THE

LIFE AND POEMS

OF

EDGAR ALLAN POE.

(A NEW MEMOIR BY E. L. DIDIER.)

AND ADDITIONAL POEMS.

Poe's Cottage at Fordham.

NEW YORK:
W. J. WIDDLETON, PUBLISHER.
1877.
TO

WILLIAM J. McCLELLAN, ESQ.,

BALTIMORE.

In associating your name with mine in this tribute to a genius whom we both so enthusiastically admire, I desire to express my appreciation of the warm and generous interest, which, from first to last, you have taken in the Work, and, at the same time, to testify to our long and uninterrupted friendship.

EUGENE L. DIDIER.
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DURING the twenty-seven years that have passed since Edgar A. Poe's death, his fame has been steadily increasing and extending, but the world has remained in ignorance of the true story of the poet's life. The present memoir is as full and complete as it is possible to make it. Every person accessible to the writer, who possessed any information upon the subject, has been approached, and seldom in vain. Much fresh and interesting information has been obtained; many false statements, heretofore accepted without question, have been corrected.

The cordial thanks of the author are heartily tendered to Mrs. Sarah Helen Whitman, for her valuable Introductory Letter, and for extracts from Poe's letters to William J. McClellan, Esq., who, with characteristic generosity, placed at my disposal his entire collection of Poeana; to Professor Joseph H. Clarke, for his interesting sketch of
Edgar A. Poe, when his pupil at the Richmond Academy; to Colonel John T. L. Preston, of the Virginia Military Institute, and Andrew Johnston, Esq., of Richmond, for their reminiscences of Poe as a schoolboy; to Mr. William Wertenbaker, Librarian of the University of Virginia, and to Neilson Poe, Esq., for details of family history and personal recollections of the poet.

EUGENE L. DIDIER.

185 Madison Avenue,
Baltimore, August 1, 1876.
INTRODUCTORY LETTER.

MR. EUGENE L. DIDIER:

Dear Sir:—I am gratified to know that one who so sincerely admires the genius of Edgar Poe, and who must have access to many hitherto unexplored sources of information as to his early history and associates, is preparing to publish the result of his investigations in relation to a period concerning which we still know so little. I doubt not that whatever you may have to say on the subject will be of permanent value in the elucidation of a story whose facts are so singularly evasive and uncertain.

To translate that mysterious, shadowy, poetic life of his, with its elusive details and mythical traditions, into the fixed facts and clear outlines of authentic narrative, must, I fear, prove a difficult task to the most conscientious annalist.

In your letter of June 26, you say: “N. P. Willis speaks of Poe as living at Fordham while he was employed upon the Mirror, which was in the autumn of 1844 and early winter of 1845.” I have no certain knowledge of the time when Poe was employed on the Mirror; but I have a very definite and decided knowledge as to the fact that during the whole of the winter 1845-6, he was residing in the city of New York—I think in Amity Street. He was, at that time, a frequent visitor and ever-welcome guest at the houses
of many persons with whom I have long been intimately acquain
ted—among others, the Hon. John R. Bartlett, then of the firm of Bartlett & Welford, and Miss Anne C. Lynch, now Mrs. Botta—who were accustomed to receive informally at their houses, on stated evenings, the best intellectual society of the city. To reinforce my memory on the subject, I have just referred to letters received from various correspondents in New York, during the winters 1845 and 1846, in all of which the name of the poet frequently occurs.

In one of these letters, dated January 20, 1846, the writer says: "Speaking of our receptions, I must tell you what a pleasant one we had on Saturday evening, in Waverley Place; or rather I will tell you the names of some of the company, and you will know, among others, that of Cassius Clay; Mr. Hart, the sculptor, who is doing Henry Clay in marble; Hall-leck; Locke (the Man in the Moon); Hunt, of the Merchant's Magazine; Hudson; Mr. Bellows; Poe; Headley; Miss Sedgwick; Mrs. Kirkland; Mrs. Osgood; Mrs. Seba Smith; Mrs. Ellet; and many others, more or less distinguished."

One of these letters, in which the date of the year is wanting, alludes to a controversy, which took place at one of the soirees, between Margaret Fuller (Ossoli) and Poe, about some writer whom, in her lofty, autocratic way, the lady had been annihilating. Miss Fuller was then writing critical papers for the New York Tribune. Poe, espousing the cause of the vanquished, with a few keen, incisive rejoinders, obtained such ascendancy over the eloquent and oracular contessa, that somebody whispered, "The Raven has perched upon the casque of Pallas, and pulled all the feathers out of her cap."
In another letter, dated January 7, 1846, I find the following: "I meet Mr. Poe very often at the receptions. He is the observed of all observers. His stories are thought wonderful, and to hear him repeat the Raven, which he does very quietly, is an event in one's life. People seem to think there is something uncanny about him, and the strangest stories are told, and, what is more, believed, about his mesmeric experiences, at the mention of which he always smiles. His smile is captivating! . . . Everybody wants to know him; but only a very few people seem to get well acquainted with him."

This was in the spring of 1846, when Poe was at the very acme of his literary and social success among the literati of New York.

His wife's health, which had always been delicate, was now rapidly failing, and, hoping that she might be benefited by change of air, the family removed to Fordham. Mr. Poe first took his wife there on a house-hunting tour of inspection, when the fruit trees were in blossom, and the aspect of the little cottage temptingly beautiful to the invalid. Whether they engaged it and removed there at once, I do not know; but it is my impression that they did, and that Poe withdrew himself entirely from the literary circles where his presence had proved so attractive.

There had, moreover, arisen at this time, among Poe's friends and admirers, social as well as literary feuds and rivalries of an incredible bitterness, and an intense vitality—feuds and rivalries whose unappeased ghosts still "peep and mutter."

The malign paragraph, falsely attributed to Mrs. Elizabeth
INTRODUCTORY LETTER.

Oakes Smith, which recently went the rounds of the newspapers, was doubtless of this class. It was, apparently, an intentional perversion of a report stated by her in an able article, written for the *Home Journal*, which appeared early in March or April of the present year.

I do not hesitate to say, without appealing to her on the subject, that the scandal so industriously circulated was neither written nor authorized by her.* It is not only at variance with the whole tenor of the article in question, but with that of a private letter, written within the year, in which she says: "Mr. Poe was the last person to whom I should ever have attributed any grossness. . . . I saw women jealous in their admiration of him. I think he often found himself entangled by their plots and rivalries. I do not for a moment think he was false in his relations to them."

Moncure Conway, too, who had reason to know something of Poe's habits, in this particular, from gentlemen of Richmond who had been intimately associated with him, says, in a cordial notice of Mr. Ingram's Memoir, prefixed to the Standard edition of Poe's works: "Edgar Poe was exceptionally chivalrous in his relations with women," and he

* Since the above was written, the following note from Mrs. Smith has been received:

**Hollywood, Carteret Co., N. C.,**

*July 15, 1876.*

**Dear Mrs. Whitman:**

I should be loth to think that any one who had ever known me could believe that I wrote the coarse, slanderous paragraph which you quote from the newspapers in your letter of the 12th instant. I never saw nor heard of it till now. Mr. Poe was no such person as that would imply. Is it not strange that so much misrepresentation should still follow one so long in the grave? It is a tribute, but a cruel tribute, to the power of his marvelous genius.

E. O. S.
illustrates the remark by an anecdote corroborative of its truth. "The innumerable legends which accumulated round his life and name," says Mr. Conway, "were, in one sense, a tribute to his extraordinary powers. He is one of the few men who are represented by a mythology."

The persistent enmity, which follows his fame like a shadow, is without a parallel in the literary history of our country. While many of the old slanders have lost their pungency, Poe's memory continues to be assailed on the most baseless and preposterous pretexts. Apparently society needs a typical Don Giovanni, a representative Mephistopheles, to frighten reprobates and refractory children, and to point a pious moral.

The Rev. Dr. Bartol, of Boston, a most exemplary and benignant gentleman, of progressive views and liberal tendencies, lately illustrated an eloquent specimen of pulpit oratory, by denouncing Poe as "the unhappy master, who recklessly carried the torch of his genius into the haunts of the drunkard and the debauchee, until he utterly extinguished it in his profligate poems!" Evidently the good Doctor had not read these "profligate poems"—poems to which the severest moralist accords "a matchless purity." At what shrine, then, was the torch of his clerical criticism lighted? Probably he had been reading Mr. Francis Gerry Fairfield's "Mad Man of Letters," and vaguely associated with "the haunt of the drunkard," Sandy Welsh's cellar, the noonday glass of ale, the cotemporaries, and the joint-stock company who got up the Raven! Out of such materials is the scroll of history replenished!

Mr. George Parsons Lathrop, in a note to his article on "Poe, Irving, and Hawthorne," as published in *Scribner's*
Monthly for April, shows the heedless manner in which Mr. Fairfield cites his authorities.

"In his 'Mad Man of Letters,'" says Mr. Lathrop, "he quotes the testimony of Moreau de Tours as coincident with that of Maudsley in the assertion that the more original orders of genius are akin to madness." Mr. Lathrop says that Dr. Maudsley says nothing of the kind; that he admits that Poe's genius was akin to madness, but denies that it was genius of the highest kind.

However this may be—and we think Dr. Maudsley is not always luminous and consistent with himself on this obscure question—it may not be uninteresting to cite here what the learned alienist said in a somewhat rhetorical article on Edgar Allan Poe, written for the Journal of Mental Science, April, 1860. The purport of the article was to show that, with a nature so rarely and sensitively organized, developed under circumstances so exceptionally perilous, Poe's strange and sorrowful career was not only natural, but inevitable.

"Strange," says Dr. Maudsley, "how far back lies the origin of any event in this world! Remembering the young law student, the father of the poet, sitting, with rapt countenance, in the pit of the Baltimore Theater, and absorbed in the enchanting actress upon whom every eye was turned in admiration, one cannot help reflecting that in this supreme moment lay the germ of things which were to occupy the world's attention, so long, it may be, as it existed: Edgar Poe, his poetry, and the amazement of mankind at his strange, lurid, and irregular existence."

After this it matters little in what precise order or rank of the poetical hierarchy the Doctor accords him a place; his words are an involuntary tribute to a genius, "whose more
potency, dissociated from other elements," Mr. Lathrop admits to be "unrivaled and pre-eminent."

In connection with Dr. Maudsley's theory of antenatal influences, one of those strange coincidences which startled Macbeth as an intimation of "fate and metaphysical aid," happened to me yesterday.

Among a large collection of old plays and pamphlets, which, after lying perdu for half a century, I was just about to surrender to an importunate chiffonier, my eye fell upon one as worn and yellow as the priceless laces of a centennial belle. The title arrested me; it was "'The Wood Dæmon; or, the Clock has Struck!' a Grand, Romantic, Cabalistic Melodrama, in Three Acts, interspersed with Processions, Pageants, and Pantomimes [as performed at the Boston Theater with unbounded applause]. Boston: 1808." I turned the page with a premonitory chill, and lo! among the list of performers, I found the name of "Mr. Poe."

In a curious preface, dated March 30, 1808, the soi-disant "author," admitting that he had taken the plot, etc., etc., from M. G. Lewis, "commits his 'Wood Dæmon,' with all its defects, to the fostering bosom of an indulgent public, in the trembling hope that, as the production of a native American, it may be found worthy of their cheering patronage."

Apparently the "gentle public" did not disappoint the trust reposed in it.

A note prefixed to Byron's unfinished drama, "The Deformed Transformed," states that the plot was taken in part from the same romance which furnished M. G. Lewis with the plot of his "Wood Dæmon," and in part from the "Faust" of Goethe.
INTRODUCTORY LETTER.

Tales of the wild and wonderful were winging their way from Germany and from the Orient, to possess the minds of Scott and Coleridge, Shelley and Godwin, Moore and Southey, and Savage Landor, whose "Geber" surpassed them all. A taste for melodrama, with its gorgeous pageants and grand spectacles, was beginning to take possession of the stage, until, as Mrs. Kemble has told us, in a recent chapter of her "Old Woman's Gossip," the splendid opera of "Der Freyschutz" swept everything before it.

Sorcery and Necromancy, Wild Yagers and Wild Huntsmen, Wood Dæmons and Specters and "Ghoul-haunted Woodlands" ruled the hour. The clock had struck; and, to judge from present appearances, the end is not yet.

When "The Dæmon" made his first appearance in Boston, Dr. Maudsley's impressible young law student, then a husband and father, was seeking a precarious subsistence by playing, sorrowfully enough, we may well believe, his subsidiary part in the great pageant. To him, doubtless,

"The play was the tragedy 'Man,'
And its hero, the Conqueror Worm."

What effect these dramatic antecedents and the influences of the hour may have had on the young poet, who made his first appearance on the stage of life within a year from that date, Dr. Maudsley may perhaps be able to determine.

Remembering these things, what a weird significance must ever henceforth attach to that wonderful poem,

"Lo! 'tis a gala night."

SARAH HELEN WHITMAN.

Providence, R. I., July, 1876.
THE Poe Family.—General Poe, the Grandfather of the Poet.—His Patriotic Devotion to the Cause of American Independence.—David Poe, Jr., the Father of Edgar.—His Romantic Marriage.—Sketch of Mr. and Mrs. Poe's Theatrical Career.—Their Tragical Death.

The life of a poet, however distinguished, seldom offers that agreeable variety which makes the lives of heroes so interesting. But the life of the author of "The Raven" furnishes an acknowledged exception to this general rule. The story of the beautiful and gifted boy, who, reared in luxury and taught to expect a fortune, was thrown upon the world, poor and friendless, at the early age of twenty; who, by the force of supreme genius, placed his name among the highest in the highest ranks of fame; whose glory has brightened as the years rolled along,

"Till now his genius fills a throne,
And nations marvel at his feet"—such a story must command the attention of all who
admire gifts so exalted, and feel sympathy for sorrows so overwhelming as were the gifts and sorrows of Edgar A. Poe.

For one hundred years the Poe family have occupied a prominent position in the city of Baltimore, and have been conspicuously identified with its business, literary, professional, and educational interests. David Poe, the elder (by courtesy called General Poe), the grandfather of the poet, was born in Londonderry, Ireland, in 1743. His father was John Poe; his mother, the sister of Admiral MacBride.* About the middle of the last century, the family emigrated to America, and settled in Pennsylvania, where David grew to manhood, and married the beautiful Miss Cairnes, of that State. In the memorable year 1776, he took up his permanent residence in Baltimore, where he was soon recognized as one of the leading citizens. He took an immediate and active interest in the struggle for independence. We find, in Force's "American Archives" (5th Series, Vol. III., p. 1147), that on the 10th of December, 1776, David Poe bore a prominent part in the expulsion of Robert Christie, the Royal Sheriff of Baltimore; and in the Maryland

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*Admiral MacBride was a distinguished officer of the British Navy, and took a conspicuous part in the engagement off Copenhagen, in March, 1801, under Lord Nelson. Admiral MacBride was a member of Parliament for several years. Mrs. John Poe, the mother of General Poe, died in Baltimore, at the age of one hundred and six, and was buried in Westminster Church-yard.
Journal, of March 25, 1777, mention is made of an attack upon Mr. William Goddard by David Poe and other members of the Whig Club. Goddard was the editor of The Journal, and had made himself obnoxious to the patriotic people of Baltimore by publishing unfavorable criticisms of Washington. Hence this attack upon him by the Whig Club, which was composed of the best citizens. Mr. Poe was a zealous member of the club until its dissolution about a year later.

On the 17th of September, 1779, David Poe was appointed, by the Governor and Council of Maryland, Assistant Deputy-Quartermaster for Baltimore. In this position he was very energetic, and frequently, when the State funds were exhausted, he made advances from his personal means, and rendered very valuable service to the cause of the patriots.* His official position required him to correspond with General Smallwood, Governor Lee, General Gist, and other distinguished officers of the Old Maryland Line. Some of his letters may be found in the Maryland papers of the '76 Society: these letters breathe the most ardent patriotism, and might be read with benefit at the present day. In Purviance's "Baltimore During the Revolution," page 106, we find the following estimate of David Poe: "He was a faithful officer,

* Among other things, General Poe furnished two brass cannons, which were used at Yorktown. His patriotism ruined him pecuniarily, and he died quite poor.
and was held in great estimation by all who had business to transact with him. Such was his devotion to his country, that it was almost proverbial, and so unabating was it long after peace was proclaimed that, by the public sentiment, he became a brevet-general, and in his later days was better known as General Poe than by any other name."

At the close of the war, David Poe engaged in the dry-goods business in Baltimore. He was a member of the First Branch of the City Council in 1799-1800. This was the only public position he held after the Revolutionary War. When Baltimore was threatened by the British, in September, 1814, General Poe volunteered in the defense of the city, and, although then seventy-one years old, he took an active part in the battle of North Point, where the enemy were ignominiously defeated by the brave militia of Maryland.

General Poe died on the 17th of October, 1816, in the seventy-fourth year of his age. The Baltimore papers, in announcing the death of the noble old patriot, paid glowing tribute to his many good qualities. He died, as he lived, a zealous republican, regretted by an extensive circle of relatives and friends. General Poe's enthusiastic devotion to the American cause won for him the friendship of Washington, Lafayette, and the other leading men of that time. At the reception given to General Lafayette, by the surviving officers and sailors of the Revolution, at
Baltimore, October 23, 1824, he said: "I have not seen among these my friendly and patriotic commissary, Mr. David Poe, who resided in Baltimore when I was here in 1781, and, out of his very limited means, supplied me with five hundred dollars to aid in clothing my troops, and whose wife, with her own hands, cut out five hundred pairs of pantaloons, and superintended the making of them for the use of my men." Lafayette was informed that Mr. Poe was dead, but that his wife was still living. He expressed an anxious wish to see her. The next day he entered a coach, and, escorted by a troop of horse, paid his respects to the venerable lady. He spoke to her in grateful terms of the friendly assistance he had received from her and her husband. "Your husband," said Lafayette, pressing his hand on his breast, "was my friend, and the aid I received from you both was greatly beneficial to my troops."

General Poe had six children, of whom the eldest was David Poe, Jr., the father of Edgar. He was a handsome, dashing, clever young fellow, and after receiving as finished an education as the schools of Baltimore then furnished, he commenced the study of the law in the office of William Gwynn, Esq., an eminent member of the Baltimore bar, and editor of The Federal Gazette. Young Poe and several of his gay companions formed an association called the Thespian Club, for the promotion of a taste for the drama. They met in a large room
in a house belonging to General Poe, on Baltimore Street, near Charles Street, then a fashionable locality for private residences. Here, at their weekly meetings, they recited passages from the old dramatists, and performed the popular plays of the day, for the entertainment of themselves and their friends.

David Poe became so infatuated with the stage that he secretly left his home in Baltimore and went to Charleston, where he was announced to make his "first appearance on any stage." One of his uncles (William Poe),* who lived in Augusta, Georgia, saw the announcement in the newspapers; he went to Charleston, took David off the stage, and put him in the law office of the Hon. John Forsyth, of Augusta. He had always been fond of the society of actors, and was more at home in the green-room than in the court-room. Before he ran away from home, he had met Mrs. Hopkins, an actress, whose maiden name was Elizabeth Arnold. The grace, vivacity, and beauty of the piquant little actress fired the susceptible heart of the young law student; he was willing and anxious to abandon home, position, profession, and everything, to live only for his love. But there existed a slight impediment to his desires in the person of Mr. Hopkins, who played the important rôle of husband to

*William Poe, a younger brother of General Poe, removed to Georgia shortly after the Revolution, and settled in Augusta. He married the sister of the Hon. John Forsyth. His son, Hon. Washington Poe, was a member of Congress from Georgia.
his lady love. While David Poe was still "yawning over Chitty," the obliging Mr. Hopkins died, and within six months the long-separated lovers were married. Their marriage took place in the spring of 1806, and an immediate estrangement between General Poe and his son was the result. The young husband, thus left to his own resources, adopted his wife's profession. On the 8th of July, 1806, the Vauxhall Garden Theater was inaugurated in New York, with a company of which both Mr. and Mrs. Poe were members. David Poe here made his first appearance as Frank, in "Fortune's Frolic," while Mrs. Poe played Priscilla, the Tom Boy. Ireland, in his "Records of the New York Stage," says: "The lady was young and pretty, and evinced talent both as a singer and actress; but the gentleman was literally nothing." On September 6, 1809, the Park Theater, New York, opened with the "Castle Specter." Mr. and Mrs. Poe made their first appearance at this establishment as Hassan and Angela. They played until the close of the season, July 4, 1810. In the winter of 1811, Mr. and Mrs. Poe were performing at the Richmond Theater. On the night of the 26th of December, the theater was destroyed by fire; among the seventy persons who perished in this awful calamity were David Poe and his wife. He had escaped from the burning building, but, in the confusion, his wife became separated from him; returning to look for her, he was caught by the falling timbers,
and died in a vain effort to save his wife, whom he loved better than life.

By the tragical death of Mr. and Mrs. Poe, their three little children were left homeless among strangers. The sympathy of the kind people of Richmond was deeply moved by the condition of the poor orphans. Mr. John Allan, a wealthy merchant of the city, adopted Edgar, and Mrs. McKenzie, of Henrico County, Virginia, adopted Rosalie, who was the youngest of the children. Henry, the eldest, was taken to Baltimore and educated by his godfather, Mr. Henry Didier, whose counting-room he subsequently entered. He was very clever, but wild and erratic. Having quarreled with his patron, Henry Poe determined to go to Greece, and fight for the cause to which the death of Byron had attracted the attention of the world. Young Poe arrived in time to participate in the last battles of the war. On the 14th of September, 1829, the Sultan acknowledged the independence of Greece, an event which was brought about by the combined armies of England, France, and Russia. Poe accompanied the Russian troops to St. Petersburg, where he soon got into trouble and into prison. He was released by the interposition of the Honorable Arthur Middleton, the American Minister, who had him sent to the port of Riga, and placed on a vessel bound for Baltimore. Six months after returning home, Henry Poe died, at the early age of twenty-six, leaving behind him the reputation of great but wasted talents.
CHAPTER II.

1809-1826.

Birth of Edgar Poe.—Adoption by Mr. Allan.—His Residence in Scotland.—Return Home.—School Days in Richmond.—Professor Clarke's Account.—Col. Preston's Reminiscences.—Poe's Precocious Talents.—"The Most Distinguished School-boy in Richmond."—His Youthful Accomplishments, etc.

EDGAR POE, the second son of David Poe, Jr., was born in Boston on the 19th of January, 1809, while his parents were filling a theatrical engagement in that city. When he was five weeks old, they returned to their home in Baltimore at General Poe's, who had long before been reconciled to his son. Mr. and Mrs. Poe always carried their children with them in their professional visits through the country, and much of Edgar's infancy was passed in the green-room. His beauty and brightness made him the pet of the actors and of all who saw him. The death of his parents, and his adoption by the Allans, wrought a complete change in the circumstances of little Edgar's existence. From a life of poverty he passed to a home of luxury. In Mrs.
Allan, he found the love of a mother; in Mr. Allan, the indulgence, if not the affection, of a father. The former petted and caressed the beautiful boy; the latter spoiled him by showing him off to strangers, by gratifying his every whim, by pampering his childish desires, and by encouraging his proud, imperious spirit.

Mr. Allan was accustomed to spend the summer at the White Sulphur Springs. It was even then the fashionable resort of all that was best and brightest in the fair land of the South. Summer after summer, the gayety and fascination of Southern life and Southern manners were transferred to the magnificent mountains of Virginia; thither went the planter from South Carolina, Mississippi, and Louisiana; the business and professional man from New Orleans, Charleston, and Richmond, and gentlemen of fortune from the whole South, taking with them their charming wives and daughters. Edgar accompanied Mr. and Mrs. Allan to the White Sulphur in the summers of 1812, '13, '14, and '15. There are several persons now living in Richmond, who remember seeing him there in those years. They describe him as a lovely little fellow, with dark curls and brilliant eyes, dressed like a young prince, and charming every one by his childish grace, vivacity, and cleverness. His disposition was frank, affectionate, and generous, and he was very popular with his young companions.

In the summer of 1816, Mr. and Mrs. Allan visited
their early home in Scotland, taking Edgar with them. He was left with a maiden sister of Mrs. Allan’s, who lived in that country, while they passed two years in England and on the continent. It was in Scotland that Edgar Poe’s education began, and during those two years he mastered the elementary branches of English, and learned the rudiments of Latin. Even in those childish days, he possessed a remarkable memory, a memory which, like Byron’s, was “wax to receive and marble to retain.”

In the year 1818, the Allans returned to their home in Richmond, accompanied by Edgar, who was now a rosy-faced boy in his ninth year. A few weeks after their return, Mr. Allan placed Edgar Poe in the Academy of Professor Joseph H. Clarke, of Trinity College, Dublin, who kept an English and classical school in Richmond from 1816 to 1823. Professor Clarke, who is now living in Baltimore, at the venerable age of eighty-six, has furnished me with the following highly interesting account of Poe’s school-days:

“In September, 1818, Mr. John Allan, a wealthy Scotch merchant, residing in Richmond, brought to my school a little boy between eight and nine years old. ‘This is my adopted son, Edgar Poe,’ Mr. Allan said. ‘His parents were burned to death when the theater was destroyed. The little fellow has recently returned from a residence of two years in Scotland, where he has been studying English and Latin. I want to place him under,
your instruction.' I asked Edgar about his Latin. He said he had studied the grammar as far as the regular verbs. He declined *penna, domus, fructus,* and *res.* I then asked him whether he could decline the adjective *bonus.* I was struck by the way in which he did it: he said *bonus,* a good man; *bona,* a good woman; *bonum,* a good thing. Edgar Poe was five years in my school. During that time he read Ovid, Cæsar, Virgil, Cicero, and Horace in Latin, and Xenophon and Homer in Greek. He showed a much stronger taste for classic poetry than he did for classic prose. He had no love for mathematics, but his poetical compositions were universally admitted to be the best in the school. While the other boys wrote mere mechanical verses, Poe wrote genuine poetry: the boy was a born poet. As a scholar, he was ambitious to excel, and although not conspicuously studious, he always acquitted himself well in his classes. He was remarkable for self-respect, without haughtiness. In his demeanor toward his playmates, he was strictly just and correct, which made him a general favorite, even with those who were older than he was. His natural and predominant passion seemed to me to be an enthusiastic ardor in everything he undertook. In any difference of opinion which occurred between him and his fellow students, he was very tenacious in maintaining his own views, and would not yield until his judgment was convinced. He had a sensitive and tender heart, and would do anything
to serve a friend. His nature was entirely free from selfishness, the predominant quality of boyhood.

"Even in those early years, Edgar Poe displayed the germs of that wonderfully rich and splendid imagination, which has placed him in the front rank of the purely imaginative poets of the world. His school-boy verses were written con amore, and not as mere tasks. When he was ten years old, Mr. Allan came to me one day with a manuscript volume of verses, which he said Edgar had written, and which the little fellow wanted to have published. He asked my advice upon the subject. I told him that Edgar was of a very excitable temperament, that he possessed a great deal of self-esteem, and that it would be very injurious to the boy to allow him to be flattered and talked about as the author of a printed book at his age. That was the first and last I heard of it. The verses, I remember, consisted chiefly of pieces addressed to the different little girls in Richmond, who had from time to time engaged his youthful affections. [Some of these juvenile productions may have been incorporated in Poe's first volume of poems, which was published at Boston, in 1824, called, "'Al Aaraaf, Tamerlane, and Minor Poems. By a Virginian." The lines "'To Helen," written at the early age of thirteen, first appeared in this volume. The classic beauty of this piece placed it among the most extraordinary juvenile poems in all literature.]

"'To the best of my recollection, the names of his
classmates were Robert Mayo, now a conspicuous lawyer in Virginia; Channing Moore (son of Bishop Moore, of Virginia), now an Episcopal clergyman in New York; Peter V. Daniel, Jr.; John Forbes; Nathaniel and William Howard; John Brokenborough, son of Judge B.; and Colonel John S. L. Preston, of the Virginia Military Institute."

Colonel Preston furnishes the following additional particulars of Poe's school-days in Richmond: "As a scholar, Poe was distinguished specially in Latin and French. In the former he was equaled, but not surpassed, by Nathaniel Howard, his friend and rival; but in poetical composition, Poe was *facile princeps*. I was the boy confidant of the boy poet, whose verses excited my enthusiastic admiration. While his many accomplishments captivated my young heart, he also took a fancy to me, and submitted his juvenile poems to me, and condescended to ask my critical opinion of them, although he was several years my senior. Poe was the swiftest runner, the best boxer, and the most daring swimmer at Clarke's school. Indeed, his swimming feats at the Great Falls of the James River were not surpassed by the more celebrated feat of Byron in swimming from Sestos to Abydos. Edgar Poe was a generous, free-hearted boy, kind to his companions, and always ready to assist them with his hand and head; but fierce in his resentments, and eager for distinction." The Nathaniel Howard alluded to by Colonel Preston was afterward one of the ripest scholars and most profound law-
yrs of Virginia. He was killed at the fall of the Capitol in Richmond, April, 1870.

At the close of the summer session of 1823, Professor Clarke removed from Richmond. Upon this occasion, young Howard wrote a Latin ode, after the style of the "O jam Satis" of Horace; while Edgar Poe addressed the retiring professor in English verse, expressing his feelings in the true language of poetry.

After the departure of Professor Clarke from Richmond, Mr. William Burke took his school and most of his scholars, and among them Edgar Poe. Mr. Andrew Johnston, in a letter dated Richmond, April 29, 1876, gives the following particulars of Poe at that school:

"I went to school at Mr. Burke's on the 1st of October, 1823, and found Edgar A. Poe there. I knew him before, but not well, there being two, if not three, years difference in our ages. We went to school together all through 1824 and the early part of 1825. Some time in the latter year (I cannot recollect at what time exactly) he left the school. For a considerable part of the time, Poe was in the same class with Colonel Joseph Selden, Dr. William H. Howard (I give their subsequent titles), Mr. Miles C. Selden, and myself. Poe was a much more advanced scholar than any of us; but there was no other class for him—that being the highest—and he had nothing to do, or but little, to keep his headship of the class. I dare say he liked it well, for he was fond of

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desultory reading, and even then wrote verses, very clever
for a boy of his years, and sometimes satirical. We all
recognized and admired his great and varied talents, and
were proud of him as the most distinguished school-boy
of the town. At that time, Poe was slight in person and
figure, but well made, active, sinewy, and graceful. In
athletic exercises he was foremost: especially, he was the
best, the most daring, and most enduring swimmer that
I ever saw in the water. When about sixteen years old,
he performed his well-known feat of swimming from
Richmond to Warwick, a distance of five or six miles.
He was accompanied by two boats, and it took him sev-
eral hours to accomplish the task, the tide changing
during the time. In dress he was neat but not foppish.
His disposition was amiable, and his manners pleasant
and courteous."

After leaving Burke’s school, in March, 1825, Mr. Allan
placed Edgar Poe under the best private tutors, in order
to prepare him for college. He devoted himself almost
exclusively to the classics, modern languages, and belles-
lettres. He also carefully read the best English authors
in prose and poetry. Richmond, fifty years since, was
celebrated for its polished society. In this society, Edgar
Poe was early welcome—a boy in years, but a man in
mind and manners. The refined grace and courtesy
toward women that ever distinguished him may have
been thus acquired in the best society of the polite little
capital of Virginia.
CHAPTER III.

1827–1831.

Enters the University of Virginia.—His Life there.—Statement of Mr. Wertenbaker.—A Successful Student.—Publishes "Al Aaraaf, Tamerlane, and Minor Poems."—First meets Mrs. Clemm and Virginia.—Poe at West Point.

Mr. Allan certainly gave Edgar Poe the advantages of a first-rate education. The petted and precocious boy was now an accomplished youth of seventeen, fully prepared to enter college. The University of Virginia—which, with the Declaration of Independence, stand as enduring monuments of the genius and patriotism of Thomas Jefferson—was opened for the reception of students in the spring of 1825. The new seat of learning soon became the favorite resort of the most distinguished young men of Virginia, Maryland, and other Southern States. Mr. Allan determined to send Edgar to the University of Virginia. William Wertenbaker, Esq., the Librarian of the University (to which position he was appointed by Mr. Jefferson, in 1825), has
furnished me with an interesting account of Poe's college career, from which I make the following extracts:

"Edgar A. Poe entered the University of Virginia, February 1st, 1826, and remained until the 15th of December of the same year. He entered the schools of ancient and modern languages, attending the lectures on Latin, Greek, French, Spanish, and Italian. I was myself a member of the last three classes, and can testify that he was regular in attendance, and a very successful student, having obtained distinction at the final examination in Latin and French. This was at that time the highest honor a student could obtain, the present regulations in regard to degrees not having been then adopted. Under existing regulations, Mr. Poe would have graduated in the two languages above mentioned, and have been entitled to diplomas.

"As Librarian, I had frequent official intercourse with Mr. Poe. The following are the names of some of the books which he borrowed from the college library: 'Histoire Ancienne,' par Rollin; 'Histoire Romaine;' Robertson's 'America;' Marshall's 'Life of Washington;' 'Histoire Particulière' de Voltaire; Dufief's 'Nature Displayed.' It will gratify the many admirers of Poe to know that his works are more in demand and more read than those of any other author, American or foreign, now in the library.

"Mr. Poe was certainly not habitually intemperate
during the time he was at the university. I often saw him in the lecture-room and in the library, but never in the slightest degree under the influence of intoxicating liquors. Among the professors he had the reputation of being a sober, quiet, and orderly young man. To them and to the officers, his deportment was universally that of an intelligent and polished gentleman. The records of the university, of which I was then, and am still, the custodian, attest that, at no time during the session, did he fall under the censure of the Faculty.

"I remember spending a pleasant hour in Mr. Poe's room one cold night in December, a short time before he left the university. On this occasion, he spoke with regret of the large amount of money he had wasted, and of the debts he had contracted during the session. If my memory is not at fault, he estimated his indebtedness at two thousand dollars, and though they were gaming debts, he was earnest and emphatic in the declaration that he was bound by honor to pay, at the earliest opportunity, every cent of them."

The room-mate and most intimate friend of Poe at the university was the late Judge Thomas S. Gholson, of Petersburg, Va. Among his other classmates were the Hon. R. M. T. Hunter, formerly United States Senator, and now Treasurer of Virginia; General George Mason Graham; of King George County, Va.; Judge William Loving, of Louisville, Ky; Dr. Orlando Fairfax, of Rich-
mond, Va.; William M. Burwell, of New Orleans; George H. Hoffman, Esq., of Philadelphia; Philip St. George Ambler, Esq., of Amherst County, Va.; General John S. Preston, of South Carolina; Judge Henry Shackleford, of Culpepper County, Va.; Ex-Governor Thomas Swann, of Maryland; the late Judge Z. Collins Lee, of Baltimore; Dr. William A Spotswood, of Virginia, and a score of others still living.

Poe was liberally supplied with money while at the university, but he had never been taught its value, and, consequently, he spent it recklessly and extravagantly. Goldsmith, whose heart was "open as day to melting charity," said of himself that he had been taught to give away thousands before he had learned to earn hundreds. Poe had been allowed—almost encouraged—to throw away thousands before he was eighteen. When a mere boy, his little purse was filled with gold dollars, while the other boys were glad to have silver quarters.

In the winter of 1826-7, Poe returned to Richmond from the university, bringing with him the reputation of great scholarship and great extravagance. The latter reputation was brilliantly maintained, for we hear of champagne suppers, and elegant suits of clothes in abundance. Edgar Poe was, at this time, the gayest, handsomest, and most dashing young man in Richmond; the peer and companion of the Mayos, Randolphs, Prestons, and other aristocratic young men of Virginia. His
distinguished talents, fascinating conversation, polished manners, and presumptive wealth (for Mr. Allan's fortune had been recently increased by the death of a wealthy uncle, and Edgar Poe was to be the heir of his adopted father), made him a welcome visitor in the best society of Richmond.

