

THE RAVEN.

BY EDGAR A. POE.

Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered,
weak and weary,
Over many a quaint and curious volume of
forgotten lore—
While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there
came a tapping,
As of some one gently rapping, rapping at my
chamber door.
"Tis some visitor," I muttered, "tapping at
my chamber door—
Only this and nothing more."

Ah, distinctly I remember it was in the bleak
December;
And each separate dying ember wrought its
ghost upon the floor.
Eagerly I wished the morrow,—vainly I had
sought to borrow
From my books surcease of sorrow—sorrow for
the lost Lenore—
For the rare and radiant maiden whom the
angels name Lenore—
Nameless here for evermore.

And the silken, sad, uncertain rustling of each
purple curtain
Thrilled me—filled me with fantastic terrors
never felt before;
So that now, to still the beating of my heart, I
stood repeating
"Tis some visitor, entreating entrance at my
chamber door—
Some late visitor entreating entrance at my
chamber door;
This it is and nothing more."

Presently my soul grew stronger, hesitating
then no longer,
"Sir," said I, "or Madam, truly your forgive-
ness I implore;
But the fact is I was napping, and so gently
you came rapping,
And so faintly you came tapping, tapping at
my chamber door,
That I scarce was sure I heard you"—here I
opened wide the door;—
Darkness there and nothing more.

Deep into the darkness peering, long I stood
there wondering, fearing,
Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortal ever
dared to dream before;
But the silence was unbroken, and the stillness
gave no token,
And the only word there spoken was the whis-
pered word, "Lenore?"
This I whispered, and an echo murmured back
the word "Lenore!"
Merely this, and nothing more.

Back into the chamber turning, all my soul
within me burning,
Soon again I heard a tapping somewhat louder
than before.
"Surely," said I, "surely that is something at
my window lattice;
Let me see, then, what loreat is, and this mys-
tery explore—
Let my heart be still a moment and this myste-
ry explore;—
Tis the wind and nothing more!"

Open here I flung the shutter when, with ma-
ny a flit and flutter,
In there stepped a stately Raven of the saintly
days of yore;
Not the least obeisance made he; not a minute
stopped or stayed he;
But with mean of lord or lady, perched above
my chamber door—
Perched upon a bust of Pallas just above my
chamber door—
Perched, and sat, and nothing more.

Then this ebony bird beguiling my sad fancy in-
to smiling,
By the grave and stern-decorum of the counte-
nance it wore,
"Though thy crest be shorn and shaven, thou,"
I said, "art sure no craven.
Ghastly, grim and ancient Raven wandering
from the Nightly shore—
Tell me what thy lordly name is on the Night's
Plutonian shore!"
Quoth the Raven "Nevermore."

Much I marvelled this ungainly fowl to hear
discourse so plain,
Though its answer little meaning—little rele-
vance bore;
For we cannot help agreeing that no living hu-
man being
Ever yet was blessed with seeing bird above his
chamber door—
Bird or beast upon the sculptured bust above
his chamber door,
With such name as "Nevermore."

But the Raven, sitting lonely on the placid
bust, spoke only
That one word, as if his soul in that one word
he did outpour,
Nothing farther then he uttered—not a feather
then he fluttered—
Till I scarcely more than muttered "Other
friends have flown before—
On the morrow he will leave me, as my hopes
have flown before."
Then the bird said "Nevermore."

Startled at the stillness broken by reply so apt-
ly spoken,
"Doubtless," said I, "what it utters is its only
stock and store
Caught from some unhappy master whom un-
merciful Disaster
Followed fast and followed faster till his songs
one burden bore—
Till the dirges of his Hope that melancholy
burden bore
Of "Never—nevermore."

But the Raven still beguiling my sad fancy
into smiling,
Strait I wheeled a cushioned seat in front of
bird, and bust and door,
Then upon the velvet sinking, and betook my-
self to linking
Fancy unto fancy, thinking what this ominous
bird of yore—
What this grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt and
ominous bird of yore
Meant in croaking "Nevermore."

Thus I sat engaged in guessing, but no syllable
expressing
To the fowl whose fiery eyes now burned into my
bosom's core;
This and more I sat divining, with my head at
ease reclining
On the cushion's velvet lining that the lamp-
light gloated o'er;
But whose velvet-violet lining with the lamp-
light gloating o'er,
She shall press, ah, nevermore!

Then, methought the air grew denser, perfum-
ed from an unseen censer
Swung by seraphim whose foot-falls tinkled on
the tufted floor
"Wretch," I cried, "thy God hath lent thee—
by these angels he hath sent thee
Respite—respite and nepenthe from thy memo-
ries of Lenore;
Quaff, oh quaff this kind nepenthe and forget
this lost Lenore!"
Quoth the Raven "Nevermore."

"Prophet!" said I, "thing of evil! prophet
still, if bird or devil!
Whether Tempter sent, or whether tempest
tossed the here ashore,
Desolate yet all undaunted, on this desert land
enchanted—
On this home by Horror haunted—tell me tru-
ly, I implore—
Is there—is there balm in Gilead? tell me—tell
me, I implore!"
Quoth the Raven "Nevermore."

"Prophet," said I, thing of evil!—prophet still,
if bird or devil!
By that Heaven that bends above us—by that
God we both adore—
Tell this soul with sorrow laden if, within the
distant Aidenn,
It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the angels
name Lenore—
Clasp a rare and radiant maiden whom the an-
gels name Lenore."
Quoth the Raven "Nevermore."

"Be that word our sign of parting, bird or fiend,
I shrieked, upstarting—
"Get the back into the tempest and the Night's
Plutonian shore!
Leave no black plume as a token of that lie thy
soul hath spoken!
Leave my loneliness unbroken!—quit the bust
above my door!
Take thy beak from out my heart, and take
thy form from off my door!"
Quoth the raven "Nevermore."

And the Raven, never flitting, still is sitting,
still is sitting
On the pallid bust of Pallas just above my cham-
ber door;
And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon's
that is dreaming,
And the lamp-light 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!