

The National Period of American Literature

BY LORENZO SEARS, LIT. D.

Professor of American Literature in Brown University.

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This period was just closing when John P. Kennedy did for Poe what Willis had done for Bayard Taylor in bringing a writer of promise before the public. The young aspirant had met with both good and ill fortune from the start. He was born in Boston Jan. 19, 1809, but of parents who staid there only long enough to complete a theatrical engagement, wandering off on a southern circuit and both dying within two years, leaving three children to the compassion of such friends as they might happen to find.

Edgar was fortunate in being taken up by the wife of a well to do tradesman of Richmond, himself generous in his treatment of the precocious lad, who soon became the petted showpiece of the family. This was his second misfortune. Five years at an English school were followed by six more of preparation for the University of Virginia in a school at home. In both he was active in athletics, a good boxer and swimmer, with one rival in scholarship, prominent in debates and a versifier of repute, yet without intimate friends and inclined as a spoiled boy to be imperious, capricious and self-willed. At the university the pursuit of knowledge in those days was relieved by punch and card playing for money. His good fortune he managed to turn into evil by contracting gambling debts to the amount of about \$2,500, which Mr. Allan, his foster father, declined to pay, and, taking the wayward youth home at the end of the year, he placed him in his own counting room, from which Poe broke loose and went to Boston. He took with him as capital with which to begin life once more in that city at the age of 18 a bundle of short poems, which he persuaded another young man to print in a thin volume of 40 pages, entitled "Tamerlane and Other Poems, by a Bostonian." During two years in the army and six months at West Point the other poems, including a revision of "Tamerlane," were composed, to be published in 1831 in New York. Among these were "Helen," "The Doomed City," "The Sleeper," "Lenore" and "The Valley of Unrest," not all of them as they now appear, but a long stride ahead of his Boston book. The forthcoming power of his weird imagination and the enchantment of his unique diction begin to show themselves. He might truly say:

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.

And he suggests rather than describes:

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This is the dreamland, ghoul haunted and demon peopled, where his sad eye wanders, seeing shapes and visions which come only to one who is afflicted with intellectual delirium tremens. Then, again, he would catch glimpses of ærephic splendor and soar to the zenith in his song of "Israfel":

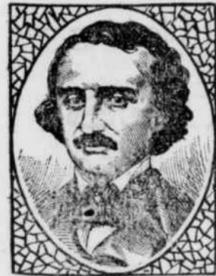
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The verse is the type of the poet himself, in whom aspiration was always contending with limitation in bitter strife, like Ormuzd and Ahriman, the good angel and the bad of the Persian myth, and sometimes it must have seemed to him like the single handed warfare of Michael the archangel against the devil.

There will always arise the temptation to join the party of accusers or of apologists so soon as the element of the personal life mingles with the literature which an author has created. How far the balance will list to one side or the other depends in such a case as this upon belief in heredity on the one hand and in the ability of the inheritor of evil bent and bias to strengthen the brain as he grows up and lives on. If, however, a moral weakness to resist be added to strong appetite in the inheritance, it would seem that the child should have large allowances made for an almost inevitable wreck. Perhaps in Poe's instance the lapses into inebriety were not so culpable as the seeming perversity with which he threw away those opportunities and advantages which would have gone far to retrieve a false start in life, for which he was no more responsible than for the good fortune of being born in Boston. Indeed throughout his checkered career he displayed remarkable facility for snubbing main chances. Nevertheless he contrived to live by his pen for 17 years. It is the work of that period more than his manner of life that is of present concern.



Poe.

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The stories themselves fulfill the promise of their titles. They reek with horrors. Delusions that prove fatal, remorse that follows involuntary crime, tombs that are prisons, vaults for those who cannot die, low hanging clouds, starless gloom, trees swaying in windless air, cold, slimy walls, vermin haunted dungeons, despair and death—these are the lurid points in a symphony of black and red. Sometimes, as in "The Domain of Arnheim," there is lavished a profusion of oriental color—melodies, odors, shrubberies, birds, flowers, silver streams, pinnacles and minarets flashing in red sunlight, the phantom architecture of fairies.

Poe has had numerous imitators, especially in the line of the detective story, who have shown at least how dangerous it is to walk the narrow way which he chose to tread and by his careful steps keeping himself from toppling over into the depths of ludicrous pathos. Such followers have not been born to be mystics, alchemists and jugglers in the black art, like Poe, in whose mind, as in the seven chambers of his Prospero's castellated abbey, there stalked a multitude of weird dreams in the carnival of "The Red Death." But if one wishes now and then to get far out of the highways of literature into the land which lies next to the unseen and the unknown, whither only once or twice in a century have gone and returned with even a plausible account of what they have seen, then this gloomy, wayward, but second sighted spirit will be the most satisfactory guide.

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X.—Edgar Allan Poe.

In 1844 a poem appeared which commended itself to many readers by the mystery and sadness with which it was filled, combined with a certain grotesqueness of fancy and singularity of phrase which caught the popular ear and pleased the imagination. Its title came to be associated so intimately with the author that "The Raven" was usually the next word after Poe. To this "Annabel Lee," "The Bells" and "The Lost Lenore" were sometimes added and other poems which, like himself, seemed to belong to some outer world far from the practicality of everyday life and from the usual definiteness of American literature in the first third of the century.

