This unpublished paper was written as the third part of a series for a now-defunct British e-zine, Real Paranormal Magazine. Part #1 introduced the author's discovery of his past life as obscure 19th-century literary figure Mathew Franklin Whittier, and his intention to use that discovery to challenge mainstream paradigms. The title of the introductory number was "My Intended Contribution Toward Bringing About the End of Philosophical Materialism." This attribution case is <u>not</u> "based on reincarnation," as some critics have suggested by way of dismissing it. It was <u>discovered</u> through a glimpse experienced while under hypnosis, but then researched by conventional means.

Evidence that Edgar Allan Poe Stole "The Raven" from Mathew Franklin Whittier

By Stephen Sakellarios, ©2021 (revised 9/24/22, 5/7/24, 6/30/24)

In the opening paper of this series, I explained how I came to discover my own past life as obscure 19th-century American author Mathew Franklin Whittier. In the second, I presented evidence that it was Mathew and his first wife, Abby Poyen Whittier, who were the real and original authors of the literary classic attributed to Charles Dickens, "A Christmas Carol."[1] As if that wasn't outrageous enough, I will now proceed to prove, beyond any reasonable doubt, that after Abby's death in March of 1841, Mathew wrote "The Raven," which was falsely claimed by a literary imposter named Edgar Allan Poe.

When I began researching my proposed past life as Mathew Franklin Whittier, in 2009, I knew very little about either the poem, "The Raven," or its supposed author, Edgar Allan Poe. But Poe had already come up, for me, in a way which is relevant to reincarnation, on two different occasions. For the first, we must go back to my sixth grade class, when the students were introduced to this poem. I was unable to read it all the way through, because of the profound feelings of grief for a lost love which it triggered. Keep in mind that most people take this as a *horror poem*, rather than primarily as a grief poem; and I was only 11 or 12 years old at the time. Normally, a boy of that age, in 1964, would have taken it as science fiction, if he showed any interest in it, at all.

For the second instance, we must move forward to February 16, 2009, when I underwent the second of two hypnotic regression sessions for my past-life study. Roughly half-way through the session, I related a seemingly-improbable account of being approached by Edgar Allan Poe to do political ghost-writing for a third party. Other than subsequently confirming that Mathew did, in fact, engage in ghost writing, I have found no evidence confirming this scenario. It seems unlikely on the face of it, inasmuch as Mathew's politics and Poe's were antithetical.[2] However, as we shall see, the facts *do* support a historical *meeting* between Mathew and Poe—most likely in the first half of 1842, two and a half years before "The Raven" was first published.

In a light hypnotic trance (which was the best I could achieve), I described the encounter this way:

> S: (sigh) We were not actually friends...not friends material, but we were very much on the, we were kindred spirits, you know? I mean in the sense that we were both rebels,

> and we were both smart, and we were both politically aware, and... So there was this sense of equals, you know, kind of just feeling each other out, and sparring, and enjoying that, you know, contact. Without a sense that it necessarily would be a great friendship, but we're just kind of, (chuckles) dancing around each other to kind of see, you know, "Who is this guy? Where's he coming from?" What's he, you know, what's he, you know, capable of, and that kind of thing. Just comparing notes, kind of. You know. I can't really explain it.

For several years afterwards, I deliberately refrained from researching Edgar Allan Poe's life, because I didn't want to "muddy the waters" by taking on the dual role of subject and researcher. However, when I obtained a reading from psychic medium Candace Zellner on March 10, 2010, and we came to the Q&A portion of the reading, I asked her about this particular facet of my research. She replied (from my notes taken during the session):

> My ideas about Edgar Allan Poe are correct (exactly correct or something to that extent, about my thinking he wanted to be friends, and him recruiting me as a political ghost writer). It would take a *lot* of research to uncover (repeated). May find in Edgar Cayce readings.

I found nothing useful in the Cayce readings about Poe, but they *did* yield a significant clue regarding the character of Mathew's brother, poet John Greenleaf Whittier. I had persistently felt he was very different from his portrayal in the literature, which was written primarily by his gushing fans and his niece's husband. In Cayce reading 3633-1 M 11 (Episcopal), we see:

> 3. In giving the interpretations of the records here of this entity, it would be very easy to interpret same either in a very optimistic or a very pessimistic vein. For there are great possibilities and great obstacles. But know, in either case, the real lesson is within self. For here is the opportunity for an entity (while comparisons are odious, these would be good comparisons) to be either a Beethoven or a Whittier or a Jesse James or some such entity! For the entity is inclined to think more highly of himself than he ought to think, as would be indicated. That's what these three individuals did, in themselves. As to the application made of it, depends upon the individual self.
>
> 4. Here is an entity who has abilities and faculties latent within self which may be turned into music or poetry, or writing in prose, which few would ever excel. Or there may be the desire to have its own way to such an extent that the entity will be in the position to disregard others altogether in every form, just so self has its own way.

