Hawthorne Centenary Essays
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Ohio State University Press
Introductory Note

When plans were being made for the Centenary Edition of the Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne, the general editors decided that for such an edition only textual and historical introductions were appropriate. However firmly rooted in historical understanding, critical studies, we decided, would not in their very nature have the staying power of the texts we should establish. Accordingly, the introductions to volumes to the Centenary Edition are meant to supply information relevant primarily to Hawthorne’s texts and their history. Still, we wanted to commemorate the centenary of Hawthorne’s death with a volume of studies which would show him and his work as they presently confront us. We trust that the texts of the Centenary Edition will make it all the surer that Hawthorne will not change. But surely his readers will. If there continues to be a Hawthorne problem, it is, as it always has been, a problem which he sets for his readers. The essays which follow offer so many solutions to that problem as it now stands, so many interpretations of “our” Hawthorne.

R. H. P.
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