But Poe's time was not wholly passed in the gay pleasures of fashionable life. He was ambitious, and looked to something higher, nobler, than mere social distinction. He studied much and read more; nor was he satisfied with being only an admirer of the writings of others. He determined to be himself a writer—a poet; to place his name in the literature of his country—in the literature of the world. Early in 1829 we find Poe in Baltimore, with a manuscript volume of verses, which in a few months was published in a thin octavo, bound in boards, crimson sprinkled, with yellow linen back. The title of the book was, "Al Aaraaf, Tamerlane, and Minor Poems. By Edgar A. Poe. Baltimore: Hatch & Dunning. 1829."* The Peabody Library of Baltimore has a copy of this rare volume, which I have carefully examined. It numbers seventy-one pages. On the sixth page is the Dedication: "Who drinks the deepest? Here's to him." "Al Aaraaf" is printed the same as now, except eight unim-

* It was printed by Matchett & Woods, who have printed the Baltimore City Directory for nearly half a century. Hatch & Dunning were two young men from New York who started in Baltimore with a small capital. After a year or two they disappeared.
portant verbal changes. "Tamerlane," which is dedicated to John Neal, is preceded by an advertisement, as follows: "This poem was printed for publication in Boston, in the year 1827, but suppressed through circumstances of a private nature." There is only one word changed in the whole poem. After "Tamerlane" follow nine miscellaneous poems, all of which, with the exception of the first and part of the eighth, are in the last edition of Poe's works. The first of these miscellaneous poems consists of four stanzas, and is headed "To ---." It has never been reprinted in full, but the third stanza contains the germ of "A Dream within a Dream."

I have failed to discover that this volume attracted any attention either in Baltimore or elsewhere, although it will scarcely be questioned that it contained thoughts and sentiments and verses which are far superior to anything in Byron's early poems. Indeed, the delicate, airy grace and musical rhythm of a portion of "Al Aaraaf" give a bright promise of that wonderful metrical sweetness which pre-eminently distinguishes Poe's poetry.

But if Edgar Poe made neither money nor fame by this little volume, it resulted in an acquaintance, a friendship, and a love, which contributed more to his happiness than either money or fame could have done. It was during this visit to Baltimore that he saw, for the first time since his infancy, his aunt, Mrs. Maria Clemm, who was to be his devoted friend through life, and his most enthusiastic
defender after his death. Mrs. Clemm—the daughter of General Poe, who had spent his fortune in the cause of American Independence, and the wife of William Clemm, who had bravely fought for his city, State, and country—was compelled to earn a living by teaching school. It was at this time, also, that Edgar Poe first saw his cousin, Virginia Clemm, a lovely, delicate girl of seven; "the fair and gentle young Eulalie, who became his blushing bride"—his Ligeia, his beautiful one—his Annabel Lee, "whom he loved with a love that was more than love"—his lost Lenore!

It is not to be presumed that Edgar Poe had any intention of adopting the life of a professional author when he published "Al Aaraaf." He was, at that time, the heir presumptive of Mr. Allan's fortune—thirty thousand dollars a year—with every present want gratified, and his future apparently secure. But, even while on this visit to Baltimore, the beginning of the end of all his fair prospects was approaching. Toward the end of February he was summoned back to Richmond, by the alarming illness of Mrs. Allan. He hastened to obey the sad summons, for he loved his adopted mother with all the warmth of his affectionate nature. But, alas! he was never again to see that kind, motherly face; never again to hear that sweet, gentle voice. Communication, in those days, between Baltimore and Richmond was slow, and before he arrived, Mrs. Allan was dead and buried. Edgar felt keenly the loss of
his earliest friend. He mourned her long and sorrowfully.

The death of Mrs. Allan caused no immediate change in Poe's life; Mr. Allan continued his friend, so far as food, clothing, and shelter went. But he missed that tender solicitude, that affectionate interest, which Mrs. Allan was ever ready to bestow.

When Edgar Poe had reached his twenty-first year, Mr. Allan—who very properly thought that a young man, however great his expectations might be, should adopt a profession—had a serious talk with him upon this important subject. Poe expressed a distaste both for the dry drudgery of the law, and for the laborious life of a physician. The gay, dashing, daring life of a soldier seemed to possess a peculiar fascination for the high-spirited, chivalrous youth, and he told Mr. Allan that, of all the professions, he preferred the army. Mr. Allan was delighted at his choice, and immediately went to work to secure his appointment to West Point. Recommended by Chief Justice Marshall, John Randolph, General Scott, and other influential friends, the appointment was easily obtained. A handsome outfit was furnished by Mr. Allan, and on the 1st of July, 1830, Edgar A. Poe entered West Point as a cadet. He was perhaps the most brilliant and gifted, but the least creditable cadet that ever entered the Military Academy. He was in the very first bloom of that remarkable beauty of face and form, which neither study,
nor trouble, nor poverty, nor sorrow ever destroyed. Dark, hyacinthine hair fell in graceful curls over his magnificent forehead, beneath which shone the most beautiful, the most glorious of mortal eyes. His figure was slight, but elegantly proportioned; his bearing was proud and fearless.

The young cadet soon discovered that the life of a soldier was not all so couleur de rose as his bright fancy had pictured it. The severe studies, the severe discipline, the morning drill, the evening parade, the guard duty, were each and all distasteful to the young poet, whose heart was glowing with high hopes, whose soul was full of a noble ambition. He turned with delight from military tactics to peruse the tuneful pages of Virgil; he neglected mathematics for the fascinating essays of Macaulay, which were just then beginning to charm the world; he escaped from the evening parade to wander along the romantic banks of the Hudson, meditating his musical "Israfel," and, perhaps, planning "Ligeia; or, the Fall of the House of Usher."

The result of his study and meditation appeared in the winter of 1831, when he published, under the title of "Poems, by Edgar A. Poe," seven new poems, together with "Al Aaraaf," and "Tamerlane," from the edition of 1829, omitting all the others. These seven new poems consisted of the exquisite lines "To Helen," "Israfel," "The Doomed City" (afterward improved, and called
"The City in the Sea"), "Fairyland" (which retains its name only), "Irene" (afterward remodeled into "The Sleeper"), "A Pæan" (four verses of which were incorporated in "Lenore"), and "The Valley of Nis" ("The Valley of Unrest"). The book was dedicated to the United States Corps of Cadets, an honor which the cadets did not deserve, for they "considered the verses ridiculous doggerel." The world has pronounced a different verdict.

After Poe had been at West Point six months, the rigid rules became so intolerable that he asked permission of Mr. Allan to resign. This was peremptorily refused. Within a year after the death of his first wife, Mr. Allan married Louise Gabrielle Patterson, of New Jersey, and, a son being born,* Edgar Poe was no longer the heir of the five thousand acres of land in Goochland County, Virginia, of hundreds of slaves, of real estate in Richmond, of bank and State stock, the whole amounting to five hundred thousand dollars. In money matters, Mr. Allan

* Mr. Allan had three children by his second wife: John, the eldest, married Henrietta Hoffman, the only child of William Henry Hoffman, Esq., of Baltimore. At the commencement of the late civil war, John Allan entered the Confederate Army, and was killed at Gettysburg, July 3, 1863, while commanding a Virginia regiment. The second son, William, married his brother's widow; he died in 1868, and his wife died in 1870. Mrs. Henrietta Allan had two children by her first husband, Hoffman and Louise Gabrielle. They are living with their grandmother in Richmond. Patterson Allan, the third son, married a lady of Cincinnati, who was banished from Richmond, by Jefferson Davis, as a Union spy.
had always treated his adopted son with the utmost generosity. But he had, now other claimants to his fortune, and he wished to give Edgar Poe an honorable profession, which would afford him a regular support for life. Hence his refusal to allow him to leave West Point—consent of father or guardian being required before a cadet could resign. But Poe was determined to get away from West Point, with or without Mr. Allan's consent. So he commenced a deliberate and systematic neglect of duty and disobedience of rules: he cut his classes, shirked the drill, and refused to do guard duty. The desired result followed; on the 7th of January, 1831, Edgar A. Poe was brought before a general court-martial, under the charge of "gross neglect of all duty, and disobedience of orders." The accused promptly pleaded "Guilty," and, to his great delight, was sentenced "to be dismissed the service of the United States." The sentence was duly approved at the War Department, and carried into effect March 6, 1831.

Several of Poe's cotemporaries at West Point afterward distinguished themselves. Among others, Colonel Henry Clay, Jr., who fell, gallantly fighting, at Buena Vista; Major-General A. A. Humphreys, Chief of Engineers, U. S. A.; Major-General William H. Emory, of Maryland; General Randolph B. Marcy, of Massachusetts; General Francis H. Smith, President of the Virginia Military Institute; General Humphrey Marshall,
of Kentucky; Major-General John G. Barnard, of Massachusetts; the late General Tench Tilghman, President of the Maryland Society of the Cincinnati; Colonel Lucius Bellinger Northrop, of South Carolina, Commissary General of the late Confederate Army; Colonel Bliss, afterward private secretary of President Taylor; Colonel George B. Crittenden, of Kentucky; Colonel George H. Ringgold, of Maryland; Major Philip M. Barbour, of Kentucky, killed at the battle of Monterey, and several others.
CHAPTER IV.

1831-1833.

Poe leaves Mr. Allan's House.—Removes to Baltimore.—Mrs. Clemm Receives Him.—Virginia, His Pupil.—His Studies.—Mode of Life.—Adopts the Literary Profession.—Tales of the Folio Club.—Gains the Prize Offered by The Saturday Visitor.

Mr. Allan received Edgar Poe very coldly when he returned to Richmond from West Point. He was disappointed and disgusted that the young man's military career had terminated so unfortunately; he was exasperated that the wayward youth had thrown away so fine an opportunity of establishing himself for life. So no feast was prepared, no fatted calf was killed, no friends were gathered to welcome the prodigal home. Mr. Allan gave him a home, indeed; but it was no longer the home of his infancy—no longer the home of his happy boyhood, and of his brilliant youth. He was tolerated, that is all. No longer the petted child, whose word was law; no longer the presumptive heir of half a million; but an unwelcome guest, whose presence was deemed an intrusion. The haughty spirit of Edgar
Poe felt keenly the great change; to be scarcely tolerated in the house where he had once reigned supreme was agony to his proud, sensitive nature. This was the beginning of that "intolerable sorrow," which crushed, conquered, and finally broke his brave, noble heart. This was the commencement of that "unmerciful disaster" which "followed fast and followed faster," until "Melancholy marked him for her own," and the "dirges of his Hope" sang forever the sad refrain of "never more."

The Allan family have never vouchsafed any explanation of the cause of the final separation between Mr. Allan and Edgar Poe. If the latter had been in fault, is it not reasonable to suppose that such a fact would have been long since published to the world? For nearly twenty years Edgar had been the idolized child of the house; caressed by Mrs. Allan, indulged by Mr. Allan. Mrs. Allan dies, Edgar goes to West Point; he returns, and finds all things changed in the old Fifth Street house. Another Mrs. Allan is there. We all know the influence of a second wife upon a fond, doting old husband. In this case the influence of the beautiful young wife was immediate and permanent. It began with the marriage, and ended only with the death of Mr. Allan. Edgar Poe felt its effects more than any one else. His extravagance at the university was forgiven, but his escapade at West Point was not to be tolerated. Why? Because the
first Mrs. Allan was his friend, and the second Mrs. Allan was not. She, very naturally, wanted the Allan money for the Allan children, who now began to make their annual appearance. Mrs. Susan Archer von Weiss, in a letter before me, dated Richmond, Virginia, June 6th. 1876, after saying she was a "confidant of Mr. Poe's," states that the cause of the quarrel between Allan and Poe was "very simple and very natural under the circumstances—human nature considered—and completely exonerates Mr. Poe from ingratitude to his adopted father."

Whatever was the cause, the result was that, a few months after his return from West Point, Edgar Poe left Mr. Allan's house forever. Writing long years after to one who possessed his entire confidence, he said: "By the God who reigns in heaven, I swear to you that my soul is incapable of dishonor. I can call to mind no act of my life which would bring a blush to my cheek or to yours. If I have erred at all, in this regard, it has been on the side of what the world would call a Quixotic sense of the honorable—of the chivalrous. The indulgence of this sense has been the true voluptuousness of my life. It was for this species of luxury that in early youth I deliberately threw away from me a large fortune, rather than endure a trivial wrong."

Like Adam, when expelled from Paradise, Edgar Poe (though his late home had been for some time anything but a Paradise to him) had now all the world before him.
where to choose his place of rest. Remembering the affectionate interest which his aunt, Mrs. Clemm, had manifested toward him when he met her in 1829, Edgar went to Baltimore, and sought out this, his nearest relative. Mrs. Clemm was poor, but poor as she was, she gave her "Eddie" (as she always called him) a home—a home humble, indeed, in a worldly sense, but rich in love. Soon after his removal to Baltimore, in the early summer of 1831, Poe, not wishing to be dependent upon his aunt, sought diligently for some employment by which he could earn a living. Dr. N. C. Brooks (who was, in 1838–9, editor of the Baltimore Museum, a magazine in which appeared some of Poe's best tales) informed me that about this time (1831), Edgar Poe applied for a position in his school, then recently started at Reisterstown, in Baltimore County. Dr. Brooks regretted there was no vacancy, for he knew that Poe was an accomplished scholar.

In 1831–2, Mrs. Clemm lived on Cove (now Fremont) Street. An intimate friend of Poe's* has furnished an interesting description of his life and studies at this time; his dress, personal appearance, habits, conversation, are all minutely given. This gentleman was in the habit of seeing Poe daily, for weeks at a time. They took long and frequent walks together in the beautiful, undulating country

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* L. A. Wilmer, author of "The Quacks of Helicon," etc.
around Baltimore. Their conversation was generally upon literary topics, and Poe expressed his opinion freely and forcibly upon all writers, from Shakespeare down to the last aspirant for poetical fame. He never could be made to bow to the world’s opinion. The very fact that an author possessed the world’s good opinion was sufficient for him to condemn that author. He knew that a few self-appointed critics formed what is called the world’s opinion. He knew that these would-be critics praised Wordsworth and ridiculed Keats. Poe frankly confessed that he had “no faith in Wordsworth;” he spoke with “reverence of Coleridge’s towering intellect and gigantic power;” pronounced Byron’s “English Bards and Scotch Reviewers” a “failure;” called Dr. Johnson “scurrilous,” and was one of the earliest admirers of Tennyson, at the time when the English reviewers were neglecting him and praising the Rev. George Croly.

At this time, Edgar Poe was slender, but graceful in person; his hands and feet were as beautiful as a woman’s. His dress was faultlessly neat; fashionable, but not fopish. His disposition was affectionate, and he was tenderly devoted to his aunt and cousin. Virginia Clemm was now an exquisitely beautiful girl ten years old, the pupil, companion, and pet of her cousin Edgar. One day, Edgar, Virginia, and Mr. Wilmer were walking in the neighborhood of Baltimore, when they happened to approach a grave-yard, where a funeral was in progress.
Curiosity attracted them to the side of the grave, where they stood among those who had accompanied the body to the cemetery. Virginia's sensitive heart was so touched by the grief of the stricken mourners, that she mingled her tears with theirs. Her emotion communicated itself to Edgar, and if his cruel defamers had seen him, at that moment, weeping by a stranger's grave, they would not have said of him that "he had no touch of human feeling or of human pity," that "he had no heart," that "he loved no one but himself," etc.

Poe was at this period constantly occupied in literary work, either writing or studying. His favorite reading was metaphysics, travels, and poetry. Disraeli was his model as a novelist, Campbell his favorite poet, and Victor Cousin's "True, Beautiful, and Good," his favorite work on metaphysics.

So, as early as 1832, Edgar Poe, with that noble confidence which genius inspires, had adopted the literary profession. He was the right man in the wrong place. Baltimôre, pre-eminently distinguished for the refined tastes and polished manners of its people, has never been a literary city. The names of the genial novelist, Kennedy, the exquisite lyrist, Pinkney, and the accomplished essayist, Calvert, filled the measure of Baltimore's literary fame, until the name of Poe crowned it with immortal glory.

During 1832–3, Poe was writing the "Tales of the
Folio Club," comprising "The Descent into the Maelstrom," "A Manuscript found in a Bottle," "Adventure of Hans Pfaall," "A Tale of the Ragged Mountain," "Berenice," and "Lionizing." These were written with the utmost care, pruned and re-pruned, polished and re-polished, over and over again, until, when they left the author's hands, they were as perfect as the gems that come from the hands of a Roman lapidary. Difficult as had been the writing of these tales, more difficult would have been their publication, had not one of those opportunities occurred which seems to come to every person once in a lifetime.

In the summer of 1833, the Baltimore Saturday Visitor—a weekly literary journal, which had been started in 1832, under the editorial charge of L. A. Wilmer—offered one hundred dollars for the best prose story, and fifty dollars for the best poem. Poe submitted his "Tales of the Folio Club," and his poem, "The Coliseum," in competition for the prizes. The committee appointed to award the prizes were the late Hon. John P. Kennedy (author of "Horse-shoe Robinson," etc.), and two other professional gentlemen (a doctor and a lawyer), who possessed only a local repute. The "Tales of the Folio Club" were so immeasurably superior to all the other stories submitted, that the hundred-dollar prize was unanimously given to Edgar A. Poe, and the "Manuscript found in a Bottle" was selected as the one to which the
premium should be awarded. The poem sent in by Poe has been admired by all readers as a magnificent tribute to the grandeur and glory of the Coliseum. It was as superior to the other "poems" as the "Manuscript found in a Bottle" was superior to the other stories; but, having awarded the hundred-dollar prize to Poe, it was deemed expedient to bestow the fifty-dollar prize upon one of the other competitors. So, having selected from the mass of rubbish a "poem" a shade better than the rest, which was written by an unknown local genius, the smaller prize was awarded to him.
CHAPTER V.

1834-1836.

Poe becomes a Contributor to *The Southern Literary Messenger*.—Marries Virginia Clemm.—Editor of *The Messenger*.—His Brilliant Articles.—His Severe Criticisms.—Social Position in Richmond.

Eagar Poe was now upon the first step of the ladder which leads *ad astra*. Like Goldsmith, Shelley, Byron, Burns, and Keats, his literary career was brief, and like theirs, his fame will be enduring. He did not, like Lord Byron, "awake one morning, and find himself famous." He had to fight his way to recognition, through toil, poverty, and suffering.

John P. Kennedy was neither a great lawyer, great novelist, nor great statesman; but his kindness to Poe will embalm his name forever in the memory of all lovers of genius. Of the three gentlemen composing the committee, he alone extended a helping hand to the poor young poet; he alone interested himself in the career of the ambitious young author. He invited Poe to his house, made him welcome at his table, and furnished him with a saddle-horse, that he might take exercise whenever he pleased.
He did more: he introduced his protégé to the proprietor of *The Southern Literary Messenger*, then recently started at Richmond, and recommended him as being "very clever with his pen, classical, and scholar-like." Mr. F. W. White, the proprietor of *The Messenger*, invited Poe to send in a contribution. He was delighted to comply with the request. In the number for March, 1835, appeared his strangely beautiful story, "Berenice," which attracted immediate attention. From that time Poe became a regular monthly contributor to *The Messenger*, furnishing tales, poems, and criticisms with marvelous rapidity, when we consider their exquisite finish.

It is pleasant to quote, from one of Edgar Poe's letters, written to Mr. White at this time, two passages, which show that he possessed, in a remarkable degree, the very two virtues which have been denied him, viz., *gratitude* and *humility*. He had written a critique of John P. Kennedy's novel, "Horse-shoe Robinson," and, apologizing for the hasty sketch he sent, instead of the thorough review which he intended, he says: "At the time, I was so ill as to be hardly able to see the paper on which I wrote, and I finished it in a state of complete exhaustion. I have not, therefore, done anything like justice to the book, and I am vexed about the matter, for Mr. Kennedy has proved himself a kind friend to me in every respect, and *I am sincerely grateful to him for many acts of generosity and attention.*" In the same letter, in answer to Mr. White's
query, whether he was satisfied with the pay he was receiving for his work on *The Messenger*, Poe wrote: "I reply that I am, entirely. *My poor services are not worth what you give me for them.*"

For four years Edgar Poe had been engaged in the most delightful of occupations—the instruction of a beautiful girl, singularly interesting and truly loved. For four years, Virginia—his starry-eyed young cousin—had been his pupil. Never had teacher so lovely a pupil, never had pupil so tender a teacher. They were both young; she was a child.

"But our love it was stronger by far than the love
Of those who were older than we."

Under the name of Eleonora, Edgar tells the story of their love in the Valley of the Many-colored Grass. He describes the "sweet recesses of the vale;" the "deep and narrow river, brighter than all, save the eyes of Eleonora;" the "soft, green grass, besprinkled with the yellow buttercup, the white daisy, the purple violet, and the ruby-red asphodel"—all so beautiful that it "spoke to our hearts of the love and glory of God." Here they "lived all alone, knowing nothing of the world without the valley—I, and my cousin, and her mother." "The loveliness of Eleonora was that of the seraphim, and she was a maiden artless and innocent as the brief life she had led among the flowers. No guile disguised the fervor of love which animated her heart," etc.
As soon as his prospects began to brighten, and his regular employment on *The Messenger* gave him a fixed income, Edgar, with the enthusiastic ardor of his race, wanted to marry his cousin Virginia, although she was only in her fourteenth year. Late in the summer of 1835, he was offered the position of assistant editor of *The Messenger*, at a salary of five hundred dollars per annum. He gladly accepted the offer, and prepared to remove to Richmond immediately. Before leaving Baltimore, he persuaded Mrs. Clemm to allow him to marry Virginia, and on the 2d of September, 1835, they were married, at old Christ Church, by the Rev. John Johns, D.D., afterward the Protestant Episcopal Bishop of Virginia. The next day he went to Richmond, and did not see his darling little wife for a year, when she and her mother joined him in that city.

Poe felt most painfully the separation from "her he loved so dearly." For years Virginia had been his daily, his hourly companion and confidant. Like Abelard and Heloise, they had one home and one heart. He had watched her young mind's development; he had seen her grow each year more lovely, more winning, more interesting. And now, when his most cherished wish was realized, by the sweet girl becoming his wife, he was two hundred miles away from her. In the first days of this separation, he wrote Mr. Kennedy a letter (dated Richmond, September 11, 1835), in which, after express-
ing a deep sense of gratitude for frequent kindness and assistance, he says:

"I am suffering under a depression of spirits such as I have never felt before. I have struggled in vain against the influence of this melancholy; you will believe me when I say that I am still miserable, in spite of the great improvement in my circumstances. My heart is open before you; if it be worth reading, read it. Write me immediately; convince me that it is worth one's while—that it is at all necessary—to live, and you will prove yourself indeed my friend. Persuade me to do what is right. I do mean this. Write me, then, and quickly. Your words will have more weight with me than the words of others, for you were my friend when no one else was."

In December, 1835, Poe was made editor of The Messenger. Under his editorial management, the work soon became well known everywhere. Perhaps no similar enterprise ever prospered so largely in its commencement, and none, in the same length of time—not even Blackwood, in the brilliant days of Dr. Maginn, ever published so many dazzling articles from the same pen. Strange stories of the German school, akin to the most fanciful legend of the Rhine, fascinating and astonishing the reader with the verisimilitude of their improbability, appeared in the same number with lyrics plaintive and wondrous sweet, the earliest vibration of those chords which have
since sounded through the world. But it was in the editorial department of *The Messenger* that Poe’s great powers were most conspicuously displayed. He was the most consummate critic that ever lived. Woe to the unlucky author who offended by a dull book. His powerful pen was as much feared by the poetasters and literary dunces of forty years ago, as Pope’s brilliant wit had been feared a century before by Theobald and the other heroes of the "Dunciad."

Within a year after Poe assumed control of *The Messenger*, its circulation had increased from seven hundred to five thousand, and, from a mere provincial magazine in 1835, it had become in 1836 a magazine of national reputation, occupying a commanding position in American literature.

Edgar Poe had left Richmond less than five years before, "a youth to fortune and to fame unknown." He returned, and, assuming the editorship of *The Messenger*, the leading periodical of the South, by his original and brilliant contributions, he made his name known in all the land as an exquisitely delicate poet, a fearless critic, and an accomplished literary artist. Slander had been whispered, nay, proclaimed aloud against him; abuse had been heaped upon him; malice had invented lies to blacken his name. He was too proud to defend himself from such attacks. He was too true a gentleman to exonerate himself at the expense of a lady, although that
lady had been the primary cause of his separation from Mr. Allan, and, consequently, of his loss of fortune.

His domestic life in Richmond, after Mrs. Clemm and Virginia joined him, was sweet and pure and true. He was devoted to his beautiful child-wife, and she idolized her gifted husband. To gratify her taste for music, he had her taught by the best masters, although his salary could scarcely afford the expense. But he cheerfully denied himself many little personal comforts for her sake. Mrs. Clemm was the Martha of the little household, providing the food, and sometimes cooking it; keeping everything neat and tidy and inviting. Their home fully illustrated Goethe's saying that beauty is cheap where taste is the purchaser.

While conducting *The Messenger*, Poe's time was so fully occupied that he seldom went into general society. Indeed, from this time forward, he mingled little in what is called the gay world. The society of cultivated women was always attractive to him. That he now enjoyed at the Mackenzies, Daniels, Macfarlands, Fairfaxes, Haxalls, Amblers, and two or three other houses, that formed a delightful literary coterie in Richmond forty years ago.
CHAPTER VI.

1837-8.

Poe Removes to New York.—Becomes Associate Editor of the New York Quarterly Review.—Literary Labors.—Private Life.—Virginia's Loveliness.—Poe Writes "The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym."—Removes to Philadelphia.—His Home there.—His Opinion of Washington Irving.—Mrs. Clemm.

Perhaps the happiest period of Edgar Poe's life was the last year that he was the editor of The Southern Literary Messenger. At the early age of twenty-six, he had made a brilliant reputation; he was married to the sweet girl Virginia; he was young and hopeful; his life was full of bright promise; his noble brow—as white as a girl's, and as beautiful as a god's—had not been clouded by suffering and sorrow; his "sweet, imperious mouth" had not caught the expression of lofty scorn which contact with a false and hollow world made habitual in his later years.

In January, 1837, Poe was offered the position of associate editor of the New York Quarterly Review. As the
salary was larger than he received on *The Messenger*, and New York was a far wider field for a professional *littérateur* than the provincial little city of Richmond, he accepted the offer. Mr. White, the proprietor of *The Messenger*, parted with him with much regret, and, in the number of the magazine which had the announcement of Poe's retirement, promised that he would "continue to furnish its columns from time to time with the effusions of his vigorous and powerful pen." He never relinquished his early interest in *The Messenger*, but wrote occasionally for it as long as he lived. As some of his earliest, so some of his latest writings were first published in that magazine.

In the winter of 1837, Poe and his little family removed to New York. Mrs. Clemm endeavored to add to their small income by taking boarders. Among the latter was the late William Gowans, the well-known second-hand bookseller, who has furnished a brief but interesting account of Poe's life at this time. He says:

"For eight months or more one house contained us, and one table fed us. I saw much of Mr. Poe during that time, and had an opportunity of conversing with him often. He was one of the most courteous, gentlemanly, and intelligent companions I ever met. I never saw him in the least affected by liquor, or descend to any known vice. He kept good hours, and all his little wants were attended to by Mrs. Clemm and her daughter, who
watched him as carefully as if he had been a child. Mrs. Poe was a lady of matchless beauty and loveliness; her eyes could match those of any houri, and her face defy the genius of any Canova to imitate; her temper and disposition were of a surpassing sweetness, and she seemed as much devoted to him and his every interest as a young mother is to her first born."

Poe's contributions to the New York Quarterly Review were chiefly critiques of current literature. They displayed his extraordinary force as a critic, his elegant scholarship, and his immense reading. As they were very unsparing in exposing the literary pretenders of the day, Poe made many enemies by his criticisms, enemies who nursed their wrath and kept it warm until he was cold in his grave; then safely poured and continue to pour their venomous slander upon his memory.

In The Southern Literary Messenger, for January and February, 1837, appeared the first portions of "The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym." It attracted much attention while running through The Messenger, and it was afterward published in book form, both in this country and in England, where it went through three editions in a very short time. It is not considered, however, one of Poe's most successful productions, and is not now read with half the interest that "William Wilson," "Ligeia," "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," and "The Fall of the House of Usher" are read. These wonderful tales—
more artistic than Hoffmann's, more circumstantial than DeFoe's—display a richness of imagination, and a beauty of style which have made Edgar Poe peerless in that peculiar department of fictitious literature.

Our poet's first residence in New York lasted from early in the winter of 1837 to late in the summer of 1838, when he removed to Philadelphia. Soon after his arrival in the latter city he was requested, by his old friend, Dr. N. C. Brooks, to write the leading article for the first number of *The American Museum*, a monthly magazine, about to be started by Dr. Brooks, in Baltimore. The subject suggested was "Washington Irving." Dr. Brooks received the following reply:

"PHILADELPHIA, September 4, 1838.

"My Dear Sir:

"I duly received your favor, with the ten dollars. Touching the review, I am forced to decline it just now. I should be most unwilling not to execute such a task well, and this I could not do at so short a notice, at least now. I have two other engagements which it would be ruinous to defer. Besides this, I am just leaving Arch Street for a small house, and, of course, am somewhat in confusion.

"My main reason, however, for declining is what I first alleged, viz., I could not do the review well at short notice. It is a theme upon which I would like very much to write,"
for there is a vast deal to be said upon it. *Irving is much overrated,* and a nice distinction might be drawn between his just, and surreptitious, and adventitious reputation; between what is due to the pioneer solely, and what to the writer.

"The merit, too, of this tame propriety and faultlessness of style should be candidly weighed. He should be compared with Addison, something being hinted about imitation, and Sir Roger De Coverley should be brought up in judgment. A bold and *a-priori* investigation of Irving's claims would strike home, take my word for it. The American literary world never saw anything of the kind yet. Seeing, therefore, the opportunity of making a fine *hit*, I am unwilling to risk *your* fame by a failure; and a failure would certainly be the event were I to undertake the task at present.

"Suppose you send me the proof of my article. I look anxiously for the first number of *The Museum*, from which I date the dawn of a fine literary day in Baltimore.

"After the 15th, I shall be more at leisure, and will be happy to do you any literary service in my power. You have but to hint.

"Very truly yours,

"*Edgar A. Poe.*"

The article, of which Poe desired the "proof," was "*Ligeia.*" It was published in the first number of *The
Museum, September, 1838. In this magazine, Poe also published his clever satirical sketch, "The Signora Psyche Zenobia," "Literary Small Talk," and the dainty, airy "Haunted Palace."

Poe resided most of the time, while in Philadelphia, at Spring Garden, a suburb of the city. Captain Mayne Reid, who became acquainted with him at this time, wrote a most delightful description of his home and family. The house was small, but furnished with much taste; flowers bloomed around the porch, and the singing of birds was heard. It seemed, indeed, the very home for a poet. "In this humble domicile," says Mayne Reid, "I have spent some of the pleasantest hours of my life—certainly, some of the most intellectual. They were passed in the company of the poet himself and his wife—a lady angelically beautiful in person, and not less beautiful in spirit. No one who remembers that dark-eyed, dark-haired daughter of the South; her face so exquisitely lovely; her gentle, graceful demeanor; no one who has ever spent an hour in her society, but will indorse what I have said of this lady, who was the most delicate realization of the poet's rarest ideal. But the bloom upon her cheek was too pure, too bright for earth. It was consumption's color—that sadly beautiful light that beckons to an early grave.

"With the poet and his wife there lived another person—Mrs. Clemm. She was the mother of Mrs. Poe—and one
of those grand American mothers. She was the ever-vigilant guardian of the house, watching over the comfort of her two children, keeping everything neat and clean, so as to please the fastidious eyes of the poet; going to market, and bringing home the little delicacies that their limited means would allow; going to publishers with a poem, a critique, or a story, and often returning without the much-needed money." This is a very pleasing glimpse at the home life of our poet, and all the more valuable, coming, as it does, spontaneously from a foreigner. Such scenes show more truly a man’s real character than volumes of human analysis.

Perhaps it will be as well to give just here a few personal particulars which Mrs. Clemm furnished me, and which I took down in short-hand at the time: "Eddie had no idea of the value of money. I had to attend to all his pecuniary affairs. I even bought his clothes for him; he never bought a pair of gloves or a cravat for himself; he never would calculate; he was very charitable, and would empty his pockets to a beggar. He loved Virginia with a tenderness and a devotion which no words can express, and he was the most affectionate of sons to me."
CHAPTER VII.

1838-1842.


Soon after his removal to Philadelphia, Poe was engaged as a contributor upon The Gentleman's Magazine, which was owned by William E. Burton, the comedian. He drew immediate attention to the magazine by his powerful criticisms, and strange, fascinating tales. Among the latter was "The Fall of the House of Usher," which is considered by most readers Poe's masterpiece in imaginative fiction; but he gave that preference to "Ligeia." "Both have the unquestionable stamp of genius. The analysis of the growth of madness in one, and the thrilling revelations of the existence
of a first wife in the person of a second, in the other, are made with consummate skill; and the strange and solemn and fascinating beauty, which informs the style and invests the circumstances of both, drugs the mind, and makes us forget the improbabilities of their general design.” In 1839 these and other romantic creations of his peerless imagination were published in two volumes, under the title of “Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque,” by Lee & Blanchard, of Philadelphia. Henceforth, in this department of imaginative composition, Poe was “alone and unapproachable.”

Burton was so well satisfied with Poe’s contributions to The Gentleman’s Magazine that in May, 1839, he appointed him its editor-in-chief. For two hours’ work every day, the editor received ten dollars a week—very paltry pay for a man of Poe’s reputation and genius; there are scores of editors in this country to-day, who, not possessing half of his reputation, or any of his genius, are twice as well paid. But American writers, thirty and forty years ago, were not paid so well as American scribblers are now paid. Poe’s duties upon The Gentleman’s Magazine left him plenty of time for other literary work. He was always a most industrious writer; never idle, never lounging; when not engaged upon a critique, he was writing a tale or a poem.

In the autumn of 1840, Mr. Burton sold The Gentleman’s Magazine to George R. Graham, owner of The
Casket; the two periodicals were merged into one, and published under the name of Graham's Magazine. Poe was retained as the editor of the new magazine. Under his management it soon reached an extensive circulation; in fact, the circulation, which was five thousand when he took charge of it in November, 1840, was more than fifty thousand when he retired in November, 1842. In Graham's Magazine he continued his merciless exposure of the dunces, which he had so savagely begun five years before in The Southern Literary Messenger. The small poetrists fell before his powerful pen as surely and as completely as the summer grass before the scythe of the mower. They fell to rise no more. Commonplace people—and they are the vast majority of mankind—think (if they are capable of thinking upon any subject) that Edgar Poe took a savage delight in impaling these would-be poets upon the point of his critical pen; whereas the truth is, that there was no personal feeling at all in the matter. But his love of the beautiful was so exquisite that a false meter, an inelegant phrase, or an imperfect image was perfect torture to him; hence his severe criticisms. His taste was fastidious—faultless; his judgment unerring; his decision final. He was among the first to proclaim the genius of Mrs. Browning (then Miss Barrett) to the world; and when he collected his poems into a volume, the book was dedicated to her, as "To the noblest of her sex, with the most enthusiastic admiration, and with the most
sincere esteem." His estimate of Hawthorne, of Willis, of Halleck, was eminently just. He placed Longfellow, in 1846, the first among American poets; the place which, in 1876, Poe himself holds, in the opinion of the leading scholars of England, France, and Germany. He was the first to introduce to American readers the then unknown poet, Tennyson, and boldly declared him to be "the noblest poet that ever lived," at a time when the English critics had failed to discover the genius of the future Poet Laureate.