This dovetailed perfectly with my own intuitive impressions of my past-life brother, but it stood in direct contrast to the popular conception of his personality, inasmuch as he has been portrayed as an American saint. Perhaps this served to give me the confidence I needed, to believe that I might be just as correct about other famous literary figures like Edgar Allan Poe.

I am not certain precisely when, in the course of my research on Mathew Franklin Whittier, it dawned on me that he, and not Poe, was the real author of "The Raven." Based on my personal journal, I seem to have begun suspecting it, sans evidence, in late 2013 and early 2014, a few

years after I had begun my research in earnest. But as I discovered more of Mathew's published works, including poetry, I began to tune in to his mind—or rather, to that part of my own mind—and in some sense which I would be hard-pressed to explain, I remembered writing these works. Not the outward details of dates and setting, but rather the subjective act of creativity, itself. And when I read "The Raven," I knew, in this same way, that I had written it.

Of course, I was able to bring style comparison to bear on the question as well, and this overwhelmingly indicated that the style we see in "The Raven" was in fact Mathew's preferred poetic style all his life—both before and after this poem was published in 1845. Anticipating the skeptics, I should clarify here that by "style" I mean, speaking as a layman, the subjective quality as well as the meter. Mathew appears to have based a large percentage of his poems on a meter which I take to have been used for the religious poetry of the day; but he would then modify it to suit his purposes.

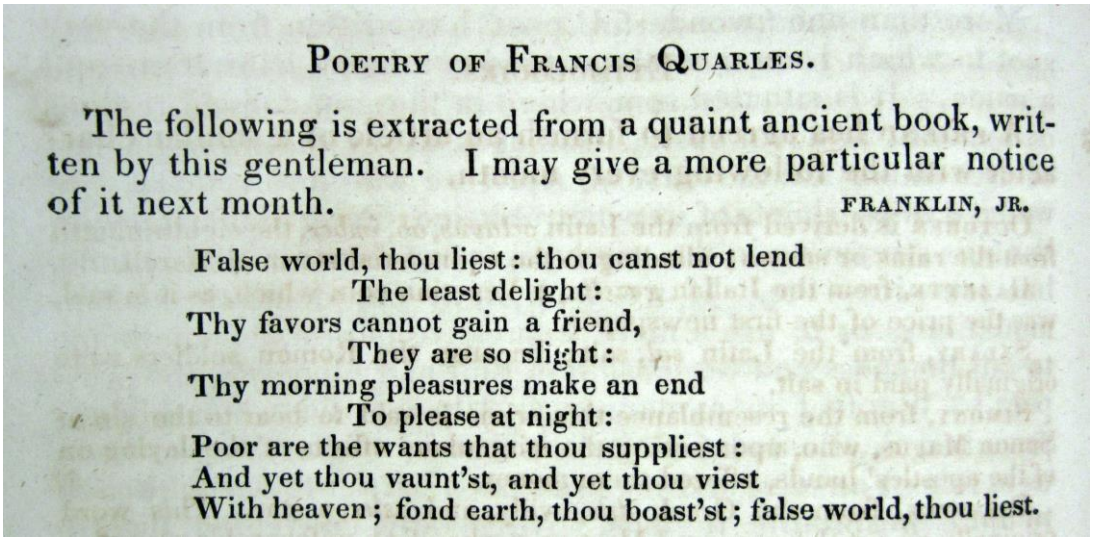
I also learned that Mathew's literary *modus operandi* was to write from his own personal experience, while yet disguising his identity. The more deeply personal the subject, the more careful he was to hide himself as the author. Out of over 3,000 of Mathew's works I've identified as of this writing, the vast majority were published anonymously. He used pseudonyms the way we use computer passwords, today. Most were personally meaningful to him, except for those works which concerned the most sensitive topics. These were given seemingly random initials, extremely generic references like "Clam Chowder" and "Grapho Mania," or no signature at all. In a few instances, one of which we will encounter shortly, he actually signed "Anon.," or "Incog." Nonetheless, I was as rigorous as possible in assigning any work to Mathew's pen, and if anything, I would err on the side of caution. My research methods are described in detail, in my book, "Mathew Franklin Whittier in his own words," and its sequel, "Mathew Franklin Whittier in his own world."[3] I would only emphasize that when, in what follows, I allude to my conclusions regarding any particular piece of evidence, this is not given lightly. I honestly attempted to falsify all of my evidence; and each conclusion is backed up with exhaustive and rigorous investigations, where my research process, along with all the pros and cons, are set forth transparently in my books.