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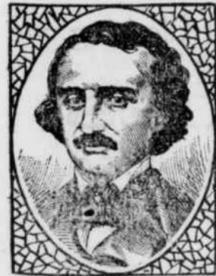
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WOMAN'S RELIEF

A really healthy woman has little pain or discomfort at the menstrual period. No woman needs to have any. Wine of Cardui will quickly relieve those smarting menstrual pains and the dragging head, back and side aches caused by falling of the womb and irregular menses.

WINE OF CARDUI

has brought permanent relief to 1,000,000 women who suffered every month. It makes the menstrual organs strong and healthy. It is the provision made by Nature to give women relief from the terrible aches and pains which blight so many homes.

GREENWOOD, LA., Oct. 14, 1900. I have been very sick for some time. I was taken with a severe pain in my side and could not get any relief until I tried a bottle of Wine of Cardui. Before I had taken all of it I was relieved. I feel it my duty to say that you have a wonderful medicine. MRS. M. A. YOUNG.

For address and literature, address giving symptoms, "The Ladies' Advisory Department," The Chattanooga Medicine Co., Chattanooga, Tenn.

"Winter Homes in Summer Lands."

The above is the title of an attractive booklet just issued by the Passenger Department of the Southern Railway. It is beautifully illustrated and fully describes the winter resorts of the South. A copy may be secured by sending a two-cent stamp to S. H. Hardwick, G. P. A., Washington, D. C.

Health and Beauty.

A poor complexion is usually the result of a torpid liver or irregular action of the bowels. Unless nature's refuse is carried off it will surely cause impure blood. Pimples, boils and other eruptions follow. This is nature's method of throwing off the poisons which the bowels failed to remove. DeWitt's Little Early Risers are world famous for remedying this condition. They stimulate the liver and promote regular and healthy action of the bowels but never cause griping, cramps or distress. Safe pills. Hare & Son, Benson Drug Co., Hood Bros., J. R. Ledbetter.

NOTICE!

Notice is hereby given that the charter of the Clayton Cotton Mills has been amended so that 1st. That the corporation can borrow money and secure the same by mortgage or otherwise, as the stockholders may direct. 2nd. Capital stock increased to \$120,000. 3rd. The word "seal" in a scroll to be written after the signature of each corporation. W. S. STEVENS, C. S. C.

Charm Lots for Sale!

Charm, Choice, central location in growing town of Roswell, N. C. Heart of Strawberry belt; last season shipments over 40,000 crates. Call on, or address, C. M. STEINMETZ, as above.

Christmas and New Year Excursion via The Southern Railway.

On account of the Christmas and New Year Holidays the Southern Railway has arranged to sell round trip tickets upon a basis of one and one-third first-class limited fares to all points south of the Ohio and Potomac and East of the Mississippi rivers; tickets to be placed on sale December 23rd, 24th and 25th at 4 a.m. on December 30th, 31st and January 1st and final return limit January 3rd, 1902. Tickets for students of schools and colleges can be purchased on December 18th, to 22nd, inclusive limited to January 8th, 1902, upon certificate from Principal, President or person in charge of the school. For further information please call on any Agent of the Southern Railway or write, R. L. VERNON, T. P. A., Charlotte, N. C.

J. M. CULP, T. M., W. A. TURK, A. P. T. M., S. H. HARDWICK, G. P. A., Washington, D. C.

NOTICE!

By virtue of authority contained in a mortgage deed executed by W. E. Lee and wife, Martha Lee, to Ben Hudson February 16, 1901, which mortgage deed has been duly transferred to Charles F. Neighbors and registered in Book U, No. 7, page 510 in the Register's office in Smithfield, I shall sell at auction for cash at the court house door in Smithfield, N. C., on Monday, the 6th day of January, 1902, the following real property: One town lot in Benson, N. C., beginning at a stake in street at a ditch and runs N 3 E 50 feet to a stake in M. C. Benson's line thence S 70 W 70 feet to a stake at street in M. C. Benson's line at a ditch; thence as said ditch N 53 W 14 feet to the beginning, containing a fractional part of an acre. Second Tract—Being part of the tract or parcel of land conveyed to J. J. Jernigan, deceased, by his father, Jesse I. Jernigan, by deed dated October 4th, 1882, and duly recorded in the Registry of Johnston County, in Book B, No. 8, page 520, and thereafter conveyed by the said Jesse Jernigan to Cornelia A. Jernigan and J. J. Jernigan, her husband, by deed dated January 5th, 1893, and registered in Book M, No. 4, page 260, Register's office of Johnston County, N. C., and described as follows: Second Tract—Being part of the tract or parcel of land conveyed to J. J. Jernigan, deceased, by his father, Jesse I. Jernigan, by deed dated October 4th, 1882, and registered in the Registry of Johnston County, in Book B, No. 8, page 520, and thereafter conveyed by the said Jesse Jernigan to Cornelia A. Jernigan and J. J. Jernigan, her husband, by deed dated January 5th, 1893, and registered in Book M, No. 4, page 260, Register's office of Johnston County, N. C., and described as follows: Second Tract—Being part of the tract or parcel of land conveyed to J. J. Jernigan, deceased, by his father, Jesse I. 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