Poe's reputation was much increased by the publication, in the April (1841) number of Graham's Magazine, of the extraordinary, analytical story, "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," which introduced him for the first time to French readers, and, also, made his name conspicuous in the French courts. The tale was dressed up to suit the French palate by a Paris Bohemian, and published in "Le Commerce, as an original story, under the name of "L'Orang Otang." Not long afterward, another French journal, La Quotidienne, published a translation of the story under another name. Thereupon Le Siècle charged La Quotidienne with having stolen the said feuilleton from one previously published in Le Commerce. This led to a war of words between the editors of La Quotidienne and Le Siècle. The quarrel became so warm that it was carried to the law courts for settlement, where the aforesaid Bohemian proved that he had stolen the story from Mon-
sieur Edgar A. Poe, an American writer. It was proved, also, that the writer in *La Quotidienne* was himself an impudent plagiarist, for he had taken Monsieur Poe’s story without a word of acknowledgment; whilst the editor of *Le Siècle* was forced to admit that not only had he never read any of Poe’s works, but had not even heard of him. The public attention having been thus directed to Poe, his best tales were translated by Madame Isabelle Mennier, and published in several French magazines. The leading French journals united in bestowing upon our author the highest praise for the extraordinary power and ingenuity displayed in these tales. Later, Charles Baudelaire, having, by years of studious application, thoroughly imbued his mind with the spirit of Edgar Poe’s prose writings, his translation of them was published in 1864–5, in five 12mo volumes, by Michel Levy et Frères, of Paris. Poe is among the very few, perhaps it may be said, that he is the only American author who is really popular in France. That he has become a standard and classic writer there is, in a great measure, owing to the patient industry of Baudelaire.

Poe followed the “Murders in the Rue Morgue” by the “Mystery of Marie Roget,” in which the scene of the mysterious murder of a cigar girl, named Mary Rogers, in the vicinity of New York, was transferred to Paris, and, by a wonderful train of analytical reasoning, the mystery that surrounded the affair was completely disentangled.
These, and a succeeding story, "The Purloined Letter," are the most ingenious tales of ratiocination in the English language. It may be an interesting piece of information that Monsieur G——, the Prefect of the Parisian Police, who is mentioned in these stories, was Monsieur Grisquet, for many years Chief of the Paris Police, who died in the month of February, 1866.

But perhaps the most successful and most skillful of Poe's efforts at ratiocination was that in which he pointed out what must be the plot of Dickens's celebrated novel, "Barnaby Rudge," when only the beginning of the story had been published. In the Philadelphia Saturday Evening Post, of May 1, 1841, Poe printed what he called a "prospective notice" of the novel, in which he used the following words:

"That Barnaby is the son of the murderer may not appear evident to our readers; but we will explain: The person murdered is Mr. Reuben Haredale. His steward (Mr. Rudge, Senior) and his gardener are missing. At first both are suspected. 'Some months afterward,' in the language of the story, 'the steward's body, scarcely to be recognized but by his clothes and the watch and ring he wore, was found at the bottom of a piece of water in the grounds, with a deep gash in the breast, where he had been stabbed by a knife,' etc., etc.

"Now, be it observed, it is not the author himself who asserts that the steward's body was found; he has put the
words in the mouth of one of his characters. His design is to make it appear in the dénouement that the steward, Rudge, first murdered the gardener, then went to his master's chamber, murdered him, was interrupted by his (Rudge's) wife, whom he seized and held by the wrist, to prevent her giving the alarm; that he then, after possessing himself of the booty desired, returned to the gardener's room, exchanged clothes with him, put upon the corpse his own watch and ring, and secreted it where it was afterward discovered at so late a period that the features could not be identified."

Readers who are familiar with the plot of "Barnaby Rudge" will perceive that the differences between Poe's preconceived ideas and the actual facts of the story are very immaterial. Dickens expressed his admiring appreciation of this analysis of "Barnaby Rudge." He would not have expressed the same appreciation of Poe's opinion of him, when reviewing the completed novel. At the time when Charles Dickens was the most popular writer in the world, Edgar Poe (who could never be made to bow his supreme intellect to any idol) boldly declared that he "failed peculiarly in pure narrative," pointing out, at the same time, several grammatical mistakes of the great Boz. He also showed that Dickens "occasionally lapsed into a gross imitation of what itself is a gross imitation—the manner of Lamb—a manner based in the Latin construction. Poe further showed that Dickens's great success as a
novelist consisted in the delineation of character, and that those characters were grossly exaggerated caricatures—all of which is now generally admitted; but it required considerable courage to proclaim such an opinion at the time when Poe proclaimed it.

While Poe was editor of *Graham's Magazine*, his restless spirit grew tired of the "endless toil" of editorial life, and he endeavored to secure more certain and more remunerative employment. His intimate friend and lifelong correspondent, William F. Thomas, of Baltimore, author of "Clinton Bradshaw," and other novels of some note forty years ago, had obtained a Government clerkship at Washington. In the year 1842, Poe wrote to Mr. Thomas, expressing a wish to get a similar position, saying that he "would be glad to get almost any appointment—even a five hundred dollar clerkship—so that I have something independent of letters for a subsistence. To coin one's brain into silver, at the nod of a master, is, I am thinking, the hardest task in the world." At the conclusion of the letter he says he hopes some day to have a "beautiful little cottage, completely buried in vines and flowers." How fortunate for the world that Edgar Poe failed to secure "even a five hundred dollar clerkship"! Had he settled down to the dull routine of official life, he would probably not have written "The Raven," "Eureka," "Ulalume," "The Literati of New York," and other works which adorn American literature.
CHAPTER VIII.

1842–1845.

Poe's Tender Devotion to his Wife.—He Retires from Graham's Magazine.—Projects The Stylus.—"The Gold Bug."—Removal to New York.—Literary Editor of The Mirror.—The Broadway Journal.—New York Literary Society.—Poe its Brightest Ornament.

Virginia Poe's health, which had always been delicate, became still more precarious toward the autumn of 1842. Friends and foes alike agree in testifying to Edgar Poe's tender devotion to his darling wife, "in sickness and in health." The most unrelenting of his enemies alludes to the fact of having been sent for to visit him "during a period of illness, caused by protracted and anxious watching at the side of his sick wife." Mr. George R. Graham, in a generous defense of the dead poet, said, "I shall never forget how solicitous of the happiness of his wife and mother-in-law he was, whilst editor of Graham's Magazine. His whole efforts seemed to be to procure the comfort and welfare of his home. . . . His love for his wife was a sort
of rapturous worship of the spirit of beauty which he felt was fading before his eyes. I have seen him hovering around her, when she was ill, with all the fond fear and tender anxiety of a mother for her first-born; her slightest cough causing in him a shudder, a heart-chill that was visible. I rode out one summer evening with them, and remembrance of his watchful eyes, eagerly bent upon the slightest change of hue in that loved face, haunts me yet as the memory of a sad strain. It was this hourly anticipation of her loss that made him a sad and thoughtful man, and lent a mournful melody to his undying song.” Similar language is used by all who were acquainted with the poet and his family.

In November, 1842, Poe retired from *Graham’s Magazine*. His reputation as the most brilliant editor in America; his fame, as a poet and writer of purely imaginative fiction, extending to England and over the continent, made him feel the very natural ambition of having a magazine of his own—a magazine in which he would be perfectly untrammeled; in which he could “let loose the dogs of war” upon literary pretenders even more fiercely than he had hitherto been allowed to do. With this view, early in 1843 he projected a magazine, to be called *The Stylus*. The prospectus was written, printed, and circulated; contracts were made for contributions and illustrations; the day was fixed for the appearance of the first number. Failing to secure in advance a suffi-
cient number of subscribers to put the magazine upon a paying footing; the enterprise was temporarily abandoned, to be taken up again and again until the close of Poe's life. The prospectus of *The Stylus* announced the intention of affording a fair and honorable field for the *true* intellect of the land, without reference to the mere *prestige* of celebrated names. It further declared that the chief purpose of *The Stylus* was to become known as a journal wherein might be found at all times a sincere and a fearless opinion, preserving always an absolutely independent criticism, acknowledging no fear save that of outraging right. Such a magazine, with Edgar A. Poe for its editor, would have been the most brilliant specimen of periodical literature that this country has ever seen. But it was never to be. Poe was destined to disappointment through life. His was the too common lot of genius: to work for the pecuniary benefit of others during life, and to be rewarded by an immortality of glory after death.

Every production of Poe's pen was now welcomed with eager expectation by all cultivated readers. There was a vigor, a brilliancy, an originality about his writings in delightful contrast with the dreary platitude of most of the writers of the time. No tales, weak as a third cup of boarding-house tea—no verses, diluted echoes of Keats and Byron—no critiques, full of meaningless praise—came from his powerful pen.

In the spring of 1843, Poe obtained the hundred-dollar
prize offered by The Dollar Magazine, of Philadelphia, for the best prose story. "The Gold Bug" was the tale that won the prize. This tale, which relates to the discovery of Captain Kyd's long-buried treasure, displays a remarkably skillful illustration of Poe's celebrated theory, that human ingenuity can construct no enigma which human ingenuity cannot, by proper application, resolve. The chief interest centers upon the solution of an abstruse cryptogram.

In the autumn of 1844, Edgar Poe removed with his family to New York. Soon after establishing himself in the metropolis, he was employed by Messrs. Morris & Willis as the literary critic and assistant editor of The Mirror, a daily newspaper. Fortunately the late N. P. Willis, one of the owners and editors of the paper, wrote an account of Poe in this connection, which affords a very attractive glimpse at our poet. Mr. Willis says that "he [Poe] was at his desk in the morning from nine o'clock until the evening paper went to press. He was invariably punctual, and industrious, and good humor-edly ready for any suggestion. We loved the man for the entireness of the fidelity with which he served us. With his pale, beautiful, and intellectual face, as a reminder of what genius was in him, it was impossible not to treat him always with deferential courtesy. To our occasional request that he would not probe too deep in a criticism, or that he would erase a passage too highly
colored with his resentments against society and mankind, he readily and courteously assented—far more yielding than most men, we thought, on points so excusably sensitive. With a prospect of taking the lead in another periodical, he gave up his employment with us; and, through all this considerable period (five or six months), we had seen but one presentment of the man—a quiet, patient, industrious, and most gentlemanly person, commanding the utmost respect and good feeling by his unvarying deportment and ability.”

The other periodical, in which he was to take the lead, was The Broadway Journal, a weekly paper which had been started in New York early in January, 1845. In March of that year Poe became associate editor of the journal, and one-third owner. From its start, The Broadway was a dying concern, and when Poe became its sole editor in July, it was in the last stage of journalistic decay. His vigorous contributions, however, kept it alive for six months longer. Upon looking over the volumes of the journal, I was astonished to find so many and such elaborate articles from Poe’s pen, at the very time, too, when his adored wife was sick, almost dying, and when he himself was in ill health, poor, and harassed by cares and troubles of all kinds.

Poe’s brilliant literary reputation admitted him to the most cultured society of New York, where his fascinating conversation, his distinguished appearance, and elegant
manners delighted every one who made his acquaintance. In the winter of 1845-6, he was frequently present among the artists and men of letters, who assembled weekly at the residence of Miss Anna C. Lynch, in Waverley Place. An accomplished woman, who met him at this time, says: "His manners at these reunions were refined and pleasing, and his style and scope of conversation that of a gentleman and a scholar. He delighted in the society of superior women, and had an exquisite perception of all graces of manner and shades of expression. He was an admiring listener, and an unobtrusive observer. We all recollect the interest felt at the time in everything emanating from his pen; the relief it was from the dullness of ordinary writers; the certainty of something fresh and suggestive. His critiques were read with avidity; people felt their ability and courage. Right or wrong, he was terribly in earnest." Mrs. Sarah Helen Whitman, whose name I mention with the most enthusiastic admiration, in that noble defense of her dead friend, "Edgar Poe and his Critics," says: "Sometimes his fair young wife was seen with him at these weekly assemblages in Waverley Place. She seldom took part in the conversation; but the memory of her sweet and girlish face, always animated and vivacious, repels the assertion, afterward so cruelly and recklessly made, that she died a victim to the neglect and unkindness of her husband, "who," as it has been said, "deliberately sought her death, that he might embalm her memory in immortal dirges."
CHAPTER IX.

1845.

"The Raven."—Poe's Masterpiece.—The Extraordinary Sensation Produced by it.—The Effect of the Poem upon American Literature.—Poe's Analysis.—"The Raven" Abroad.

We have now reached that period in the life of Edgar A. Poe when his genius culminated in the production of "The Raven," which stands alone in poetry, as the Venus in sculpture and the Transfiguration in painting.

"The Raven" was originally published in The American Review—a New York Whig Journal of Politics, Literature, Art, and Science—in the number for February, 1845. It is rather remarkable that this poem, the masterpiece of Poe, should be the only composition of his published under a nom de plume. It was headed, "The Raven," by Quarles, and introduced as follows: "The following lines from a correspondent—besides the deep, quaint strain of the sentiment, and the curious introduction of some ludicrous touches amidst the serious and impressive, as
was doubtless intended by the author—appear to us one of the most felicitous specimens of unique rhyming which has for some time met our eye. The resources for English rhythm for varieties of melody, measure, and sound, producing corresponding diversities of effect, have been thoroughly studied, much more perceived, by very few poets in the language. While the classic tongues, especially the Greek, possess, by power of accent, several advantages for versification over our own, chiefly through greater abundance of spondaic feet, we have other and very great advantages of sound by the modern usage of rhyme. Alliteration is nearly the only effect of that kind which the ancients had in common with us. It will be seen that much of the melody of 'The Raven' arises from alliteration, and the studious use of similar sounds in unusual places. In regard to its measure, it may be noted that, if all the verses were like the second, they might properly be placed merely in short lines, producing a not uncommon form; but the presence in all the others of one line—mostly the second in the verse—which flows continuously, with only an aspirate pause in the middle, like that before the short line in the Sapphic Adonis, while the fifth has at the middle pause no similarity of sound with any part beside, gives the versification an entirely different effect."

This exquisite specimen of hypercritical criticism, made up of words of "learned length and thundering sound,"
is given as one of the curiosities of American literature. The writer, no doubt, thought he was paying a high compliment to "The Raven," when he kindly pronounced it a "felicitous specimen of rhyming." Then his brilliant suggestion in reference to placing the verses in "short lines," reminds us irresistibly that the writer could not have been long out of his short clothes. But the simple fact that Edgar A. Poe was paid only ten dollars for a poem that has brought more honor upon American literature than all the rest of American poetry combined, a poem that has been proclaimed a masterpiece of genius by the scholars of the world, is sufficient of itself to show how incapable the editor of The American Review was of appreciating the genius of "The Raven." For the recently discovered early poem of Poe's, "Alone," Scribner's Magazine paid twice as much as Poe received for his masterpiece.

It has been truly said that the first perusal of "The Raven" leaves no distinct understanding, but fascinates the reader with a strange and thrilling interest. It produces upon the mind and heart a vague impression of fate, of mystery, of hopeless sorrow. It sounds like the utterance of a full heart, poured out—not for the sake of telling its sad story to a sympathizing ear—but because he is mastered by his emotions, and cannot help giving vent to them. It more resembles the soliloquies of Hamlet, in which he betrays his struggling thoughts and feel-
ings, and in which he reveals the workings of his soul, stirred to its utmost depth by his terrible forebodings.

An American scholar* has furnished the most admirable critique of "The Raven" that has yet been given to the world. After assigning to Poe a place in that illustrious procession of classical poets which includes the names of Milton, Ben Jonson, Herrick, Shelley, and Keats, he says of "The Raven": "No poem in our language presents a more graceful grouping of metrical appliances and devices. The power of peculiar letters is evolved with a magnificent touch; the thrill of the liquids is a characteristic feature, not only of the refrain, but throughout the compass of the poem; their "linked sweetness, long drawn out," falls with a mellow cadence, revealing the poet's mastery of those mysterious harmonies which lie at the basis of human speech. The continuity of the rhythm, illustrating Milton's ideal of true musical delight, in which the sense is variously drawn out from one verse into another; the alliteration of the Norse minstrel and the Saxon bard; the graphic delineation and the sustained interest, are some of the features which place 'The Raven' foremost among the creations of a poetic art in our age and clime."

Edgar Poe was not one of those poets, like Addison, "born to write and live with ease;" but modern readers

* Professor Henry E. Shepherd, of Baltimore.
find Addison’s “easy writing, hard reading.” The truth is that the affectation of easy writing is no longer in fashion. It is now universally admitted that in poetry, as in all other human pursuits, what is rare and valuable is seldom obtainable without patient labor. “Genius is patience,” says the great Chateaubriand. There never was a more patient genius than Edgar A. Poe. He bestowed both time and pains upon his work. After he had planned “The Raven,” a poem which few minds beside his own could have conceived, he clothed it in a style and language whose force and affluence have seldom, if ever, been surpassed. Professor Shepherd, the American scholar already quoted in this chapter, alludes with classic beauty and grace to this subject of patience, when he says: “The Athenian sculptor, in the palmiest days of Grecian art, wrought out his loveliest conceptions by the painful processes of unflagging diligence. The angel was not evolved from the block by a sudden inspiration, or a brilliant flash of unpremeditated art. No finer illustration of conscious art has been produced in our century than ‘The Raven.’”

Poe’s own account of the composition of his masterpiece is one of the strangest revelations that any author has ever given to the world; indeed, it would be incredible if told by any other person than the poet himself. Setting out with the intention of composing a poem that should suit at once the popular and the critical
taste, and keeping *originality* always in view, the work proceeded, says Poe, step by step to its completion, with the precision and rigid consequence of a mathematical problem. One of Poe's peculiar theories being that a long poem does not and cannot exist, he limited his poem to one hundred and eight lines.... He next considered the impression, or effect, to be produced, and he declares that he kept steadily in view the design of rendering the work *universally* appreciable. Regarding beauty as the only legitimate province of the poem, and *sadness* as the highest manifestation of its tone, he selected the idea of a lover lamenting the death of his beautiful beloved as the groundwork of the poem. He then be-thought himself of some key-note, some pivot, upon which the whole structure might turn, and decided upon the *restrain*; determining to produce continuously novel effects by the variation of the *application* of the *restrain*, the *restrain* itself remaining, for the most part, unvaried. The next thing in order was to select a word which would be in the fullest possible keeping with the melancholy tone of the poem. The word "nevermore" was the very first that presented itself. Then it was necessary to have some pretext for the repetition of the one word "nevermore." The poet says he saw at once that it would not do to put the monotonous word in the mouth of a *human being*. Immediately the idea arose of a *non*-reasoning creature capable of speech, and very naturally a parrot, in the
first instance, suggested itself; but was superseded forthwith by a raven, as equally capable of speech, and infinitely more in keeping with the intended melancholy tone.

Having, then, decided upon the rhythm of the poem, the next point to be considered was the mode of bringing together the lover and the raven. The poet determined to place the lover in the chamber rendered sacred by memories of her who had frequented it. The bird was next to be introduced. The night was made tempestuous, to account for the raven's seeking admission, and also for the effect of contrast with the physical serenity within the chamber. The bird was made to alight on the bust of Pallas, also for the effect of contrast between the marble and the plumage, the bust of Pallas being chosen as most in keeping with the scholarship of the lover.

The poem then proceeds, in mournful but melodious numbers, to the dénouement, when we are told the soul of the unhappy poet, from out the shadow of the raven, that lies floating on the floor, shall be lifted nevermore.

This is a mere outline of Poe's masterly analysis of his most extraordinary poem. The world should be grateful to our poet for his "confidential disclosures" in regard to "The Raven." With what delight would not the world have welcomed Shakespeare's own account of the conception and composition of "Lear," of "Macbeth," of "Hamlet"!

It is a remarkable fact that "The Raven," the longest
and most elaborate of all Poe's poems, is the only one that was never changed or altered by the author. Several editions were published during Poe's lifetime, but not a stanza, not a line, not a word was changed; as it was first printed in *The American Review*, so it has ever been printed. The author was satisfied with his work.

"The Raven" established Poe's fame as the most original poet of America, and placed him in the front rank of the poets of the world. *The Edinburgh Review*, in a very harsh article, says: "'The Raven' has taken rank all over the world as the very first poem yet produced on the American Continent." This poem has been translated into most of the modern and several of the ancient languages. Stephane Mallarmé, who has quite recently translated and published a superbly illustrated edition of "The Raven" in Paris, sent Mrs. Whitman a copy of the volume, and a highly appreciative letter, from which I have been permitted to make the following extracts:

"Whatever is done to honor the memory of a genius the most truly divine the world has seen, ought it not first to obtain your sanction? Such of Poe's works as our great Baudelaire has left untranslated, this is to say, the poems, and many of the critical fragments, I hope to make known to France, and my first attempt ('The Raven') is intended to attract attention to a future work, now nearly completed. . . . Fascinated with the works of Poe from my infancy, it is already a very long time
since your name became associated with his in my earliest and most intimate sympathies." In a letter addressed to one of his relations in Baltimore, a few months after the appearance of "The Raven," Edgar Poe alludes with just pride to the renown which his poetical reputation had conferred upon the family name. A writer in The Southern Literary Messenger declared, with equal truth and beauty, that on the dusky wings of "The Raven," Edgar A. Poe will sail securely over the gulf of oblivion to the eternal shore.
In the winter of 1845–6, the literary reputation of Edgar A. Poe had attained its greatest brilliancy. During that time, he resided at 85 Amity Street, New York. A cousin of the poet, who visited him that winter, has told me that Edgar, Virginia, and Mrs. Clemm formed the happiest little family he had ever seen. Edgar was sick at the time of this visit, and the visitor was invited to his chamber. The poet was reclining on a lounge, with Virginia and Mrs. Clemm in devoted attendance upon him. A small table by his side held a bouquet of sweet flowers, two or three books, and some delicacies. Mrs. Osgood, Miss Anna Lynch, and Mrs. Lewis called. Edgar Poe lying sick upon his lounge was the center of attraction. The conversation, in such company, naturally took a literary turn. The invalid poet
directed it, and all listened, enchanted by his low, musical voice, and the brilliant play of his imagination.

Poe’s acquaintance with Mrs. Frances Sargent Osgood commenced soon after the publication of “The Raven.” That accomplished woman, a few weeks before her early death, wrote an account of their first meeting and subsequent intimacy. She says: “My first meeting with the poet was at the Astor House. A few days previous, Mr. Willis had handed me, at the table d’hôte, that strange and thrilling poem, ‘The Raven.’ Its effect upon me was so singular, so like that of weird, unearthly music, that it was with a feeling almost of dread I heard he desired an introduction. I shall never forget the morning when I was summoned to the drawing-room, by Mr. Willis, to receive him. With his proud and beautiful head erect, his dark eyes flashing with the electric light of feeling and thought, a peculiar and inimitable blending of sweetness and hauteur in his expression and manner, he greeted me calmly, gravely, almost coldly, yet with so sweet an earnestness that I could not help being deeply impressed by it. From that moment until his death we were friends. Of the charming love and confidence that existed between his wife and himself I cannot speak too earnestly, too warmly. It was in his own simple yet poetical home that, to me, the character of Edgar Poe appeared in its most beautiful light. Playful, affectionate, witty; alternately docile and wayward as a petted child; for his
young, gentle, and idolized wife, and for all who came, he had, even in the midst of the most harassing literary duties, a kind word, a pleasant smile, a graceful and courteous attention. At his desk, beneath the romantic picture of his loved Lenore, he would sit, hour after hour, patient, assiduous, and uncomplaining, tracing in an exquisitely clear chirography, and with almost super-human swiftness, the lightning thoughts, the 'rare and radiant' fancies, as they flashed through his wonderful and ever-wakeful brain. I recollect one morning, toward the close of his residence in New York, when he seemed unusually gay and light-hearted. Virginia, his sweet wife, had written me a pressing invitation to come to them; and I, who never could resist her affectionate summons, and who enjoyed his society far more in his own home than elsewhere, hastened to Amity Street. I found him just completing his series of papers entitled 'The Literati of New York.' 'See,' said he, displaying in laughing triumph several little rolls of narrow paper (he always wrote thus for the press); 'I am going to show you, by the difference of length in these, the different degrees of estimation in which I hold all you literary people. In each of these one of you is rolled up and fully discussed. Come, Virginia, help me.' One by one they unfolded them. At last they came to one which seemed interminable. Virginia laughingly ran to one corner of the room with one end, and her husband to
the other. 'And whose lengthened sweetness long drawn out is that?' said I. 'Hear her!' he cried, 'just as if her vain little heart didn't tell her it's herself!''

In May, 1845, while still conducting *The Broadway Journal*, Poe began his celebrated critical papers, "The Literati of New York," in Godey's *Lady's Book*, of Philadelphia. The series commenced with George Bush, and terminated with Richard Adams Locke, making thirty-eight in all. The majority of these "literati" have long since passed into merited oblivion. An immense impetus was given to the *Lady's Book* by the publication of these papers. People read it who had never read it before. Poe caused as much terror among the literary pigmies as Gulliver caused among the Lilliputian pigmies. As a natural result of such unsparing criticism he made a "host of enemies among persons toward whom he entertained no personal ill-will." "It was his sensitiveness to artistic imperfections rather than any malignity of feeling that made him so severe a critic." It has been suggested that an appropriate escutcheon for Edgar Poe would have been the crest of Brian de Bois Gilbert—a raven in full flight, holding in its claws a skull, and bearing the motto, "*Gare le Corbeau.*"

As the spring of 1846 advanced, the health of Mrs. Poe continued to decline, and fearing the effects of the prostrating summer heat of the city upon the feeble health of the lovely and loved invalid, it was determined to remove
to the country. The pretty little village of Fordham was chosen for the home of the delicate wife. A tiny Dutch cottage was rented. It was on the top of a picturesque hill, a pretty, romantic spot; the antiquated little house was half buried in fruit trees. This new home was small enough, only boasting four rooms, two below and two above; but it was cool, quiet, and away from the noise and vexations of New York. The parlor was used by Poe as a study. Here he wrote "Ulalume," "Eureka," and other productions of his "lonesome latter years." This room was furnished with exquisite neatness and simplicity. The floor was laid with red and white matting; four cane-seat chairs, a light table, a set of hanging bookshelves, and two or three fine engravings, completed the furniture.

A gentleman who visited Poe at Fordham, in 1846, says: "The cottage had an air of taste and gentility that must have been lent to it by the presence of its inmates. So neat, so poor, so unfurnished, and yet so charming a dwelling I never saw. There was an acre or two of greensward fenced in about the house, as smooth as velvet, and as clean as the best kept carpet. Mr. Poe was so handsome, so impassive in his wonderful, intellectual beauty, so proud and reserved, so entirely a gentleman upon all occasions—so good a talker was he that he impressed himself and his wishes even without words upon those with whom he spoke. His voice was melody itself. He
always spoke low, even in a violent discussion, compelling his hearers to listen if they would know his opinion, his facts, fancies, or philosophy. Mrs. Poe looked very young; she had large black eyes, and a pearly whiteness of complexion, which was a perfect pallor. Her pale face, her brilliant eyes, and her raven hair, gave her an unearthly look. One felt that she was almost a disrobed spirit, and when she coughed it was made certain that she was rapidly passing away.

As the winter of 1846–7 approached, the affairs of the little Fordham household grew desperate. The sickness of his wife and his own ill health at this time incapacitated Poe from literary work, his only source of revenue, and, consequently, the family were reduced to the last extremity, wanting even the barest necessaries of life—at a time, too, when Mrs. Poe required the little delicacies so grateful to the sick. It was at this time that N. P. Willis made, in The Home Journal, his generous appeal in behalf of his friend and brother poet. In the course of his article Mr. Willis said: "Here is one of the finest scholars, one of the most original men of genius, and one of the most industrious of the literary profession of our country; whose temporary suspension of labor, from bodily illness, drops him immediately to a level with the common objects of public charity. There is no intermediate stopping-place, no respectful shelter, where, with the delicacy due to genius and culture, he might secure aid,
till, with returning health, he could resume his labors, and his unmortified sense of independence." This article was gratefully acknowledged by Poe, in a letter dated December 30, 1846, in which, after alluding to Willis’s "kind and manly comments in The Home Journal," he says: "That my wife is ill is true, and you may imagine with what feeling I add that this illness, hopeless from the first, has been heightened and precipitated by her reception, at two different periods, of anonymous letters. That I myself have been long and dangerously ill, and that my illness has been a well-understood thing among my brethren of the press, the best evidence is afforded by the innumerable paragraphs of personal and literary abuse with which I have been lately assailed. This matter, however, will remedy itself. At the very blush of my new prosperity the gentlemen who toadied me in the old will recollect themselves and toady me again. That I am 'without friends,' is a gross calumny, which I am sure you never could have believed, and which a thousand noble-hearted men would have good right never to forgive, for permitting to pass unnoticed and denied. I am getting better, and may add, if it is any comfort to my enemies, that I have little fear of getting worse. The truth is, I have a great deal to do, and I have made up my mind not to die till it is done."

Exactly one month from the date of this letter, that is, on the 30th of January, 1847, the loved wife died. Her death-bed was the witness of a scene as sad and pathetic
as ever told by poet or romance writer. The weather was cold, and Mrs. Poe suffered also from the chills that follow the hectic fever of consumption. The bed was of straw, and was covered only with a spread and sheets, no blanket. Here the dying lady lay, wrapped in her husband's overcoat, with a large tortoise-shell cat in her bosom. The coat and the cat afforded the only warmth to the sufferer, except that imparted by her mother chafing her feet and her husband her hands. And thus died, at the early age of twenty-five, the wife of America's greatest genius.

This loss, though long expected, was not the less crushing when it came at last. To a lady of Massachusetts, who had sent him expressions of sympathy, Edgar Poe wrote, a few weeks after the death of his wife: "I was overwhelmed by a sorrow so poignant as to deprive me, for several weeks, of all power of thought or action." Mrs. Clemm told me that "Eddie" often wandered to his wife's grave at midnight, in the snow and rain, and threw himself upon the mound of earth, calling upon her in words of devoted love, and invoking her gentle spirit to watch over him.
CHAPTER XI.

1847-1848.

The Effect of Virginia's Death.—He Writes "Ulalume."—"Eureka."—The Stylus Again.

For weeks and months after his wife's death, Edgar Poe was buried in an agony of grief, from which nothing could arouse him. His books, his studies were abandoned; his pen was thrown aside; his usual occupation was neglected. He wandered aimlessly about the country by day, and at night kept long and solitary vigil at the grave of his "lost Lenore." He seemed to anticipate the death of his wife in that line of "The Raven" where he says, "My soul from out that shadow shall be lifted nevermore." It never was lifted. After the loss of his wife, Poe was a changed man. He, who never laughed and rarely smiled before, might now almost be said to have "never smiled again." But the most melancholy effect of this crushing grief was the resort to stimulants, hoping to drown his sorrows in the waters of Lethe. Fatal delusion! Lethe proved, indeed, a river of hell to the unhappy poet. It was not
for pleasure that he thus sank his noble intellect. "I have absolutely no pleasure in the stimulants in which I sometimes so madly indulge," he wrote within a year of his death. "It has not been in the pursuit of pleasure that I have periled life and reputation and reason. It has been in the desperate attempt to escape from torturing memories, from a sense of insupportable loneliness, and a dread of some strange, impending doom."

But it must not be supposed that this "mad indulgence" was habitual. It was only sometimes, only when driven to despair by "intolerable sorrow," that he was guilty of follies and excesses, "which," as he very naturally complained, "are hourly committed by others without attracting any notice whatever." It is very easy for people who sit down to a sumptuous dinner every day to abuse our poor, lonely, unhappy poet. It is very easy for people who are surrounded by all the luxuries of life to condemn Edgar Poe as a drunkard; whereas, if the truth were known, he was not drunk so often as they have been—they for sensual gratification, he driven to it by misery and despair.

Poe was conscious that he possessed genius; how could the possessor of so grand a genius be ignorant of it? He had adorned his country's literature with works which the world has pronounced immortal. Yet, in spite of his wealth of genius, perhaps on account of it, he was so poor that he could not comfort his sick and dying wife
with the most trifling delicacy. It is all very well for people who daily enjoy the best wines to condemn Poe for being bitter and morbid, when he could not afford a glass of wine to warm the chill body of his idolized darling. Poverty, disappointment, and sorrow wrought their worst upon him. He experienced to the utmost "the stings and arrows of outrageous fortune." But the death of his wife was the crowning sorrow of his life, the crushing blow from which he never entirely recovered.

In the autumn of the year in which he lost his wife, Poe wrote that strange, fascinating poem, "Ulalume." It first appeared in The American Review for December, 1847. Willis copied it in The Home Journal, January 1, 1848, with the following notice: "We do not know how many readers we have who will enjoy as we do this exquisite piquant and skillful exercise of variety and niceness of language. It is a poem full of beauty—a curiosity (and a delicious one, we think) in philologic flavor." When Willis wrote this notice, he did not know that Poe was the author of the poem. An enthusiastic writer describes "Ulalume" as a piece of perfect witchery produced by words: the conjuror poet waves the wand of his enchantment, and, by the mystic charm of those few verses, solemn, lantern-like phantasmagoria, effects of light and shade; dreamy pictures; intoxication, as if from a charmed chalice; something luxurious, we know not what, form a spell, which works as the "'Arabian Nights'"
on the brain of a child; indeed, a whole world is created. Is not this the great art of the poet? He keeps hidden the means; the effect only is understood.

An English writer, after quoting the opening stanzas of "Ulalume," says: "These to many will appear only words, but what wondrous words! What a spell they wield! What a weird unity there is in them! The instant they are uttered, a misty picture, with a tarn, dark as a murderer's eye, below, and the thin, yellow leaves of October fluttering above, exponents of a misery which scorns the name of sorrow, is hung up in the chambers of your soul forever." Mrs. Whitman, in speaking of the strange threnody of "Ulalume," says: "This poem, perhaps the most original and weirdly suggestive of all his poems, resembles, at first sight, some of Turner's landscapes, being apparently 'without form and void, and having darkness on the face of it.'" It is, nevertheless, in its basis, although not in the precise correspondence of time, simply historical. Such was the poet's lonely midnight walk; such, amid the desolate memories and scenes of the hour, was the new-born hope enkindled within his heart at sight of the morning star—

"Astarte's be-diamond crescent"—

looming up as the beautiful harbinger of love and happiness, yet awaiting him in the untried future; and such the sudden transition of feeling, the boding dread, that
supervened, on discovering what had at first been unnoted, that it shone, as if in mockery or in warning, directly over the sepulcher of the lost "Ulalume."

"Ulalume" was the only piece published by Poe in the year 1847, his "most immemorial year." During almost this entire period he remained at his quiet cottage home in Fordham. Mrs. Clemm, who shared his grief for their household darling, devoted herself thenceforth exclusively to him. He testified to the kindness of his "dear Muddie," as he affectionately called her, in a beautiful sonnet, in which he says she had been "more than mother" to him.

But, although Poe published only one piece in 1847, it must not be supposed that his busy brain was idle. It was during the autumn and early winter of that year that "Eureka" was planned, thought out, and, in part, written. To the composition of this work Poe brought the matured powers of his marvelous intellect; all the enthusiasm, all the earnestness of his passionately intellectual nature was thrown into it. Mrs. Clemm told me that while engaged upon this extraordinary prose poem, he would walk up and down the porch in front of the cottage, in the coldest nights of December, with an overcoat thrown over his shoulders, contemplating the stars, and "pondering the deep problems" of the universe, until long after midnight.

By the middle of January, 1848, the work had pro-
gressed so far that Poe announced his intention of delivering a series of lectures, commencing February 3d, with "Eureka," or "The Universe," as it was first called. His aim and object will be found in the following letter addressed to N. P. Willis:

"Fordham, January 22, 1848.

"My Dear Mr. Willis:

"I am about to make an effort at re-establishing myself in the literary world, and feel that I may depend upon your aid.

"My general aim is to start a magazine, to be called The Stylus; but it would be useless to me, even when established, if not entirely out of the control of a publisher. I mean, therefore, to get up a journal which shall be my own, at all points. With this end in view, I must get a list of at least five hundred subscribers to begin with—nearly two hundred I have already. I propose, however, to go South and West among my personal and literary friends—old college and West Point acquaintances—and see what I can do. In order to get the means of taking the first step, I propose to lecture at the Society Library, on Thursday, the 3d of February, and, that there may be no cause of squabbling, my subject shall not be literary at all. I have chosen a broad text, The Universe.

"Having thus given you the facts of the case, I leave 5*
all the rest to the suggestions of your own tact and generosity. Gratefully, *most* gratefully,

"Your friend always,

"EDGAR A. POE."