"The Raven"

Applying my new understanding of Mathew's methods, I began recognizing the personal background elements of the story he had conveyed in "The Raven." It turned out that, like so many of his works, this poem is, in fact, a literal account of an incident in his life; or rather, it is literal up to the point that the raven appears. From there on, it is metaphorical and symbolic. I will briefly explain, and then we will move on to a number of the clues that Mathew left posterity which point to his authorship.

Mathew's first wife and true love, Abby Poyen, was four years younger than himself. She was also his tutor, passing along to him her own upper-class, privately tutored, European-style education, in lieu of his being able to attend college. She was not only a musical and literary child prodigy, but from an early age she was a deep student of mysticism and what we call, today, the paranormal. Abby appears to have learned these subjects, at least in part, from her Scottish mother Sally Elliot Poyen. Sally, herself, has been described as "brilliant." At first,

when Abby was 15 and Mathew was 19, he was skeptical of these matters, to the point that he would make light of them in humorous articles. But soon he was becoming convinced of some of these teachings, at least intellectually. By the time Abby died of consumption on March 27, 1841, he professed belief in many of the things she had taught him—but under the pressure of intense grief, his skeptical mind played havoc with his new-found faith. Meanwhile, being of an austere turn of mind, he was an admirer of the poetry of Francis Quarles. We know this because he wrote a two-part series which favorably reviews it in 1831/32, in a Boston young man's magazine called "The Essayist," signing as "Franklin, Jr."



POETRY OF FRANCIS QUARLES.

The following is extracted from a quaint ancient book, written by this gentleman. I may give a more particular notice of it next month. FRANKLIN, JR.

False world, thou liest: thou canst not lend
The least delight:
Thy favors cannot gain a friend,
They are so slight:
Thy morning pleasures make an end
To please at night:
Poor are the wants that thou suppliest:
And yet thou vaunt'st, and yet thou viest
With heaven; fond earth, thou boast'st; false world, thou liest.

It is likely Abby admired Quarles even more than Mathew did, and that the antiquarian volume he mentions reading from, in this series, belonged to her. After all, being from an upper-class family, she is more likely to have been able to afford it, or to have been given it as a gift. Mathew would have retained Abby's books after her death; and I know from many examples that he had a habit of studying late into the night. Medium Candace Zellner, referring to these books in 2010—and having no prior knowledge concerning either Mathew or Abby—remarked (from my notes):

> The books we were studying were based on reincarnation. Black market books. Had to hide them. Abby putting book under her dress if someone approached. Like-mindedness between us, in complete agreement. Abby talks poetically. Her education came after her schooling, largely from Matthew, reading books together. We were ahead of our time.

In this statement she was only partially correct, as I subsequently determined from my study of the deep historical record. Abby may have accepted reincarnation, but Mathew didn't become open-minded on the subject until around 1850. Instead, he embraced the teachings of Emanuel Swedenborg, who did not teach it. Mathew and Abby were deeply simpatico, and were indeed like-minded on many subjects, but as said, initially he was skeptical of some of her more controversial beliefs (as, for example, astrology and prescient dreams). Whether or not Abby spoke poetically (i.e., during the reading itself, or historically), we don't know, but I did subsequently discover that she was writing poetry at a very high level by age 14. I would have to guess that she was reciting poetry to Candace during the reading, as a way of conveying that she

had, in fact, been a poet. Candace had the situation backwards as regards education—it was Abby who taught Mathew, not the other way-around. These are the kinds of errors which can result when a medium misinterprets impressions conveyed by a discarnate person. In this case, Candace got the fact of a *teaching relationship* right, but the *configuration* wrong. As for the final statement, "We were ahead of our time," she was spot-on. This, I can objectively prove by the content of their respective writings. Keep in mind that I took pains to insure that Candace could have known nothing whatsoever about this couple via normal means.

