

# The Torch-Light.

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VARIETY IS THE SPICE OF LIFE, THAT GIVES IT ALL ITS FLAVOR.

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## A Petition.

Father, upon thy holy name,  
I call with hope and trust;  
I ask not wreaths of gorgeous fame,  
But a heart unstained by lust.  
Glittering gold and earthly power,  
I would not seek to win,  
Their charms soon fade like the flower,  
And leave the soul exposed to sin.  
I only ask that virtue's light  
May steadily burn within my breast,  
And cheer me 'mid the gloomy night  
With tales of holy peace and rest.

File flattery, with its deadly sting,  
Will no joy to my mind impart,  
But radiant love will ever cling  
Like fry round my trusting heart.  
Let fate so tender, soft and sweet,  
Wait her fragrance o'er my life,  
And let submission calm and meek  
Control me 'mid the storm and strife;  
And let my weary longings cease,  
And my prayer be heard by Thee above,  
And let my soul from sin find full release,  
In the glory of Thy holy love.

EDGAR ALLEN POE.

BY OTTMAR H. ROTHACKER.

In all the history of literature there has never lived an author who has been placed more completely under the ban of society than Edgar Allen Poe. Every one of his bad qualities—his ambition, his hatred of his literary contemporaries, his vacillating conduct—has been singled out and exposed in every light that could make it more hideous than it really was. In this respect Poe is almost alone. Richard Savage had a sturdy apologist in Dr. Johnson. The vices of Lord Byron were deprived of much of their repelling influence by the halo of mock heroism that surrounded him. Coleridge, although he left the support of his family and himself to his friends; although he was a victim of the opium habit, and, according to his estimable biographer, Cortle, used every subterfuge, however small or mean, to obtain his favorite drug, has been defended and excused.

Poe, on the contrary, has been followed with abuse and contumely. To judge from the reminiscences of him that have appeared in print, those who knew him seemed to think that the most interesting matter that they could furnish the public in regard to the poet, would be a ject letters acknowledging his indebtedness to them for past favors, and begging the loan of five dollars. The entire disregard for common decency that has been displayed by his enemies has acted in a manner which they did not look for—it covered Poe with disgrace it is true, but it re-acted on those who satisfied their petty spite by flinging filth upon his grave.

I shall not attempt to give anything like an account of Poe's career. Falsehood is so plentifully blended with truth in the published data respecting him that it is almost impossibility to distinguish between them. Suffice it to say that he was born in Baltimore in 1811, and was adopted by a wealthy Virginian gentleman named Allen, from whom he took one of his given names. Poe came of a highly respected family, but his father had been disinherited and disowned by his relatives for an imprudent marriage with an actress. He visited England when young, received a classical education, and was sent to West Point. While there, he published a volume of juvenile poems under the name of "Al Arad," which were remarkable, to say the least. They displayed the first drawing of that originality and rhythmic which distinguished his later and maturer productions. Every account of his younger days represents him as wild and intractable,

but the authorities are doubtful, and his earlier life may be said to be wrapped in obscurity.