In response to this letter, Willis published, in *The Home Journal*, the following generous and appreciative article:

"We by accident omitted to mention, in our last week's paper, that our friend and former editorial associate, Mr. Poe, was to deliver a lecture, on Thursday evening, February 3d, at the Society Library. The subject is rather a broad one, 'The Universe;’ but, from a mind so original, no text could furnish any clue to what would probably be the sermon. There is but one thing certain about it: that it will be compact of thought, *most* fresh, startling, and suggestive. Delivered under the warrant of our friend's purely intellectual features and expression, such a lecture as he must write would doubtless be, to the listeners, a mental treat of a very unusual relish and point.

"We understand that the purpose of Mr. Poe's lecture is to raise the necessary capital for the establishment of a magazine, which he proposes to call *The Stylus*. They who like literature without trammels, and criticism without gloves, should send in their names forthwith as subscribers. If there be in the world a born anatomist of thought, it is Mr. Poe. He takes genius and its imitators to pieces with a skill wholly unequalled on either side of the
water; and neither in criticism nor in his own most singular works of imagination, does he write a sentence that is not vivid and suggestive. The severe afflictions with which Mr. Poe has been visited within the last year have left him in a position to devote himself, self-sacrificingly, to his new task; and, with energies that need the exercise, he will doubtless give it that most complete attention which alone can make such an enterprise successful.”

As announced, the lecture was delivered on Thursday evening, February 3d, 1848. The night was stormy, but there was present a “select but highly appreciative audience, that remained attentive and interested for nearly three hours, under the lecturer’s powerful, able, and profound analytical exposition of his peculiar theory on the origin, creation, and final destiny of the universe. Mr. Poe’s delivery is pure, finished, and chaste in style; his power of reasoning is acute, and his analytical perceptions keen. The lecturer appeared inspired; his eyes seemed to glow like those of his own ‘Raven.’”

The pecuniary result of this lecture did not materially advance the prospects of The Stylus. Mrs. Clemm once showed me a book in which were entered the names of the subscribers to The Stylus. This book, with several letters and other interesting Poe papers, mysteriously disappeared after Mrs. Clemm’s death, which took place in Baltimore, February 16th, 1871. The prospectus of The Stylus which was published in 1848 did not differ, in
any essential particulars, from the prospectus which was published in 1843. Now, as then, the chief purpose of the proposed magazine was to maintain a "sincere and fearless opinion," an "absolutely independent criticism," guided by the "intelligible laws of art."
CHAPTER XII.

1848.

Publication of "Eureka."—Resumes His Contributions to The Southern Literary Messenger.—Poe's Engagement to Mrs. Sarah Helen Whitman.—Love Letters.—The Engagement Broken.—Poe Blameless in the Matter.

Poe's lecture upon "The Universe" having failed to draw an audience of more than seventy-five persons, he determined to reach a larger audience by the publication of his lecture in book form. With this view, he carefully revised and enlarged it, and late in the spring of 1848, it was published, under the name of "Eureka." The book was generally noticed in the papers, magazines, and reviews. "Eureka" was the most ambitious literary work Edgar Poe ever wrote, and the least successful. He expected much from it in reputation. He got little from it but abuse. "Pagan," "Pantheist," "Polytheist," were among the epithets flung at him by the shallow scribblers of the day.

In the summer of this year Poe visited Richmond, and having formed the acquaintance of John R. Thompson, the editor of The Southern Literary Messenger, engaged to
furnish contributions to the magazine in which his earliest laurels were won. In the September number of *The Messenger* appeared his elaborate review of Mrs. Estelle Anna Lewis's poems. The October number of *The Messenger* contained Poe's celebrated article on "The Rationale of Verse," in the opening of which he alludes, rather strongly, to the inaccuracy, confusion, misconception, and downright ignorance generally prevailing upon a subject which he pronounces exceedingly simple, and "within the limits of the commonest common sense." He certainly treats the subject with much analytical acumen; but, as it has been truly said, a reference to the carefully finished, free, and original style of "The Raven" will furnish a practical illustration of Poe's theory. The admirable variety, pause, and cadence of the versification of that poem could only have emanated from a mind well acquainted with the art. A rule must govern the use of words, in order to produce perfect unity and harmony, as necessarily as a rule must be applied to the notes of music, in order to produce the same effect. Nearly as much scientific research is required for the attainment of the one as of the other. Toward the conclusion of this article, Poe devoted two or three paragraphs to showing that what are called "English hexameters" would make much better respectable prose; that, in fact, the English language cannot be turned or twisted into the Greek hexameters.
Early in the spring of 1845, Poe was returning to New York from Boston, where he had been invited to deliver a poem, and stopped at Providence. Late at night, he was strolling through the moonlit streets of the city, and saw a lady walking in a beautiful garden. The time, the scene, the circumstances, all made an indelible impression upon the mind of the poet. Three years passed, during which time he did not see again the lady. In the summer of 1848, he addressed to her the exquisite poem, commencing,

“I saw thee once—once only—years ago.”

The lady who had so profoundly interested the poetical soul of Edgar Poe was one of the most brilliant women of New England, the gifted poetess, Mrs. Sarah Helen Whitman, of Providence, R. I. Up to this time they had never met, though they had many friends in common. This poem, “To Helen,” conveyed to her the first intelligence of the fact that she had awakened a feeling of interest in the poet’s heart. It was not until early in the autumn of 1848 that Edgar Poe and Mrs. Whitman became personally acquainted. She had long admired the extraordinary genius of the poet. She soon learned to value the generous, enthusiastic, chivalrous heart of the man. In spite of the opposition of Mrs. Whitman’s relations, in spite of the warnings of her friends, she became engaged to Edgar Poe in October of
this same year, 1848. This engagement was the silver lining to the dark cloud that overspread the latter years of our poet's life. It opened a prospect of happiness for him—even for him, the desolate and despairing. Like the gleam of light that cheered Sinbad in the Cave of Death and restored him to life, did this engagement hold out a saving hope to the soul of the unhappy master of "The Raven," and promise to restore him once again to love.

Mrs. Osgood said that, in his letters, far more than in his published writings, the genius of Edgar Poe was most gloriously revealed; they were divinely beautiful. His letters to Mrs. Whitman at this time are the most passionately eloquent that we have ever read. But they are, for the most part, strictly personal, and we can only give here a few brief extracts from them. Listen to his proud protest against the charge of indifference to moral obligations so often and so recklessly urged against him:

"Fordham, October 18, 1848.

... "Of what avail to me in my deadly grief are your enthusiastic words of mere admiration? You do not love me, or you would have felt too thorough a sympathy with the sensitiveness of my nature to have so wounded me as you have done with this terrible passage of your letter: 'How often have I heard men and even women say of you, "He has great intellectual power, but no principle, no moral sense."' Is it possible that such
expressions as these could have been repeated to me—to me—by one whom I love; ah, whom I love?

"For nearly three years I have been ill, poor, living out of the world; and thus, as I now painfully see, have afforded opportunity to my enemies to slander me in private society without my knowledge, and, thus, with impunity. Although much, however, may (and, I now see, must) have been said to my discredit during my retirement, those few who, knowing me well, have been steadfastly my friends, permitted nothing to reach my ears—unless in one instance of such a character that I could appeal to a court of justice for redress. I replied to the charge fully, in a public newspaper, suing The Mirror (in which the scandal appeared), obtaining a verdict, and recovering such an amount of damages as, for the time, to completely break up that journal.

"And you ask me why men so misjudge me—why I have enemies? If your knowledge of my character and of my career does not afford you an answer to the query, at least it does not become me to suggest the answer. Let it suffice that I have had the audacity to remain poor, that I might preserve my independence; that, nevertheless, in letters, to a certain extent, and in some regards, I have been successful; that I have been a critic—an unscrupulously honest, and, no doubt, in many cases, a bitter one; that I have uniformly attacked—where I attacked at all—those who stood highest in power and in-
fluence; and that, whether in literature or in society, I have seldom refrained from expressing, either directly or indirectly, the pure contempt with which the pretensions of ignorance, arrogance, or imbecility inspire me.

"And you, who know all this, you ask me why I have enemies. Ah! I have a hundred friends for every individual enemy; but has it ever occurred to you that you do not live among my friends? Had you read my criticisms generally, you would see why all those whom you know best know me least, and are my enemies. Do you not remember with how deep a sigh I said to you, 'My heart is heavy, for I see that your friends are not my own'? Forgive me, best and beloved Helen, if there is bitterness in my tone. Toward you there is no room in my soul for any other sentiment than devotion. It is fate only which I accuse. It is my own unhappy nature."

No truly generous person can read without a feeling of sympathy this eloquent remonstrance against the base injustice of men who stabbed the character of Poe in the dark; waiting until he was "ill, and poor, and living out of the world."

In a letter to Mrs. Whitman, dated November 24, 1848, occurs this powerful passage: "The agony which I have so lately endured—an agony known only to my God and to myself—seems to have passed my soul through fire, and purified it from all that is weak. Hence-
forward, I am strong; this, those who love me shall see, as well as those who have so relentlessly endeavored to ruin me. It needed only some such trials as I have just undergone to make me what I was born to be, by making me conscious of my own strength.”

In six weeks from the time when they first became engaged the affair had reached so near a point, that Poe wrote to his friend, W. J. Pabodie, at Providence, requesting him to get the Rev. Dr. Crocker to publish the intended marriage at his earliest convenience. Yet, in a few weeks, the engagement was broken off. Why, still remains a mystery; but, certainly, Poe was not blamable in the matter, for Mrs. Whitman always remained his friend; has always defended him, both in private and in public; and, in “Edgar Poe, and his Critics,” furnished the ablest and most eloquent defense of her dead friend that has yet been given to the world. Read the concluding stanzas of her beautiful and touching monody entitled “The Portrait of Poe,” and then judge whether any woman could thus write of the man who had grossly insulted (as has been alleged) the dearest and most sensitive feelings of her nature:

“Sweet, mourning eyes, long closed upon earth’s sorrow,
Sleep restfully after life’s fevered dream!
Sleep, wayward heart, till, on some bright cool morrow,
Thy soul, refreshed, shall bathe in morning’s beam.
"Though cloud and shadow rest upon thy story,  
And rude hands lift the drapery of thy pall,  
Time, as a birthright, shall restore thy glory,  
And Heaven rekindle all the stars that fall."

Were more proof required that Edgar Poe's conduct in this affair was that of an honorable, high-souled gentleman, it will be found in the fact that Mrs. Whitman addressed six sonnets to his memory; sonnets breathing the most passionate admiration; sonnets which exhibit, with noble eloquence, the real nobility and fascination and power of her poet-lover. The first of these sonnets thus concludes:

"Thou wert my destiny—thy song, thy fame,  
The wild enchantments clustering round thy name  
Were my soul's heritage—its regal dower;  
Its glory, and its kingdom, and its power."

The last of the six sonnets is full of the most sublime sorrow for the lost lover, and ends with an intense longing for a never-ending reunion:

"Oh, yet, believe, that, in that 'hollow vale,'  
Where thy soul lingers, waiting to attain  
So much of Heaven's sweet grace as shall avail  
To lift its burden of remorseful pain,  
My soul shall meet thee, and its Heaven forego,  
Till God's great love on both one hope, one Heaven bestow."
When the engagement was on the point of being severed, the poet, in a letter to Mrs. Whitman, drew the following exquisite picture of his ideal home:

"I suffered my imagination to stray with you, and with the few who love us both, to the banks of some quiet river in some lovely valley of our land. Here, not too far secluded from the world, we exercised a taste controlled by no conventionalities, but the sworn slaves of a natural art in the building for ourselves a cottage, which no human being could ever pass without an ejaculation of wonder at its strange, weird, and incomprehensible yet simple beauty. Oh! the sweet and gorgeous, but not often rare flowers in which we half buried it, the grandeur of the magnolias and tulip trees which stood guarding it, the luxurious velvet of its lawn, the luster of the rivulet that ran by its very door, the tasteful yet quiet comfort of its interior, the music, the books, the unostentatious pictures, and above all the love, the love that threw an unfading glory over the whole! Alas! all is now a dream."
CHAPTER XIII.

1849.

Last Visit to Richmond.—Death and Burial in Baltimore.—Last Poems.—The Poe Monument.

We have reached the last year of Edgar Poe’s life—that life so full of sorrow, so full of suffering, but so full of literary glory. This last year did not yield much fruit, but the fruit that it yielded was precious as the golden apples of the Hesperides.

Edgar Poe passed the winter and spring of 1849 at his secluded home in Fordham. The only variety to relieve the monotony of his quiet life was the occasional visit of a friend, or a visit of a few days, by him and Mrs. Clemm, to their friend, Mrs. Estelle Anna Lewis, in Brooklyn. "Annabel Lee" and "The Bells" were the rich results of this winter’s work.

On the 30th of June, Poe departed on his last trip to the South. The months of July, August, and September were spent in Richmond. During this time he boarded either at the old Swan Hotel, or resided in the family of Mrs. John H. McKenzie, at Duncan Lodge, in
the suburbs of the city. She was the lady who adopted Rosalie Poe at the time that Mr. Allan adopted Edgar. The latter, from his childhood, had been upon the most intimate terms with the McKenzie family, and was always a most welcome visitor at their house; in fact it was his home whenever he visited Richmond. It was during this last visit to Richmond that Poe delivered his beautiful lecture upon "The Poetical Principle," before one of the most cultivated audiences that had ever been brought together at the Exchange Concert-room.

Mrs. Elmira Shelton, the Miss Royster to whom Edgar Poe had been engaged eighteen years before, was now a widow. He renewed his former intimate acquaintance with her, visited her frequently, and in September they became engaged. About the middle of that month he wrote to Mrs. Clemm that his marriage was appointed for the 17th of October. This letter, although announcing the "happy event," was very sad, as if the writer was oppressed by a sense of impending doom. On Tuesday, the 2d of October, Poe left Richmond by boat for Baltimore, where he arrived the next morning. His intention was to go to Fordham, and bring Mrs. Clemm to Richmond for his wedding. He had written her to be ready to return with him on the 10th—that he had determined to pass the rest of his life amid the scenes of his happy youth.

What became of Poe, after he arrived in Baltimore on that October morning, will probably never be known.
It was an election day. His cousin, Mr. Neilson Poe, told me that on the evening of that day he was informed that a gentleman named Poe was in a back room of the Fourth Ward polls, on Lombard Street, between High and Exeter Streets. Mr. Poe went there, and found Edgar A. Poe in a state of stupefaction. He had been "cooped," and voted all over the city. A carriage was called, and the dying poet was conveyed to the Washington College Hospital, on Broadway, north of Baltimore Street. There, on the following Sunday, October 7th, he died, remaining insensible to the last. Had he lived until the 19th of January, 1850, he would have been forty-one years old. At four o'clock on Tuesday afternoon, October 9th, the body of Edgar A. Poe was buried in the midst of his ancestors, in the cemetery attached to the Westminster Church, southeast corner of Fayette and Greene Streets. It was a dull, cold, autumn day—just such a day as he had described in "Ulalume":

"The skies they were ashen and sober,
The leaves they were crisped and sere."

Only eight persons attended the funeral of the author of "The Raven."

Both "The Bells" and "Annabel Lee" were published in *Sartain's Magazine*, of Philadelphia, after Poe's death. The former, consisting at first of only two short stanzas, was left with the editor of *The Magazine* in July, 1849,
when the poet stopped in Philadelphia on his way to the South. The poem was accepted and put in type, but before its appearance the author greatly enlarged it, and before its actual publication he sent to the editor the complete version of the poem in the form in which it finally appeared in the November number of The Magazine for 1849. "Annabel Lee" was published in Sartain's Magazine in January, 1850. A writer in The British Quarterly Review pronounces "Annabel Lee" one of the most graceful effusions in all literature.

For more than a quarter of a century the grave of Edgar A. Poe possessed no stone to tell the passing visitor that America's greatest genius there reposed. Strangers from distant lands visited Baltimore, and sought the grave of Poe as a pilgrim's shrine. Great was their astonishment when, after much inquiry and diligent search, they at last found the poet's grave—a forlorn, forsaken spot in an obscure corner of an obscure church-yard. Rank weeds covered the neglected mound, but none of the violets and roses and pansies which the poet loved.

Such for twenty-six years was the resting-place of the author of "The Raven." Such is no longer the condition of our poet's grave. On the 17th of November, 1875, a beautiful monument was dedicated to the honor of Edgar A. Poe, in the presence of an immense assemblage, comprising the wealth, taste, and culture of Baltimore. Poetry, music, and eloquence, each contributed to the
interesting occasion. What a contrast was offered by this splendid demonstration to the scant ceremony and scantier attendance on that dreary autumn afternoon twenty-six years before, when the body of the poet was privately buried! Then, eight persons followed him to the grave, while more than a thousand persons were present at the dedication of the Poe Monument.
CHAPTER XIV.

Poe's Personal Habits.—His Industry.—His Disposition.—Appearance and Manners.—A Genuine American Writer.—Moral Beauty of His Writings.—Poe and Byron.—Poe's Fame.

Here are many persons—intelligent and cultivated persons—who believe, and always will believe, that Edgar Poe was a drunken vagabond, whose whole life was one long fit of intoxication. It never seems to occur to these worthy people that a drunkard's intellect could not have produced the literary work which stands an immortal monument of Poe's genius; that the painful process of reasoning, and the wonderful analytical power in his writings display the clearest, the most brilliant mind. Besides the ancient and modern languages, his works show a familiarity with natural history, mineralogy, philosophy, chemistry, astronomy, etc. Habitual drunkards do not, generally speaking, spend their time in accumulating vast stores of learning.

It does seem very suspicious that only one of Poe's
acquaintances knew of his "frequent fits of intoxication." N. P. Willis, who was in daily intercourse with him for months, saw nothing of his dissipated habits; L. A. Wilmer, during an intimate friendship of twelve years, saw nothing of it; George R. Graham, who was associated with him daily for two years, saw nothing of it; S. D. Lewis, who lived in the closest intimacy with him, never saw him drink a glass of wine, beer, or liquor of any kind. The fact is, that it was only at rare intervals, and more especially after the loss of his adored wife, that he indulged in stimulants at all. Upon those occasions, the lines in Dermody's "Enthusiast" might be applied to Poe:

"He who such polished lines so well could form,
   Was Passion's slave, Intoxication's child;
Now earth-enamored, a groveling worm,
   Now seraph-plumed, the wonderful, the wild."

Poe was a most laborious, painstaking, industrious writer. Mrs. Clemm told me that it was a regular habit of his, when editor of *Graham's Magazine*, to sit down to his desk after breakfast, and write five pages of print before going to bed. He never sat down to write until he had completely arranged the plot, the characters, and even the language. His habit was to walk up and down while thinking out his work.

Neilson Poe says Edgar was one of the best-hearted men that ever lived. People who only met him in so-
ciety, where his manner was often cold and repelling, could not believe him otherwise than proud and cynical. It was in the bosom of his own little family, and among the intimate friends whom he loved and trusted, the "few who loved him, and whom he loved," that his tender and affectionate nature manifested itself in all its sweetness.

Every person who came in personal contact with Edgar Poe speaks of his elegant appearance, the stately grace of his manners, and his fascinating conversation. "His manners were winning in the extreme," says an accomplished lady, "his voice a marvel of melody." "His conversation was bright, earnest, and fascinating," says another. "He impressed me as a man inspired by noble and exalted sentiments," says Dr. N. C. Brooks, who was his friend from first to last. "I do not think it possible to overstate the gentlemanly reticence and amenity of his habitual manner," says Mrs. Whitman, in a letter lying before me.

Edgar Poe was five feet six inches high; in his person there was a perfect blending of grace with strength; his shoulders were broad, his chest full, his waist small, his limbs symmetrical, his feet and hands as beautiful and shapely as a girl's. He had the firm step, erect form, and military bearing observable in all West-Pointers. His eyes were dark gray, with a sad but fascinating expression:
"Those melancholy eyes that seemed
To look beyond all time, or, turned
On eyes they loved, so softly beamed—
How few their mystic language learned.

"How few could read their depths, or know
The proud, high heart that dwelt alone
In gorgeous palaces of woe,
Like Eblis on his burning throne."

Over his broad, white forehead fell the rich, dark hair, almost as black as the wings of his own "Raven." The "sweet, imperious mouth," when opened by one of the poet's rare but beautiful smiles, disclosed the most brilliant teeth in the world. His complexion was pale, but it was a clear, "translucent pallor," not the sickly hue of ill health.

Poe always dressed with extreme elegance and in perfect taste; he generally wore gray clothes, a loose black cravat, and turn-down collar.

Edgar A. Poe was a genuine American writer. He was one of the first American authors who dared to have a literary opinion different from that of England. He did not wait for a transatlantic verdict upon a poet, novelist, or historian before he delivered his opinion, and he maintained it with irresistible force. He was perfectly free from that spirit of literary Anglo-mania, which was so generally prevalent in this country thirty or forty years ago. He did more to establish a native American liter-
nature than all the writers that preceded him. Let it never be forgotten that Edgar A. Poe has conferred upon our country the glory of having produced the most original poet of the century.

A man, whose early death saved him from the penitentiary for the crime of bigamy, was the first to start the charge that Poe was utterly void of conscience, that he "exhibited scarcely any virtue in either his life or his writings." We gladly admit that Edgar Poe did not exhibit any of the peculiar "virtues" of this libeler "in his life or his writings." We confidently point to the present memoir as a triumphant answer to this base and gratuitous charge as to the life of Poe. As to his writings, there is not a sentence, a line, a word in all the four closely-printed volumes that could bring a blush to the most delicate maiden's cheek, and, as Han-nay, the English critic, says, "His poetry is all as pure as wild flowers." Again: "With all his passion for the beautiful, no poet was ever less voluptuous. He never profaned his genius." No; his love of beauty was not the gross love of the sensualist; it was rather the spiritualized, ethereal, heavenly adoration of the se-raph.

It is a matter of surprise that any American writer, who really has at heart the honor of American literature, should endeavor to cast reproach and dishonor upon Edgar A. Poe, who has done more for our country's literary reputa-
tion than any other author. It is hard to stop a falsehood once started. So, every month or two, some hungry penny-a-liner takes up the old, worn-out stories against Poe, dresses them up in new clothes, and palms them upon a credulous and unsuspecting world. The malignancy of these literary vermin is only exceeded by their ignorance.

Poe and Byron have often been compared. They were alike only in the divine gift of genius. But how different their earthly lot! Byron, at an early age, became the lord of Newstead Abbey, a magnificent inheritance. Poe, at an early age, was cast upon the world homeless and friendless. Byron was descended from a long and distinguished line of nobles; he was prouder of being a descendant of the Norman gentleman who came over with the Conqueror, and whose name was inscribed in Doomsday Book, than he was of having written "Childe Harold," or "Manfred." Poe, though of a good family, was the son of a poor player. Byron, at twenty-four; was the most famous poet of his age, the idol of the aristocratic society of England, and the most beautiful women in the world were striving for his smile. Poe, at twenty-four, was living in poverty and obscurity. Byron, after a literary career unexampled for success and brilliancy, died in the glorious struggle for Grecian independence. Poe, after a literary career crowded with suffering and sorrow, died miserably in a public hospital. Poe suffered, but he
drew no man down with him; he did not attempt to shake any man's religion; he seduced no one from the path of virtue by the voluptuous enchantment of his writings. Byron did this, and more than this: to the evil influence of his writings he added the evil example of his life.

Edgar Poe was, perhaps, the most scholarly writer our country has ever produced. His acquaintance with classical literature was thorough. His familiarity with modern literature, especially French and Italian, was extensive, while, of English literature, it can be truly said he knew it from the very source—from Chaucer, the first poet-laureate, in the fourteenth century, to Tennyson, the last poet-laureate, in the nineteenth century. Even the most insignificant of his writings show scholarship. In the language of Mr. Kennedy, "His taste was replete with classical flavor, and he wrote in the spirit of an old Greek philosopher."

Dying so young, and accomplishing so much, we may confidently conjecture what the author of "The Raven" might have done had he reached the number of years allotted to man. But the fame of Edgar A. Poe is secure; it can never die.

6*
THE RAVEN.

ONCE upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary,
Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore—
While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping,
As of some one gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door.
"'Tis some visitor," I muttered, "tapping at my chamber door—
Only this and nothing more."

Ah, distinctly I remember it was in the bleak December,
And each separate dying ember wrought its ghost upon the floor.
Eagerly I wished the morrow;—vainly I had sought to borrow
From my books surcease of sorrow—sorrow for the lost Lenore—
For the rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore—
Nameless here for evermore.
And the silken sad uncertain rustling of each purple curtain
Thrilled me—filled me with fantastic terrors never felt before;
So that now, to still the beating of my heart, I stood repeating
"'Tis some visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door—
Some late visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door;
This it is and nothing more."

Presently my soul grew stronger; hesitating then no longer,
"Sir," said I, "or Madam, truly your forgiveness I implore;
But the fact is I was napping, and so gently you came rapping,
And so faintly you came tapping, tapping at my chamber door,
That I scarce was sure I heard you"—here I opened wide the door;—

Darkness there and nothing more.

Deep into that darkness peering, long I stood there wondering, fearing,
Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortals ever dared to dream before;
But the silence was unbroken, and the stillness gave no
token,
And the only word there spoken was the whispered
word, "Lenore?"
This I whispered, and an echo murmured back the word,
"Lenore!"

Merely this and nothing more.

Back into the chamber turning, all my soul within me
burning,
Soon again I heard a tapping, something louder than
before.
"Surely," said I, "surely that is something at my win-
dow lattice;  
Let me see, then, what thereat is and this mystery
explore—
Let my heart be still a moment and this mystery ex-
plore;—

'Tis the wind and nothing more."

Open here I flung the shutter, when, with many a flirt
and flutter,
In there stepped a stately Raven of the saintly days of
yore.
Not the least obeisance made he; not a minute stopped
or stayed he,
But, with mien of lord or lady, perched above my cham-
ber door—
Perched upon a bust of Pallas just above my chamber door —
Perched, and sat, and nothing more.
Then this ebony bird beguiling my sad fancy into smiling,
By the grave and stern decorum of the countenance it wore,
"Though thy crest be shorn and shaven, thou," I said,
"art sure no craven,
Ghastly, grim, and ancient Raven, wandering from the Nightly shore.
Tell me what thy lordly name is on the Night's Plutonian shore!"
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

Much I marvelled this ungainly fowl to hear discourse so plainly,
Though its answer little meaning — little relevancy bore; For we cannot help agreeing that no living human being Ever yet was blessed with seeing bird above his chamber door —
Bird or beast upon the sculptured bust above his chamber door,
With such name as "Nevermore."

But the Raven, sitting lonely on that placid bust, spoke only
That one word, as if his soul in that one word he did outpour.
Nothing further then he uttered; not a feather then he fluttered—
Till I scarcely more than muttered, "Other friends have flown before—
On the morrow he will leave me, as my Hopes have flown before,"

Then the bird said "Nevermore."

Startled at the stillness broken by reply so aptly spoken,
"Doubtless," said I, "what it utters is its only stock and store
Caught from some unhappy master whom unmerciful Disaster
Followed fast and followed faster till his songs one burden bore—
Till the dirges of his Hope that melancholy burden bore
Of 'Never, — nevermore.'"

But the Raven still beguiling all my sad soul into smiling,
Straight I wheeled a cushioned seat in front of bird and bust and door;
Then, upon the velvet sinking, I betook myself to linking Fancy unto fancy, thinking what this ominous bird of yore—
What this grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt, and ominous bird of yore

Meant in croaking "Nevermore."
This I sat engaged in guessing, but no syllable expressing
To the fowl whose fiery eyes now burned into my bosom's core;
This and more I sat divining, with my head at ease reclining
On the cushion's velvet lining that the lamplight gloated o'er,
But whose velvet violet lining with the lamplight gloating o'er
She shall press, ah, nevermore!

Then, methought, the air grew denser, perfumed from an unseen censer
Swung by Seraphim whose footfalls tinkled on the tufted floor.
"Wretch," I cried, "thy God hath lent thee — by these angels he hath sent thee
Respite — respite and nepenthe from thy memories of Lenore!
Quaff, oh quaff this kind Nepenthe and forget this lost Lenore!"

Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

"Prophet!" said I, "thing of evil! — prophet still, if bird or devil!
Whether Tempter sent, or whether tempest tossed thee here ashore,
Desolate yet all undaunted, on this desert land enchanted—

On this Home by horror haunted—tell me truly, I implore—

Is there—is there balm in Gilead?—tell me—tell me, I implore!"

Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

"Prophet!" said I, "thing of evil—prophet still, if bird or devil!

By that Heaven that bends above us—by that God we both adore—

Tell this soul with sorrow laden if, within the distant Aidenn,

It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the angels name Lenore—

Clasp a rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore."

Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

"Be that word our sign of parting, bird or fiend!" I shrieked, upstarting—

"Get thee back into the tempest and the Night's Plutonian shore!

Leave no black plume as a token of that lie thy soul hath spoken!

Leave my loneliness unbroken!—quit the bust above my door!
LENORE.

Take thy beak from out my heart, and take thy form from off my door!"

Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

And the Raven, never flitting, still is sitting, still is sitting
On the pallid bust of Pallas just above my chamber door;
And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon’s that is dreaming,
And the lamplight o’er him streaming throws his shadow on the floor;
And my soul from out that shadow that lies floating on the floor

Shall be lifted — nevermore!

LENORE.

H, broken is the golden bowl! the spirit flown forever!
Let the bell toll! — a saintly soul floats on the Stygian river;
And, Guy De Vere, hast thou no tear? — weep now or nevermore!

See! on yon drear and rigid bier low lies thy love, Lenore!
Come! let the burial rite be read — the funeral song be sung! —
An anthem for the queenliest dead that ever died so young —
A dirge for her the doubly dead in that she died so young.

"Wretches! ye loved her for her wealth and hated her for her pride;
And when she fell in feeble health, ye blessed her — that she died!
How shall the ritual, then, be read? — the requiem how be sung
By you — by yours, the evil eye, — by yours, the slanderous tongue
That did to death the innocence that died, and died so young?"

Peccavimus; but rave not thus! and let a Sabbath song
Go up to God so solemnly the dead may feel no wrong!
The sweet Lenore hath "gone before," with Hope, that flew beside,
Leaving thee wild for the dear child that should have been thy bride —
For her, the fair and debonair, that now so lowly lies,
The life upon her yellow hair but not within her eyes —
The life still there, upon her hair — the death upon her eyes.
"Avaunt! to-night my heart is light. No dirge will I upraise,
But waft the angel on her flight with a Pæan of old days!
Let no bell toll!—lest her sweet soul, amid its hallowed mirth,
Should catch the note, as it doth float up from the damnèd Earth.
To friends above, from fiends below, the indignant ghost is riven—
From Hell unto a high estate far up within the Heaven—
From grief and groan, to a golden throne, beside the King of Heaven."

HYMN.

At morn — at noon — at twilight dim —
Maria! thou hast heard my hymn!
In joy and woe — in good and ill —
Mother of God, be with me still!
When the Hours flew brightly by,
And not a cloud obscured the sky,
My soul, lest it should truant be,
Thy grace did guide to thine and thee;
Now, when storms of Fate o’ercast
Darkly my Present and my Past,
Let my Future radiant shine
With sweet hopes of thee and thine!
A VALENTINE.

For her this rhyme is penned, whose luminous eyes,
   Brightly expressive as the twins of Lœda,
Shall find her own sweet name, that, nestling lies
   Upon the page, enwrapped from every reader.

Search narrowly the lines! — they hold a treasure
   Divine — a talisman -- an amulet
That must be worn at heart. Search well the measure —
   The words — the syllables! Do not forget
The trivialest point, or you may lose your labor!
   And yet there is in this no Gordian knot
Which one might not undo without a sabre,
   If one could merely comprehend the plot.

Enwritten upon the leaf where now are peering
   Eyes scintillating soul, there lie perdus
Three eloquent words oft uttered in the hearing
   Of poets, by poets — as the name is a poet's, too.
Its letters, although naturally lying
   Like the knight Pinto — Mendez Ferdinando —
Still form a synonym for Truth. — Cease trying!
   You will not read the riddle, though you do the best
   you can do.

[To translate the address, read the first letter of the first line in connection with the second letter of the second line, the third letter of the third line, the fourth of the fourth, and so on to the end. The name will thus appear.]
THE COLISEUM.

Type of the antique Rome! Rich reliquary
Of lofty contemplation left to Time
By buried centuries of pomp and power!
At length — at length — after so many days
Of weary pilgrimage and burning thirst,
(Thirst for the springs of lore that in thee lie,)
I kneel, an altered and an humble man,
Amid thy shadows, and so drink within
My very soul thy grandeur, gloom, and glory!

Vastness! and Age! and Memories of Eld!
Silence! and Desolation! and dim Night!
I feel ye now — I feel ye in your strength —
O spells more sure than e'er Judæan king
Taught in the gardens of Gethsemane!
O charms more potent than the rapt Chaldee
Ever drew down from out the quiet stars!

Here, where a hero fell, a column falls!
Here, where the mimic eagle glared in gold,
A midnight vigil holds the swarthy bat!
Here, where the dames of Rome their gilded hair
Waved to the wind, now wave the reed and thistle!
Here, where on golden throne the monarch lolled,
Glides, spectre-like, unto his marble home,
Lit by the wan light of the hornéd moon,
The swift and silent lizard of the stones!
But stay! these walls — these ivy-clad arcades —
These mouldering plinths — these sad and blackened shafts —
These vague entablatures — this crumbling frieze —
These shattered cornices — this wreck — this ruin —
These stones — alas! these gray stones — are they all —
All of the famed, and the colossal left
By the corrosive Hours to Fate and me?

"Not all" — the Echoes answer me — "not all!
Prophetic sounds and loud, arise forever
From us, and from all Ruin, unto the wise,
As melody from Memnon to the Sun.
We rule the hearts of mightiest men — we rule
With a despotic sway all giant minds.
We are not impotent — we pallid stones.
Not all our power is gone — not all our fame —
Not all the magic of our high renown —
Not all the wonder that encircles us —
Not all the mysteries that in us lie —
Not all the memories that hang upon
And cling around about us as a garment,
Clothing us in a robe of more than glory."
TO HELEN.

SAW thee once — once only — years ago:
I must not say how many — but not many.
It was a July midnight; and from out
A full-orbed moon, that, like thine own soul, soaring,
Sought a precipitate pathway up through heaven,
There fell a silvery silken veil of light,
With quietude, and sultriness, and slumber,
Upon the upturn'd faces of a thousand
Roses that grew in an enchanted garden,
Where no wind dared to stir, unless on tiptoe —
Fell on the upturn'd faces of these roses
That gave out, in return for the love-light,
Their odorous souls in an ecstatic death —
Fell on the upturn'd faces of these roses
That smiled and died in this parterre, enchanted
By thee, and by the poetry of thy presence.

Clad all in white, upon a violet bank
I saw thee half reclining; while the moon
Fell on the upturn'd faces of the roses,
And on thine own, upturn'd — alas, in sorrow!

Was it not Fate, that, on this July midnight —
Was it not Fate (whose name is also Sorrow)
That bade me pause before that garden-gate,
To breathe the incense of those slumbering roses?
No footstep stirred: the hated world all slept,
Save only thee and me. (Oh, Heaven! — oh, God!
How my heart beats in coupling those two words!
Save only thee and me. I paused — I looked —
And in an instant all things disappeared.
(Ah, bear in mind this garden was enchanted!)

The pearly lustre of the moon went out:
The mossy banks and the meandering paths,
The happy flowers and the repining trees,
Were seen no more: the very roses’ odors
Died in the arms of the adoring airs.
All — all expired save thee — save less than thou:
Save only the divine light in thine eyes —
Save but the soul in thine uplifted eyes.
I saw but them — they were the world to me.
I saw but them — saw only them for hours —
Saw only them until the moon went down.
What wild heart-histories seemed to lie enwritten
Upon those crystalline, celestial spheres!
How dark a woe! yet how sublime a hope!
How silently serene a sea of pride!
How daring an ambition! yet how deep —
How fathomless a capacity for love!