So Mathew's situation, at the moment described in the opening to the poem, "The Raven," is that Abby had died some eight months previously. He is up late studying her old books, including, perhaps, the volume of Francis Quarles' poetry which he had reviewed ten years earlier, as well as books which describe spirit visitations. Mathew deeply desires such a visitation from Abby; at the same time, he fears it, and to cap it all off, he is profoundly skeptical and vacillates in his belief. Suddenly he hears something at the window, and he thrills to the possibility that it could be *her*—but it turns out to be merely a branch scraping the pane, or a bird. Now, the finality of physical death hits him with even greater force, and his skepticism prevails.

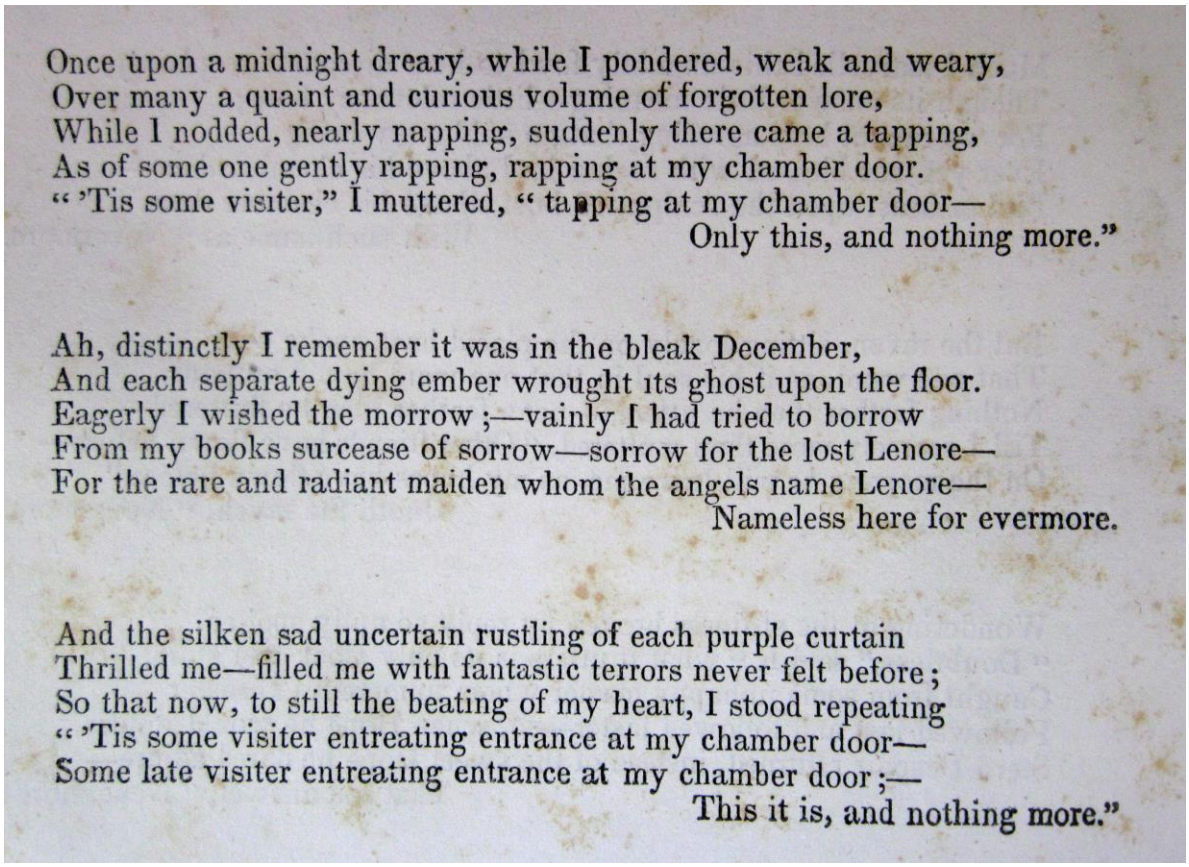
This is not Edgar Allan Poe's imagination. These are Mathew Franklin Whittier's own deeply personal recollections. And for him, this kind of literature is quite typical, as I can show from a great many examples.

