THESIS

On

THE LIFE AND WORKS OF EDGAR ALLAN POE.

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OUTLINE.

Introduction.

Discussion.

1. Biographical Sketch.
2. Works.
   1. Poems.
      1. The Raven
      2. The Bells
      3. Annabel Lee.
      4. Lines to Helen
      5. Israfel
   2. Tales.
      1. The Oblong Box.
      3. Thou Art the Man.
      5. The Black Cat.
      6. The Murders in the Rue Morgue.

Conclusion.
Introduction.

Slowly and half-heartedly the people of America have come to atone for past neglect of a poet who, under painful circumstances, produced the most distinctive and original contributions to American literature. They realize that the follies of his unfortunate life can be put aside and the weight of criticism let to rest on his magnificent literary art.

Edgar Allan Poe is the most tragic figure in the history of our American literature and has proved to be also the most interesting. He is perhaps more widely known and more appreciated by the intelligent men of foreign nations than any other American writer. He was a great genius with a life full of sorrows and despair. He was a prodigal of wasted powers, the victim of cruel circumstances, of inherent evil propensities, with a certain majesty of nature inalienable in his moral squalor.

Poe's early biographers have misrepresented him because they did not understand him. Most of his critics have dealt with only the evil side of his life. His evil habits during the latter years of his life were due more to cruel fate than to a faulty character. The man writing under such adverse conditions, with starvation staring him in the face, and his affections daily blunted and betrayed could not have endured the strain if he had not had a constitution of iron. Under such a strain, it is no wonder that his health gave way and that he indulged in the dangerous help of stimulants.

Writers have believed that his strange stories came
from a distempered imagination in the intervals of degraded debauchery. This has proved to be untrue. Poe was entirely honest with his readers and no poems and romances were ever produced at greater expense of brain and spirit than his. His fantastic creations were produced by careful calculation, step by step, to a pre-arranged end. He carefully planned his desired effect which was always to impress the soul with horror, mystery and fear. In his writings he seemed to feel the terror of the unknown, the dark, the mysterious, the inexplicable; and these were the themes in which he delighted.

It is said that he was immoral; but his immorality has brought no disgrace upon the world since his writings, which represent him, are unstained by a single immoral sentiment.

Edgar Allan Poe is held in high esteem in Europe, especially in France where he is counted among the exceedingly rare foreigners who have become naturalized citizens of the French Republic of letters. His works are almost as familiar to all generations of Frenchmen since 1856 as those of any native writer. One Frenchman has called him "the most beautiful thing (la plus belle) which America has produced."

His work is in three groups: poetry, short stories, and criticisms. His poetry is of undeniable quality and of a character unlike that produced by any other writer.
His short stories are remarkable works of art and imagination; his criticisms intelligent, discriminating and free from prejudice.
The Life of Edgar Allan Poe.

January 19, 1809, is the date of the birth of the poet who has the name of being the most gifted and most unhappy of American men of letters. Edgar Allan Poe descended from a noble and honorable ancestry. His father was the son of General David Poe, the Revolutionary patriot whose name he bore. General Poe was a strong, decisive man. His strength came natural since his descent is traced through his father John Poe, who emigrated about 1745 from the northern part of Ireland and settled in Pennsylvania, to one of Cromwell's officers who received grants of land. On his mother's side, he is said to have been nephew to John MacBride who fought under Nelson at Copenhagen and became an Admiral of the Blue. He used his own scanty funds to help in the Revolution, and although no repayment was ever made, he was not the less devoted to his country. Even in 1814, when he was seventy-two years old, the old spirit was rekindled in active service as a volunteer in the battle of North Point against his old enemies, the British. He was an honest, vigorous, sensible man capable of worldly sacrifice. Young David Poe had been known as a promising student of law but abandoned the law books and went upon the stage.

Poe's record of lineage on his mother's side is more obscure and belongs to the gleeting memories of the stage. His grandmother, Mrs. Arnold, was a beautiful English actress of admirable power. Miss Elizabeth Arnold, her daughter and the mother of the poet, spent her whole life on
the stage, not knowing the comfort of a home or a mother's tender care. It was when Miss Arnold was playing with the Virginia Company at Baltimore that she fell in love with and married Mr. C. D. Hopkins who had joined the Company.