A quarrel with his benefactor compelled him to rely upon his own resources, and he entered the field of literature to gain fame and—which was of more importance to him then—bread and butter. His first appearance in the role of Bohemian was a competitor for two prizes which had been offered by a Southern magazine for the best story and poem. The story he sent was "MS Found in a Bottle," and it won the prize. He also forwarded a poem, which the committee, of whom John P. Kennedy, the author of "Horseshoe Robinson" and "Swallow Barn," was a member, decided was the best, but they refused to award both prizes to one author. When the name of the successful competitor was announced, there came forth a slender young man, with a face haggard and ghastly through want and hunger; and a threadbare coat to hide the lack of a shirt, and boots through whose torn uppers could be seen the stockingless feet, announced himself as Edgar Allen Poe. Dr. Kennedy immediately felt an interest in him, and procured him some literary employment, with which he succeeded in keeping soul and body together. From that time his career was a strange blending of shine and shadow. He edited the "Southern Literary Messenger," "Burton's Gentleman's Magazine," and wrote literary criticisms for the "New York Mirror," and once controlled a periodical of his own, contributing tales, sketches and poems, meanwhile to "Graham's" and others magazines. His life is not pleasant reading. It is a sad, weary story of a struggle against the temptations of the wine cup and despair. Pursued by poverty and want, denied his legitimate place in literature, scorned by men over whom he stood intellectually head and shoulders, selling the productions of his pen for the wherewithal to keep the gnant wolf, starvation, from his door; it is a strange, dark picture. The happiness of his wedded life, and the picture that Willis draws of him while in the "Mirror" office, are the only gleams of sunshine that relieve the shadow of fate that hung over his life. The reader turns with a sigh of relief from the exaggerated story of dissipation that Griswold tells, to the account of the pale-faced, scholarly student, who came to the "Mirror" office day after day always punctual and faithful to his duties, and drawing every one to him by his uniform courtesy and kindness.

The character of Poe has been entirely misunderstood. There is no American author of his rank of whom so little is known, and consequently, people have gathered from a casual reading of his tales and poems an erroneous and ridiculous idea of him, both as an author and as a man. He has been considered as a sort of literary Mephistopheles; and as one who stood aloof from society and the world, knowing no social enjoyments, and with no companions but his own fearful thoughts. He stands apart from his contemporaries, gloomy and alone. He has been charged with every dishonorable action that a man could possibly commit, and his industrious calumniator supplied that portion of his life of which so little is known, and gathered the unreliable and distorted stories of his habits which passed from mouth to mouth and had their foundation in malice and ignorance.

The only way by which a correct estimate of his character may

be obtained, is to judge him by the standard of humanity by which every man is judged. He was ambitious and poor. His ambition pushed him on and his poverty held him back. He saw men who were his inferiors in everything, go above him and here lies the root of the bitter onslaughts upon his contemporaries, which so effectually estranged him from the literary men of the day. Possessing a very delicate organization, this isolation and ostracism from the existing literary circles must have had a powerful effect upon him. His spirit was essentially combative, and he went through life hating all men, and with every man's hand raised against him. His perfections were many, but if ever there lived a man over whom the mantle of palliation could be flung, Edgar Allen Poe was the man. His whole life was shaped by circumstances. Naturally high-tempered and wild, his childhood was not calculated to temper his imperfections. He was indulged in every whim, and ruined by the mistaken kindness of his benefactor. Had he been in good circumstances, many of the dishonorable actions which are attributed to him could not have taken place.

His death was as tragic as his life. He had made resolutions of reform, and resolutely lived up to them for a time. Life was again opening to his gaze with some of its former loveliness. Olden hopes and olden dreams were coming back to him, and once more a bright future appeared before his eyes. But, alas for poor humanity, the world is full of temptations and pitfalls. In September, 1849, while on the way to fill an engagement in a Northern State, he stopped for a few hours in Baltimore, and, by chance, met some of his West Point friends. They invited him to a supper, and in the midst of the revel the first glass passed his lips. That night, while wondering around the streets insane with liquor, he was attacked and beaten and left insensible. He was found and carried to the hospital, where he died as he had lived—alone and friendless.

What enigmas the lives of great men are. What a strange mixture of grandeur and littleness. Think of Bacon accepting a bride! Of Marlow killed in a pot-house fight! Of Byron and his wild career.

There is a story told by Hawthorne in one of his earlier works, of a stone that stands in a valley at the foot of the White Mountains, and which, at a distance, resembles the face of a dignified old man, but on a nearer approach it does not differ materially from the other rocks about it. So are the lives of too many of the literary giants of the world. We look up to them when a long vista of years separate us from them, and they appear dignified and noble; but go nearer, study their lives and their motives, and we find, far too often, that they are but as those about them.—*The South.*

Intemperance is largely on the increase in Glasgow, Scotland and the authorities are very much troubled about it. Saturday night thousands of factory hands—men and women—became outrageously drunk, and remain in that condition over Sunday.