In a poem which I have concluded is Mathew's, reprinted from the "National Era" in the November 10, 1849 Boston "Weekly Museum" (to which Mathew frequently contributed), he describes a very similar situation. As a poor author living in a "garret," or attic, the poet despairs of his failure, his poverty, and the opposition he faces; when suddenly a bright female spirit appears in his room to cheer him. The "National Era," edited by Mathew's brother, was an abolitionist newspaper which published, among other things, Harriet Beecher Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin" in serial form before it was released as a book. A number of clues indicate that for a period of weeks or months, beginning in mid-1849, Mathew lived in an attic in Philadelphia. The first stanza of "For in much Wisdom is much Grief," signed "Incog.," reads as follows:

> In a garret, forlorn and high,
> Wearily gazing upon the sky,
> Lingered a thoughtful and toil-worn one,
> Scanning the march of the setting sun:
> Broad his brow, but his form was thin,
> Dark and sad was the soul within,
> Lofty genius the eye bespoke,
> Burning words from the pale lips broke;
> Want, and Sorrow, and stern-faced Pride,
> In his garret stood side by side;
> Poverty, too, like a well-known guest,
> Leaned with her gaunt hand on his breast;
> Day and night, in his lonely cot,
> He felt their presence, but saw them not.

Let us now go just far enough into “The Raven” to cover the *literal* events which Mathew is recalling:

> 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 visiter,” 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 tried 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 visiter entreating entrance at my chamber door—
> Some late visiter entreating entrance at my chamber door;—
> This it is, and nothing more.”



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As the poem proceeds, Mathew brings in other literal elements from his life. The "purple curtains" in the third stanza, above (which will also figure in our discussion of "Lady Geraldine's Courtship," plagiarized from Mathew by the future Elizabeth Barrett Browning) once belonged—as I feel and seem to remember—to Abby. She had initially used either this very cloth, or a similar one, as a tapestry to cover the unsightly walls of an apartment they were renting. This would have been a natural choice for her, having been raised in an upper-class French home, her father being a marquis. Likewise the "velvet violet cushion" which appears in the 13th stanza:

> This and more I sat divining with my head at ease reclining
> On the cushion's velvet lining that the lamplight gloated o'er,
> But whose velvet violet lining with the lamplight gloating o'er,
> *She* shall press, ah, nevermore!

But this item is even more likely to have once belonged to a young woman of an upper-class background, inasmuch as in the late 1830's, when Abby would have used it, velour was not yet being widely manufactured, and velvet was expensive. Meanwhile, not only is purple the color of royalty, but many consider it the color of *spirituality*, suggesting the real reason for her preference.

Blifkins the Martyr

The “bust of Pallas” in “The Raven” was, as I gather, both literal and symbolic. In the 1850’s Mathew told his personal friend and editor, Benjamin Penhallow Shillaber, stories of his disastrous second, arranged marriage to a woman named Jane Vaughan. Shillaber fashioned these, perhaps in direct collaboration with Mathew, into a series about “Blifkins the Martyr.”[4] In one of the stories, “Blifkins” confides in Shillaber that he has met with the “widow Thompson” on a steamboat, in a dream. Clearly, she represents Abby and the visitation dreams that Mathew has referred to, in verse, on many occasions. But note Shillaber’s description of Blifkins in his introduction to the story:

> “I never told you about my moonlight excursion, last summer,” said Blifkins, smiling, as he sat and gazed “upon the bust of Pallas just above our study door.”
>
> There was something provokingly funny in his look, and he drummed the “Hallelujah” upon the chair, looking up at the bust aforesaid, as though he were exchanging private signals with the insensate plaster.