In the fall of 1804 a new member was added to the Company. This was David Poe who had appeared only twice before. During the winter season at Mr. Green's theater in Washington, Mr. Hopkins died and within a month David Poe married Mrs. Hopkins. After playing at Richmond, Philadelphia, and New York, Mr. and Mrs. Poe made what might be called, their permanent home in Boston for three years. David Poe soon sank to insignificance as an actor but his wife, born and trained to the stage, became a very clever actress though she never reached her mother in popularity and merit. Mrs. Poe was an interesting rather than a brilliant actress. She was more deserving than fortunate and indebted for her success painstaking care rather than native talents.

At the end of the season in Boston during which Edgar, the second son, was born, the family left Boston never to return. No further mention is made of the husband who probably died of consumption. Mrs. Poe continued to play till after the birth of her third child when she went into a rapid decline. The family became destitute and were the object of the charity of Richmond Ladies. On December 6, 1811, Mrs Poe died, bringing to a close a
career which, though honorable, must have been full of labor, anxiety and poverty. The children were taken into the homes of friends.

Edgar took the family name of his benefactor, John Allan, and as they had no children, he was petted and fondled in the empty home. His foster parents allowed no opportunity to pass without showing him off. In this elegant home he was flattered and indulged in every way. They used to place him on the table after dinner to drink to the health of the guests and to recite for he was talented in that way. This was indeed a wicked way to bring up a child; and is it a wonder that he cultivated a taste for strong drink, which became the fate of his after life? He was a beautiful and precocious child being able to read, draw and dance at the age of six.

He received the rudiments of knowledge at a private school in Richmond. About June 17, 1815, Mr. Allan, his wife, her sister and Edgar sailed for England to remain for five years and shortly after arriving placed Edgar at the Manor House School, Stake Newington, a suburb of London. In the seclusion of these grounds, which have since been swallowed up in the growth of the great metropolis, Poe spent his school days from his seventh to his twelfth year. Here he learned to read Latin and to speak French. Indeed he must have passed many a lonely hour and it might be that in this stretch of his life appeared the first workings of the sinister influence which after-
wards struck so impassably the circle of isolation about the man.

In June 1820, he left this school behind and was brought back to America to live with the Allans at Richmond. Here he renewed his studies in the English and Classical School of Joseph H. Clarke from Trinity College, Dublin. As a student, Poe was lacking in diligence and accuracy but was quick and brilliant and had but one rival in scholarship. He was especially active in athletics, a swift runner, bold swimmer, a far leaper and skilled in boxing. He evidently cut a considerable figure in the school. He was champion in the simple tournaments, prominent in debating society and known as a versifier in both a gallant and a satiric vein. He was always reserved and never formed the habit of making intimate friends.

He was a dreamer and felt his solitariness. After the death of a friend's mother, who had been very kind to him and for whom he felt a maternal love, he haunted the grave by night brooding over the mystery of death. There his young heart caught the first faint notes of that palan of passionate regret and self-sprung terror which afterward became the Io Triomphe of despair. The direct experience of death in her loss was the ground on which his imagination long worked and determined the early bent of his mind toward a sombre supernaturalism.

February 14, 1826 he matriculated at the University of Virginia and entered the schools of ancient and modern
languages. He was at this time seventeen years old, short in stature, thick set, compact, bow-legged with the rapid and jerky gait of an English boy. He had dark curly hair and usually wore a grave and melancholy expression. He divided his time between the recitation room, the punch-bowl, the card table, athletic sports, and pedestrianism.

He took Latin, Greek, French, and Spanish but being facile rather than studious, did not acquire a critical knowledge of these languages. Though he attended his classes quite regularly, he moved in a jolly set and was very fond of drinking and card playing. Gambling was then his vice and he often ran into debt. Whatever may have been his private history however, he did not come under the notice of the Faculty which is stated to have been unusually strict at that time. None of his classmates knew him intimately but he was described as a spirited youth, who led a self-absorbed life but was easily diverted into the pleasures of the fashionable set. At the close of the session, December 15, 1826, Poe came off with the highest honors in Latin and French. Instead of allowing him to return to the University, Mr. Allan placed him in his own counting-room from which confinement Poe soon escaped and went out into the world to seek his fortune.

