God, in the Divine inspiration of the Bible, in the Incarnation, in the im-

mortality of the soul, and in the possible intercourse between the dead and the living, among other things."

"A nice creed for the prize student of a German university! But I suppose you are lying, now."

"I am casting my pearls before Burlace, which is perhaps as bad."

"Well, to begin with, what is matter?"

"Matter is the attestation of the constancy of the relation between the Creator and the creature."

"Oh! and what is nature?"

"Nature is the analysis of human nature, projected on the sphere of sense by the creative energy."

"If that be the case," said I, "why does not the face of nature become modified in correspondence with our growth and development?"

"Well," returned Ralph, "doesn't it?"

"I haven't noticed it in my own experience," I replied.

"You would, if you were mankind. And even you furnish your room and dig your garden in accordance with your notion of the correct thing. But the great geological and cosmical changes, the variation and extinction of species, alterations of climate, and all matters of that calibre, follow and reflect the develop-