But now, at length, dear Dian sank from sight,
Into a western couch of thunder-cloud;
And thou, a ghost, amid the entombing trees
Didst glide way. Only thine eyes remained.
They would not go — they never yet have gone.
Lighting my lonely pathway home that night,
They have not left me (as my hopes have) since.
They follow me—they lead me through the years—
They are my ministers—yet I their slave.
Their office is to illumine and enkindle—
My duty, to be saved by their bright light,
And purified in their electric fire,
And sanctified in their elysian fire.
They fill my soul with Beauty (which is Hope),
And are far up in Heaven—the stars I kneel to
In the sad, silent watches of my night;
While even in the meridian glare of day
I see them still—two sweetly scintillant
Venuses, unextinguished by the sun!

TO ————

NOT long ago, the writer of these lines,
In the mad pride of intellectuality, [that ever
Maintained “the power of words”—denied
A thought arose within the human brain
Beyond the utterance of the human tongue:
And now, as if in mockery of that boast,
Two words—two foreign soft dissyllables—
Italian tones, made only to be murmured
By angels dreaming in the moonlit “dew
That hangs like chains of pearl on Hermon hill,” —
ULALUME.

Have stirred from out the abysses of his heart,
Unthought-like thoughts that are the souls of thought,
Richer, far wilder, far diviner visions
Than even the seraph harper, Israfel,
(Who has "the sweetest voice of all God's creatures,")
Could hope to utter. And I! my spells are broken.
The pen falls powerless from my shivering hand.
With thy dear name as text, though bidden by thee,
I cannot write — I cannot speak or think —
Alas, I cannot feel; for 't is not feeling,
This standing motionless upon the golden
Threshold of the wide-open gate of dreams,
Gazing, entranced, adown the gorgeous vista,
And thrilling as I see, upon the right,
Upon the left, and all the way along,
Amid unpurpled vapors, far away
To where the prospect terminates — thee only.

ULALUME.

The skies they were ashen and sober;
The leaves they were crisped and sere —
The leaves they were withering and sere —
It was night in the lonesome October
Of my most immemorial year;
ULALUME.

It was hard by the dim lake of Auber,
    In the misty mid region of Weir—
It was down by the dank tarn of Auber,
    In the ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir.

Here once, through an alley Titanic,
    Of cypress, I roamed with my soul—
    Of cypress, with Psyche, my Soul.
These were days when my heart was volcanic
    As the scoriac rivers that roll—
    As the lavas that restlessly roll—
Their sulphurous currents down Yaanek
    In the ultimate climes of the pole—
That groan as they roll down Mount Yaanek
    In the realms of the boreal pole.

Our talk had been serious and sober,
    But our thoughts they were palsied and sere—
    Our memories were treacherous and sere—
For we knew not the month was October,
    And we marked not the night of the year—
(Ah, night of all nights in the year!)
We noted not the dim lake of Auber—
(Though once we had journeyed down here)—
Remembered not the dank tarn of Auber,
    Nor the ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir.
And now, as the night was senescent
And star-dials pointed to morn—
As the star-dials hinted of morn—
At the end of our path a liquescent
And nebulous lustre was born,
Out of which a miraculous crescent
Arose with a duplicate horn—
Astarte's bediamonded crescent
Distinct with its duplicate horn.

And I said — "She is warmer than Dian:
She rolls through an ether of sighs—
She revels in a region of sighs:
She has seen that the tears are not dry on
These cheeks, where the worm never dies,
And has come past the stars of the Lion
To point us the path to the skies—
To the Lethean peace of the skies—
Come up, in despite of the Lion,
To shine on us with her bright eyes—
Come up through the lair of the Lion,
With love in her luminous eyes."

But Psyche, uplifting her finger,
Said — "Sadly this star I mistrust—
Her pallor I strangely mistrust:—
Oh, hasten! oh, let us not linger!
Oh, fly! — let us fly! — for we must."
In terror she spoke, letting sink her
Wings until they trailed in the dust—
In agony sobbed, letting sink her
Plumes till they trailed in the dust—
Till they sorrowfully trailed in the dust.

I replied—"This is nothing but dreaming:
Let us on by this tremulous light!
Let us bathe in this crystalline light!

Its Sybilic splendor is beaming
With Hope and in Beauty to-night:—
See!—it flickers up the sky through the night!
Ah, we safely may trust to its gleaming,
And be sure it will lead us aright—
We safely may trust to a gleaming
That cannot but guide us aright,
Since it flickers up to Heaven through the night."

Thus I pacified Psyche and kissed her,
And tempted her out of her gloom—
And conquered her scruples and gloom;
And we passed to the end of the vista,
But were stopped by the door of a tomb—
By the door of a legended tomb;
And I said—"What is written, sweet sister,
On the door of this legended tomb?"
She replied—"Ulalume—Ulalume—
'T is the vault of thy lost Ulalume!"
Then my heart it grew ashen and sober
As the leaves that were crisped and sere—
As the leaves that were withering and sere,
And I cried—"It was surely October
On this very night of last year
That I journeyed—I journeyed down here—
That I brought a dread burden down here—
On this night of all nights in the year,
Ah, what demon has tempted me here?
Well I know, now, this dim lake of Auber—
This misty mid region of Weir—
Well I know, now, this dank tarn of Auber,
This ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir."

THE BELLS.

I.

H E A R the sledges with the bells—
Silver bells!
What a world of merriment their melody foretells!
How they tinkle, tinkle, tinkle,
In the icy air of night!
While the stars that oversprinkle
All the heavens, seem to twinkle
With a crystalline delight;
Keeping time, time, time,
In a sort of Runic rhyme,
To the tintinabulation that so musically wells
   From the bells, bells, bells, bells,
   Bells, bells, bells —
   From the jingling and the tinkling of the bells.

II.

Hear the mellow wedding bells,
   Golden bells!
What a world of happiness their harmony foretells!
   Through the balmy air of night
   How they ring out their delight!
   From the molten golden notes,
      And all in tune,
   What a liquid ditty floats
To the turtle-dove that listens, while she gloats
      On the moon!
   Oh, from out the sounding cells,
What a gush of euphony voluminously wells!
   How it swells!
   How it dwells
   On the Future! how it tells
   Of the rapture that impels
To the swinging and the ringing
   Of the bells, bells, bells,
   Of the bells, bells, bells, bells,
      Bells, bells, bells —
To the rhyming and the chiming of the bells!
III.

Hear the loud alarum bells —
Brazen bells!
What a tale of terror, now, their turbulency tells!
In the startled ear of night
How they scream out their affright!
Too much horrified to speak,
They can only shriek, shriek,
Out of tune,
In a clamorous appealing to the mercy of the fire,
In a mad expostulation with the deaf and frantic fire.
Leaping higher, higher, higher,
With a desperate desire,
And a resolute endeavor
Now — now to sit or never,
By the side of the pale-faced moon.
Oh, the bells, bells, bells!
What a tale their terror tells
Of Despair!
How they clang, and clash, and roar!
What a horror they outpour
On the bosom of the palpitating air!
Yet the ear it fully knows,
By the twanging,
And the clanging,
How the danger ebbs and flows;
THE BELLS.

Yet the ear distinctly tells,
   In the jangling,
   And the wrangling,
How the danger sinks and swells,
By the sinking or the swelling in the anger of the bells —
   Of the bells —
Of the bells, bells, bells, bells,
   Bells, bells, bells —
   In the clamor and the clangor of the bells!

IV.

Hear the tolling of the bells —
   Iron bells!
What a world of solemn thought their monody compels!
   In the silence of the night,
How we shiver with affright
At the melancholy menace of their tone!
   For every sound that floats
From the rust within their throats
   Is a groan.
And the people — ah, the people —
They that dwell up in the steeple,
   All alone,
And who tolling, tolling, tolling,
   In that muffled monotone,
Feel a glory in so rolling
   On the human heart a stone —
They are neither man nor woman —
They are neither brute nor human —
They are Ghouls:
And their king it is who tolls;
And he rolls, rolls, rolls,
Rolls
A pæan from the bells!
And his merry bosom swells
With the pæan of the bells!
And he dances, and he yells;
Keeping time, time, time,
In a sort of Runic rhyme,
To the pæan of the bells —
Of the bells:
Keeping time, time, time,
In a sort of Runic rhyme,
To the throbbing of the bells —
Of the bells, bells, bells —
To the sobbing of the bells;
Keeping time, time, time,
As he knells, knells, knells,
In a happy Runic rhyme,
To the rolling of the bells —
Of the bells, bells, bells —
To the tolling of the bells,
Of the bells, bells, bells —
Bells, bells, bells —
To the moaning and the groaning of the bells.
ELDOM we find,” says Solomon Don Dunce, “Half an idea in the profoundest sonnet. Through all the flimsy things we see at once As easily as through a Naples bonnet— Trash of all trash! — how can a lady don it! Yet heavier far than your Petrarchan stuff— Owl-downy nonsense that the faintest puff Twirls into trunk-paper the while you con it.” And, veritably, Sol is right enough. The general tuckermanities are arrant Bubbles — ephemeral and so transparent — But this is, now, — you may depend upon it— Stable, opaque, immortal — all by dint Of the dear names that lie concealed within’t.

ANNABEL LEE.

T was many and many a year ago, In a kingdom by the sea, That a maiden there lived whom you may know By the name of ANNABEL LEE; And this maiden she lived with no other thought Than to love and be loved by me.
I was a child and she was a child,
   In this kingdom by the sea:
But we loved with a love that was more than love—
   I and my Annabel Lee;
With a love that the winged seraphs of heaven
   Coveted her and me.
And this was the reason that, long ago,
   In this kingdom by the sea,
A wind blew out of a cloud, chilling
   My beautiful Annabel Lee;
So that her high-born kinsman came
   And bore her away from me,
To shut her up in a sepulchre
   In this kingdom by the sea.

The angels, not half so happy in heaven,
   Went envying her and me—
Yes!—that was the reason (as all men know,
   In this kingdom by the sea)
That the wind came out of the cloud by night,
   Chilling and killing my Annabel Lee.

But our love it was stronger by far than the love
   Of those who were older than we—
   Of many far wiser than we—
And neither the angels in heaven above,
   Nor the demons down under the sea,
Can ever dissever my soul from the soul
   Of the beautiful Annabel Lee:
For the moon never beams, without bringing me dreams
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;
And the stars never rise, but I feel the bright eyes
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;
And so, all the night-tide, I lie down by the side
Of my darling — my darling — my life and my bride,
In the sepulchre there by the sea,
In her tomb by the sounding sea.


TO MY MOTHER.

Because I feel that, in the Heavens above,
The angels, whispering to one another,
Can find, among their burning terms of love,
None so devotional as that of “Mother,”
Therefore by that dear name I long have called you —
You who are more than mother unto me,
And fill my heart of hearts, where Death installed you,
In setting my Virginia’s spirit free.
My mother — my own mother, who died early,
Was but the mother of myself; but you
Are mother to the one I loved so dearly,
And thus are dearer than the mother I knew
By that infinity with which my wife
Was dearer to my soul than its own soul-life.
THE HAUNTED PALACE.

In the greenest of our valleys
By good angels tenanted,
Once a fair and stately palace —
Radiant palace—reared its head.
In the monarch Thought's dominion —
It stood there!
Never seraph spread a pinion
Over fabric half so fair!

Banners yellow, glorious, golden,
On its roof did float and flow,
(This — all this — was in the olden
Time long ago,)
And every gentle air that dallied,
In that sweet day,
Along the ramparts plumed and pallid,
A wingèd odor went away.

Wanderers in that happy valley,
Through two luminous windows, saw
Spirits moving musically,
To a lute's well-tunèd law,
Round about a throne where, sitting
(Porphyrogenè !)
In state his glory well befitting,
The ruler of the realm was seen.
And all with pearl and ruby glowing
   Was the fair palace door,
Through which came flowing, flowing, flowing
   And sparkling evermore,
A troop of Echoes, whose sweet duty
   Was but to sing,
In voices of surpassing beauty,
   The wit and wisdom of their king.

But evil things, in robes of sorrow,
   Assailed the monarch's high estate.
(Ah, let us mourn! — for never morrow
   Shall dawn upon him desolate!)
And round about his home the glory
   That blushed and bloomed,
Is but a dim-remembered story
   Of the old time entombed.

And travellers, now, within that valley,
   Through the red-litten windows see
Vast forms, that move fantastically
   To a discordant melody,
While, like a ghastly rapid river,
   Through the pale door
A hideous throng rush out forever
   And laugh — but smile no more.
O! 'tis a gala night  
Within the lonesome latter years.

An angel throng, bewinged, bedight  
In veils, and drowned in tears,

Sit in a theatre, to see  
A play of hopes and fears,

While the orchestra breathes fitfully  
The music of the spheres.

Mimes, in the form of God on high,  
Mutter and mumble low,

And hither and thither fly—  
Mere puppets they, who come and go

At bidding of vast formless things  
That shift the scenery to and fro,

Flapping from out their Condor wings  
Invisible Woe!

That motley drama — oh, be sure  
It shall not be forgot!

With its Phantom chased for evermore,  
By a crowd that seize it not,

Through a circle that ever returneth in  
To the self-same spot,

And much of Madness, and more of Sin,  
And Horror the soul of the plot.
But see, amid the mimic rout
   A crawling shape intrude!
A blood-red thing that writhes from out
   The scenic solitude!
It writhes! — it writhes! — with mortal pangs
   The mimes become its food,
And the angels sob at vermin fangs
   In human gore imbrued.

Out — out are the lights — out all!
   And, over each quivering form,
The curtain, a funeral pall,
   Comes down with the rush of a storm,
And the angels, all pallid and wan,
   Uprising, unveiling, affirm
That the play is the tragedy, "Man,"
   And its hero the Conqueror Worm.

TO F—S S. O—D.

Wouldst be loved? — then let thy heart
   From its present pathway part not!
Being everything which now thou art,
   Be nothing which thou art not.
So with the world thy gentle ways,
   Thy grace, thy more than beauty,
Shall be an endless theme of praise,
   And love — a simple duty.
TO ONE IN PARADISE.

THOU wast that all to me, love,
For which my soul did pine—
A green isle in the sea, love,
A fountain and a shrine,
All wreathed with fairy fruits and flowers,
And all the flowers were mine.
Ah, dream too bright to last!
Ah, starry Hope! that didst arise
But to be overcast!
A voice, from out the Future cries,
"On! on!" — but o'er the Past
(Dim gulf!) my spirit hovering lies
Mute, motionless, aghast!
For, alas! alas! with me
The light of Life is o'er!
"No more — no more — no more —"
(Such language holds the solemn sea
To the sands upon the shore)
Shall bloom the thunder-blasted tree,
Or the stricken eagle soar!
And all my days are trances,
And all my nightly dreams
Are where thy dark eye glances,
And where thy footprint gleams —
In what ethereal dances,
By what eternal streams.
It smiled a silent dell
Where the people did not dwell;
They had gone unto the wars,
Trust ing to the mild-eyed stars,
Nightly, from their azure towers,
To keep watch above the flowers,
In the midst of which all day
The red sunlight lazily lay.
Now each visitor shall confess
The sad valley’s restlessness.
Nothing there is motionless—
Nothing save the airs that brood
Over the magic solitude.
Ah, by no wind are stirred those trees
That palpitate like the chill seas
Around the misty Hebrides!
Ah, by no wind those clouds are driven
That rustle through the unquiet Heaven
Uneasily, from morn till even,
Over the violets there that lie
In myriad types of the human eye—
Over the lilies there that wave
And weep above a nameless grave!
They wave:—from out their fragrant tops
Eternal dews come down in drops.
They weep:—from off their delicate stems
Perennial tears descend in gems.
O! Death has reared himself a throne
In a strange city lying alone
Far down within the dim West,
Where the good and the bad and the worst and the
Have gone to their eternal rest.
There shrines and palaces and towers
(Time-eaten towers that tremble not!)
Resemble nothing that is ours.
Around, by lifting winds forgot,
Resignedly beneath the sky
The melancholy waters lie.

No rays from the holy heaven come down
On the long night-time of that town;
But light from out the lurid sea
Streams up the turrets silently—
Gleams up the pinnacles far and free—
Up domes—up spires—up kingly halls—
Up fanes—up Babylon-like walls—
Up shadowy long-forgotten bowers
Of sculptured ivy and stone flowers—
Up many and many a marvellous shrine
Whose wreathed friezes intertwine
The viol, the violet, and the vine.

Resignedly, beneath the sky
The melancholy waters lie.
THE CITY IN THE SEA.

So blend the turrets and shadows there
That all seem pendulous in air,
While, from a proud tower in the town,
Death looks gigantically down.

There open fanes and gaping graves
Yawn level with the luminous waves,
But not the riches there that lie
In each idol's diamond eye —
Not the gayly-jewelled dead
Tempt the waters from their bed;
For no ripples curl, alas!
Along that wilderness of glass —
No swellings tell that winds may be
Upon some far-off happier sea —
No heavings hint that winds have been
On scenes less hideously serene.

But low! a stir is in the air!
The wave — there is a movement there!
As if the towers had thrust aside,
In slightly sinking, the dull tide —
As if their tops had feebly given
A void within the filmy Heaven.
The waves have now a redder glow,
The hours are breathing faint and low —
And when, amid no earthly moans,
Down, down that town shall settle hence,
Hell, rising from a thousand thrones,
Shall do it reverence.
At midnight, in the month of June,
I stand beneath the mystic moon.
An opiate vapor, dewy, dim,
Exhales from out her golden rim,
And, softly dripping, drop by drop,
Upon the quiet mountain-top,
Steals drowsily and musically
Into the universal valley.
The rosemary nods upon the grave;
The lily lolls upon the wave;
Wrapping the fog about its breast,
The ruin moulders into rest;
Looking like Lethe, see! the lake
A conscious slumber seems to take,
And would not, for the world, awake.
All Beauty sleeps! — and lo! where lies
(Her casement open to the skies)
Irene, with her Destinies!
Oh, lady bright! can it be right —
This window open to the night?
The wanton airs, from the tree-top,
Laughingly through the lattice drop —
The bodiless airs, a wizard rout,
Flit through thy chamber in and out,
And wave the curtain canopy
So fitfully — so fearfully —
THE SLEEPER.

Above the closed and fringed lid
'Neath which thy slumb'ring soul lies hid,
That, o'er the floor and down the wall,
Like ghosts the shadows rise and fall!
Oh, lady dear, hast thou no fear?
Why and what art thou dreaming here?
Sure thou art come o'er far-off seas,
A wonder to these garden trees!
Strange is thy pallor! strange thy dress!
Strange, above all, thy length of tress,
And this all solemn silentness!

The lady sleeps! Oh, may her sleep,
Which is enduring, so be deep!
Heaven have her in its sacred keep!
This chamber changed for one more holy,
This bed for one more melancholy,
I pray to God that she may lie
Forever with unopened eye,
While the dim sheeted ghosts go by!

My love, she sleeps! Oh, may her sleep,
As it is lasting, so be deep!
Soft may the worms about her creep!
Far in the forest, dim and old,
For her may some tall vault unfold—
Some vault that oft hath flung its black
And winged panels fluttering back,
Triumphant, o'er the crested palls
Of her grand family funerals—
Some sepulchre, remote, alone,
Against whose portal she hath thrown,
In childhood, many an idle stone—
Some tomb from out whose sounding door
She ne'er shall force an echo more,
Thrilling to think, poor child of sin!
It was the dead who groaned within.

SILENCE.

HERE are some qualities—some incorporate things,
That have a double life, which thus is made
A type of that twin entity which springs
From matter and light, evinced in solid and shade.
There is a twofold Silence—sea and shore—
Body and soul. One dwells in lonely places,
Newly with grass o'ergrown; some solemn graces,
Some human memories and tearful lore,
Render him terrorless: his name's "No More."
He is the corporate Silence: dread him not!
No power hath he of evil in himself;
But should some urgent fate (untimely lot!)
Bring thee to meet his shadow (nameless elf,
That haunteth the lone regions where hath trod
No foot of man), commend thyself to God!
A DREAM WITHIN A DREAM.

TAKE this kiss upon the brow!
And, in parting from you now,
Thus much let me avow—
You are not wrong, who deem
That my days have been a dream;
Yet if hope has flown away
In a night, or in a day,
In a vision, or in none,
Is it therefore the less gone?
All that we see or seem
Is but a dream within a dream.

I stand amid the roar
Of a surf-tormented shore,
And I hold within my hand
Grains of the golden sand—
How few! yet how they creep
Through my fingers to the deep,
While I weep—while I weep!
O God! can I not grasp
Them with a tighter clasp?
O God! can I not save
One from the pitiless wave?
Is all that we see or seem
But a dream within a dream?
By a route obscure and lonely,
Haunted by ill angels only,
Where an Eidolon, named Night,
On a black throne reigns upright,
I have reached these lands but newly
From an ultimate dim Thule—
From a wild weird clime that lieth, sublime,
Out of Space—out of Time.

Bottomless vales and boundless floods,
And chasms, and caves, and Titan woods,
With forms that no man can discover
For the dews that drip all over;
Mountains toppling evermore
Into seas without a shore;
Seas that restlessly aspire,
Surging, unto skies of fire;
Lakes that endlessly outspread
Their lone waters—lone and dead,—
Their still waters—still and chilly
With the snows of the lolling lily.

By the lakes that thus outspread
Their lone waters, lone and dead,—
Their sad waters, sad and chilly
With the snows of the lolling lily,—
By the mountains — near the river
Murmuring lowly, murmuring ever, —
By the gray woods, — by the swamp
Where the toad and the newt encamp, —
By the dismal tarns and pools
Where dwell the Ghouls, —
By each spot the most unholy —
In each nook most melancholy, —
There the traveller meets aghast
Sheeted Memories of the Past —
Shrouded forms that start and sigh
As they pass the wanderer by —
White-robed forms of friends long given,
In agony, to the Earth — and Heaven.

For the heart whose woes are legion
’T is a peaceful, soothing region —
For the spirit that walks in shadow
’T is — oh ’t is an Eldorado!
But the traveller, travelling through it,
May not — dare not openly view it ;
Never its mysteries are exposed
To the weak human eye unclosed ;
So wills its King, who hath forbid
The uplifting of the fringed lid ;
And thus the sad Soul that here passes
Beholds it but through darkened glasses.
TO ZANTE.

By a route obscure and lonely,
Haunted by ill angels only,
Where an Eidolon, named NIGHT,
On a black throne reigns upright,
I have wandered home but newly
From this ultimate dim Thule.

TO ZANTE.

AIR isle, that from the fairest of all flowers,
Thy gentlest of all gentle names dost take!
How many memories of what radiant hours
At sight of thee and thine at once awake!
How many scenes of what departed bliss!
How many thoughts of what entombèd hopes!
How many visions of a maiden that is
No more — no more upon thy verdant slopes!
No more! alas, that magical sad sound
Transforming all! Thy charms shall please no more—
Thy memory no more! Accursèd ground
Henceforth I hold thy flower-enamelled shore,
O hyacinthine isle! O purple Zante!
"Isola d'oro! Fior di Levante!"
DWELT alone
In a world of moan,
And my soul was a stagnant tide,
Till the fair and gentle Eulalie became my blushing bride—
Till the yellow-haired young Eulalie became my smiling bride.

Ah, less — less bright
The stars of the night
Than the eyes of the radiant girl;
And never a flake
That the vapor can make
With the moon-tints of purple and pearl,
Can vie with the modest Eulalie’s most unregarded curl—
Can compare with the bright-eyed Eulalie’s most humble and careless curl.

Now Doubt — now Pain
Come never again,
For her soul gives me sigh for sigh,
And all day long
Shines bright and strong,
Astarté within the sky,
While ever to her dear Eulalie upturns her matron eye—
While ever to her young Eulalie upturns her violet eye.
AYLY bedight,
A gallant knight,
In sunshine and in shadow,
Had journeyed long,
Singing a song,
In search of Eldorado.

But he grew old —
This knight so bold —
And o'er his heart a shadow
Fell as he found
No spot of ground
That looked like Eldorado.

And, as his strength
Failed him at length,
He met a pilgrim shadow —
"Shadow," said he,
"Where can it be —
This land of Eldorado?"

"Over the Mountains
Of the Moon,
Down the Valley of the Shadow,
Ride, boldly ride,"
The shade replied, —
"If you seek for Eldorado!"
ISRAFEL.*

In Heaven a spirit doth dwell
"Whose heart-strings are a lute;"
None sing so wildly well
As the angel Israfel,
And the giddy stars (so legends tell)
Ceasing their hymns, attend the spell
Of his voice, all mute.

Tottering above
In her highest noon,
The enamored moon
Blushes with love,
While, to listen, the red levin
(With the rapid Pleiades, even,
Which were seven),
Pauses in Heaven.

And they say (the starry choir
And the other listening things)
That Israfeli's fire
Is owing to that lyre
By which he sits and sings —
The trembling living wire
Of those unusual strings.

* And the angel Israfel, whose heart-strings are a lute, and who has the sweetest voice of all God's creatures. — Koran.
But the skies that angel trod,
   Where deep thoughts are a duty—
Where Love's a grown-up God—
   Where the Houri glances are
Imbued with all the beauty
   Which we worship in a star.

Therefore, thou art not wrong,
   Israfeli, who despisest
An unimpassioned song;
To thee the laurels belong,
   Best bard, because the wisest!
Merrily live, and long!

The ecstasies above
   With thy burning measures suit—
Thy grief, thy joy, thy hate, thy love,
   With the fervor of thy lute—
Well may the stars be mute!

Yes, Heaven is thine; but this
   Is a world of sweets and sours;
Our flowers are merely—flowers,
And the shadow of thy perfect bliss
   Is the sunshine of ours.

If I could dwell
Where Israfel
   Hath dwelt, and he where I,
FOR ANNIE.

He might not sing so wildly well
A mortal melody,
While a bolder note than this might swell
From my lyre within the sky.

FOR ANNIE.

HANK Heaven! the crisis —
The danger is past,
And the lingering illness
Is over at last —
And the fever called "Living"
Is conquered at last.

Sadly, I know,
I am shorn of my strength,
And no muscle I move
As I lie at full length —
But no matter! — I feel
I am better at length.

And I rest so composed
Now, in my bed,
That any beholder
Might fancy me dead —
Might start at beholding me,
Thinking me dead.
The moaning and groaning,
The sighing and sobbing
Are quieted now,
With that horrible throbbing
At heart: — ah, that horrible,
Horrible throbbing!

The sickness — the nausea —
The pitiless pain —
Have ceased, with the fever
That maddened my brain —
With the fever called "Living"
That burned in my brain.

And oh! of all tortures
That torture the worst
Has abated — the terrible
Torture of thirst
For the napthaline river
Of Passion accurst: —
I have drank of a water
That quenches all thirst: —

Of a water that flows,
With a lullaby sound,
From a spring but a very few
Feet under ground —
From a cavern not very far
Down under ground.
And ah! let it never
  Be foolishly said
That my room it is gloomy
  And narrow my bed;
For man never slept
  In a different bed—
And, to sleep, you must slumber
  In just such a bed.

My tantalized spirit
  Here blandly reposes,
Forgetting, or never
  Regretting its roses—
Its old agitations
  Of myrtles and roses:

For now, while so quietly
  Lying, it fancies
A holier odor
  About it, of pansies—
A rosemary odor,
  Commingled with pansies—
With rue and the beautiful
  Puritan pansies.

And so it lies happily,
  Bathing in many
A dream of the truth
  And the beauty of Annie—
Drowned in a bath
  Of the tresses of Annie.

She tenderly kissed me,
  She fondly caressed,
And then I fell gently
  To sleep on her breast —
Deeply to sleep
  From the heaven of her breast.

When the light was extinguished,
  She covered me warm,
And she prayed to the angels
  To keep me from harm —
To the queen of the angels
  To shield me from harm.

And I lie so composedly,
  Now, in my bed,
(Knowing her love)
  That you fancy me dead —
And I rest so contentedly,
  Now in my bed,
(With her love at my breast)
  That you fancy me dead —
That you shudder to look at me,
  Thinking me dead: —
BRIDAL BALLAD.

But my heart it is brighter
Than all of the many
Stars in the sky,
    For it sparkles with Annie —
It glows with the light
    Of the love of my Annie —
With the thought of the light
    Of the eyes of my Annie.

TO ——.

HEED not that my earthly lot
Hath — little of Earth in it —
That years of love have been forgot
    In the hatred of a minute: —
I mourn not that the desolate
    Are happier, sweet, than I,
But that you sorrow for my fate
    Who am a passer-by.

BRIDAL BALLAD.

HE ring is on my hand,
And the wreath is on my brow;
    Satins and jewels grand
Are all at my command,
    And I am happy now.
And my lord he loves me well;
But, when first he breathed his vow,
I felt my bosom swell—
For the words rang as a knell,
And the voice seemed his who fell
In the battle down the dell;
And who is happy now.

But he spoke to reassure me,
And he kissed my pallid brow,
While a reverie came o'er me,
And to the church-yard bore me,
And I sighed to him before me,
Thinking him dead D'Elormie,
"Oh, I am happy now!"

And thus the words were spoken,
And this the plighted vow,
And, though my faith be broken,
And, though my heart be broken,
Behold the golden token
That proves me happy now!

Would God I could awaken!
For I dream I know not how,
And my soul is sorely shaken
Lest an evil step be taken,—
Lest the dead who is forsaken
May not be happy now.
TO F——.

BELOVED! amid the earnest woes
That crowd around my earthly path——
(Drear path, alas! where grows
Not even one lonely rose)—
My soul at least a solace hath
In dreams of thee, and therein knows
An Eden of bland repose.

And thus my memory is to me
Like some enchanted far-off isle
In some tumultuous sea——
Some ocean throbbing far and free
With storms—but where meanwhile
Serenest skies continually
Just o'er that one bright island smile.
ROMA. — A Hall in a Palace. Alessandra and Castiglione.

ALESSANDRA. Thou art sad, Castiglione, Castiglione. Sad! — not I.

Oh, I'm the happiest, happiest man in Rome!
A few days more, thou knowest, my Alessandra,
Will make thee mine. Oh, I am very happy!

Aless. Methinks thou hast a singular way of showing
Thy happiness! — what ails thee, cousin of mine?
Why didst thou sigh so deeply?

Cas. Did I sigh?
I was not conscious of it. It is a fashion,
A silly — a most silly fashion I have
When I am very happy. Did I sigh? (Sighing.)

Aless. Thou didst. Thou art not well. Thou hast indulged
Too much of late, and I am vexed to see it.
Late hours and wine, Castiglione, — these
Will ruin thee! thou art already altered —
Thy looks are haggard — nothing so wears away
The constitution as late hours and wine.
Cas. (musing). Nothing, fair cousin, nothing—not even deep sorrow—
Wears it away like evil hours and wine.
I will amend.

Aless. Do it! I would have thee drop
Thy riotous company, too—fellows low born—
Ill suit the like with old Di Broglio's heir
And Alessandra's husband.

Cas. I will drop them.

Aless. Thou wilt—thou must. Attend thou also more
To thy dress, and equipage—they are over plain
For thy lofty rank and fashion—much depends
Upon appearances.

Cas. I'll see to it.

Aless. Then see to it!—pay more attention, sir,
To a becoming carriage—much thou wantest
In dignity.

Cas. Much, much, oh much I want
In proper dignity.

Aless. (haughtily). Thou mockest me, sir!
Cas. (abstractedly). Sweet, gentle Lalage!

Aless. Heard I aright?
I speak to him—he speaks of Lalage!
Sir Count! (places her hand on his shoulder) what art thou dreaming? he's not well!
What ails thee, sir?
Cas. (starting). Cousin! fair cousin! — madam!
I crave thy pardon — indeed I am not well —
Your hand from off my shoulder, if you please.
This air is most oppressive! — Madam — the Duke!

Enter Di Broglio.

Di Broglio. My son, I've news for thee! — hey? —
what's the matter? (observing Alessandra.)
I' the pouts? Kiss her, Castiglione! kiss her,
You dog! and make it up, I say, this minute!
I've news for you both. Politian is expected
Hourly in Rome — Politian, Earl of Leicester!
We 'll have him at the wedding. 'T is his first visit
To the imperial city.

Aless. What! Politian
Of Britain, Earl of Leicester?

Di Brog. The same, my love.
We 'll have him at the wedding. A man quite young
In years, but gray in fame. I have not seen him,
But Rumor speaks of him as of a prodigy
Pre-eminent in arts and arms, and wealth,
And high descent. We 'll have him at the wedding.

Aless. I have heard much of this Politian.
Gay, volatile, and giddy — is he not?
And little given to thinking.

Di Brog. Far from it, love.
No branch, they say, of all philosophy
So deep, abstruse he has not mastered it.
Learned as few are learned.
"Aless. 'Tis very strange!
I have known men have seen Politian
And sought his company. They speak of him
As of one who entered madly into life,
Drinking the cup of pleasure to the dregs.

Cas. Ridiculous! Now I have seen Politian
And know him well — nor learned nor mirthful he.
He is a dreamer and a man shut out
From common passions.

Di Brog. Children, we disagree.
Let us go forth and taste the fragrant air
Of the garden. Did I dream, or did I hear
Politian was a melancholy man? (Exeunt.)

II.

ROME. — A Lady's apartment, with a window open and looking
into a garden. Lalage, in deep mourning, reading at a table on
which lie some books and a hand mirror. In the background
Jacinta (a servant-maid) leans carelessly upon a chair.

Lal. Jacinta! is it thou?

Jac. (pertly). Yes, ma'am, I'm here.

Lal. I did not know, Jacinta, you were in waiting.

Sit down! — let not my presence trouble you —

Sit down! — for I am humble, most humble.

Jac. (aside). 'Tis time.

( Jacinta seats herself in a sidelong manner upon
the chair, resting her elbows upon the back, and
regarding her mistress with a contemptuous
look. Lalage continues to read.)
Lal. “It in another climate, so he said,
Bore a bright golden flower, but not i’ this soil!”

(Pauses — turns over some leaves, and resumes.)
“No lingering winters there, nor snow, nor shower —
But Ocean ever to refresh mankind
Breathes the shrill spirit of the western wind.”
Oh, beautiful! — most beautiful! — how like
To what my fevered soul doth dream of Heaven!
O happy land! (pause.) She died! — the maiden died!
O still more happy maiden who couldst die!
Jacinta!

(Jacinta returns no answer, and Lalage presently resumes.)
Again! a similar tale
Told of a beauteous dame beyond the sea!
Thus speaketh one Ferdinand in the words of the play,
“She died full young” — one Bossola answers him —
“I think not so — her infelicity
Seemed to have years too many” — Ah, luckless lady!
Jacinta! (Still no answer.)
Here’s a far sterner story
But like — oh, very like in its despair —
Of that Egyptian queen, winning so easily
A thousand hearts — losing at length her own.
She died. Thus endeth the history — and her maids
Lean over her and weep — two gentle maids
With gentle names — Eiros and Charmion!
Rainbow and dove! —— Jacinta!

Jac. (pettishly). Madam, what is it?

Lal. Wilt thou, my good Jacinta, be so kind
As go down in the library and bring me
The Holy Evangelists?

Jac. Pshaw! (Exit.)

Lal. If there be balm
For the wounded spirit in Gilead, it is there!
Dew in the night-time of my bitter trouble
Will there be found — "dew sweeter far than that
Which hangs like chains of pearl on Hermon hill."

(Re-enter Jacinta, and throws a volume on the table.)

There, ma'am, 's the book. (Aside.) Indeed she is
very troublesome.

Lal. (astonished). What didst thou say, Jacinta?
Have done aught
To grieve thee or to vex thee? — I am sorry.
For thou hast served me long and ever been
Trustworthy and respectful. (Resumes her reading.)

Jac. (aside). I can't believe
She has any more jewels — no — no — she gave me all.

Lal. What didst thou say, Jacinta? Now I bethink
me
Thou hast not spoken lately of thy wedding.
How fares good Ugo? — and when is it to be?
Can I do aught!—is there no further aid
Thou needest, Jacinta?

_Jac._ (aside). Is there no further aid!
That 's meant for me. — I 'm sure, madam, you need not
Be always throwing those jewels in my teeth.

_Lal._ Jewels! Jacinta,—now indeed, Jaçinta,
I thought not of the jewels.