He went at once to Boston where he tried to make a start in the world by publishing his youthful verses. The result was a small, thin book entitled, "Tamerlane and other Poems." His ambitious feelings were disappointed because
his poems attracted little attention, but they became sufficiently known to find mention in the first comprehensive work on American Poetry. A few months exhausted his resources and he found himself friendless and without means of self-support. There seemed only one way out of the difficulties. On May 26, 1827, he enlisted as a private soldier in the United States Army under the name of E. A. Perry. He was a faithful and efficient soldier. On account of merit, he was promoted. John Allan, having learned of Edgar's whereabouts, and his nature being softened by the death of his wife, who loved Edgar devotedly gave him all aid necessary.

Poe was fond of books and was accomplished in mathematics and French but he had a contempt for military duties. His temper made him at times utterly oblivious or indifferent to the ordinary routine of military duties. Only six months after entering the service he was tried by court-martial, found guilty and dismissed. He then went South to Baltimore where he continued to write poetry but failed to make a living. He then turned his attention to prose. In a contest for the best short story, Poe won $100 by his "M.S. Found in a Bottle." This prize was indeed welcome as the author had become reduced to a state of starvation. With the aid of his friend, Mr. Kennedy, he worked the next six months, contributing to the Saturday Visitor. From the summer of 1833 he lived in a very retired way with his father's widowed sister, Mrs. Clemm and her daughter Virginia, giving what means he earned for their common sup-
port. He decided to go to Richmond but before going proposed to marry his cousin Virginia, who was only thirteen years old.

At Richmond he became assistant editor of the Southern Literary Messenger, receiving a salary of ten dollars per week. Soon afterwards, obstructions arising in his love affairs, he returned to Baltimore and married Virginia, going back to Richmond the next day. Mrs. Clemm and Virginia followed him in a few weeks and the three continued to live together. Poe now took entire charge of the magazine and continued to contribute poems, tales and reviews. With his excellent criticism he placed his new Southern Magazine beside the leading magazines of the day. He was loudly praised and life seemed to open to him full of promise. It was here that he began his work as a critic which made him many enemies. On account of irregularity and dissatisfaction and perhaps intoxication he wasted his opportunity of prosperity and gave up his place and left Richmond. With his family he made his way slowly through Baltimore and Philadelphia to New York, where he made his home. He spent the greater part of the winter writing his "Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym". After some time he moved to Philadelphia when he contributed to the "American Museum of Literature and Arts." and wrote a text-book on Conchology. He contributed to the gentleman's Magazine" edited by Wm. Burton. In 1840 he published a volume containing twenty-five tales, two of which "Ligeia" and "The
"Fall of the House of Usher," marked the highest reach of the Romantic element in Poe's genius. He continued for about three years writing for Burton's magazine during which time and the few years following he wrote some of his best productions. He shifted from one magazine to another and even tried to start a new one of his own.

Whatever misfortunes and privations came to his lot Poe had much real happiness with his family in their little home. He was proud of his beautiful young wife and brought many visitors to see her. She idolized him and worshipped his genius. Mrs. Clemm was a true mother to Poe and through all his waywardness and folly she clung to him with devotion. Virginia was a very sweet singer and in their more prosperous days she had a harp and piano. One evening, while singing, she ruptured a blood vessel and although she partially recovered, she was never well again. Poe went through all the agonies of her death and clung to her with desperate pertinacity. He would become almost insane at times during which, indulged in drink. They were now at all times reduced to extreme poverty, although Poe continued writing those immortal tales which nowadays would at once make any man's fortune. The principal income during these trying months was a hundred dollar prize received for his story, "The Gold Bug."

In 1844 he moved to New York where he had great difficulty in selling his productions and was very poorly paid. His wife continued to fail and he was ill at times himself.
He lectured sometimes on American Poetry and contributed to the "Mirror", "Saturday Evening Post," "Broadway Journal" and others. The reason he failed to make a living by literature was that he did ten times more work than he received pay for. He became sole editor of the Journal but having no capital, gave it up after a few months. He published "The Literate of New York" which made the hit of the season. This was a series of criticisms on the authors of New York which made him many enemies but was of service to the authors in bringing them early applause. He made relentless war on mediocrity and his criticisms were of good service to American letters in that they enforced higher literary standards.

