

lege. A year's caging was all that this wild spirit could endure. He was only twenty-two, but he was a poet, a traveller, a man of the world. It is said he had fought for Greece during his wanderings; he had drunk the wine of youth and freedom. He deliberately qualified for dismissal from West Point by breaking some technical rules, had a last violent altercation with his foster father, which ended all hopes of allowances or legacies, and was again face to face with the world. Henceforth Poe's life is a long and sordid battle with poverty—a losing battle from the world's point of view, for he never achieved financial success, and finally he sank under the slavery of drink—the fire of his youth was beaten down, until it was only manifest in lurid and fitful outbreaks of genius and misdirected passion. It is a dreary record, little as we know of it, not merely because of his failures and misfortunes, but because he could never get a fair start. His mind and spirit were worthy of a large field, even for defeat; he would have leaped at the opportunity. But it was his fate always to struggle for a mere footing, and his pride often raised obstacles where a meaner spirit might have avoided them.

After the final quarrel, his friends for the second time lost all trace of him, but his second experience of Bohemia was no better than the first, and he again reappears in the prodigal's rags, but no home or father to carry his repentance to. A literary patron, Mr. Kennedy, came to his assistance, and Poe soon made his debut as a prose writer by winning a hundred dollar prize with a collection of six romantic tales. This started him on his career. He became connected with a Southern paper, the "Literary Messenger," and was appointed editor within a year. Nowadays one would think that a young man who could rise so rapidly to the head of an editorial staff would have an assured future. Either

Poe's capacities were extraordinary, and easily recognised, or newspaper proprietors have changed remarkably in three generations. Certainly the first is true. Within two years Poe had ended his connection with the paper, but during that time he had quadrupled its circulation, chiefly by the popularity of his own contributions. And yet his salary never exceeded a hundred guineas. This speaks more for the astuteness than the generosity of the American publishers. And Poe's life is simply a repetition of the same experience. One newspaper proprietor after another jumped at the opportunity of engaging the brilliant hack, who came to them on the verge of destitution and was willing to accept starvation wage. For a time all would go well. Poe's tales never lost their popularity. He was willing to write half the magazine. His articles were fresh, original, provoking. His ideas excited controversy. Circulations went up. Then after a year or two trouble would arise. Then the hack would become restive, claim a higher salary, or a share in the paper, and something more than the orthodox three dollars a page for his creations. Or his criticism became too plain-spoken. He gave offence in quarters where flattery was the policy that paid. He abused popular favourites, and overthrew orthodox literary idols. So Poe would find himself penniless on the world again, hawking his stories round to the newspapers to keep the wolf from the door. Excepting the "Narrative of A. G. Pym," and the famous "Gold Bug," ancestor of innumerable cypher tales, which gained a hundred dollar (£20) prize, all his stories appeared in the manner described, and brought little or no profit to their author.

Perhaps the height of contrast was reached in the year '45, which saw the production of "The Raven," one of those rare poems which delight both the people and