THE GREAT STONE FACE AND OTHER TALES OF THE WHITE MOUNTAINS

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The Great Stone Face and Other Tales of the White Mountains by Nathaniel Hawthorne

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NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

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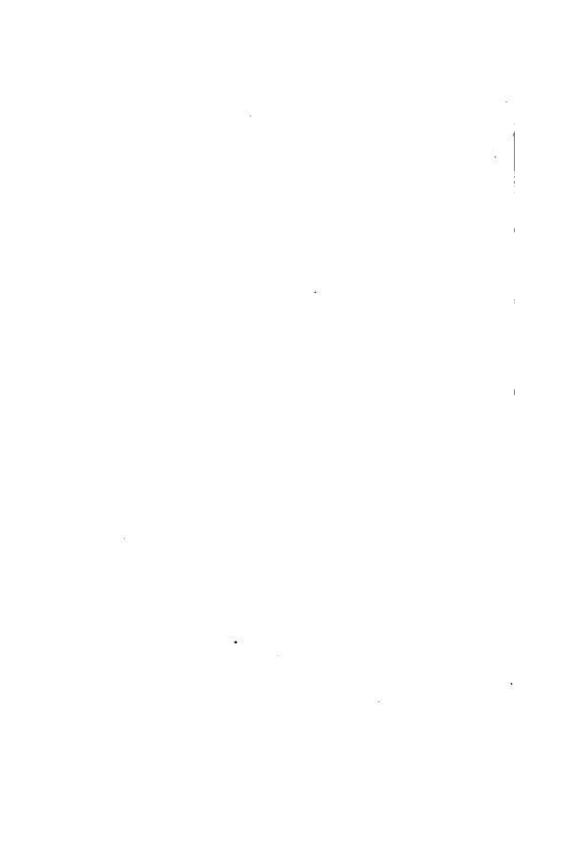


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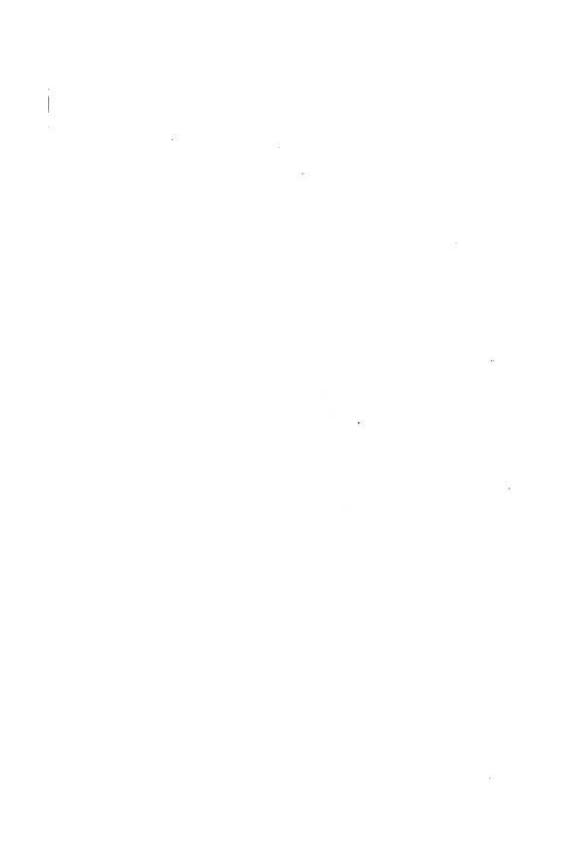
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INTRODUCTION.

The first three numbers in this collection are tales of the White Hills in New Hampshire. The passages from Sketches from Memory show that Hawthorne bad visited the mountains in one of his occasional rambles from home, but there are no entries in his Note Books which give accounts of such a visit. There is, however, among these notes the following interesting paragraph, written in 1840 and clearly foreshadowing The Great Stone Face:

"The semblance of a human face to be formed on the side of a mountain, or in the fracture of a small stone, by a lusus natura [freak of nature]. The face is an object of curiosity for years or centuries, and by and by a boy is born whose features gradually assume the aspect of that portrait. At some critical juncture the resemblance is found to be perfect. A prophecy may be connected."

It is not impossible that this conceit occurred to Hawthorne before he had himself seen the Old Man of the Mountain, or the Profile, in the Franconia Notch which is generally associated in the minds of readers with The Great Stone Face.

In The Ambitious Guest he has made use of the incident still told to travellers through the Notch, of the destruction of the Willey family in August, 1826. The house occupied by the family was on the slope of a mountain, and after a long drought there was a ter-