Poe's home was now a mean little dwelling in the suburbs of New York, scantily furnished but always clean and neat. Virginia was failing rapidly; Poe himself became ill and the household was reduced almost to a starvation point. They were relieved by a friend, Mrs. Shew, who obtained a subscription and watched over them during the rest of Virginia's life. Touched by her kindness, Poe was roused to new work. After Virginia's death, he became very ill, and his life was in danger for a long time.

On recovering from this prolonged illness he confined himself to his home walking much and planning stories which being produced, were the language of a spirit sunk in blank and moaning despair. In 1846 a review of his tales was published in Paris and his reputation began to grow in France where it was destined to be wide-spread and enduring.
During Poe's life in New York he was often in society, and in spite of his enemies was always a welcome guest. After his publication of the "The Raven", he became the talk of the nation and was sought in the most cultured circles which New York could then boast. Even his enemies admit that he possessed all the qualifications that make a man shine in society. He had graceful and refined manners, a voice low, musical and exquisitely modulated large, dark eyes, luminous and wonderfully expressive. There was about him that air of unmistakable distinction which ordinary men cannot assume and which few men ever have. He had wonderful conversational powers the charm of which was in its genuineness—its wonderful directness and sincerity. His proud reserve, profound melancholy and entire unworldliness, his simple, natural, unconventional courtesy and the perfectly sincere grace of his manner, added to the fascination of his personal presence in society.

During the latter part of his life he fell in love with several different women and although his marriage with Mrs. Whitman and afterwards with Mrs. Shelton were expected, he never married again. Virginia's death was the crisis of his life and he never completely rallied from her loss. He was sober and industrious for a time but gave up completely to drinking and taking opium. He died in Baltimore in October 1849, under
circumstances of extreme misery and pity. Only a very modest stone marks his grave in Baltimore and in New York, Poe Park, opposite the Poe cottage in which have been placed a bust and a tablet, has been erected to his memory.
The Raven.

At the dreary hour of midnight, a student sat in his room pondering over a volume, and half dreaming of a beloved mistress recently deceased. Suddenly he was aroused by a tapping at his door which he thought to be some visitor.

It was in the month of December and the dying fire cast queer shadows on the floor. He was impatiently waiting for the next day to come when, through study, he might forget his sorrow for his beautiful lost Lenore. Every rustle of the costly curtains thrilled him and filled him with strange fancies that it might be she returning. He was nervous and hesitated about opening the door.

Presently his courage strengthened and begging pardon, he opened the door, but found no visitor there.

For a long time he stood there in wonder and fear but could hear nothing. Presently, as if dreaming, he whispered her name and thought he heard the murmur of an echo.

He closed the door, his soul burning with terror. Again he heard a louder tapping at his window and resolved to explore the mystery.

He flung open the shutter and in fluttered a Raven which instantly perched on a bust above his door.

Its stern and grave countenance made him smile. He asked it name and the raven answered, "nevermore".
This answer surprised the student for he thought this must be some unearthly being.

The raven spoke but the one word "nevermore". Now that his friends had all left him, he said he expected the raven would go too but the bird answered "nevermore".

Startled at hearing the same word oft repeated, the student came to the conclusion that it was the only word the bird could say and that it had learned it from a burdened and melancholy master.

The raven's coming relieved his sad soul, and placing himself in a seat in front of the bird, he began to fancy, thinking what it meant by the word nevermore.

On the comfortable, cushioned seat he sat pondering not only of the bird but of her who would never sit in that chair again.

Then in fancy he heard soft footfalls on the carpet and scented the perfume from a censer swung by Seraphim. "Wretch", he cried to the raven, "thy God hath sent you", then he murmured to himself that God had sent this Messenger to soothe and quiet his memories for Lenore and that he should drink much of this soothing nepenthe and forget the dead Lenore. The raven answered, "nevermore."

