

LIFE OF NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

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Life of Nathaniel Hawthorne by Moncure D. Conway

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MONCURE D. CONWAY

**LIFE OF NATHANIEL
HAWTHORNE**

"Great Writers."

EDITED BY

PROFESSOR ERIC S. ROBERTSON, M.A.

LIFE OF HAWTHORNE.

LIFE
OF
NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

BY
MONCURE D. CONWAY

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PREFACE.

THERE are few authors with whom the world is more intimate than the one supposed to have most shunned its intimacy. But Nathaniel Hawthorne, though his peculiar sensibility shrank from men, loved mankind, and described his earliest writings as "attempts to open an intercourse with the world." In his works he has occasionally taken the world into his confidence in matters which most men of the world would veil—as in the opening chapter of "The Scarlet Letter." Like his own Hilda, in "Transformation," he was spiritually compelled to descend from his aerial hermitage, and unburden his heart in the world's confessional. And as, when Hilda had disappeared, a duplicate key admitted lover and contadina alike to her virginal chamber, Hawthorne's journals and letters have made a saloon of his retreat, and brought a flare of daylight into the twilight seclusion, where he sat at his beautiful task and fed his sacred lamp. But this prosaic light becomes tender and mystical as it reveals the infusion of his heart's blood in the pigments so refined into finished