

THE RAVEN.

BY EDGAR A. POE, ESQ.

Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered,
weak and weary,
Over many a quaint and curious volume of for-
gotten lore,
While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there
came a tapping,
As of some one gently rapping, rapping at my
chamber door.

"'Tis some visiter," I muttered, "tapping at my
chamber door—

Only this, and nothing more."

Ah, distinctly I remember it was in the bleak De-
cember,
And each separate dying ember wrought its ghost
upon the floor.

Eagerly I wished the morrow;—vainly I had
tried to borrow

From my books surcease of sorrow—sorrow for
the lost Lenore—

For the rare and radiant maiden whom the an-
gels name Lenore—

Nameless here for evermore.

And the silken sad uncertain rustling of each
purple curtain

Thrilled me—filled me with fantastic terrors ne-
ver felt before;

So that now, to still the beating of my heart, I
stood repeating

"'Tis some visiter entreating entrance at my
chamber door—

Some late visiter entreating entrance at my cham-
ber door;—

This it is, and nothing more."

Presently my soul grew stronger; hesitating then
no longer,

"Sir," said I, "or Madam, truly your forgiveness
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 that darkness peering, long I stood
there wondering, fearing,

Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortal ever da-
red to dream before;

But the silence was unbroken, and the darkness
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.

Then into the chamber turning, all my soul with-
in me burning,

Soon I heard again a tapping somewhat louder
than before.

"Surely," said I, "surely that is something at my
window lattice;

Let me see, then, what thereat is, and this mys-
tery explore—

Let my heart be still a moment and this mystery
explore;—

'Tis the wind, and nothing more."

Open here I flung the shutter, when, with many
a flirt and flutter,

In there stepped a stately raven of the saintly
days of yore;

Not the least obeisance made he; not an instant
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 Nighty 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 plainly,

Though its answer little meaning—little rele-
vancy 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 out-pour,

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."

Quoth the raven, "Nevermore."

Startled at the stillness broken by reply so aptly
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—so, when
Hope he would adjure,

Stern Despair returned, instead of the sweet
Hope he dared adjure—

That sad answer, "Nevermore!"

But the raven still beguiling all my sad soul into
smiling,

Straight I wheeled a cushioned seat in front of
bird, and bust and door;

Then upon the velvet sinking, I betook myself
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."

This 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

She shall press, ah, nevermore!

Then, methought, the air grew denser, perfum-
ed from an unseen censer

Swung by angels whose faint 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 tos-
sed thee here ashore,

Desolate, yet all undaunted, on this desert land
enchanted--

On this home by Horror haunted--tell me truly,
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 thee 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
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 float-
ing on the floor

Shall be lifted--nevermore!