Whether bird or devil or whether Satan sent you, or you were driven here by the storm all alone but brave, to my home haunted by horrible memories, still you must be a prophet. Tell me truly is there anything to soothe my grief. Again the raven answered, nevermore.
"O prophet", "oh thing of evil!" again he cried, "by the heaven above us by the God we both love, tell my soul so full of sorrow if within that distant haven I shall see and clasp the blessed Lenore! But the raven said, nevermore.

Suddenly rising he cried aloud for the bird to return into the tempest the evil land from which it had come and to leave not even a feather to remind him of the lie it had spoken. "Fly from the bust above my door", he cried, "and leave me in my sorrow." Take away the wound in my heart and take your form from out my presence.

But in his fancy the raven is still sitting on the bust above the door and its eyes haunt like a demon's. Its shadow still glimmers on the floor and his soul can never rest from the horror of the memory.
As you listen to the sleigh bells what a token of mirth there is in the sound. How clearly you can hear each faint tinkle in the still, cold night. The stars overspreading the whole heavens seem to shine with gladness keeping time with their twinkling to the tinkling that with such harmony seems to flow from the bells.

What a token of happiness and bliss there is in the sound of the golden wedding bells. Through the refreshing night air they seem to cry out for very pleasure. From the clear, tuneful notes the sound seems to float to the turtle-dove as she listens, gazing on the moon. What a burst of pleasant sound comes from the resounding cells. How it tells of the great delight that is caused by the rhythm of the bells.

Hear the fire bells! The loud brazen bells. Their deafening commotion tells of terror. How they disturb the peaceful night with their screams of fright. They peal forth regardless of tune and call for mercy with their clamor, madly urging the wild unheeding flames leaping higher and higher as if they were furious to reach the moon. What a feeling of terror and of despair their sound signifies as they clash and roar! What horror rings through the disturbed air! The ear understands by the harshness and loudness how the
danger slackens and then grows imminent again, and how in the idle sounding and the sudden brawling the danger falls and rises.

Hear the tolling iron bells, the funeral bells! Their mournful sounds urge grave and sacred thoughts. In the silent night we tremble with fear at the threats of their sad tones. Every sound that comes from their muffled throats is like a moaning in distress.

The demons who dwell in the steeple, all unseen, take great delight in breaking the human hearts with their tolling in that melancholy, muffled sound. They are neither brute nor human, they are evil beings who feed upon human bodies. It is their king who pours out his triumph and delight as he tolls the bells. Dancing and yelling happily he keeps time to the melancholy strokes of the bells with a mysterious rhyme, to the wailing and the grieving of the bells.
Annabel Lee.

A great number of years ago there lived beside the sea a maiden by the name of Annabel Lee. She loved me and trusted that some day we might be united.

We were only children, but our love was true and everlasting. Even the angels coveted our love and that is the reason they sent the wind that chilled and killed my Annabel Lee. They took her from me and buried her in a tomb by the sea.

We were happier than they, that is the reason the angels decreed that the wind should kill my sweetheart.

Our love was far stronger than that of older and wiser people; it was so strong that, even in death, no power can ever separate our souls from each other.

Each night as I look at the moon, it brings memories of her. I see her eyes in the stars and all through the night I dream that I am beside her in her tomb by the dashing sea.
Lines to Helen. (Mrs. Stanard).

Helen, by thy beauty and tenderness, you have soothed my heart and raised me out of my sadness and despair to realize that there is some hope in the world.

Having lived so long in despair and forlorn hopes, your kindness and beauty have led me to genius and honor.

In the starry heavens afar I can see your stately form, oh goddess, holding a shining star in your hand. Thou art an angel from the regions of the Holy Land.
Israfel.

In Heaven there dwells an angel by the name of Israfel whose heart strings are a lute. He sings, the sweetest of all God's creatures. The bewildered Stars (so the myths relate) stop their songs to listen silently to the charm of his voice.

Wavering on high at her highest point, the captivated moon is in love and the lightning and even the seven Pleiads pause to listen.

The stars and other heavenly bodies say that Israfel's splendor is due to the trembling and living lyre by which he sits and sings.

But in the skies there is a land where angels dwell, where thinking is a duty, where Love rules and where the nymphs are tinged with all the beauty of the stars.

It is not wrong to hate songs that have no ardent passion, Israfel. You are the best singer because you are the wisest, and to you belongs the highest honor. Long may you live.

