

teaux and tramway rails. After a slow progress of fifteen miles another steamboat is met, and thence they follow the Athabasca, through Athabasca Lake, and so on up to a second rapids, on the Great Slave River this time, where oxen and carts carry them across a sixteen-mile portage to a screw steamer, which finishes the three-thousand-mile journey to the North. Of course the shorter branch routes, distributing the goods on either side of the main track, are still traversed by canoes and hardy fellows in the old way, but with shabby accessories of costume and spirit. These boatmen, when they come to a portage, produce their tomlines, and "pack" the goods to the next waterway. By means of these "lines" they carry great weights, resting on their backs, but supported from their skulls, over which the strong straps are passed.

The winter mail-packet, starting from Winnipeg in the depth of the season, goes to all the posts by dog train. The letters and papers are packed in great boxes and strapped to the sleds, beside or behind

which the drivers trot along, cracking their lashes and pelting and cursing the dogs. A more direct course than the old Lake Winnipeg way has usually been followed by this packet; but it is thought that the route *via* Edmonton and Athabasca Landing will serve better yet, so that another change may be made. This is a small exhibition as compared with the brigade that takes the supplies, or those others that come plashing down the streams and across the country with the furs every year. But only fancy how eagerly this solitary semiannual mail is waited for! It is a little speck on the snow-wrapped upper end of all North America. It cuts a tiny trail, and here and there lesser black dots move off from it to cut still slenderer threads, zigzagging to the side factories and lesser posts; but we may be sure that if human eyes could see so far, all those of the white men in all that vast tangled system of trading centres would be watching the little caravan, until at last each pair fell upon the expected missives from the throbbing world this side of the border.

## PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS OF NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE.

BY HORATIO BRIDGE

Third Paper.

### XII.

**I**MEDIATELY after General Pierce's election to the Presidency, in 1852, he offered Hawthorne the Liverpool consulate, an office then considered the most lucrative of all the foreign appointments in the Presidential gift, and soon after his inauguration he gave him that place.

In July, 1853, Hawthorne and his family sailed for England.

A few of his letters are here given, which speak of some of his annoyances at the prospect of his official emoluments being decreased by legislation, and of some other matters of public and private concern.

LIVERPOOL, March 30, 1854.

MY DEAR BRIDGE.—You are welcome home, and I heartily wish I could see Mrs. Bridge and yourself and little Marian by our English fireside.

I like my office well enough, but any official duties and obligations are irksome to me beyond expression. Nevertheless, the emoluments will be a sufficient inducement to keep

me here, though they are not above a quarter part what some people suppose them.

It sickens me to look back to America. I am sick to death of the continual fuss and tumult and excitement and bad blood which we keep up about political topics. If it were not for my children I should probably never return, but—after quitting office—should go to Italy, and live and die there. If Mrs. Bridge and you would go too, we might form a little colony amongst ourselves, and see our children grow up together. But it will never do to deprive them of their native land, which I hope will be a more comfortable and happy residence in their day than it has been in ours. In my opinion, we are the most miserable people on earth.

I wish you would send me the most minute particulars about Pierce—how he looks and behaves when you meet him, how his health and spirits are—and above all what the public really thinks of him. A point which I am utterly unable to get at through the newspapers. Give him my best regards, and ask him whether he finds his post any more comfortable than I prophesied it would be.

I have a great deal more to say, but defer it to future letters. Mrs. Hawthorne sends her