_Jac._ Oh! perhaps not!
But then I might have sworn it. After all
There 's Ugo says the ring is only paste,
For he 's sure the Count Castiglione never
Would have given a real diamond to such as you;
And at the best I 'm certain, madam, you cannot
Have use for jewels now. But I might have sworn it.

(Exit.)

(Lalage bursts into tears and leans her head upon
the table — after a short pause raises it.)

_Lal._ Poor Lalage!—and is it to come to this?
Thy servant-maid!—but courage!— 't is but a viper
Who thou hast cherished to sting thee to the soul!

(Taking up the mirror.)

Ha! here at least 's a friend—too much a friend
In earlier days—a friend will not deceive thee
Fair mirror and true! now tell me (for thou canst)
A tale—a pretty tale—and heed thou not
Though it be rife with woe. It answers me.
It speaks of sunken eyes, and wasted cheeks,
And Beauty long deceased — remembers me
Of Joy departed — Hope, the Seraph Hope,
Inurned and intombed! now, in a tone
Low, sad, and solemn, but most audible,
Whispers of early grave untimely yawning
For ruined maid. Fair mirror and true! — thou liest not!

*Thou* hast no end to gain — no heart to break —
Castiglione lied who said he loved —
Thou true — he false! — false! — false!

((While she speaks, a monk enters her apartment,
and approaches unobserved.))

**Monk.** Refuge thou hast,
Sweet daughter! in Heaven. Think of eternal things!
Give up thy soul to penitence, and pray!

**Lal.** (arising hurriedly). I cannot pray! — My soul is at war with God!
The frightful sounds of merriment below
Disturb my senses — go! I cannot pray —
The sweet airs from the garden worry me!
Thy presence grieves me — go! — thy priestly raiment
Fills me with dread — thy ebony crucifix
With horror and awe!

**Monk.** Think of thy precious soul!

**Lal.** Think of my early days! — think of my father
And mother in Heaven! think of our quiet home,
And the rivulet that ran before the door!

**Monk.** Refuge thou hast,
Sweet daughter! in Heaven. Think of eternal things!
Give up thy soul to penitence, and pray!

**Lal.** (arising hurriedly). I cannot pray! — My soul is at war with God!
The frightful sounds of merriment below
Disturb my senses — go! I cannot pray —
The sweet airs from the garden worry me!
Thy presence grieves me — go! — thy priestly raiment
Fills me with dread — thy ebony crucifix
With horror and awe!

**Monk.** Think of thy precious soul!

**Lal.** Think of my early days! — think of my father
And mother in Heaven! think of our quiet home,
And the rivulet that ran before the door!
Think of my little sisters — think of them!
And think of me! — think of my trusting love
And confidence — his vows — my ruin — think — think
Of my unspeakable misery! —— begone!
Yet stay! yet stay! — what was it thou saidst of prayer
And penitence? Didst thou not speak of faith
And vows before the throne?

_Monk._ I did.

_Lal._ 'Tis well.

There is a vow were fitting should be made —
A sacred vow, imperative and urgent,
A solemn vow!

_Monk._ Daughter, this zeal is well!

_Lal._ Father, this zeal is anything but well!

Hast thou a crucifix fit for this thing?
A crucifix whereon to register
This sacred vow? (He hands her his own.)

Not that — Oh! no! — no! — no! (Shuddering.)
Not that! Not that! — I tell thee, holy man,
Thy raiments and thy ebony cross affright me!
Stand back! I have a crucifix myself, —
_I have a crucifix!_ Methinks 't were fitting
The deed — the vow — the symbol of the deed —
And the deed's register should tally, father!

(Draws a cross-handled dagger and raises it on high.)
Behold the cross wherewith a vow like mine.
Is written in Heaven!
Monk. Thy words are madness, daughter,
And speak a purpose unholy — thy lips are livid —
Thine eyes are wild — tempt not the wrath divine!
Pause ere too late! — Oh be not — be not rash!
Swear not the oath — oh swear it not!

Lal. 'Tis sworn!

III.

An apartment in a palace. Politian and Baldazzar.

Baldazzar. — Arouse thee now, Politian!
Thou must not — nay indeed, indeed, thou shalt not
Give way unto these humors. Be thyself!
Shake off the idle fancies that beset thee,
And live, for now thou diest!

Politian. Not so, Baldazzar!

Surely I live.

Bal. Politian, it doth grieve me
To see thee thus.

Pol. Baldazzar, it doth grieve me
To give thee cause for grief, my honored friend.
Command me, sir! what wouldst thou have me do?
At thy behest I will shake off that nature
Which from my forefathers I did inherit,
Which with my mother’s milk I did imbibe,
And be no more Pol’tian, but some other.
Command me, sir!
Bal. To the field, then—to the field—
To the senate or the field.

Pol. Alas! alas!
There is an imp would follow me even there!
There is an imp hath followed me even there!
There is—what voice was that?

Bal. I heard it not.
I heard not any voice except thine own,
And the echo of thine own.

Pol. Then I but dreamed.

Bal. Give not thy soul to dreams: the camp—the court
Befit thee—Fame awaits thee—Glory calls—
And her the trumpet-tongued thou wilt not hear
In hearkening to imaginary sounds
And phantom voices.

Pol. It is a phantom voice!
Didst thou not hear it then?

Bal. I heard it not.

Pol. Thou hearest it not!—Baldazzar, speak no more
To me, Politian, of thy camps and courts.
Oh! I am sick, sick, sick, even unto death,
Of the hollow and high-sounding vanities
Of the populous Earth! Bear with me yet awhile!
We have been boys together—school-fellows—
And now are friends—yet shall not be so long—
For in the eternal city thou shalt do me
A kind and gentle office, and a Power—
A Power august, benignant, and supreme—
Shall then absolve thee of all further duties
Unto thy friend.

Bal. Thou speakest a fearful riddle
I will not understand.

Pol. Yet now as Fate
Approaches, and the Hours are breathing low,
The sands of Time are changed to golden grains,
And dazzle me, Baldazzar. Alas! alas!
I cannot die, having within my heart
So keen a relish for the beautiful
As hath been kindled within it. Methinks the air
Is balmier now than it was wont to be—
Rich melodies are floating in the winds—
A rarer loveliness bedecks the earth—
And with a holier lustre the quiet moon
Sitteth in Heaven. — Hist! hist! thou canst not say
Thou hearest not now, Baldazzar?

Bal. Indeed I hear not.

Pol. Not hear it?—listen now—listen!—the
faintest sound
And yet the sweetest that ear ever heard!
A lady's voice!—and sorrow in the tone!
Baldazzar, it oppresses me like a spell!
Again!—again!—how solemnly it falls
Into my heart of hearts! that eloquent voice
Surely I never heard — yet it were well
Had I but heard it with its thrilling tones
In earlier days!

_Bal._ I myself hear it now.

Be still! — the voice, if I mistake not greatly,
Proceeds from yonder lattice — which you may see
Very plainly through the window — it belongs,
Does it not? unto this palace of the Duke.
The singer is undoubtedly beneath
The roof of his Excellency — and perhaps
Is even that Alessandra of whom he spake
As the betrothed of Castiglione,
His son and heir.

_Pol._ Be still! — it comes again!

Voice "And is thy heart so strong
(very faintly). As for to leave me thus
Who hath loved thee so long
In wealth and woe among?
And is thy heart so strong
As for to leave me thus?
Say nay — say nay!"

_Bal._ The song is English, and I oft have heard it
In merry England — never so plaintively —
Hist! hist! it comes again!
Voice      "Is it so strong
(more loudly). As for to leave me thus
Who hath loved thee so long
In wealth and woe among?
And is thy heart so strong
As for to leave me thus?
   Say nay — say nay!"

Bal. 'Tis hushed and all is still!
Pol. All is not still.
Bal. Let us go down.
Pol. Go down, Baldazzar, go!
Bal. The hour is growing late — the Duke awaits us,—
Thy presence is expected in the hall
Below. What ails thee, Earl Politian?

Voice      "Who hath loved thee so long,
(distinctly). In wealth and woe among,
   And is thy heart so strong?
      Say nay — say nay!"

Bal. Let us descend! — 't is time. Politian, give
   These fancies to the wind. Remember, pray,
Your bearing lately savored much of rudeness
Unto the Duke. Arouse thee! and remember!

   (Going.)
Let us descend. Believe me I would give,
Freely would give the broad lands of my earldom
To look upon the face hidden by yon lattice —
"To gaze upon that veiled face, and hear
Once more that silent tongue."

Bal. Let me beg you, sir,
Descend with me — the Duke may be offended.
Let us go down, I pray you.

Voice (loudly). Say nay! — say nay!

Pol. (aside). 'Tis strange! — 'tis very strange —
methought the voice
Chimed in with my desires and bade me stay!

(Approaching the window)

Sweet voice! I heed thee, and will surely stay.
Now be this Fancy, by Heaven, or be it Fate,
Still will I not descend. Baldazzar, make
Apology unto the Duke for me;
I go not down to-night.

Bal. Your lordship's pleasure
Shall be attended to. Good-night, Politian.

Pol. Good-night, my friend, good-night.

IV.

The gardens of a palace — Moonlight. Lalage and Politian.

Lalage. And dost thou speak of love
To me, Politian? dost thou speak of love
To Lalage? — ah woe — ah woe is me!
This mockery is most cruel — most cruel indeed!

Politian. Weep not! oh, sob not thus! — thy bitter tears
Will madden me. Oh, mourn not, Lalage —
Be comforted! I know — I know it all,
And still I speak of love. Look at me, brightest,
And beautiful Lalage! turn here thine eyes!
Thou askest me if I could speak of love,
Knowing what I know, and seeing what I have seen.
Thou askest me that — and thus I answer thee —
Thus on my bended knee I answer thee.

(Kneeling.)

Sweet Lalage, I love thee — love thee — love thee;
Thro' good and ill — thro' weal and woe I love thee.
Not mother, with her first-born on her knee,
Thrills with intenser love than I for thee.
Not on God's altar, in any time or clime,
Burned there a holier fire than burneth now
Within my spirit for thee. And do I love?

(Arising.)

Even for thy woes I love thee — even for thy woes —
Thy beauty and thy woes.

Lal. Alas, proud Earl,
Thou dost forget thyself, remembering me!
How, in thy father's halls, among the maidens
Pure and reproachless of thy princely line,
Could the dishonored Lalage abide?
Thy wife, and with a tainted memory —
My seared and blighted name, how would it tally
With the ancestral honors of thy house,
And with thy glory?

Pol. Speak not to me of glory!
I hate — I loathe the name; I do abhor
The unsatisfactory and ideal thing.
Art thou not Lalage and I Politian?
Do I not love? — art thou not beautiful? —
What need we more? Ha! glory! — now speak not of it
By all I hold most sacred and most solemn —
By all my wishes now — my fears hereafter —
By all I scorn on earth and hope in heaven —
There is no deed I would more glory in,
Than in thy cause to scoff at this same glory
And trample it under foot. What matters it —
What matters it, my fairest, and my best,
That we go down unhonored and forgotten
Into the dust — so we descend together?
Descend together — and then — and then perchance —

Lal. Why dost thou pause, Politian?

Pol. And then perchance

Arise together, Lalage, and roam
The starry and quiet dwellings of the blest,
And still —

Lal. Why dost thou pause, Politian?
Pol. And still together — together.

Lai. Now, Earl of Leicester!
Thou lovest me, and in my heart of hearts
I feel thou lovest me truly.

Pol. Oh, Lalage! (Throwing himself upon his knee.)
And lovest thou me?

Lai. Hist! hush! Within the gloom
Of yonder trees methought a figure past —
A spectral figure, solemn, and slow, and noiseless —
Like the grim shadow Conscience, solemn and noiseless.

(Walks across and returns.)

I was mistaken — 't was but a giant bough
Stirred by the autumn wind. Politian!

Pol. My Lalage — my love! why art thou moved?
Why dost thou turn so pale? Not Conscience' self,
Far less a shadow which thou likenest to it,
Should shake the firm spirit thus. But the night-wind
Is chilly — and these melancholy boughs
Throw over all things a gloom.

Lai. Politian!
Thou speakest to me of love. Knowest thou the land
With which all tongues are busy — a land new found —
Miraculously found by one of Genoa —
A thousand leagues within the golden west?
A fairy land of flowers, and fruit, and sunshine,
And crystal lakes, and over-arching forests, [winds
And mountains, around whose towering summits the
Of Heaven untrammelled flow — which air to breathe
Is Happiness now, and will be Freedom hereafter
In days that are to come?

Pol. O, wilt thou — wilt thou
Fly to that Paradise — my Lalage, wilt thou
Fly thither with me? There Care shall be forgotten,
And Sorrow shall be no more, and Eros be all.
And life shall then be mine, for I will live
For thee, and in thine eyes — and thou shalt be
No more a mourner — but the radiant Joys
Shall wait upon thee, and the angel Hope
Attend thee ever; and I will kneel to thee
And worship thee, and call thee my beloved,
My own, my beautiful, my love, my wife,
My all; — oh, wilt thou — wilt thou, Lalage,
Fly thither with me?

Lal. A deed is to be done —
Castiglione lives!

Pol. And he shall die! (Exit.)

Lal. (after a pause). And — he — shall — die — alas!
Castiglione die? Who spoke the words?
Where am I? — what was it he said? — Politian!
Thou art not gone — thou art not gone, Politian!
I feel thou art not gone — yet dare not look,
Lest I behold thee not; thou couldst not go
With those words upon thy lips — O, speak to me!
And let me hear thy voice — one word — one word,
To say thou art not gone, — one little sentence,
To say how thou dost scorn — how thou dost hate
My womanly weakness. Ha! ha! thou art not gone —
O speak to me! I knew thou wouldst not go!
I knew thou wouldst not, couldst not, durst not go.
Villain, thou art not gone — thou mockest me!
And thus I clutch thee — thus! —— He is gone, he is
Gone — gone. Where am I? — 't is well — 't is very well!
So that the blade be keen — the blow be sure,
'T is well, 't is very well — alas! alas!

V.

The suburbs. Politian alone.

Politian. This weakness grows upon me. I am faint,
And much I fear me ill — it will not do
To die ere I have lived! — Stay — stay thy hand,
O Azrael, yet awhile! — Prince of the Powers
Of Darkness and the Tomb, O pity me!
O pity me! let me not perish now,
In the budding of my Paradisal Hope!
Give me to live yet — yet a little while:
'Tis I who pray for life — I who so late
Demanded but to die! — what sayeth the Count?
Enter Baldazzar.

Baldazzar. That knowing no cause of quarrel or of feud
Between the Earl Politian and himself,
He doth decline your cartel.

Pol. What didst thou say?
What answer was it you brought me, good Baldazzar?
With what excessive fragrance the zephyr comes
Laden from yonder bowers!—a fairer day,
Or one more worthy Italy, methinks
No mortal eyes have seen!—what said the Count?

Bal. That he, Castiglione, not being aware
Of any feud existing, or any cause
Of quarrel between your lordship and himself,
Cannot accept the challenge.

Pol. It is most true—
All this is very true. When saw you, sir,
When saw you now, Baldazzar, in the frigid
Ungenial Britain which we left so lately,
A heaven so calm as this—so utterly free
From the evil taint of clouds?—and he did say?

Bal. No more, my lord, than I have told you, sir:
The Count Castiglione will not fight,
Having no cause or quarrel.

Pol. Now this is true—
All very true. Thou art my friend, Baldazzar,
And I have not forgotten it—thou'lt do me
A piece of service; wilt thou go back and say
Unto this man, that I, the Earl of Leicester,
Hold him a villain? — thus much, I prye thee, say
Unto the Count — it is exceeding just
He should have cause for quarrel.

_Bal._ My lord! — my friend —
_Pol. (aside)._ 'Tis he — he comes himself! (_Aloud._)
Thou reasonest well.

I know what thou wouldst say — not send the message —
Well! — I will think of it — I will not send it.

Now prithee, leave me — hither doth come a person
With whom affairs of a most private nature
I would adjust.

_Bal._ I go — to-morrow we meet,

_Do we not? — at the Vatican._

_Pol._ At the Vatican. (Exit _Bal._)

_Enter Castiglione._

_Cas._ The Earl of Leicester here!

_Pol._ I am the Earl of Leicester, and thou seest,
Dost thou not? that I am here.

_Cas._ My lord, some strange,
Some singular mistake — misunderstanding —
Hath without doubt arisen: thou hast been urged
Thereby, in heat of anger, to address
Some words most unaccountable, in writing,
To me, Castiglione; the bearer being
Baldazzar, Duke of Surrey. I am aware
Of nothing which might warrant thee in this thing,
Having given thee no offence. Ha!—am I right?
'Twas a mistake?—undoubtedly—we all
Do err at times

Pol. Draw, villain, and prate no more!
Cas Ha!—draw!—and villain! have at thee then
at once,
Proud Earl! (Draws.)

Pol (drawing). Thus to the expiatory tomb,
Untimely sepulchre, I do devote thee
In the name of Lalage!

Cas. (letting fall his sword and recoiling to the extremity
of the stage).

Of Lalage!
Hold off—thy sacred hand!—avaunt I say!
Avaunt—I will not fight thee—indeed I dare not.

Pol. Thou wilt not fight with me didst say; Sir Count?
Shall I be baffled thus?—now this is well;
Didst say thou darest not? Ha!

Cas. I dare not—dare not—
Hold off thy hand—with that beloved name
So fresh upon thy lips I will not fight thee—
I cannot—dare not.

Pol. Now by my halidom
I do believe thee!—coward, I do believe thee!

Cas. Ha!—coward!—this may not be!

(Clutches his sword, and staggers towards Politian, but
his purpose is changed before reaching him, and he
falls upon his knee at the feet of the Earl.)
Alas! my lord,
It is—it is—most true. In such a cause
I am the veriest coward. O pity me! [thee.
Pol. (greatly softened). Alas!—I do—indeed I pity
Cas. And Lalage—
Pol. Scoundrel!—arise and die!
Cas. It needeth not be—thus—thus—O let me die
Thus on my bended knee. It were most fitting
That in this deep humiliation I perish.
For in the fight I will not raise a hand
Against thee, Earl of Leicester. Strike thou home—
(baring his bosom).
Here is no let or hinderance to thy weapon—
Strike home. I will not fight thee.
Pol. Now s'Death and Hell!
Am I not—am I not sorely—grievously tempted
To take thee at thy word? But mark me, sir:
Think not to fly me thus. Do thou prepare
For public insult in the streets—before
The eyes of the citizens. I'll follow thee—
Like an avenging spirit I'll follow thee
Even unto death. Before those whom thou lovest—
Before all Rome I'll taunt thee, villain—I'll taunt thee,
Dost hear? with cowardice—thou wilt not fight me?
Thou liest! thou shalt! (Exit.)
Cas. Now this indeed is just!
Most righteous, and most just, avenging Heaven.
SONNET — TO SCIENCE.

SCIENCE! true daughter of Old Time thou art!
Who alterest all things with thy peering eyes.
Why preyest thou thus upon the poet’s heart,
Vulture, whose wings are dull realities?
How should he love thee? or how deem thee wise,
Who wouldst not leave him in his wandering
To seek for treasure in the jewelled skies,
Albeit he soared with an undaunted wing?
Hast thou not dragged Diana from her car?
And driven the Hamadryad from the wood
To seek a shelter in some happier star?
Hast thou not torn the Naiad from her flood,
The Elfin from the green grass, and from me
The summer dream beneath the tamarind tree?

* Private reasons — some of which have reference to the sin of plagiarism, and others to the date of Tennyson’s first poems — have induced me, after some hesitation, to republish these, the crude compositions of my earliest boyhood. They are printed verbatim, without alteration from the original edition, the date of which is too remote to be judiciously acknowledged. E. A. P.
! NOTHING earthly save the ray
(Thrown back from flowers) of Beauty's eye,
As in those gardens where the day
Springs from the gems of Circassya —
O! nothing earthly save the thrill
Of melody in woodland rill —
Or (music of the passion-hearted)
Joy's voice so peacefully departed
That like the murmur in the shell,
Its echo dwelleth and will dwell —
O! nothing of the dross of ours —
Yet all the beauty — all the flowers
That list our Love, and deck our bower —
Adorn yon world afar, afar —
The wandering star.

'T was a sweet time for Nesace — for there
Her world lay lolling on the golden air,
Near four bright suns — a temporary rest —
An oasis in desert of the blest.

* A star was discovered by Tycho Brahe, which appeared suddenly in the heavens; attained, in a few days, a brilliancy surpassing that of Jupiter; then as suddenly disappeared, and has never been seen since.
Away — away — ’mid seas of rays that roll
Empyrean splendor o’er the unchained soul —
The soul that scarce (the billows are so dense)
Can struggle to its destin’d eminence —
To distant spheres, from time to time, she rode,
And late to ours, the favor’d one of God —
But, now, the ruler of an anchor’d realm,
She throws aside the sceptre — leaves the helm,
And, amid incense and high spiritual hymns,
Laves in quadruple light her angel limbs.

Now happiest, loveliest in yon lovely Earth,
Whence sprang the “Idea of Beauty” into birth,
(Falling in wreaths thro’ many a startled star,
Like woman’s hair ’mid pearls, until, afar,
It lit on hills Achaian, and there dwelt)
She look’d into Infinity — and knelt.
Rich clouds, for canopies, about her curled —
Fit emblems of the model of her world —
Seen but in beauty — not impeding sight
Of other beauty glittering thro’ the light —
A wreath that twined each starry form around,
And all the opal’d air in color bound.

All hurriedly she knelt upon a bed
Of flowers: of lilies such as rear’d the head
On the fair Capo Deucato,* and sprang
So eagerly around about to hang

* On Santa Maura — olim Deucadia.
Upon the flying footsteps of — deep pride —
Of her who lov'd a mortal — and so died.*
The Sephalica, budding with young bees,
Uprear'd its purple stem around her knees:
And gemmy flower, of Trebizond misnam'd † —
Inmate of highest stars, where erst it sham'd
All other loveliness: its honied dew
(The fabled nectar that the heathen knew)
Deliriously sweet, was dropp'd from Heaven,
And fell on gardens of the unforgiven
In Trebizond — and on a sunny flower
So like its own above that, to this hour,
It still remaineth, torturing the bee
With madness, and unwonted reverie:
In Heaven, and all its environs, the leaf
And blossom of the fairy plant, in grief
Disconsolate linger — grief that hangs her head,
Repenting follies that full long have fled,
Heaving her white breast to the balmy air,
Like guilty beauty, chasten'd, and more fair:
Nyctanthes too, as sacred as the light
She fears to perfume, perfuming the night:
And Clytia ‡ pondering between many a sun,
While pettish tears adown her petals run:

* Sappho.
† This flower is much noticed by Lewenhoeck and Tournefort. The bee, feeding upon its blossom, becomes intoxicated.
‡ Clytia, — the Chrysanthemum Peruvianum, or, to employ a better-known term, the Turnsol, — which turns continually towards the sun, covers itself, like
And that aspiring flower that sprang on Earth
And died, ere scarce exalted into birth,*
Bursting its odorous heart in spirit to wing
Its way to Heaven, from garden of a king:
And Valisnerian lotus † thither flown
From struggling with the waters of the Rhone:
And thy most lovely purple perfume, Zante!‡
Isola d'oro! Fior di Levante!
And the Nelumbo bud § that floats for ever
With Indian Cupid down the holy river—
Fair flowers, and fairy! to whose care is given
To bear the Goddess' song in odors, up to Heaven: ||
“Spirit! that dwellest where,
In the deep sky,
The terrible and fair,
In beauty vie!

Peru, the country from which it comes, with dewy clouds which cool and refresh its flowers during the most violent heat of the day. — B. de St. Pierre.
* There is cultivated in the king's garden at Paris a species of serpentine aloes without prickles, whose large and beautiful flower exhalas a strong odor of the vanilla, during the time of its expansion, which is very short. It does not blow till towards the month of July: you then perceive it gradually open its petals, expand them, fade and die. — St. Pierre.
† There is found, in the Rhone, a beautiful lily of the Valisnerian kind. Its stem will stretch to the length of three or four feet, thus preserving its head above water in the swellings of the river.
‡ The Hyacinth.
§ It is a fiction of the Indians, that Cupid was first seen floating in one of these down the river Ganges, and that he still loves the cradle of his childhood.
|| And golden vials full of odors which are the prayers of the saints. — Rev. St. John.
Beyond the line of blue —
   The boundary of the star
Which turneth at the view
   Of thy barrier and thy bar —
Of the barrier overgone
   By the comets who were cast
From their pride, and from their throne
   To be drudges till the last —
To be carriers of fire
   (The red fire of their heart)
With speed that may not tire
   And with pain that shall not part —
Who livest — that we know —
   In Eternity — we feel —
But the shadow of whose brow
   What spirit shall reveal?
Thro’ the beings whom thy Nesace,
   Thy messenger hath known
Have dream’d for thy Infinity
   A model of their own* —

* The Humanitarians held that God was to be understood as having really a human form. — Vide Clarke’s Sermons, vol. i, page 26, fol. edit.

The drift of Milton’s argument leads him to employ language which would appear, at first sight, to verge upon their doctrine; but it will be seen immediately, that he guards himself against the charge of having adopted one of the most ignorant errors of the dark ages of the church. — Dr. Sumner’s Notes on Milton’s Christian Doctrine.

This opinion, in spite of many testimonies to the contrary, could never have been very general. Andeus, a Syrian of Mesopotamia, was condemned for the
Thy will is done, O God!
The star hath ridden high
Thro' many a tempest, but she rode
Beneath thy burning eye;
And here, in thought, to thee—
In thought that can alone
Ascend thy empire and so be
A partner of thy throne—
By winged Fantasy,*
My embassy is given,
Till secrecy shall knowledge be
In the environs of Heaven.”

She ceas'd — and buried then her burning cheek
Abash'd amid the lilies there, to seek
A shelter from the fervor of His eye;
For the stars trembled at the Deity.
She stirr'd not — breath'd not — for a voice was there
How solemnly pervading the calm air!

opinion, as heretical. He lived in the beginning of the fourth century. His
disciples were called Anthropomorphites.—Vide Du Pin.
Among Milton's minor poems are these lines:

Dicite sacrorum præsides nemorum Deæ, etc.
Quis ille primus cujus ex imagine
Natura solers finxit humanum genus?
Eternus, incorruptus, æquævus polo,
Unusque et universus exemplar Dei.—And afterwards,
Non cui profuudum Cæcitas lumen dedit
Dircaens augur vidit hunc alto sinu, etc.

* Seltsamen Tochter Jovis
Seinem Schosskinde
Der Phantasie.—Goethe.
A sound of silence on the startled ear
Which dreamy poets name "the music of the sphere."
Ours is a world of words: Quiet we call
"Silence" — which is the merest word of all.
All Nature speaks, and ev'n ideal things
Flap shadowy sounds from visionary wings —
But ah! not so when, thus, in realms on high
The eternal voice of God is passing by,
And the red winds are withering in the sky!

"What tho' in worlds which sightless* cycles run,
Link'd to a little system, and one sun —
Where all my love is folly, and the crowd
Still think my terrors but the thunder-cloud,
The storm, the earthquake, and the ocean-wrath —
(Ah! will they cross me in my angrier path?)
What tho' in worlds which own a single sun
The sands of Time grow dimmer as they run,
Yet thine is my resplendency, so given
To bear my secrets thro' the upper Heaven,
Leave tenantless thy crystal home, and fly,
With all thy train, athwart the moony sky —
Apart — like fire-flies † in Sicilian night,
And wing to other worlds another light!
Divulge the secrets of thy embassy
To the proud orbs that twinkle — and so be

* Sightless — too small to be seen. — Legge.
† I have often noticed a peculiar movement of the fire-flies. They will collect in a body and fly off, from a common centre, into innumerable radii.
To ev'ry heart a barrier and a ban
Lest the stars totter in the guilt of man!"

Up rose the maiden in the yellow night,
The single-mooned eve!—on Earth we plight
Our faith to one love—and one moon adore—
The birthplace of young Beauty had no more.
As sprang that yellow star from downy hours,
Up rose the maiden from her shrine of flowers,
And bent o'er sheeny mountain and dim plain
Her way—but left not yet her Therasæan* reign.

PART II.

High on a mountain of enamell'd head—
Such as the drowsy shepherd on his bed
Of giant pasturage lying at his ease,
Raising his heavy eyelid, starts and sees
With many a mutter'd "hope to be forgiven"
What time the moon is quadrated in Heaven—
Of rosy head, that towering far away
Into the sunlit ether, caught the ray
Of sunken suns at eve—at noon of night,
While the moon danc'd with the fair stranger light—

* Therasæa, or Thera sea, the island mentioned by Seneca, which, in a moment, arose from the sea to the eyes of astonished mariners.
Uprear'd upon such height arose a pile
Of gorgeous columns on th' unburthen'd air,
Flashing from Parian marble that twin smile
Far down upon the wave that sparkled there,
And nursled the young mountain in its lair.
Of molten stars* their pavement, such as fall
Thro' the ebon air, besilvering the pall
Of their own dissolution, while they die —
Adorning then the dwellings of the sky.
A dome, by linked light from Heaven let down,
Sat gently on these columns as a crown —
A window of one circular diamond, there,
Look'd out above into the purple air,
And rays from God shot down that meteor chain
And hallow'd all the beauty twice again,
Save when, between th' Empyrean and that ring,
Some eager spirit flapp'd his dusky wing.
But on the pillars Seraph eyes have seen
The dimness of this world : that grayish green
That Nature loves the best for Beauty's grave
Lurk'd in each cornice, round each architrave —
And every sculptur'd cherub thereabout
That from his marble dwelling peer'd out,
Seem'd earthly in the shadow of his niche —
Achaian statues in a world so rich?

* Some star which, from the ruin'd roof
Of shak'd Olympus, by mischance did fall. — Milton.
Friezes from Tadmor and Persepolis—
From Balbec, and the stilly, clear abyss
Of beautiful Gomorrah!† Oh! the wave
Is now upon thee—but too late to save!

Sound loves to revel in a summer night:
Witness the murmur of the gray twilight
That stole upon the ear, in Eyraco,‡
Of many a wild star-gazer long ago—
That stealeth ever on the ear of him
Who, musing, gazeth on the distance dim.
And sees the darkness coming as a cloud—
Is not its form—its voice—most palpable and loud?§

But what is this?—it cometh—and it brings
A music with it—'tis the rush of wings—

* Voltaire, in speaking of Persepolis, says, "Je connois bien l'admiration qu'inspirent ces ruines—mais un palais erigé au pied d'une chaine des rochers stériles peut il être un chef d'œuvre des arts!"

† "Oh! the wave"—Ula Deguisi is the Turkish appellation; but, on its own shores, it is called Bahar Loth, or Almotanah. There were undoubtedly more than two cities engulfed in the "dead sea." In the valley of Siddim were five,—Adrah, Zeboin, Zoar, Sodom, and Gomorrah. Stephen of Byzantium mentions eight, and Strabo thirteen (engulfed)—but the last is out of all reason.

It is said [Tacitus, Strabo, Josephus, Daniel of St. Saba, Nau, Maundrell, Troilo, D'Arvieux] that after an excessive drought, the vestiges of columns, walls, etc., are seen above the surface. At any season, such remains may be discovered by looking down into the transparent lake, and at such distances as would argue the existence of many settlements in the space now usurped by the "Asphaltites."

‡ Eyraco—Chaldea.

§ I have often thought I could distinctly hear the sound of the darkness as it stole over the horizon.
A pause — and then a sweeping, falling strain
And Nesace is in her halls again.
From the wild energy of wanton haste
Her cheeks were flushing, and her lips apart;
And zone that clung around her gentle waist
Had burst beneath the heaving of her heart.
Within the centre of that hall to breathe
She paus’d and panted, Zanthe! all beneath,
The fairy light that kiss’d her golden hair
And long’d to rest, yet could but sparkle there!

Young flowers* were whispering in melody
To happy flowers that night — and tree to tree;
Fountains were gushing music as they fell
In many a star-lit grove, or moon-lit dell;
Yet silence came upon material things —
Fair flowers, bright waterfalls, and angel wings —
And sound alone that from the spirit sprang
Bore burthen to the charm the maiden sang:

"'Neath blue-bell or streamer —
Or tufted wild spray
That keeps, from the dreamer,
The moonbeam away †—

* Fairies use flowers for their charactery. — *Merry Wives of Windsor.*
† In Scripture is this passage: "The sun shall not harm thee by day, nor the moon by night." It is perhaps not generally known that the moon, in Egypt, has the effect of producing blindness to those who sleep with the face exposed to its rays, to which circumstance the passage evidently alludes.
Bright beings! that ponder,
   With half-closing eyes,
On the stars which your wonder
   Hath drawn from the skies,
Till they glance thro' the shade, and
   Come down to your brow
Like — eyes of the maiden
   Who calls on you now —
Arise! from your dreaming
   In violet bowers,
To duty beseeming
   These star-litten hours —
And shake from your tresses
   Encumber'd with dew
The breath of those kisses
   That cumber them too —
(O! how, without you, Love!
   Could angels be blest?)
Those kisses of true love
   That lull'd ye to rest!
Up! shake from your wing
   Each hindering thing:
The dew of the night —
   It would weigh down your flight;
And true love caresses —
   O! leave them apart!
They are light on the tresses,
   But lead on the heart.
Ligeia! Ligeia!
  My beautiful one!
Whose harshest idea
  Will to melody run,
O! is it thy will
  On the breezes to toss?
Or, capriciously still,
  Like the lone Albatross,*
Incumbent on night
  (As she on the air)
To keep watch with delight
  On the harmony there?

"Ligeia! wherever
  Thy image may be,
No magic shall sever
  Thy music from thee.
Thou hast bound many eyes
  In a dreamy sleep—
But the strains still arise
  Which thy vigilance keep—
The sound of the rain
  Which leaps down to the flower,
And dances again
  In the rhythm of the shower—

* The Albatross is said to sleep on the wing.
The murmur that springs *
From the growing of grass
Are the music of things —
But are modell'd, alas! —
Away, then, my dearest,
O! hie the away
To springs that lie clearest
Beneath the moon-ray —
To lone lake that smiles,
In its dream of deep rest,
At the many star-isles
That enjewel its breast —
Where wild flowers, creeping,
Have mingled their shade,
On its margin is sleeping
Full many a maid —
Some have left the cool glade, and
Have slept with the bee† —

* I met with this idea in an old English tale, which I am now unable to obtain and quote from memory: "The verie essence and, as it were, springe-heade and origine of all musiche is the verie pleasaunte sounde which the trees of the forest do make when they growe."

† The wild bee will not sleep in the shade if there be moonlight.

The rhyme in this verse, as in one about sixty lines before, has an appearance of affectation. It is, however, imitated from Sir W. Scott, or rather from Claude Halero — in whose mouth I admired its effect: —

O! were there an island,
Tho' ever so wild
Where woman might smile, and
No man be beguil'd, etc.
Arouse them my maiden,
    On moorland and lea —
Go! breathe on their slumber,
    All softly in ear,
The musical number
    They slumber’d to hear —
For what can awaken
    An angel so soon,
Whose sleep hath been taken
    Beneath the cold moon,
As the spell which no slumber
    Of witchery may test,
The rhythmical number
    Which lull’d him to rest?”

Spirits in wing, and angels to the view,
A thousand seraphs burst th’ Empyrean thro’,
Young dreams still hovering on their drowsy flight—
Seraphs in all but “Knowledge,” the keen light
That fell, refracted, thro’ thy bounds, afar
O Death! from eye of God upon that star:
Sweet was that error — sweeter still that death —
Sweet was that error — ev’n with us the breath
Of Science dims the mirror of our joy—
To them ’t were the Simoom, and would destroy—
For what (to them) availeth it to know
That Truth is Falsehood — or that Bliss is Woe?
Sweet was their death — with them to die was rife
With the last ecstasy of satiate life —
Beyond that death no immortality —
But sleep that pondereth and is not "to be" —
And there — oh! may my weary spirit dwell —
Apart from Heaven's Eternity — and yet how far from

Hell! *

What guilty spirit, in what shrubbery dim,
Heard not the stirring summons of that hymn?
But two: they fell: for Heaven no grace imparts
To those who hear not for their beating hearts.
A maiden-angel and her seraph-lover —
O! where (and ye may seek the wide skies over)
Was Love, the blind, near sober Duty known?
Unguided Love hath fallen — 'mid "tears of perfect
moan." †

* With the Arabians there is a medium between Heaven and Hell, where men suffer no punishment, but yet do not attain that tranquil and even happiness which they suppose to be characteristic of heavenly enjoyment.