The pleasures above join in with thy rhythm. Thy grief, joy, hate, or love agrees with the passion of thy lute. It is no wonder that the stars are silent.

You are in Heaven but our world is one of both sorrows and joys in which your pain would seem a pleasure to us.

If I should change places with Israfel, perhaps he could not sing as well while I might sing more sweetly even than he.
The Oblong Box.

"The Oblong Box" is a tale of mystery and horror with no reference to character.

Mr. Wyatt and party engage passage on a steamer and he takes with him an oblong box. The peculiar manner and actions of Mr. Wyatt toward this box keep a friend on board mystified and aroused with curiosity. During a storm the ship springs a leak and all escape in the boats. The oblong box is left behind and Mr. Wyatt, to the horror of all, jumps overboard and securing it, ties himself to it and they sink together into the sea. Afterward the mystery is explained: how his adored wife had died and in order to take the corpse he had packed it in this oblong box.

Description is of no consequence in this tale, the importance is given to the plot which leads to a startling climax.

The principal characters in the story are Mr. Wyatt and his friend. They are decidedly imaginative.

The Oblong Box is a tale in which the plot predominates. It is skillfully constructed and holds the interest to the very end, holding the reader in wonder as to what can be the reason for the strange things which happen. An interesting part of the story is where the friend tells what he saw on two different nights while he lay awake and could look into Mr. Wyatt's stateroom; also an other event when he tries to jest with Mr. Wyatt about
the contents of the box and Mr. Wyatt acts very strangely and suddenly turns ill. A very horrible event in the story is when Mr. Wyatt demands that the box be saved from the ship, and upon being refused jumps overboard and sinks in the sea with it tied to his body.

Everyone who reads this story is moved by the mystery and horror of it. It is a story for both old and young and one that can be read several times with interest. It is a story that will not soon die or grow old-fashioned, but will be popular as a story of its class for ages to come.
Arthur Gordon Pym.

This is a tale of blood-curdling adventures on the sea.

The story relates the adventures of Arthur Gordon Pym on the American Brig Grampus on her way to the South Seas. It gives in detail the mutiny and atrocious butchery on board with an account of the recapture of the vessel by the survivors. It tells of their shipwreck and horrible sufferings from starvation, their final rescue by a British Schooner and the brief cruise of this vessel in the Antarctic Ocean; her capture and the massacre of the crew by the natives; some incredible adventures and discoveries farther south by Pym and another man the only ones who escaped from the massacre.

Some brief description is found in this tale, and character abounds much more than in any of Poe's other stories.

The startling scenery, as they go farther south, forms one of his most original and powerful landscapes.

The story is constructed so as to win credence by circumstantial detail and an affected air of plainness. It is perhaps the closest approach to reality of any of Poe's tales.

The book is peculiar for its accumulation of blood-curdling incidents. Death is experienced in every horrible form. Arthur's imprisonment in the hold where he suffers starvation and horrible suspense, the butchery and riot of the mutineers, the shipwreck, poison, starvation and
cannibalism, are some of the horrible situations. Another peculiar thing about the book is its incomplete ending.

Some portions of the book, such as the ship of carrion men with the feeding gull, the account of Augustus's death, and Arthur's disguise as the putrid corpse, are almost too noisome to be endured.
Thou Art the Man.

The plot of this tale which is constructed very skillfully, shows it to be a tale of mystery and crime.

Mr. Shuttleworthy, a wealthy and respected man had suddenly disappeared. His nephew, Mr. Pennifeather had been accused of having murdered him and was imprisoned. One day Charles Goodfellow received a box of wine which had been promised him by Mr. Shuttleworthy with whom he had been very intimate. Upon opening the box in the midst of a crowd of friends, the corpse of the murdered man rose up and looking at Mr. Goodfellow cried out, "Thou art the man!" After giving a clean confession of the crime, he staggered and fell dead. Mr. Pennifeather, having suspected Old Charley, searched and found the body and planned and carried out the horrible scene.

This short tale is not given to character sketching or description but is one in which the plot predominates. It is a story of terror highly original and very unreal but captivating.

It shows the author's great imaginative and concentra-tive powers. The characters are spectres imagined with almost magical skill.

