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taking less than 80 per cent., P. A. Lind-
say, J. E. N., I. Moir, N. Wilson,
"Norma," "Betty," A Rural Student,
"Bede," G. D. S., H. M. S., L. Rout-
ledge, L. E. Roberts, M. F. H., "Country
Cousin," "A Friend."

To-day we give Poe's own version
(somewhat epitomized at the beginning)
of how he wrote The Raven. When The
Roundabout Club next appears, the
essays of the prizewinners will be given.

Poe's Description of How He Composed "The Raven."

The first portion of his explanation is
merely indicated here, as space will not per-
mit giving it in full. In it he states that he
conceived first the idea of writing a poem
that should be "universally appreciable,"
then decided: (1) Its length—This to be
not much over 100 lines or not more than
enough to be read at a single setting.
(2) The "impression"—This to be one of
beauty, such beauty as would make a
soul-impression, Poe considering beauty
the chief province of any poem. (3) The
"tone"—One of "melancholy," since he
considered melancholy to be "the highest
manifestation of beauty." "Melancholy,"
he says, "is the most legitimate of all the
poetical tones," since "beauty, of what-
ever kind, in its supreme development,
invariably excites the sensitive soul to
tears."

Having now settled the length, prov-
ince and tone of his poem, he next con-
sidered by what device piquancy might
be attained, and so thought of a "refrain,"
deciding upon the word "Nevermore," as
at once short, melancholy, and melodious.
The trouble was, however, to fit the con-
stant repetition of this word "Nevermore"
with the reasoning powers of a human
being. He perceived, in short, that it
could not be put into the mouth of a
human being, and so thought first of a
parrot, then of a raven as equally cap-
able of speech, and infinitely more in
keeping with the intended tone. At this
point we use his own words:

"I had now gone so far as the concep-
tion of a raven, the bird of ill-omen, mo-
notously repeating the one word 'Never-
more' at the conclusion of each stanza in
a poem of melancholy tone, and in length
about a hundred lines. Now, never los-
ing sight of the object—supremeness or
perfection at all points—I asked myself—
'Of all melancholy topics, what, according
to the universal understanding of man-
kind, 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 al-
ready explained, the answer is also here
obvious—'When it closely allies itself to
beauty; the death, then, of a beautiful
woman is unquestionably the most poet-
ical topic in the world, and equally is it
beyond doubt that the lips best suited
for such topics 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.' . . . 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. I saw that I could make the first
query propounded by the lover—the first
query to which the Raven should reply
'Nevermore'—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 pro-
pounds queries of a far different char-
acter—queries whose solution he has pas-
sionately 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 as-
sures him is merely repeating a lesson
learned by rote), but because he experi-
ences a frenzied pleasure in so modeling
his questions as to receive from the ex-
pected 'Nevermore' the most delicious be-
cause the most intolerable of sorrows.

[He here explains that, having arrived
in thought at this climax, he wrote the
climatic stanza—the one beginning "Pro-

phet!" said I, "thing of evil"—first, fit-
ting the others to it later.]

"The next point to be con-
sidered 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 sug-
gestion might seem to be a forest, or the
fields, but it has always appeared to me
that a close circumscription of space is
absolutely necessary to the effect of in-
sulated incident—it has the force of a
frame to a picture. . . . 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 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 in-
stance, that the flapping of the wings of
the bird against the shutter, is a 'tap-
ping' 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 admis-
sion, and, secondly, for the effect of con-
trast with the (physical) serenity within
the chamber.

"I made the bird alight on the bust of
Pallas, also for the effect of contrast be-
tween the marble and the plumage—the
bust of 'Pallas' being chosen, first, as
most in keeping with the scholarship of
the lover, and, secondly, for the sonor-
ousness of the word itself.

"About the middle of the poem, also,
I have availed myself of the force of con-
trast, with a view to deepening the ul-
timate 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.' In the
two stanzas which follow, the design is
more obviously carried out.

"The effect of the denouement
being thus provided for, I immediately
drop the fantastic for a tone of the most
profound seriousness—this tone commencing
with the line:

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

"From this speech the lover no longer
jests—no longer sees anything 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 in-
to a proper frame for the denouement
which is now brought about as rapidly
and as directly as possible.

"With the denouement 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—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 artistic 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 special, which imparts
to a work of art so much of that 'rich-
ness' which we are 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 cur-
rent of the theme—which turns into prose
(and that of the very flattest kind) the
so-called poetry of the so-called trans-
cendentalists.

"Holding these opinions, I added the
two concluding stanzas of the poem—their
suggestiveness being thus made to per-
vade all the narrative which has pre-
ceded them. The undercurrent of mean-
ing 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 Remem-
brance is permitted distinctly to be seen:

"And the Raven, never fitting, 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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A Cornish Carol.

By Robert Stephen Hawker.

Welcome that star in Judah's sky,
That voice o'er Bethlehem's palmy glen:
The lamp, far sages hailed on high,
The tones that thrilled the shepherd
men:

Glory to God in highest heaven!
Thus angels smote the echoing chord;
Glad tidings unto man forgiven!
Peace from the presence of the Lord!

Those voices from on high are mute;
The star the Wise Men saw is dim;
But Hope still guides the wanderer's foot,
And faith renews the angel-hymn:
Glory to God in loftiest heaven!
Touch with glad hand the ancient chord;
Good tidings unto man forgiven,
Peace from the presence of the Lord!

How poor are they that have not
patience!—Shakespeare.