An Ohio man has been converted to temperance ninety-eight times, and says he will go up to a hundred or die.

Let friendship creep gently to a height; if it rush to it, it may soon run itself out of breath.

## Shakspear's Tempest.

Prospero is a man, whose faith in humanity has been greatly shaken, since his brother Sebastian has robbed him of his dukedom. He now lives upon a lonely island where he practices his art as a magician; the spirits of the air are at his command. His chief servant is Ariel, who was once confined in the trunk of a tree, and because he was liberated by Prospero, he was ever afterwards subjected to obey all his behests. Prospero is learned and great, yet much embittered by the treachery of his friends. Miranda is one of those pure, sweet characters we seldom find in real life. She is like a modest violet, whose blue eyes peep forth from its mossy bed in wonder; everything in nature charms her. She is glad in the sunshine, reverent in the storm, loving life for the pleasure of the bright days it brings. She is as unconscious of her power to please as the spring flowers growing wild by shady brooks and on the meadows. She has never seen any human being, except her father and Caliban, who is a hideously ugly dwarf. No feelings deeper than filial affection have yet disturbed her mind or stirred her heart; but how beautifully does her character, like a rose, disclose its hidden perfume and reveal true womanhood, when Prince Ferdinand appears, worn, sick and shipwrecked! First we see her delight at his appearance, mistaking him for a God, because he is of such a good presence. Then curiosity deepens into sympathy, as she discovers he is human and suffering; then sympathy changes into real distress, as her father unkindly imprisons him. After she has seen him oftener, she learns to love him; wishes that she might work for him; laments the cruelty of her father, and in many ways, shows him her love, not knowing or assuming the pretended modesty, which veils the only thing that is good, true and beautiful in life. How naturally does she weep at what she deems her unworthiness, when every tear reflects in its crystal depths the worth and purity of her heart. Then Ferdinand is such a noble specimen of a man! He loves Miranda so entirely and so devotedly! Although he has been an accomplished courtier; though he has seen ladies of beauty, wit and wealth, some defect would mar the harmony of their characters. The ladies at his father's court had sought in vain to win his admiration; in vain had they donned their costly attire, sparkled with gems of great price, wreathed their lips in sweet smiles, and thrown bewitching glances from their soft dark eyes. But in Miranda he sees all charms united, and she has won, without an effort, what so many coveted in vain! In their game of chess, how well does he display man's propensity to dictate and conquer, and she to admire and love his superior wisdom, though it be exercised against her. NANNIE.

A letter-writer says Grace Greenwood is a lovely woman of thirty. Well, yes, Grace must be all of thirty by this time, because she was twenty-seven about twenty-five years ago.

A Saratoga lady, aged sixty, is about to be married to her widowed son-in-law, aged thirty. Evidently the poor man will never be permitted to go out of the family.

Did you ever notice that a borrowed umbrella either turns inside out as soon as opened, or has a hole in the top about the size of a pie plate!

## FRESH BERRIES.

Natural slippers—eels.  
Mud is the father of dust.

A strong man—a shop-lifter.  
The flower of the field—Wheat.  
"Shear" nonsense—Clipping jokes.

Natural cooking—boiling of the blood.  
The last thing a man should be out of—Temper.

Never waste your time; waste somebody else's.

A sweet article for the toilet—a honey-comb.

Autumn leaves fall to cover the grave of summer.

A prickly pair—a porcupine and a hedgehog.

Boston had forty-four marriages last week. Oh! sugar.

Get atop of your troubles and they are half cured.

An affair of the heart—The circulation of the blood.

We want a fire engine. Suppose a candle should explode!

Which is the queerest of us two? Why you are the queerest.

A man cannot expect half a loaf when he loafs all the time.

Humility is the sweetest and fairest flower that groweth in the mind.

The apple Eve longed for and ate at last, must have been a pine-apple.

The Third term excitement is all foolishness. Why not let it Term-in-eight.