One feature about the story is that it leads the reader astray and makes him mistaken in the character of Old Charley Goodfellow, thus preserving the secret more closely.
The Gold Bug.

The plot of this tale shows it to be a study of detection and mystery.

A gold bug, found by a Mr. Wm. Le Grand, is the source of much excitement and finally leads to startling results. A piece of parchment paper accidentally picked up on the beach, and on which Le Grand had drawn a picture of the bug, was discovered to be a mysterious chart which upon being solved made clear a spot where pirates had buried vast treasure.

The description is plain and very interesting and is found mostly in the part of the tale which deals with the location of the treasure. The characters are imaginative. The main ones are Wm. Le Grand, the old negro, Jupiter, and the friend who relates the story:

The plot is well constructed and holds the reader's interest. Nothing is explained till near the end, and the reader cannot possibly understand the story till the end is reached. An astonishing situation in the story is where the friend discovers the drawing of the death's head on the scrap of paper and Le Grand's actions on the discovery. The most exciting situation throughout the story is when the treasure is discovered after such strange circumstances.

The story of the Gold Bug is very vague and mysterious but holds the reader's close attention. This tale shows evidence of the author's great art and intellectual activity; and it, together with the "Murders in the Rue Morgue", is the progenitor of the great brood of modern detective stories.
The Black Cat.

In this short story the plot is a tale of extreme terror.

A man having been very fond of a black cat, finally grew to hate and abhor it. The cat followed him about continually though he did everything to try to destroy its affection for him. One day a sudden impulse caused him to seize an ax and strike at the cat. In so doing, his wife, having stepped up to prevent him, was struck in the head and killed. In order to hide his crime he concealed her body within the wall of the cellar. While searching for the body, the police heard the meow of a cat in the wall and tearing away the wall, discovered the body. The cat had gone in there while he was concealing the body.

In "The Black Cat" the main character is very imaginative and could not possibly be true to life.

The plot is well constructed and inspires the reader with intense dread and fear.

Incidents in the tale, as when the man cuts the cat's eye out, when he strikes at the cat and cuts his wife's head open, and also when the cat is found with the corpse, are loathsome and full of terror.
The Murders in the Rue Morgue.

This is a tale of murder and crime involving very sly detective work.

A lady and her daughter had been very cruelly and mysteriously murdered. Strange voices had been heard but no one had seen any sign of the murderer. The strange condition of the bodies and the fact that a large sum of money and other valuables had not been molested, led a detective to think that no human hand had done the deed. He very skillfully unravelled the mystery and came to the conclusion that the murderer was a strong and ferocious orang-outang. By a skillful advertisement he got the owner of the beast to call on him, and made him confess and explain all.

The description, especially where it describes the condition of the mangled bodies and the disordered room, is very plain and complete.

There is no character study, the interest all centers in the plot.

"The Murders in the Rue Morgue" is a very puzzling and horrible account of murder. It is the result of very intense imagination and graphic skill. Its peculiarity lies in its strange murderer and sly detective work. It is a story which can be read and reread without losing its charm.
Conclusion.

Edgar Allan Poe stands alone not only in our literature but in all literature. He is the father of the short story, the poet of "Love in Fear", of "Love in Madness", of "Love in Death", who painted the grotesque not to our eyes but to our souls. In individuality and distinction of workmanship, in power of visualizing unreal things and taking possession of the reader's imagination, in daring fantasy, and in ingenious invention, his writings hold a place by themselves. The masterly combination of logical lucidity, keenness of intellect, passion for proportion, for climax for crisis, is the secret of his art and its effects.

Poe was beautiful, gifted, sensitive, proud, ambitious, daring, endowed with subtle charms of manner and person, and generous and devoted to his family. He was highly endowed, well-bred and highly educated and more than once had fair opportunities, brilliant prospects, and many benevolent and considerate friends. Whatever may have been the cause, he drank liquor and ate opium which were the instruments of his broken and ruined manhood. If he could have exerted greater self discipline, it may readily be conjectured how much more he might have accomplished for himself and others.

However, in spite of his disappointing qualities, Poe's is a life that promises to be long. He left a
fame destined to long memory. On the roll of our literature his name is inscribed with the foremost; and in the world at large his genius is established as valid among all men.