

## EDGAR ALLAN POE.

The flawless literary workmanship, the balanced sentences which somehow are never monotonous, the perfect unity of plan and singleness of effect which are shown in a dozen of Poe's tales have never been surpassed. They may deal with utter impossibilities—but you never feel this while reading them. The intense horror never goes far enough to produce the revulsion of disbelief, the suggestion is always kept a suggestion; and when you reach the climax of "Ligeia" or "The Tell-Tale Heart," you feel that you have been an eye-witness to the terrors set forth. The only time Poe scores a failure is when he tries to be humorous; and then he scores very bad failures indeed. Humor implies sympathy with one's fellows, and the quality was very nearly left out of Poe's make up. He despised most of his contemporaries, and was totally indifferent to the rest. The only persons he ever loved were his cousin-wife and himself; and the second named passion began earlier and lasted longer than the first.

Leaving out the abortive "grotesques," Poe's tales, like ancient Gaul, may be divided into three parts. There are those which for want of a better word we must call the romances: "The Fall of the House of Usher," "The Pit and the Pendulum," "Ligeia," and many others. There are the studies of monomania; as "The Tell-Tale Heart" and "The Black Cat." There are the stories with a scientific basis: as "The Descent into the Maelstrom," "The Gold-Bug," and the three detective stories. These last have been the subject of many acrid and amusing debates. It is charged that Conan Doyle modeled Sherlock Holmes on the lines of Poe's Frenchman, Dupin; and that the whole spring of the tales whereof the cocaine-using Londoner is the hero may be found in Poe. I believe the charge to be equally true and unimportant. If one does please work in an acceptable fashion why should it be counted a reproach that he learned his trade under a competent workman? To my mind Poe has fewer greater claims on modern gratitude than that of being a literary grandfather to "The Five Orange Pips," "The Priory School," "The Hound of the Baskervilles," and "The Second Stain." I do not include "The Dancing Men." For this particular tale to be found in the possession of one who had read "The Gold-Bug" seems less a case of inheritance than of larceny.

The studies in monomania have never, I think, been equaled; not even by Maupassant. That bit in "The Tell-Tale Heart" which describes the long terror of the old man sitting up in bed, trying to persuade himself that the noise he had heard was not at his chamber door, is one of the most fiendishly perfect things of literature. But I believe that Poe reached the climax of his powers in his romances. "The Pit and the Pendulum" alone would have made the reputation of a lover author; the weird yet ordered horror of that tale haunted my boyhood dreams for months. Yet if I could save but one of Poe's works from destruction, that one would be "The Fall of the House of Usher." That is a tale as near to absolute perfection of its kind as human wit can either perform or appreciate. Study it over and over, pick it to pieces in anywise you will; the wonderful mastery is still there, showing ever brighter the longer you look.—Selected.

In how small a world that one lives whose sole thought is self, and whose measure of everything is the way in which it affects himself! And the worst of it is that in such a world the horizon contracts more and more as the days go by.

## THE SCOTTISH CHURCHES COMMISSION.

The Churches Commissioners have broken a long silence by issuing a memorandum giving effect to their last year's labors. The United Free Church have reason to be thankful that they have gone back on their last proposals, to allocate to the Free Church the college funds, from which the professors' salaries are paid, and have agreed to make up the £92,000 falling to the Free Church out of bursary and miscellaneous funds not essential to carrying on the United Free Church colleges. This will enable the vacancies at Edinburgh to be filled up. Large sums, amounting in all to over £42,000, are being allowed to the Free Church for the excess of their expenditure over income since 1900, and as interest on the capital allocated to them. The sum of £37,750 is allowed in respect of the legal expenses up to the end of 1907. This is, of course, in addition to that Church's judicial expenses in the original litigation, which, under the House of Lords' decision, fell on the United Free Church. Large as this sum is, it is understood to be about one-fourth less than the Free Church state they have expended on legal expenses. There is a very general feeling that the best thing the Commissioners can do in the interest of both Churches is to bring their labors to an end without much refining in matters of detail. The expenses of all parties came off the United Free Church, and the prolongation of the inquiry is more likely to augment the expenses than to reduce the amount allocated to the Free Church.—Correspondence British Weekly.

## A FOLK SONG.

By Jessie MacKay.