Un no rompido sueno —
Un dia puro — allegre — libre
Quiera —
Libre de amor — de zelo —
De odio — de esperanza — de rezelo. — Luis Ponce de Leon.

Sorrow is not excluded from "Al Aaraaf," but it is that sorrow which the living love to cherish for the dead, and which, in some minds, resembles the delirium of opium. The passionate excitement of Love and the buoyancy of spirit attendant upon intoxication are its less holy pleasures — the price of which, to those souls who make choice of "Al Aaraaf" as the residence after life, is final death and annihilation.

† There be tears of perfect moan
Wept for thee in Helicon. — Milton.
He was a goodly spirit — he who fell:
A wanderer by mossy-mantled well —
A gazer on the lights that shine above —
A dreamer in the moonbeam by his love!
What wonder? for each star is eye-like there,
And looks so sweetly down on Beauty's hair —
And they, and ev'ry mossy spring were holy
To his love-haunted heart and melancholy.
The night had found (to him a night of woe)
Upon a mountain crag, young Angelo —
Beetling, it bends athwart the solemn sky,
And scowls on starry worlds that down beneath it lie.
Here sate he with his love — his dark eye bent
With eagle gaze along the firmament:
Now turn'd it upon her — but ever then
It trembled to the orb of Earth again.

"Ianthe, dearest, see! how dim that ray!
How lovely 't is to look so far away!
She seem'd not thus upon that autumn eve
I left her gorgeous halls — nor mourned to leave.
That eve — that eve — I should remember well —
The sun-ray dropp'd, in Lemnos, with a spell
On th' Arabesque carving of a gilded hall
Wherein I sate, and on the draperied wall —
And on my eyelids — oh the heavy light!
How drowsily it weigh'd them into night!
On flowers, before, and mist, and love they ran
With Persian Saadi in his Gulistan:
But oh that light! — I slumber'd — Death, the while,
Stole o'er my senses in that lovely isle
So softly that no single silken hair
Awoke that slept — or knew that he was there.

"The last spot of Earth's orb I trod upon
Was a proud temple call'd the Parthenon* —
More beauty clung around her column'd wall
Than ev'n thy glowing bosom beats withal,†
And when old Time my wing did disenthral
Thence sprang I — as the eagle from his tower,
And years I left behind me in an hour.
What time upon her airy bounds I hung
One half the garden of her globe was flung
Unrolling as a chart unto my view —
Tenantless cities of the desert too!
Ianthie, beauty crowded on me then,
And half I wish'd to be again of men."

"My Angelo! and why of them to be?
A brighter dwelling-place is here for thee —
And greener fields than in yon world above,
And woman's loveliness — and passionate love."

* It was entire in 1687 — the most elevated spot in Athens.
† Shadowing more beauty in their airy brows
   Than have the white breasts of the Queen of Love. — Marlowe.
"But, list, Ianthe! when the air so soft
Fail'd, as my pennon'd spirit leapt aloft,*
Perhaps my brain grew dizzy — but the world
I left so late was into chaos hurl'd —
Sprang from her station, on the winds apart,
And roll'd, a flame, the fiery Heaven athwart.
Methought, my sweet one, then I ceased to soar,
And fell — not swiftly as I rose before,
But with a downward, tremulous motion thro'
Light, brazen rays, this golden star unto!
Nor long the measure of my falling hours.
For nearest of all stars was thine to ours —
Dread star! that came, amid a night of mirth,
A red Dædalion on the timid Earth.

"We came — and to thy Earth — but not to us
Be given our lady's bidding to discuss:
We came, my love; around, above, below,
Gay fire-fly of the night we come and go,
Nor ask a reason save the angel-nod
She grants to us, as granted by her God —
But, Angelo, than thine gray Time unfurl'd
Never his fairy wing o'er fairer world!
Dim was its little disk, and angel eyes
Alone could see the phantom in the skies,

*Pennon — for pinion. — Milton.
When first Al Aaraaf knew her course to be
Headlong thitherward o'er the starry sea —
But when its glory swell'd upon the sky,
As glowing Beauty's bust beneath man's eye,
We paus'd before the heritage of men,
And thy star trembled — as doth Beauty then!"
Thus, in discourse, the lovers whiled away
The night that waned and waned and brought no
They fell: for Heaven to them no hope imparts
Who hear not for the beating of their hearts.

TO THE RIVER ——.

AIR river! in thy bright, clear flow
Of crystal, wandering water,
Thou art an emblem of the glow
Of beauty — the unhidden heart —
The playful maziness of art
In old Alberto's daughter;
But when within thy wave she looks —
Which glistens then, and trembles —
Why, then, the prettiest of brooks
Her worshipper resembles;
For in his heart, as in thy stream,
Her image deeply lies —
His heart which trembles at the beam
Of her soul-searching eyes.
IND solace in a dying hour!
Such, father, is not (now) my theme—
I will not madly deem that power
Of Earth may shrive me of the sin
Unearthly pride hath revell’d in—
I have no time to dote or dream:
You call it hope—that fire of fire!
It is but agony of desire:
If I can hope—oh God! I can—
Its fount is holier—more divine—
I would not call thee fool, old man,
But such is not a gift of thine.

Know thou the secret of a spirit
Bow’d from its wild pride into shame.
O yearning heart! I did inherit
Thy withering portion with the fame,
The searing glory which hath shone
Amid the jewels of my throne,
Halo of Hell! and with a pain
Not Hell shall make me fear again—
O craving heart, for the lost flowers
And sunshine of my summer hours!
The undying voice of that dead time,
With its interminable chime,
Rings, in the spirit of a spell,
Upon thy emptiness—a knell.
I have not always been as now:
The fever'd diadem on my brow
    I claim'd and won usurpingly —
Hath not the same fierce heirdom given
    Rome to the Cæsar — this to me?
The heritage of a kingly mind,
And a proud spirit which hath striven
    Triumphantly with human kind.
On mountain soil I first drew life:
The mists of the Taglay have shed
Nightly their dews upon my head,
And, I believe, the winged strife
And tumult of the headlong air
Have nestled in my very hair.
So late from Heaven — that dew — it fell
    ('Mid dreams of an unholy night)
Upon me with the touch of Hell,
    While the red flashing of the light
From clouds that hung, like banners, o'er,
    Appeared to my half-closing eye
The pageantry of monarchy,
And the deep trumpet-thunder's roar
    Came hurriedly upon me, telling
    Of human battle, where my voice,
My own voice, silly child! — was swelling
    (O! how my spirit would rejoice,
And leap within me at the cry)
The battle-cry of Victory!
The rain came down upon my head
Unshelter'd — and the heavy wind
Rendered me mad and deaf and blind.
It was but man, I thought, who shed
Laurels upon me: and the rush —
The torrent of the chilly air
Gurgled within my ear the crush
Of empires — with the captive's prayer —
The hum of suitors — and the tone
Of flattery 'round a sovereign's throne.

My passions, from that hapless hour,
Usurp'd a tyranny which men
Have deem'd, since I have reach'd to power,
My innate nature — be it so:
But, father, there liv'd one who, then,
Then — in my boyhood — when their fire
Burn'd with a still intenser glow
(For passion must, with youth, expire)
E'en then who knew this iron heart
In woman's weakness had a part.

I have no words — alas! — to tell
The loveliness of loving well!
Nor would I now attempt to trace
The more than beauty of a face
Whose lineaments, upon my mind,
Are — shadows on th' unstable wind:
Thus I remember having dwelt
Some page of early lore upon,
With loitering eye, till I have felt
The letters — with their meaning — melt
To fantasies — with none.

O, she was worthy of all love!
Love — as in infancy was mine —
'T was such as angel minds above
Might envy; her young heart the shrine
On which my every hope and thought
Were incense — then a goodly gift,
For they were childish and upright —
Pure — as her young example taught:
Why did I leave it, and, adrift,
Trust to the fire within, for light?

We grew in age — and love — together —
Roaming the forest and the wild;
My breast her shield in wintry weather —
And when the friendly sunshine smil'd,
And she would mark the opening skies,
I saw no Heaven — but in her eyes.

Young Love's first lesson is — the heart:
For 'mid that sunshine, and those smiles,
When, from our little cares apart,
And laughing at her girlish wiles,
I'd throw me on her throbbing breast,
   And pour my spirit out in tears —
There was no need to speak the rest —
   No need to quiet any fears
Of her — who ask'd no reason why,
But turn'd on me her quiet eye!

Yet more than worthy of the love
My spirit struggled with, and strove,
When, on the mountain-peak, alone,
Ambition lent it a new tone —
I had no being — but in thee:
   The world, and all it did contain
In the earth — the air — the sea —
   Its joy — its little lot of pain
That was new pleasure — the ideal,
   Dim vanities of dreams by night —
And dimmer nothings which were real —
   (Shadows — and a more shadowy light!)
Parted upon their misty wings,
   And so, confusedly, became
   Thine image and — a name — a name!
Two separate — yet most intimate things.

I was ambitious — have you known
   The passion, father?  You have not:
A cottager, I mark'd a throne
Of half the world as all my own,
And murmur'd at such lowly lot—
But, just like any other dream,
   Upon the vapor of the dew
My own had past, did not the beam
   Of beauty which did while it thro'
The minute — the hour — the day — oppress
My mind with double loveliness.

We walk'd together on the crown
Of a high mountain which look'd down
Afar from its proud natural towers
   Of rock and forest, on the hills—
The dwindled hills! begirt with bowers
   And shouting with a thousand rills,

I spoke to her of power and pride,
   But mystically — in such guise
That she might deem it nought beside
   The moment's converse; in her eyes
I read, perhaps too carelessly,
   A mingled feeling with my own;
The flush on her bright cheek, to me
   Seem'd to become a queenly throne
Too well that I should let it be
   Light in the wilderness alone.

I wrapp'd myself in grandeur then
   And donn'd a visionary crown —
Yet it was not that Fantasy
Had thrown her mantle over me—
But that, among the rabble—men,
Lion ambition is chain'd down—
And crouches to a keeper's hand—
Not so in deserts where the grand—
The wild— the terrible conspire
With their own breath to fan his fire.

Look 'round thee now on Samarcand!
Is she not queen of Earth? her pride
Above all cities? in her hand
Their destinies? in all beside
Of glory which the world hath known
Stands she not nobly and alone?
Falling—her veriest stepping-stone
Shall form the pedestal of a throne—
And who her sovereign? Timour—he
Whom the astonished people saw
Striding o'er empires haughtily
A diadem'd outlaw!

O, human love! thou spirit given,
On Earth, of all we hope in Heaven!
Which fall'st into the soul like rain
Upon the Siroc-wither'd plain,
And, failing in thy power to bless,
But leav'st the heart a wilderness!
Idea! which bindest life around
With music of so strange a sound
And beauty of so wild a birth —
Farewell! for I have won the Earth.

When Hope, the eagle that tower'd, could see
No cliff beyond him in the sky,
His pinions were bent droopingly —
And homeward turn'd his soften'd eye.
'T was sunset; when the sun will part
There comes a sullenness of heart
To him who still would look upon
The glory of the summer sun.
That soul will hate the ev'ning mist
So often lovely, and will list
To the sound of the coming darkness (known
To those whose spirits harken) as one
Who, in a dream of night, would fly
But cannot from a danger nigh.

What tho' the moon — the white moon
Shed all the splendor of her noon,
Her smile is chilly — and her beam,
In that time of dreariness, will seem
(So like you gather in your breath)
A portrait taken after death.
And boyhood is a summer sun
Whose waning is the dreariest one —
For all we live to know is known,
And all we seek to keep hath flown —
Let life, then, as the day-flower, fall
With the noonday beauty — which is all.

I reach'd my home — my home no more —
For all had flown who made it so.
I pass'd from out its mossy door,
And, tho' my tread was soft and low,
A voice came from the threshold stone
Of one whom I had earlier known —
O, I defy thee, Hell, to show
On beds of fire that burn below,
A humbler heart — a deeper woe.

Father, I firmly do believe —
I know — for Death who comes for me
From regions of the blest afar,
Where there is nothing to deceive,
Hath left his iron gate ajar,
And rays of truth you cannot see
Are flashing thro' Eternity —
I do believe that Eblis hath
A snare in every human path —
Else how, when in the holy grove,
I wandered of the idol, Love,
Who daily scents his snowy wings
With incense of burnt offerings
From the most unpolluted things,
Whose pleasant bowers are yet so riven
Above with trellis'd rays from Heaven,
No mote may shun — no tiniest fly —
The lightning of his eagle eye —
How was it that Ambition crept,
    Unseen, amid the revels there,
Till growing bold, he laughed and leapt
    In the tangles of Love's very hair?

TO ———.

The bowers whereat, in dreams, I see
The wantonest singing birds,
Are lips — and all thy melody
    Of lip-begotten words.

Thine eyes, in Heaven of heart enshrined,
    Then desolately fall,
O God! on my funereal mind
    Like starlight on a pall.

Thy heart — thy heart — I wake and sigh,
    And sleep to dream till day
Of the truth that gold can never buy —
    Of the baubles that it may.
A DREAM.

In visions of the dark night
I have dreamed of joy departed—
But a waking dream of life and light
Hath left me broken-hearted.

Ah! what is not a dream by day
To him whose eyes are cast
On things around him with a ray
Turned back upon the past?

That holy dream—that holy dream,
While all the world were chiding,
Hath cheered me as a lovely beam,
A lonely spirit guiding.

What though that light, thro' storm and night,
So trembled from afar—
What could there be more purely bright
In Truth's day-star?

ROMANCE.

ROMANCE, who loves to nod and sing,
With drowsy head and folded wing,
Among the green leaves as they shake
Far down within some shadowy lake,
To me a painted paroquet
Hath been—a most familiar bird—
Taught me my alphabet to say—
To lisp my very earliest word
While in the wild wood I did lie,
A child—with a most knowing eye.

Of late, eternal Condor years
So shake the very Heaven on high
With tumult as they thunder by,
I have no time for idle cares
Through gazing on the unquiet sky.
And when an hour with calmer wings
Its down upon my spirit flings—
That little time with lyre and rhyme
To while away—forbidden things!
My heart would feel to be a crime
Unless it trembled with the strings.

FAIRY–LAND.

IM vales—and shadowy floods—
And, cloudy-looking woods,
Whose forms we can't discover
For the tears that drip all over:
Huge moons there wax and wane—
Again—again—again—
Every moment of the night —
Forever changing places —
And they put out the star-light
With the breath from their pale faces.
About twelve by the moon-dial
One more filmy than the rest
(A kind which, upon trial,
They have found to be the best)
Comes down — still down — and down
With its centre on the crown
Of a mountain’s eminence,
While its wide circumference
In easy drapery falls
Over hamlets, over halls,
Wherever they may be —
O’er the strange woods — o’er the sea —
Over spirits on the wing —
Over every drowsy thing —
And buries them up quite
In a labyrinth of light —
And then, how deep! — oh, deep
Is the passion of their sleep.
In the morning they arise,
And their moony covering
Is soaring in the skies,
With the tempests as they toss,
Like — almost anything —
Or a yellow Albatross.
They use that moon no more
For the same end as before —
Videlicet a tent —
Which I think extravagant:
Its atomies, however,
Into a shower dissever,
Of which those butterflies,
Of Earth, who seek the skies,
And so come down again
(Never-contented things!)
Have brought a specimen
Upon their quivering wings.

THE LAKE. — TO ——.

N spring of youth it was my lot
To haunt of the wide world a spot
The which I could not love the less —
So lovely was the loneliness
Of a wild lake, with black rock bound,
And the tall pines that towered around.
But when the Night had thrown her pall
Upon that spot, as upon all,
And the mystic wind went by
Murmuring in melody —
Then — ah, then I would awake
To the terror of the lone lake.
Yet that terror was not fright,
But a tremulous delight—
A feeling not the jewelled mine
Could teach or bribe me to define—
Nor Love—although the Love were thine.

Death was in that poisonous wave,
And its gulf a fitting grave
For him who thence could solace bring
To his lone imagining—
Whose solitary soul could make
An Eden of that dim lake.

---

**SONG.**

SAW thee on the bridal day,
When a burning blush came o'er thee,
Though happiness around thee lay,
The world all love before thee:

And in thine eye a kindling light
(Whatever it might be)
Was all on Earth my aching sight
Of Loveliness could see.

That blush, perhaps, was maiden shame—
As such it well may pass—
Though its glow hath raised a fiercer flame
In the breast of him, alas!
Who saw thee on that bridal day,
When that deep blush would come o'er thee,
Though happiness around thee lay,
The world all love before thee.

——

OF all who hail thy presence as the morning —
Of all to whom thine absence is the night —
The blotting utterly from out high heaven
The sacred sun — of all who, weeping, bless thee
Hourly for hope — for life — ah! above all,
For the resurrection of deep-buried faith
In Truth — in Virtue — in Humanity —
Of all who, on Despair's unhallowed bed
Lying down to die, have suddenly arisen
At thy soft-murmured words, "Let there be light!"
At the soft-murmured words that were fulfilled
In the seraphic glancing of thine eyes —
Of all who owe thee most — whose gratitude
Nearest resembles worship — oh, remember
The truest — the most fervently devoted,
And think that these weak lines are written by him —
By him who, as he pens them, thrills to think
His spirit is communing with an angel's.
HY soul shall find itself alone
'Mid dark thoughts of the gray tomb-stone—
Not one, of all the crowd, to pry
Into thine hour of secrecy.

Be silent in that solitude
Which is not loneliness—for then
The spirits of the dead who stood
In life before thee are again
In death around thee—and their will
Shall overshadow thee: be still.

The night—tho' clear—shall frown—
And the stars shall not look down
From their high thrones in Heaven,
With light like Hope to mortals given—
But their red orbs, without beam,
To thy weariness shall seem
As a burning and a fever
Which would cling to thee forever.

Now are thoughts thou shalt not banish—
Now are visions ne'er to vanish—
From thy spirit shall they pass
No more—like dew-drops from the grass.
The breeze—the breath of God—is still—
And the mist upon the hill
Shadowy—shadowy—yet unbroken,
Is a symbol and a token—
How it hangs upon the trees,
A mystery of mysteries!

TO HELEN.

ELEN, thy beauty is to me
Like those Nicean barks of yore,
That gently, o'er a perfumed sea,
The weary, way-worn wanderer bore
To his own native shore.

On desperate seas long wont to roam,
Thy hyacinth hair, thy classic face,
Thy Naiad airs have brought me home
To the glory that was Greece
And the grandeur that was Rome.

Lo! in yon brilliant window-niche
How statue-like I see thee stand!
The agate lamp within thy hand,
Ah! Psyche, from the regions which
Are Holy Land!
ALONE.

FROM childhood's hour I have not been
   As others were—I have not seen
   As others saw—I could not bring
My passions from a common spring.
From the same source I have not taken
My sorrow; I could not awaken
My heart to joy at the same tone;
And all I lov'd, I lov'd alone.

Then—in my childhood—in the dawn
Of a most stormy life—was drawn
From ev'ry depth of good and ill
The mystery which binds me still:
From the torrent, or the fountain,
From the red cliff of the mountain,
From the sun that 'round me roll'd
In its autumn tint of gold—
From the lightning in the sky
As it pass'd me flying by—
From the thunder and the storm,
And the cloud that took the form
(When the rest of Heaven was blue)
Of a demon in my view.
THE POETIC PRINCIPLE.
THE POETIC PRINCIPLE.

In speaking of the Poetic Principle, I have no design to be either thorough or profound. While discussing, very much at random, the essentiality of what we call Poetry, my principal purpose will be to cite for consideration some few of those minor English or American poems which best suit my own taste, or which, upon my own fancy, have left the most definite impression. By "minor poems" I mean, of course, poems of little length. And here, in the beginning, permit me to say a few words in regard to a somewhat peculiar principle, which, whether rightfully or wrongfully, has always had its influence in my own critical estimate of the poem. I hold that a long poem does not exist. I maintain that the phrase "a long poem" is simply a flat contradiction in terms.

I need scarcely observe that a poem deserves its title only inasmuch as it excites by elevating the soul. The value of the poem is in the ratio of this elevating excitement. But all excitements are, through a psychal necessity, transient. That degree of excitement which would entitle a poem to be so called at all cannot be
sustained throughout a composition of any great length. After the lapse of half an hour, at the very utmost, it flags, fails, a revulsion ensues; and then the poem is, in effect and in fact, no longer such.

There are, no doubt, many who have found difficulty in reconciling the critical dictum that the "Paradise Lost" is to be devoutly admired throughout with the absolute impossibility of maintaining for it, during perusal, the amount of enthusiasm which that critical dictum would demand. This great work, in fact, is to be regarded as poetical only when, losing sight of that vital requisite in all works of art, unity, we view it merely as a series of minor poems. If, to preserve its unity,—its totality of effect or impression,—we read it (as would be necessary) at a single sitting, the result is but a constant alternation of excitement and depression. After a passage of what we feel to be true poetry, there follows, inevitably, a passage of platitude which no critical pre-judgment can force us to admire; but if, upon completing the work, we read it again, omitting the first book,—that is to say, commencing with the second,—we shall be surprised at now finding that admirable which we before condemned, that damnable which we had previously so much admired. It follows from all this that the ultimate, aggregate, or absolute effect of even the best epic under the sun is a nullity: and this is precisely the fact.
In regard to the Iliad, we have, if not positive proof, at least very good reason, for believing it intended as a series of lyrics; but granting the epic intention, I can say only that the work is based in an imperfect sense of art. The modern epic is of the suppositional ancient model, but an inconsiderate and blindfold imitation. But the day of these artistic anomalies is over. If, at any time, any very long poem were popular in reality,—which I doubt,—it is at least clear that no very long poem will ever be popular again.

That the extent of a poetical work is, *ceteris paribus*, the measure of its merit, seems undoubtedly, when we thus state it, a proposition sufficiently absurd; yet we are indebted for it to the Quarterly Reviews. Surely there can be nothing in mere size, abstractly considered, there can be nothing in mere bulk, so far as a volume is concerned, which has so continuously elicited admiration from these saturnine pamphlets! A mountain, to be sure, by the mere sentiment of physical magnitude which it conveys, *does* impress us with a sense of the sublime; but no man is impressed after this fashion by the material grandeur of even "The Columbiad." Even the Quarterlies have not instructed us to be so impressed by it. *As yet*, they have not *insisted* on our estimating Lamartine by the cubic foot, or Pollock by the pound; but what else are we to *infer* from their continual prating about "sustained effort"? If by
"sustained effort" any little gentleman has accomplished an epic, let us frankly commend him for the effort,—if this indeed be a thing commendable,—but let us forbear praising the epic on the effort’s account.

It is to be hoped that common-sense, in the time to come, will prefer deciding upon a work of art rather by the impression it makes, by the effect it produces, than by the time it took to impress the effect, or by the amount of "sustained effort" which had been found necessary in effecting the impression. The fact is, that perseverance is one thing and genius quite another, nor can all the Quarterlies in Christendom confound them. By and by this proposition, with many which I have been just urging, will be received as self-evident. In the mean time, by being generally condemned as falsities, they will not be essentially damaged as truths.

On the other hand, it is clear that a poem may be improperly brief. Undue brevity degenerates into mere epigrammatism. A very short poem, while now and then producing a brilliant or vivid, never produces a profound or enduring effect. There must be the steady pressing down of the stamp upon the wax. De Béranger has wrought innumerable things, pungent and spirit-stirring; but, in general, they have been too imponderous to stamp themselves deeply into the public attention; and thus, as so many feathers of fancy, have been blown aloft only to be whistled down the wind.
A remarkable instance of the effect of undue brevity in depressing a poem,—in keeping it out of the popular view, is afforded by the following exquisite little serenade:

I arise from dreams of thee
   In the first sweet sleep of night,
When the winds are breathing low
   And the stars are shining bright.
I arise from dreams of thee,
   And a spirit in my feet
Has led me,—who knows how?—
   To thy chamber-window, sweet!

The wandering airs they faint
   On the dark, the silent stream;
The champak odors fail
   Like sweet thoughts in a dream;
The nightingale's complaint,
   It dies upon her heart,
As I must die on thine,
   Oh, beloved, as thou art!

Oh, lift me from the grass!
   I die, I faint, I fail!
Let thy love in kisses rain
   On my lips and eyelids pale.
My cheek is cold and white, alas!
My heart beats loud and fast:
Oh! press it close to thine again,
Where it will break at last.

Very few, perhaps, are familiar with these lines, yet no less a poet than Shelley is their author. Their warm yet delicate and ethereal imagination will be appreciated by all; but by none so thoroughly as by him who has himself arisen from sweet dreams of one beloved to bathe in the aromatic air of a southern mid-summer night.

One of the finest poems by Willis—the very best, in my opinion, which he has ever written—has, no doubt through this same defect of undue brevity, been kept back from its proper position, not less in the critical than in the popular view.

The shadows lay along Broadway,
'Twas near the twilight tide,
And slowly there a lady fair
Was walking in her pride.
Alone walked she, but viewlessly
Walked spirits at her side.

Peace charmed the street beneath her feet,
And Honor charmed the air,
And all astir looked kind on her,
And called her good as fair;
For all God ever gave to her
She kept with chary care.

She kept with care her beauties rare
From lovers warm and true,
For her heart was cold to all but gold,
And the rich came not to woo:
But honored well are charms to sell
If priests the selling do.

Now walking there was one more fair,—
A slight girl, lily-pale;
And she had unseen company
To make the spirit quail:
'Twixt Want and Scorn she walked forlorn,
And nothing could avail.

No mercy now can clear her brow
For this world's peace to pray;
For, as love's wild prayer dissolved in air,
Her woman's heart gave way!—
But the sin forgiven by Christ in Heaven
By man is cursed alway!

In this composition we find it difficult to recognize
the Willis who has written so many mere "verses of
society." The lines are not only richly ideal, but full
of energy, while they breathe an earnestness, an evident sincerity of sentiment, for which we look in vain throughout all the other works of this author.

While the epic mania — while the idea that to merit, in poetry, prolixity is indispensable — has, for some years past, been gradually dying out of the public mind by mere dint of its own absurdity, we find it succeeded by a heresy too palpably false to be long tolerated, but one which, in the brief period it has already endured, may be said to have accomplished more in the corruption of our poetical literature than all its other enemies combined. I allude to the heresy of The Didactic. It has been assumed, tacitly and avowedly, directly and indirectly, that the ultimate object of all poetry is truth. Every poem, it is said, should inculcate a moral; and by this moral is the poetical merit of the work to be adjudged. We Americans especially have patronized this happy idea; and we Bostonians, very especially, have developed it in full. We have taken it into our heads that to write a poem simply for the poem's sake, and to acknowledge such to have been our design, would be to confess ourselves radically wanting in the true poetic dignity and force; but the simple fact is that, would we but permit ourselves to look into our own souls, we should immediately there discover that under the sun there neither exists nor can exist any work more thoroughly dignified, more supremely noble, than this
very poem; this poem *per se*; this poem which is a poem and nothing more; this poem written solely for the poem’s sake.

With as deep a reverence for the True as ever inspired the bosom of man, I would nevertheless limit, in some measure, its modes of inculcation. I would limit, to enforce them. I would not enfeeble them by dissipation. The demands of Truth are severe. She has no sympathy with the myrtles. All *that* which is so indispensable in Song is precisely all *that* with which *she* has nothing whatever to do. It is but making her a flaunting paradox to wreathe her in gems and flowers. In enforcing a truth, we need severity rather than efflorescence of language. We must be simple, precise, terse; we must be cool, calm, unimpassioned; in a word, we must be in that mood which, as nearly as possible, is the exact converse of the poetical. *He* must be blind indeed who does not perceive the radical and chasmal differences between the truthful and the poetical modes of inculcation. *He* must be theory-mad beyond redemption who, in spite of these differences, shall still persist in attempting to reconcile the obstinate oils and waters of Poetry and Truth.

Dividing the world of mind into its three most immediately obvious distinctions, we have the Pure Intellect, Taste, and the Moral Sense. I place Taste in the middle because it is just this position which, in the mind,
it occupies. It holds intimate relations with either extreme, but from the Moral Sense is separated by so faint a difference that Aristotle has not hesitated to place some of its operations among the virtues themselves. Nevertheless, we find the offices of the trio marked with a sufficient distinction. Just as the Intellect concerns itself with Truth, so Taste informs us of the Beautiful, while the Moral Sense is regardful of Duty. Of this latter, while Conscience teaches the obligation, and Reason the expediency, Taste contents herself with displaying the charms; waging war upon Vice solely on the ground of her deformity, her disproportion, her animosity to the fitting, to the appropriate, to the harmonious—in a word, to Beauty.

An immortal instinct, deep within the spirit of man, is plainlv, a sense of the Beautiful. This it is which administers to his delight in the manifold forms and sounds and odors and sentiments amid which he exists. And just as the lily is repeated in the lake, or the eyes of Amaryllis in the mirror, so is the mere oral or written repetition of these forms and sounds and colors and odors and sentiments a duplicate source of delight. But this mere repetition is not poetry. He who shall simply sing, with however glowing enthusiasm or with however vivid a truth of description, of the sights and sounds and odors and colors and sentiments which greet him in common with all mankind,—
he, I say, has yet failed to prove his divine title. There is still a something in the distance which he has been unable to attain. We have still a thirst unquenchable, to allay which he has not shown us the crystal springs. This thirst belongs to the immortality of man. It is at once a consequence and an indication of his perennial existence. It is the desire of the moth for the star. It is no mere appreciation of the beauty before us, but a wild effort to reach the beauty above. Inspired by an ecstatic prescience of the glories beyond the grave, we struggle, by multiform combinations among the things and thoughts of time, to attain a portion of that loveliness whose very elements, perhaps, appertain to eternity alone. And thus when by poetry—or when by music, the most entrancing of the poetic moods—we find ourselves melted into tears, we weep then, not, as the Abbate Gravina supposes, through excess of pleasure, but through a certain petulant, impatient sorrow at our inability to grasp now, wholly, here on earth, at once and forever, those divine and rapturous joys, of which through the poem or through the music, we attain to but brief and indeterminate glimpses.

The struggle to apprehend the supernal loveliness, this struggle, on the part of souls fittingly constituted, has given to the world all that which it (the world) has ever been enabled at once to understand and to feel as poetic.
The poetic sentiment, of course, may develop itself in various modes,—in painting, in sculpture, in architecture, in the dance, very especially in music, and very peculiarly, and with a wide field, in the composition of the landscape garden. Our present theme, however, has regard only to its manifestation in words. And here let me speak briefly on the topic of rhythm. Contenting myself with the certainty that music, in its various modes of metre, rhythm, and rhyme, is of so vast a moment in poetry as never to be wisely rejected, is so vitally important an adjunct that he is simply silly who declines its assistance, I will not now pause to maintain its absolute essentiality. It is in music, perhaps, that the soul most nearly attains the great end for which, when inspired by the poetic sentiment, it struggles,—the creation of supernal beauty. It may be, indeed, that here this sublime end is, now and then, attained, in fact. We are often made to feel, with a shivering delight, that from an earthly harp are stricken notes which cannot have been unfamiliar to the angels. And thus there can be little doubt that in the union of poetry with music in its popular sense, we shall find the widest field for the poetic development. The old bards and minnesingers had advantages which we do not possess; and Thomas Moore, singing his own songs, was, in the most legitimate manner, perfecting them as poems.

To recapitulate, then:—I would define, in brief, the
poetry of words as the *rhythmical creation of beauty*. Its sole arbiter is Taste. With the intellect or with the conscience, it has only collateral relations. Unless incidentally, it has no concern whatever either with Duty or with Truth.

A few words, however, in explanation. *That* pleasure which is at once the most pure, the most elevating, and the most intense, is derived, I maintain, from the contemplation of the Beautiful. In the contemplation of Beauty, we alone find it possible to attain this pleasurable elevation or excitement of the soul which we recognize as the poetic sentiment, and which is so easily distinguished from Truth, which is the satisfaction of the Reason, or from Passion, which is the excitement of the heart. I make Beauty, therefore, using the word as inclusive of the sublime,—I make Beauty the province of the poem, simply because it is an obvious rule of art that effects should be made to spring as directly as possible from their causes,—no one as yet having been weak enough to deny that the peculiar elevation in question is at least *most readily* attainable in the poem. It by no means follows, however, that the incitements of Passion or the precepts of Duty, or even the lessons of Truth, may not be introduced into a poem, and with advantage; for they may subserve, incidentally, in various ways, the general purposes of the work: but the true artist will always contrive to tone them down in proper subjection
to that Beauty which is the atmosphere and the rea
essence of the poem.

I cannot better introduce the few poems which I shall
present for your consideration than by the citation of
the proem to Mr. Longfellow’s “Waif.”

The day is done, and the darkness
Falls from the wings of Night,
As a feather is wafted downward
From an eagle in his flight.

I see the lights of the village
Gleam through the rain and the mist,
And a feeling of sadness comes o’er me
That my soul cannot resist,—

A feeling of sadness and longing,
That is not akin to pain,
And resembles sorrow only
As the mist resembles rain.

Come, read to me some poem,
Some simple and heartfelt lay,
That shall soothe this restless feeling,
And banish the thoughts of day.

Not from the grand old masters,
Not from the bards sublime,
Whose distant footsteps echo
Through the corridors of Time;
For, like strains of martial music,
    Their mighty thoughts suggest
Life's endless toil and endeavor;
    And to-night I long for rest.

Read from some humbler poet,
    Whose songs gushed from his heart
As showers from the clouds of summer
    Or tears from the eyelids start;

Who, through long days of labor
    And nights devoid of ease,
Still heard in his soul the music
    Of wonderful melodies.

Such songs have power to quiet
    The restless pulse of care,
And come like the benediction
    That follows after prayer.

Then read from the treasured volume
    The poem of thy choice,
And lend to the rhyme of the poet
    The beauty of thy voice.

And the night shall be filled with music,
    And the cares that infest the day
Shall fold their tents, like the Arabs,
    And as silently steal away.
With no great range of imagination, these lines have been justly admired for their delicacy of expression. Some of the images are very effective. Nothing can be better than

--- The bards sublime,
Whose distant footsteps echo
Down the corridors of Time.

The idea of the last quartrain is also very effective. The poem, on the whole, however, is chiefly to be admired for the graceful insouciance of its metre, so well in accordance with the character of the sentiments, and especially for the ease of the general manner. This "ease," or naturalness, in a literary style, it has long been the fashion to regard as ease in appearance alone, — as a point of really difficult attainment. But not so: a natural manner is difficult only to him who should never meddle with it, — to the unnatural. It is but the result of writing with the understanding, or with the instinct, that the tone, in composition, should always be that which the mass of mankind would adopt, and must perpetually vary, of course, with the occasion. The author who, after the fashion of "The North American Review," should be, upon all occasions, merely "quiet," must necessarily, upon many occasions, be simply silly or stupid; and has no more right to be considered "easy" or "natural," than a cockney exquisite, or than the sleeping Beauty in the wax-works.
Among the minor poems of Bryant, none has so much impressed me as the one which he entitles "June." I quote only a portion of it:—

There, through the long, long summer hours
  The golden light should lie,
And thick, young herbs and groups of flowers
  Stand in their beauty by.
The oriole should build and tell
His love-tale, close beside my cell;
The idle butterfly
Should rest him there, and there be heard
The housewife-bee and humming-bird.

And what if cheerful shouts, at noon,
  Come, from the village sent,
Or songs of maids, beneath the moon,
  With fairy laughter blent?
And what if, in the evening light,
Betrothed lovers walk in sight
  Of my low monument?
I would the lovely scene around
Might know no sadder sight nor sound.

I know, I know I should not see
  The season's glorious show,
Nor would its brightness shine for me,
  Nor its wild music flow;
But if around my place of sleep,
The friends I love should come to weep,
    They might not haste to go.
Soft airs, and song, and light, and bloom,
Should keep them lingering by my tomb.