Mr. Pleasant Yell is a candidate for the Legislature in Texas. Howl he suit!

A Wisconsin hen has been taught to sing three tunes. Does the lay-zy thing set them herself!

There is an organist in Philadelphia named Thunder, but he doesn't seem to have made much noise in the world.

"A Swanton man sheared off his wife's locks for money to buy rum." A hair-ram-scarum fellow, evidently.

The Supreme Court of Ohio has just decided that sending a dun to a man on a postal card is unlawful—as well as saucy.

Duelling is becoming so prevalent in the Prussian army that an officer may pull a man's nose at noon and be dead before one o'clock.

A paper informs us that Elizabethtown, Indiana, is called Betsy for short. It is not the Bess's name they could have chosen for brevity.

The Cincinnati *Gazette* nominates Murat Halstead for mayor. Thus does aspiring Iceland cast its chill shadow over this great nationality.

## Insanity Caused by Flowers.

A young girl in Paris, named Marguerite Bellet, who had been unfortunate in a love affair, resolved to commit suicide. Before going to bed she filled her chamber with the most odorous flowers, and having completely closed the room, covered up her head and went to sleep. She was found in an unconscious state about noon the next day, and although by great medical skill she was recalled to life her reason had fled. She imagines that she has been transported to the kingdom of flowers, and has become a marigold. "I remember that I loved a butterfly," she murmurs, "but he has gone away."

## Sunshine and Shadow.

There are in the lives of all people periods of sunshine and shadow, light and darkness, pleasure and pain. Yet we launch our frail bark out upon the boisterous rolling waters of life, not thinking or seeming to have the slightest knowledge of that little cloud that is hovering on the horizon just ahead. Still we travel on and on, reveling in the captivating, transitory pleasures of this world, ignoring the presence of sorrow until it is actually too late to make any provision for the mighty trials that are beginning to beset us so awfully. That soothing sunshine that so effectually deprives us of our sorrow, lasts but for a time. A few short rambles over the green hills of peace; a few short journeys through the blooming valleys of pleasure; a few short rides upon the mighty surging deep, and a few lingering glances at the wondrous achievements of science and art, and the sunshine of our life all passes away like a flitting vision. Then comes the night-trial. The long dark shadows begin to flit around us and haunt us on every hand. There is no way that we can devise to elude them. They grow longer and darker, more dense and fearful in their aspect, until will screams of victory and triumph, they seem to rise up in every direction and assist each other in marking our destiny thus

That is life but a dream  
Of hidden joys and peace;  
As changeful as the flitting clouds,  
Whose rosiings never cease.

SILVER STAR.

Flat River, N. C.

Balsam.

Balsam is the greatest producer of raisins. Those styled Valencia raisins find great favor with all classes of English people. A few years ago a crop of twelve thousand tons, for the supply of the world, was considered large; now London receives twelve thousand tons out of a total of twenty thousand tons that are grown. These raisins also find a large market in the United States and Canada. The improvement in the article most observable of late years is that of removing the stalks before shipment. As no useful purpose has been found as yet for the stalks, they are generally burned. Muscatel, or table raisins, from Malaga, vary widely in quality. They are known as "layers," "bunch" and "loose" raisins, the best being picked from the stalk. This sort is largely used in America. The finest growth of Muscatel come to this country in decorated boxes, with colored paper and face edgings, increasing the expense of packing to the extent of \$1.25 per ton. The Sultan raisins, produced in Turkey, are cured in the sun, a light sprinkling of oil being employed to prevent the too great evaporation of the moisture, and also to assist in the preservation of the fruit when packed and shipped.

A dandy at the table remarked that he was sitting between two tailors. "Yes," said one of them, "and we have but one goose between us."

While crossing a ferry a little three-year-old was heard to exclaim as she saw a sailboat. "Oh, mamma! there's a boat with a bonnet on!"

How many people are busy in this world, gathering together a handful of thorns to sit upon.

Cicero said: "The pursuit of all things should be calm and tranquil. How about capturing fleas!"