(The finest poem that has come out of New Zealand says Mr. A. G. Stephen, editor of the Bookfellow.)

I came to your town, my love,  
And you were away, away!  
I said: "She is with the Queen's maidens  
They tarry long at their play.  
They are stringing her words like pearls  
To throw to the Dukes and Earls."  
But O, the pity!  
I had but a morn of windy red  
To come to the town where you were bred  
And you were away, away!

I came to your town, my love,  
And you were away, away!  
I said, "She is with the mountain elves,  
And misty and fair as they.  
They are spinning a diamond net  
To cover her curls of jet."

But O, the pity!  
I had but a noon of searing heat  
To come to your town, my love, my  
sweet,  
And you were away, away!

I came to your town, my love,  
And you were away, away!  
I said, "She is with the pale white saints,  
And they tarry long to pray.  
They gave her a white lily-crown,  
And I fear she will never come down."  
But O, the pity!

I had but an even grey and wan  
To come to your town and plead as a  
man,  
And you were away, away!

Lord Castlereagh and Sir Thomas Romilly were the leaders of the bar in their day. They both died suicides. Wilberforce accounts for their aberration of intellect on the ground that they were unintermittent in their work, and they never rested on Sunday. "Poor fellow!" said Wilberforce, in regard to Castlereagh. "Poor fellow! it was non-observance of the Sabbath."

## NIGHT AND GOD.

And yet it seems so full of comfort and strength, the Night. In its great presence, our small sorrows creep away ashamed. The day has been so full of fret and care, and our hearts have been so full of bitter thoughts, and the world has seemed so hard and wrong to us. Then Night, like some great loving mother, gently lays her hand upon our fevered heads and turns our little tear-stained faces up to hers, and smiles; and though she does not speak, we know what she would say, and lay our hot, flushed cheek against her bosom, and the pain is gone. Night's heart is full of pity for us; she takes our hand in here, and the little world grows very small and very far away beneath us, and borne on her dark wings we pass for a moment into a mightier Presence than her own, and in the wondrous light of that great Presence all human life lies like a bark before us, and we know that Pain and Sorrow are but the angels of God.—Jerome K. Jerome.

## AN ARROW AT A VENTURE.

The minister had just finished a little opening talk to the children, preparatory to the morning service, when Mrs. Berkeley suddenly realized, with all the agony of a careful housewife, that she had forgotten to turn the gas off from the oven in which she had left a nicely cooked roast, all ready for the final reheating. Visions of a ruined dinner and a smoky kitchen roused her to immediate effort, and, borrowing a pencil from the young man in front, she scribbled a note. Just then her husband, an usher of the church, passed her pew. With a murmured "Hurry!" she thrust the note into his hand, and he, with an understanding nod, turned, passed up the aisle, and handed the note to the minister. Mrs. Berkeley saw the act in speechless horror, and shuddered as she saw the minister smilingly open the note and begin to read. But her expression of dismay was fully equalled by the look of amazement and wrath on the good man's face as he read the words: "Go home and turn off the gas!"

## MONTREAL.

The Rev. Peter A. Walker, of Maisonneuve Church, preached at the Garden-ville Avenue Church, last Sunday evening by appointment of Presbytery. He conferred with the managers of the church, after the service, on matters pertaining to the growth of the mission. The Rev. Dr. Amaron preached at Maisonneuve at the evening service.

A very encouraging meeting of Calvin Presbyterian Church was held last week when reports from all the organizations were read, showing a decided forward movement, particular credit for this state of affairs being due to the Ladies' Aid and Christian Endeavor Societies. Feeling references were made to the resignation of the pastor, the Rev. J. L. George, M.A., and resolutions were adopted, sympathizing with him in his illness, and expressing the earnest hope that his health would speedily return in all its fullness. The following officers were added to the present staff—To the board of management, Messrs. Chas. Paton, George Meldrum, P. Brookie; as trustees, Dr. Walter H. Smyth, Messrs. H. E. Hardisty and John Asborne; auditors Messrs. R. H. Brown and John Gow; treasurer, Mr. H. E. Hardisty.

Mr. H. R. Pickup, B.A., a young Knox College man, has been appointed assistant to Rev. Dr. Gilray, pastor of College Street Church, Toronto, at a salary of \$1,000 a year. He enters upon his duties in April.