These to their softened hearts should bear
    The thought of what has been,
And speak of one who cannot share
    The gladness of the scene;
Whose part in all the pomp that fills
The circuit of the summer hills,
    Is — that his grave is green;
And deeply would their hearts rejoice
To hear again his living voice.

The rhythmical flow here is even voluptuous — nothing could be more melodious. The poem has always affected me in a remarkable manner. The intense melancholy which seems to well up, perforce, to the surface of all the poet’s cheerful sayings about his grave, we find thrilling us to the soul, while there is the truest poetic elevation in the thrill. The impression left is one of a pleasurable sadness. And if, in the remaining compositions which I shall introduce to you, there be more or less of a similar tone always apparent, let me remind you that (how or why we know not) this certain taint of sadness is inseparably connected with
all the higher manifestations of true beauty. It is, nevertheless,

A feeling of sadness and longing
   That is not akin to pain,
   And resembles sorrow only
   As the mist resembles the rain

The taint of which I speak is clearly perceptible even in a poem so full of brilliancy and spirit as the "Health" of Edward Coate Pinkney:

I fill this cup to one made up
   Of loveliness alone,
A woman, of her gentle sex
   The seeming paragon;
To whom the better elements
   And kindly stars have given
A form so fair that, like the air
   'Tis less of earth than heaven.

Her every tone is music's own,
   Like those of morning birds,
And something more than melody
   Dwells ever in her words;
The coinage of her heart are they,
   And from her lips each flows
As one may see the burden'd bee
   Forth issue from the rose.
Affections are as thoughts to her,  
The measures of her hours;  
Her feelings have the fragrancy,  
The freshness of young flowers;  
And lovely passions, changing oft,  
So fill her, she appears  
The image of themselves by turns, —  
The idol of past years!

Of her bright face one glance will trace  
A picture on the brain,  
And of her voice in echoing hearts  
A sound must long remain;  
But memory, such as mine of her,  
So very much endears,  
When death is nigh my latest sigh  
Will not be life's, but hers.

I fill'd this cup to one made up  
Of loveliness alone,  
A woman, of her gentle sex  
The seeming paragon.  
Her health! and would on earth there stood  
Some more of such a frame,  
That life might be all poetry,  
And weariness a name.
It was the misfortune of Mr. Pinckney to have been born too far south. Had he been a New Englander, it is probable that he would have been ranked as the first of American lyricsts by that magnanimous cabal which has so long controlled the destinies of American Letters in conducting the thing called "The North American Review." The poem just cited is especially beautiful; but the poetic elevation which it induces, we must refer chiefly to our sympathy in the poet's enthusiasm. We pardon his hyperboles for the evident earnestness with which they are uttered.

It was by no means my design, however, to expatiate upon the merits of what I should read you. These will necessarily speak for themselves. Boccalini, in his "Advertisements from Parnassus," tells us that Zoilus once presented Apollo a very caustic criticism upon a very admirable book, whereupon the god asked him for the beauties of the work. He replied that he only busied himself about the errors. On hearing this, Apollo, handing him a sack of unwinnowed wheat, bade him pick out all the chaff for his reward.

Now this fable answers very well as a hit at the critics; but I am by no means sure that the god was in the right. I am by no means certain that the true limits of the critical duty are not grossly misunderstood. Excellence, in a poem especially, may be considered in the light of an axiom, which need only be
properly put to become self-evident. It is not excellence if it require to be demonstrated as such: and thus, to point out too particularly the merits of a work of art is to admit that they are not merits altogether.

Among the "Melodies" of Thomas Moore, is one whose distinguished character as a poem proper, seems to have been singularly left out of view. I allude to his lines beginning "Come, rest in this bosom." The intense energy of their expression is not surpassed by anything in Byron. There are two of the lines in which a sentiment is conveyed that embodies the all in all of the divine passion of love,—a sentiment which, perhaps, has found its echo in more, and in more passionate human hearts, than any other single sentiment ever embodied in words:—

Come, rest in this bosom, my own stricken deer,
Though the herd have fled from thee, thy home is still here;
Here still is the smile that no cloud can o’ercast,
And a heart and a hand all thy own to the last.

Oh! what was love made for, if ’t is not the same
Through joy and through torment, through glory and shame?
I know not, I ask not, if guilt’s in that heart:
I but know that I love thee, whatever thou art.
Thou hast call’d me thy angel in moments of bliss,
And thy angel I ’ll be, ’mid the horrors of this,—
Through the furnace, unshrinking, thy steps to pursue,
And shield thee, and save thee,—or perish there too!

It has been the fashion of late days to deny Moore imagination, while granting him fancy,—a distinction originating with Coleridge, than whom no man more fully comprehended the great powers of Moore. The fact is that the fancy of this poet so far predominates over all his other faculties, and over the fancy of all other men, as to have induced, very naturally, the idea that he is fanciful only. But never was there a greater mistake, never was a grosser wrong done the fame of a true poet. In the compass of the English language I can call to mind no poem more profoundly, more weirdly imaginative, in the best sense, than the lines commencing “I would I were by that dim lake,” which are the composition of Thomas Moore. I regret that I am unable to remember them.

One of the noblest — and, speaking of fancy, one of the most singularly fanciful of modern poets — was Thomas Hood. His “Fair Ines” had always, for me, an inexpressible charm:

Oh, saw ye not Fair Ines?
She’s gone into the West,
To dazzle when the sun is down,
And rob the world of rest.
She took our daylight with her,
   The smiles that we love best,
With morning blushes on her cheek
   And pearls upon her breast.

Oh, turn again, fair Ines,
   Before the fall of night,
For fear the moon should shine alone,
   And stars unrivall'd bright:
And blessed will the lover be
   That walks beneath their light,
And breathes the love against thy cheek
   I dare not even write!

Would I had been, fair Ines,
   That gallant cavalier
Who rode so gayly by thy side,
   And whispered thee so near!
Were there no bonny dames at home,
   Or no true lovers here,
That he should cross the seas to win
   The dearest of the dear?

I saw thee, lovely Ines,
   Descend along the shore,
With a band of noble gentlemen,
   And banners wav'd before;
And gentle youth and maidens gay,
   And snowy plumes they wore;
It would have been a beauteous dream,
   — If it had been no more!

Alas, alas, fair Ines!
   She went away with song,
With Music waiting on her steps,
   And shoutings of the throng;
But some were sad and felt no mirth,
   But only Music’s wrong;
In sounds that sang Farewell, Farewell,
   To her you’ve loved so long.

Farewell, farewell, fair Ines!
   That vessel never bore
So fair a lady on its deck,
   Nor danced so light before.
Alas for pleasure on the sea
   And sorrow on the shore!
The smile that blest one lover’s heart
   Has broken many more!

“The Haunted House,” by the same author, is one of the truest poems ever written, one of the *truest*, one of the most unexceptionable, one of the most thoroughly artistic, both in its theme and in its execu-
tion. It is, moreover, powerfully ideal, imaginative. I regret that its length renders it unsuitable for the purposes of this Lecture. In place of it, permit me to offer the universally appreciated "Bridge of Sighs":—

One more Unfortunate,
Weary of breath,
Rashly importunate,
Gone to her death.

Take her up tenderly,
Lift her with care,—
Fashion'd so slenderly,
Young, and so fair!

Look at her garments,
Clinging like cerements;
Whilst the wave constantly
Drips from her clothing.
Take her up instantly,
Loving, not loathing.—

Touch her not scornfully,
Think of her mournfully,
Gently and humanly;
Not of the stains of her,
All that remains of her
Now, is pure womanly.
THE POETIC PRINCIPLE.

Make no deep scrutiny
Into her mutiny
Rash and undutiful;
Past all dishonor,
Death has left on her
Only the beautiful.

Still, for all slips of hers,
One of Eve's family,
Wipe those poor lips of hers,
Oozing so clammyly;
Loop up her tresses
Escaped from the comb,
Her fair auburn tresses,
Whilst wonderment guesses
Where was her home?

Who was her father?
Who was her mother?
Had she a sister?
Had she a brother?
Or was there a dearer one
Still, and a nearer one
Yet, than all other?

Alas! for the rarity
Of Christian charity
Under the sun!
Oh, it was pitiful!
Near a whole city full,
Home she had none.

Sisterly, brotherly,
Fatherly, motherly
Feelings had changed;
Love, by harsh evidence,
Thrown from its eminence;
Even God's providence
Seeming estranged.

Where the lamps quiver
So far in the river,
With many a light
From window and casement,
From garret to basement,
She stood, with amazement,
Houseless by night.

The bleak wind of March
Made her tremble and shiver,
But not the dark arch,
Or the black flowing river:
Mad from life's history,
Glad to death's mystery
Swift to be hurl'd —
Anywhere, anywhere
Out of the world!
In she plunged boldly,
No matter how coldly
The rough river ran,—
Over the brink of it,
Picture it, think of it,
Dissolute man!
Lave in it, drink of it,
Then, if you can!

Take her up tenderly,
Lift her with care,—
Fashion'd so slenderly,
Young, and so fair!

Ere her limbs frigidly
Stiffen too rigidly,
Decently,—kindly,—
Smooth and compose them;
And her eyes, close them,
Staring so blindly!

Dreadfully staring
Through muddy impurity,
As when with the daring
Last look of despairing
Fixed on futurity.

Perishing gloomily,
Spurred by contumely,
Cold inhumanity,
Burning insanity,
Into her rest.
Cross her hands humbly,
As if praying dumbly,
Over her breast!
Owning her weakness,
Her evil behavior,
And leaving, with meekness,
Her sins to her Saviour!

The vigor of this poem is no less remarkable than its pathos. The versification, although carrying the fanciful to the very verge of the fantastic, is nevertheless admirably adapted to the wild insanity which is the thesis of the poem.

Among the minor poems of Lord Byron is one which has never received from the critics the praise which it undoubtedly deserves:

Though the day of my destiny's over,
And the star of my fate hath declined,
Thy soft heart refused to discover
The faults which so many could find;
Though thy soul with my grief was acquainted,
It shrunk not to share it with me,
And the love which my spirit hath painted
It never hath found but in thee.
Then when nature around me is smiling,
   The last smile which answers to mine,
I do not believe it beguiling,
   Because it reminds me of thine;
And when winds are at war with the ocean,
   As the breasts I believed in with me,
If their billows excite an emotion,
   It is that they bear me from thee.

Though the rock of my last hope is shivered,
   And its fragments are sunk in the wave,
Though I feel that my soul is delivered
   To pain — it shall not be its slave.
There is many a pang to pursue me:
   They may crush, but they shall not contemn;
They may torture, but shall not subdue me:
   'Tis of thee that I think — not of them.

Though human, thou didst not deceive me,
   Though woman, thou didst not forsake,
Though loved, thou forborest to grieve me,
   Though slandered, thou never couldst shake;
Though trusted, thou didst not disclaim me,
   Though parted, it was not to fly,
Though watchful, 't was not to defame me,
   Nor mute, that the world might belie.
Yet I blame not the world, nor despise it,
Nor the war of the many with one:
If my soul was not fitted to prize it,
'T was folly not sooner to shun;
And if dearly that error hath cost me,
And more than I once could foresee,
I have found that, whatever it lost me,
It could not deprive me of thee.

From the wreck of the past, which hath perished,
Thus much I at least may recall,
It hath taught me that which I most cherished,
Deserved to be dearest of all:
In the desert a fountain is springing,
In the wide waste there still is a tree,
And a bird in the solitude singing,
Which speaks to my spirit of thee.

Although the rhythm, here, is one of the most difficult,
the versification could scarcely be improved. No nobler
theme ever engaged the pen of poet. It is the soul-elevating idea that no man can consider himself entitled
to complain of fate, while in his adversity he still retains
the unwavering love of woman.

From Alfred Tennyson — although in perfect sincerity
I regard him as the noblest poet that ever lived — I
have left myself time to cite only a very brief specimen.
I call him and think him the noblest of poets, — not
because the impressions he produces are, at all times, the most profound; not because the poetical excitement which he induces is, at all times, the most intense; but because it is, at all times, the most ethereal, in other words, the most elevating and the most pure. No poet is so little of the earth, earthy. What I am about to read is from his last long poem, "The Princess":

Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean!
Tears from the depth of some divine despair
Rise in the heart and gather to the eyes,
In looking on the happy Autumn fields,
And thinking of the days that are no more.

Fresh as the first beam glittering on a sail
That brings our friends up from the underworld,
Sad as the last which reddens over one
That sinks with all we love below the verge,—
So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more.

Ah! sad and strange as in dark summer dawns
The earliest pipe of half-awaken'd birds
To dying ears, when unto dying eyes
The casement slowly grows a glimmering square,—
So sad, so strange, the days that are no more.

Dear as remember'd kisses after death,
And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feign'd
On lips that are for others; deep as love,
Deep as first love, and wild with all regret.
O Death in Life! the days that are no more.

Thus, although in a very cursory and imperfect manner, I have endeavored to convey to you my conception of the Poetic Principle. It has been my purpose to suggest that, while this principle itself is, strictly and simply, the human aspiration for supernal beauty, the manifestation of the principle is always found in *an elevating excitement of the soul*, quite independent of that passion which is the intoxication of the heart, or of that truth which is the satisfaction of the reason; for, in regard to passion, alas! its tendency is to degrade rather than to elevate the soul. Love, on the contrary,—Love, the true, the divine Eros, the Uranian as distinguished from the Dionæan Venus,—is unquestionably the purest and truest of all poetical themes. And in regard to Truth, if, to be sure, through the attainment of a truth we are led to perceive a harmony where none was apparent before, we experience at once the true poetical effect; but this effect is referrible to the harmony alone, and not in the least degree to the truth which merely served to render the harmony manifest.

We shall reach, however, more immediately a distinct conception of what the true poetry is by mere reference to a few of the simple elements which induce in
the poet himself the true poetical effect. He recognizes the ambrosia which nourishes his soul, in the bright orbs that shine in Heaven, in the volutes of the flower, in the clustering of low shrubberies, in the waving of the grain-fields, in the slanting of tall, eastern trees, in the blue distance of mountains, in the grouping of clouds, in the twinkling of half-hidden brooks, in the gleaming of silver rivers, in the repose of sequestered lakes, in the star-mirroring depths of lonely wells. He perceives it in the songs of birds, in the harp of Æolus, in the sighing of the night-wind, in the repining voice of the forest, in the surf that complains to the shore, in the fresh breath of the woods, in the scent of the violet, in the voluptuous perfume of the hyacinth, in the suggestive odor that comes to him, at eventide, from far-distant, undiscovered islands, over dim oceans, illimitable and unexplored. He owns it in all noble thoughts, in all unworldly motives, in all holy impulses, in all chivalrous, generous, and self-sacrificing deeds. He feels it in the beauty of woman,—in the grace of her step, in the lustre of her eye, in the melody of her voice, in her soft laughter, in her sigh, in the harmony of the rustling of her robes. He deeply feels it in her winning endearments, in her burning enthusiasms, in her gentle charities, in her meek and devotional endurance; but above all, ah! far above all, he kneels
to it, he worships it in the faith, in the purity, in the strength, in the altogether divine majesty of her love.

Let me conclude by the recitation of yet another brief poem, one very different in character from any that I have before quoted. It is by Motherwell, and is called "The Song of the Cavalier." With our modern and altogether rational ideas of the absurdity and impiety of warfare, we are not precisely in that frame of mind best adapted to sympathize with the sentiments, and thus to appreciate the real excellence of the poem. To do this fully, we must identify ourselves, in fancy, with the soul of the old cavalier.

Then mounte, then mounte, brave gallants all,
And don your helmes amaine!
Deathe's couriers, Fame and Honor, call
Us to the field againe.
No shrewish teares shall fill our eye
When the sword-hilt's in our hand;
Heart-whole we'll part, and no whit sighe
For the fayrest of the land.
Let piping swaine and craven wight
Thus weepe and puling crye:
Our business is like men to fight,
And hero-like to die.
THE PHILOSOPHY OF COMPOSITION.

CHARLES DICKENS, in a note now lying before me, alluding to an examination I once made of the mechanism of "Barnaby Rudge," says: "By the way, are you aware that Godwin wrote his 'Caleb Williams' backward? He first involved his hero in a web of difficulties, forming the second volume, and then, for the first, cast about him for some mode of accounting for what had been done."

I cannot think this the precise mode of procedure on the part of Godwin—and indeed what he himself acknowledges is not altogether in accordance with Mr. Dickens's idea—but the author of "Caleb Williams" was too good an artist not to perceive the advantage derivable from at least a somewhat similar process. Nothing is more clear than that every plot, worth the name, must be elaborated to its dénouement before anything be attempted with the pen. It is only with the dénouement constantly in view that we can give a plot its indispensable air of consequence, or causation, by making the incidents, and espe-
cially the tone, at all points, tend to the development of the intention.

There is a radical error, I think, in the usual mode of constructing a story. Either history affords a thesis, or one is suggested by an incident of the day—or, at best, the author sets himself to work in the combination of striking events to form merely the basis of his narrative—designing, generally, to fill in, with description, dialogue, or autorial comment, whatever crevices of fact, or action, may, from page to page, render themselves apparent.

I prefer commencing with the consideration of an effect. Keeping originality always in view—for he is false to himself who ventures to dispense with so obvious and so easily attainable a source of interest—I say to myself, in the first place, "Of the innumerable effects, or impressions, of which the heart, the intellect, or (more generally) the soul is susceptible, what one shall I, on the present occasion, select?" Having chosen a novel, first, and secondly a vivid effect, I consider whether it can be best wrought by incident or tone—whether by ordinary incidents and peculiar tone, or the converse, or by peculiarity both of incident and tone; afterward looking about me (or rather within) for such combinations of event or tone as shall best aid me in the construction of the effect.

I have often thought how interesting a magazine paper might be written by any author who would—that is to say, who could—detail, step by step, the processes by
which any one of his compositions attained its ultimate point of completion. Why such a paper has never been given to the world I am much at a loss to say; but, perhaps, the autorial vanity has had more to do with the omission than any one other cause. Most writers—poets in especial—prefer having it understood that they compose by a species of fine frenzy—an ecstatic intuition—and would positively shudder at letting the public take a peep, behind the scenes, at the elaborate and vacillating crudities of thought—at the true purposes seized only at the last moment—at the innumerable glimpses of idea that arrived not at the maturity of full view—at the fully matured fancies discarded in despair as unmanageable—at the cautious selections and rejections—at the painful erasures and interpolations—in a word, at the wheels and pinions—the tackle for scene-shifting—the step-ladders and demon-traps—the cock's feathers, the red paint, and the black patches, which, in ninety-nine cases out of the hundred, constitute the properties of the literary histrio.

I am aware, on the other hand, that the case is by no means common, in which an author is at all in condition to retrace the steps by which his conclusions have been attained. In general, suggestions, having arisen pell-mell, are pursued and forgotten in a similar manner.

For my own part, I have neither sympathy with the repugnance alluded to, nor, at any time, the least difficulty in recalling to mind the progressive steps of any of
my compositions; and since the interest of an analysis, or reconstruction, such as I have considered a desideratum, is quite independent of any real or fancied interest in the thing analyzed, it will not be regarded as a breach of decorum on my part to show the modus operandi by which some one of my own works was put together. I select "The Raven" as most generally known. It is my design to render it manifest that no one point in its composition is referable either to accident or intuition—that the work proceeded, step by step, to its completion with the precision and rigid consequence of a mathematical problem.

Let us dismiss, as irrelevant to the poem, per se, the circumstance—or say the necessity—which, in the first place, gave rise to the intention of composing a poem that should suit at once the popular and the critical taste.

We commence, then, with this intention.

The initial consideration was that of extent. If any literary work is too long to be read at one sitting, we must be content to dispense with the immensely important effect derivable from unity of impression—for, if two sittings be required, the affairs of the world interfere, and everything like totality is at once destroyed. But since, seteris paribus, no poet can afford to dispense with anything that may advance his design, it but remains to be seen whether there is, in extent, any advantage to counterbalance the loss of unity which attends it. Here I say
no, at once. What we term a long poem is, in fact, merely a succession of brief ones—that is to say, of brief poetical effects. It is needless to demonstrate that a poem is such, only inasmuch as it intensely excites, by elevating, the soul; and all intense excitements are, through a psychical necessity, brief. For this reason, at least one-half of the "Paradise Lost" is essentially prose—a succession of poetical excitements interspersed, inevitably, with corresponding depresions—the whole being deprived, through the extremeness of its length, of the vastly important artistic element, totality, or unity, of effect.

It appears evident, then, that there is a distinct limit, as regards length, to all works of literary art—the limit of a single sitting—and that, although in certain classes of prose composition, such as "Robinson Crusoe" (demanding no unity), this limit may be advantageously overpassed, it can never properly be overpassed in a poem. Within this limit, the extent of a poem may be made to bear mathematical relation to its merit—in other words, to the excitement or elevation—again, in other words, to the degree of the true poetical effect which it is capable of inducing; for it is clear that the brevity must be in direct ratio of the intensity of the intended effect: this, with one proviso—that a certain degree of duration is absolutely requisite for the production of any effect at all.

Holding in view these considerations, as well as that degree of excitement which I deemed not above the popular,
while not below the critical, taste, I reached at once what I conceived the proper length for my intended poem—a length of about one hundred lines. It is, in fact, a hundred and eight.

My next thought concerned the choice of an impression, or effect to be conveyed: and here I may as well observe that, throughout the construction, I kept steadily in view the design of rendering the work universally appreciable. I should be carried too far out of my immediate topic were I to demonstrate a point upon which I have repeatedly insisted, and which, with the poetical, stands not in the slightest need of demonstration—the point, I mean, that Beauty is the sole legitimate province of the poem. A few words, however, in elucidation of my real meaning, which some of my friends have evinced a disposition to misrepresent. That pleasure which is at once the most intense, the most elevating, and the most pure, is, I believe, found in the contemplation of the beautiful. When, indeed, men speak of Beauty, they mean, precisely, not a quality, as is supposed, but an effect—they refer, in short, just to that intense and pure elevation of soul—not of intellect or of heart—upon which I have commented, and which is experienced in consequence of contemplating "the beautiful." Now I designate Beauty as the province of the poem, merely because it is an obvious rule of Art that effects should be made to spring from direct causes—that objects should be attained through means
best adapted for their attainment—no one as yet having been weak enough to deny that the peculiar elevation alluded to is most readily attained in the poem. Now the object Truth, or the satisfaction of the intellect, and the object Passion, or the excitement of the heart, are, although attainable, to a certain extent, in poetry, far more readily attainable in prose. Truth, in fact, demands a precision, and Passion a homeliness (the truly passionate will comprehend me) which are absolutely antagonistic to that Beauty which, I maintain, is the excitement or pleasurable elevation of the soul. It by no means follows from anything here said, that passion, or even truth, may not be introduced, and even profitably introduced, into a poem—for they may serve in elucidation, or aid the general effect, as do discords in music, by contrast—but the true artist will always contrive, first, to tone them into proper subservience to the predominant aim, and, secondly, to envail them, as far as possible, in that Beauty which is the atmosphere and the essence of the poem.

Regarding, then, Beauty as my province, my next question referred to the tone of its highest manifestation—and all experience has shown that this tone is one of sadness. Beauty of whatever kind, in its supreme development, invariably excites the sensitive soul to tears. Melancholy is thus the most legitimate of all the poetical tones. The length, the province, and the tone being thus determined, I betook myself to ordinary induction, with the
view of obtaining some artistic piquancy which might serve me as a key-note in the construction of the poem—some pivot upon which the whole structure might turn. In carefully thinking over all the usual artistic effects, or more properly points, in the theatrical sense, I did not fail to perceive immediately that no one had been so universally employed as that of the refrain. The universality of its employment sufficed to assure me of its intrinsic value, and spared me the necessity of submitting it to analysis. I considered it, however, with regard to its susceptibility of improvement, and soon saw it to be in a primitive condition. As commonly used, the refrain, or burden, not only is limited to lyric verse, but depends for its impression upon the force of monotone, both in sound and thought. The pleasure is deduced solely from the sense of identity—of repetition. I resolved to diversify, and so heighten the effect, by adhering, in general, to the monotone of sound, while I continually varied that of thought: that is to say, I determined to produce continuously novel effects by the variation of the application of the refrain—the refrain itself remaining, for the most part, unvaried.

These points being settled, I next bethought me of the nature of my refrain. Since its application was to be repeatedly varied, it was clear that the refrain itself must be brief, for there would have been an insurmountable difficulty in frequent variations of application in any sen-
tence of length. In proportion to the brevity of the sentence, would, of course, be the facility of the variation. This led me at once to a single word as the best refrain.

The question now arose as to the character of the word. Having made up my mind to a refrain, the division of the poem into stanzas was, of course, a corollary: the refrain forming the close to each stanza. That such a close, to have force, must be sonorous and susceptible of protracted emphasis, admitted no doubt: and these considerations inevitably led me to the long o as the most sonorous vowel, in connection with r as the most producible consonant.

The sound of the refrain being thus determined, it became necessary to select a word embodying this sound, and at the same time in the fullest possible keeping with that melancholy which I had predetermined as the tone of the poem. In such a search it would have been absolutely impossible to overlook the word "Nevermore." In fact, it was the very first which presented itself.

The next desideratum was a pretext for the continuous use of the one word "nevermore." In observing the difficulty which I at once found in inventing a sufficiently plausible reason for its continuous repetition, I did not fail to perceive that this difficulty arose solely from the pre-assumption that the word was to be so continuously or monotonously spoken by a human being—I did not fail to perceive, in short, that the difficulty lay in the
reconciliation of this monotony with the exercise of reason on the part of the creature repeating the word. Here, then, immediately arose the idea of a non-reasoning creature capable of speech; and, very naturally, a parrot, in the first instance, suggested itself, but was superseded forthwith by a raven, as equally capable of speech, and infinitely more in keeping with the intended tone.

I had now gone so far as the conception of a raven—the bird of ill omen—monotonously repeating the one word, "Nevermore," at the conclusion of each stanza, in a poem of melancholy tone, and in length about one hundred lines. Now, never losing sight of the object supremeness, or perfection, at all points, I asked myself—"Of all melancholy topics, what, according to the universal understanding of mankind, is the most melancholy?" Death—was the obvious reply. "And when," I said, "is this most melancholy of topics most poetical?" From what I have already explained at some length, the answer, here also, is obvious—"When it most closely allies itself to Beauty. The death, then, of a beautiful woman is, unquestionably, the most poetical topic in the world—and equally is it beyond doubt that the lips best suited for such topic are those of a bereaved lover."

I had now to combine the two ideas, of a lover lamenting his deceased mistress, and a raven continuously repeating the word "Nevermore." I had to combine these,
bearing in mind my design of varying, at every turn, the application of the word repeated; but the only intelligible mode of such combination is that of imagining the raven employing the word in answer to the queries of the lover. And here it was that I saw at once the opportunity afforded for the effect on which I had been depending—that is to say, the effect of the variation of application. I saw that I could make the first query propounded by the lover, the first query to which the raven should reply "Nevermore;" that I could make this first query a commonplace one, the second less so, the third still less, and so on—until at length the lover—startled from his original nonchalance by the melancholy character of the word itself, by its frequent repetition, and by a consideration of the ominous reputation of the fowl that uttered it—is at length excited to superstition, and wildly propounds queries of a far different character—queries whose solution he has passionately at heart—propounds them, half in superstition and half in that species of despair which delights in self-torture—propounds them not altogether because he believes in the prophetic or demoniac character of the bird (which, reason assures him, is merely repeating a lesson learned by rote), but because he experiences a frenzied pleasure in so modeling his questions as to receive from the expected "Nevermore" the most delicious because the most intolerable of sorrow. Perceiving the opportunity thus afforded me—or, more strictly, thus forced upon me

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in the progress of the construction—I first established in mind the climax, or concluding query, that query to which "Nevermore" should be in the last place an answer—that query in reply to which this word "Nevermore" should involve the utmost conceivable amount of sorrow and despair.

Here then the poem may be said to have its beginning—at the end, where all works of art should begin—for it was here, at this point of my preconsiderations, that I first put pen to paper in the composition of the stanza:

"Prophet," said I, "thing of evil! prophet still if bird or devil! By that heaven that bends above us—by that God we both adore, Tell this soul with sorrow laden, if within the distant Aidenn, It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the angels name Lenore— Clasp a rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore?"

Quoth the raven "Nevermore."

I composed this stanza, at this point, first, that, by establishing the climax, I might the better vary and graduate, as regards seriousness and importance, the preceding queries of the lover; and, secondly, that I might definitely settle the rhythm, the meter, and the length and general arrangement of the stanza—as well as graduate the stanzas which were to precede, so that none of them might surpass this in rhythmical effect. Had I been able, in the subsequent composition, to construct more vigorous stanzas, I should, without scruple, have purposely en-
fieeble them, so as not to interfere with the climacteric effect.

And here I may as well say a few words of the versification. My first object (as usual) was originality. The extent to which this has been neglected, in versification, is one of the most unaccountable things in the world. Admitting that there is little possibility of variety in mere rhythm, it is still clear that the possible varieties of meter and stanza are absolutely infinite; and yet, for centuries, no man, in verse, has ever done, or ever seemed to think of doing, an original thing. The fact is, that originality (unless in minds of very unusual force) is by no means a matter, as some suppose, of impulse or intuition. In general, to be found, it must be elaborately sought, and, although a positive merit of the highest class, demands in its attainment less of invention than negation.

Of course, I pretend to no originality in either the rhythm or meter of "The Raven." The former is trochaic; the latter is octometer acatalectic, alternating with heptameter catalectic repeated in the refrain of the fifth verse, and terminating with tetrameter catalectic. Less pedantically—the feet employed throughout (trochees) consist of a long syllable followed by a short; the first line of the stanza consists of eight of these feet—the second of seven and a half (in effect two-thirds)—the third of eight—the fourth of seven and a half—the fifth the same—the sixth three and a half. Now, each of these lines, taken individually,
has been employed before, and what originality "The Raven" has, is in their combination into stanzas; nothing even remotely approaching this combination has ever been attempted. The effect of this originality of combination is aided by other unusual, and some altogether novel effects arising from an extension of the application of the principles of rhyme and alliteration.

The next point to be considered was the mode of bringing together the lover and the raven, and the first branch of this consideration was the locale. For this the most natural suggestion might seem to be a forest, or the fields; but it has always appeared to me that a close circumscripti on of space is absolutely necessary to the effect of insulated incident; it has the force of a frame to a picture. It has an indisputable moral power in keeping concentrated the attention, and, of course, must not be confounded with mere unity of place.

I determined, then, to place the lover in his chamber—in a chamber rendered sacred to him by memories of her who had frequented it. The room is represented as richly furnished; this, in mere pursuance of the ideas I have already explained on the subject of Beauty, as the sole true poetical thesis.

The locale being thus determined, I had now to introduce the bird, and the thought of introducing him through the window was inevitable. The idea of making the lover suppose, in the first instance, that the flap-
ping of the wings of the bird against the shutter is a "tapping" at the door, originated in a wish to increase, by prolonging, the reader's curiosity, and in a desire to admit the incidental effect arising from the lover's throwing open the door, finding all dark, and thence adopting the half-fancy that it was the spirit of his mistress that knocked.

I made the night tempestuous, first, to account for the raven's seeking admission, and secondly, for the effect of contrast with the (physical) serenity within the chamber.

I made the bird alight on the bust of Pallas, also, for the effect of contrast between the marble and the plumage—it being understood that the bust was absolutely suggested by the bird—the bust of Pallas being chosen, first, as most in keeping with the scholarship of the lover, and, secondly, for the sonorousness of the word Pallas itself.

About the middle of the poem, also, I have availed myself of the force of contrast, with a view of deepening the ultimate impression. For example, an air of the fantastic, approaching as nearly to the ludicrous as was admissible, is given to the raven’s entrance. He comes in "with many a flirt and flutter."

Not the least obeisance made he—not a moment stopped or stayed he, But with mien of lord or lady, perched above my chamber door.

In the two stanzas which follow, the design is more obviously carried out:
Then this ebony bird beguiling my sad fancy into smiling
By the grave and stern decorum of the countenance it wore,
"Though thy crest be shorn and shaven, thou," I said, "art sure no
 craven,
Ghastly grim and ancient Raven wandering from the nightly shore—
Tell me what thy lordly name is on the Night’s Plutonian shore?"
Quoth the Raven "Nevermore."

Much I marveled this ungainly fowl to hear discourse so plainly,
Though its answer little meaning—little relevancy bore;
For we cannot help agreeing that no living human being
Ever yet was blessed with seeing bird above his chamber door—
Bird or beast upon the sculptured bust above his chamber door,
With such name as "Nevermore."

The effect of the dénouement being thus provided for, I
immediately drop the fantastic for a tone of the most pro-
found seriousness; this tone commencing in the stanza
directly following the one last quoted, with the line,

But the Raven, sitting lonely on that placid bust, spoke only, etc.

From this epoch the lover no longer jests; no longer sees
anything even of the fantastic in the raven’s demeanor.
He speaks of him as a "grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt,
and ominous bird of yore," and feels the "fiery eyes"
burning into his "bosom’s core." This revolution of
thought, or fancy, on the lover’s part, is intended to
induce a similar one on the part of the reader—to
bring the mind into a proper frame for the dénouement—
which is now brought about as rapidly and as directly as possible.

With the dénouement proper—with the raven's reply, "Nevermore," to the lover's final demand if he shall meet his mistress in another world—the poem, in its obvious phase, that of a simple narrative, may be said to have its completion. So far, everything is within the limits of the accountable—of the real. A raven, having learned by rote the single word "Nevermore," and having escaped from the custody of its owner, is driven at midnight, through the violence of a storm, to seek admission at a window from which a light still gleams—the chamber-window of a student, occupied half in poring over a volume, half in dreaming of a beloved mistress deceased. The casement being thrown open at the fluttering of the bird's wings, the bird itself perches on the most convenient seat out of the immediate reach of the student, who, amused by the incident and the oddity of the visitor's demeanor, demands of it, in jest and without looking for a reply, its name. The raven addressed, answers with its customary word, "Nevermore"—a word which finds immediate echo in the melancholy heart of the student, who, giving utterance loud to certain thoughts suggested by the occasion, is again startled by the fowl's repetition of "Nevermore." The student now guesses the state of the case, but is impelled, as I have before explained, by the human thirst for self-torture, and in part by superstition,
to propound such queries to the bird as will bring him, the lover, the most of the luxury of sorrow, through the anticipated answer "Nevermore." With the indulgence, to the extreme, of this self-torture, the narration, in what I have termed its first or obvious phase, has a natural termination, and so far there has been no overstepping of the limits of the real.

But in subjects so handled, however skillfully, or with however vivid an array of incident, there is always a certain hardness or nakedness, which repels the artistical eye. Two things are invariably required—first, some amount of complexity, or, more properly, adaptation; and secondly, some amount of suggestiveness—some under-current, however indefinite, of meaning. It is this latter, in especial, which imparts to a work of art so much of that richness (to borrow from colloquy a forcible term) which we are too fond of confounding with the ideal. It is the excess of the suggested meaning—it is the rendering this the upper instead of the under-current of the theme—which turns into prose (and that of the very flattest kind) the so-called poetry of the so-called transcendentalists.

Holding these opinions, I added the two concluding stanzas of the poem—their suggestiveness being thus made to pervade all the narrative which has preceded them. The under-current of meaning is rendered first apparent in the lines,
"Take thy beak from out my heart, and take thy form from off my door!"

Quoth the Raven "Nevermore!"

It will be observed that the words, "from out my heart," involve the first metaphorical expression in the poem. They, with the answer, "Nevermore," dispose the mind to seek a moral in all that has been previously narrated. The reader begins now to regard the raven as emblematical—but it is not until the very last line of the very last stanza, that the intention of making him emblematical of Mournful and Never-ending Remembrance is permitted distinctly to be seen:

And the Raven, never flitting, still is sitting, still is sitting,
On the pallid bust of Pallas just above my chamber door;
And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon's that is dreaming,
And the lamplight o'er him streaming throws his shadow on the floor;
And my soul from out that shadow that lies floating on the floor
Shall be lifted—nevermore."
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