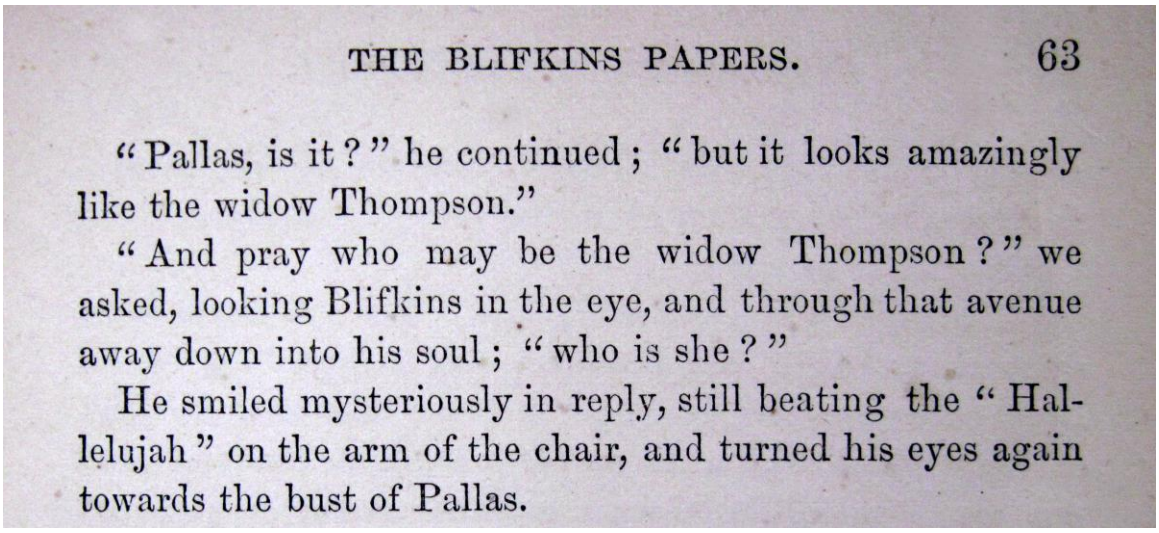
Here, the inference is that the bust resides above the study door of the narrator (presumably, Shillaber)—but in actuality, it would have been Mathew’s, which probably means Shillaber would have been visiting *him* (i.e., after that second marriage was over, when he was living alone). Now, the final clue is found a little further into the text. Here, it is suggested that Mathew is visiting Shillaber in his editorial office. This would not have been unusual, during the years 1851-53, when Shillaber edited the Boston “Carpet-Bag” and Mathew was a silent financial partner and a heavy contributor to the paper. There is evidence that Mathew had a key to that office and was sometimes the first to arrive early in the morning. Shillaber has written his account as though “Blifkins” is unfamiliar with the bust of Pallas above *his* door—this is deliberate obfuscation. Blifkins tells Shillaber that he had been on an excursion in the steamboat “Nelly Baker.” (This particular reference, if taken literally, would set the story some years later, but I think it was added.) Keep in mind that both Mathew and Shillaber were Spiritualists, but that Shillaber may not have been as strong in his beliefs as Mathew was.

Now, putting all of this evidence together, we find that the real context behind this story is that Mathew is sharing, with his friend Shillaber—somewhat reluctantly, because he knows Shillaber may mock him—a visitation dream from Abby.

> “Why, the Nelly Baker has stopped running for a month,” we said; “what do you mean?”
>
> “I mean,” he replied, “the most curious thing that ever happened to me, and one which I have wanted to tell you for a long time. I thought of it just as I came in here, and looked at that bust. Whose is it?”
>
> “Pallas.”
>
> “Pallas, is it?” he continued; “but it looks amazingly like the widow Thompson.”

"And pray who may be the widow Thompson?" we asked, looking Blifkins in the eye, and through that avenue away down into his soul: "who is she?"

He smiled mysteriously in reply, still beating the "Hallelujah" on the arm of the chair, and turned his eyes again towards the bust of Pallas.



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Shillaber has mixed-and-matched the facts to his own liking, while hiding Mathew's identity. For example, it's impossible that, in the early 1850's, Mathew would have to ask who the bust represented. If we deconstruct this passage, however, it tells us that Abby looked like the bust of Pallas; and that Mathew literally kept a replica of that bust above his study door (which is far more likely, under the circumstances, than that Shillaber kept one above his editorial office door at the "Carpet-Bag"). He would have done so because Abby, who in their youth had taken on the role of his tutor, had gifted him with both a full liberal education, and a knowledge of esoteric matters; while Pallas, also called Athena, was the Greek goddess of wisdom. Abby appears to have drawn most deeply, in her teaching, from the history, mythology and philosophy of ancient Greece. Athena represented, to Mathew, the wisdom that Abby had imparted to him, as well as her direct guidance from the spirit world. One of Mathew's favorite words was "palladium," which is a reference to the statue of Pallas that is said to have stood guard over the ancient city of Troy. The word, including deliberate comic misspellings in his "Ethan Spike" series, appears in at least 23 of his published works. Thus, the bust of Pallas being placed above his chamber door was his personal version of Pallas guarding Troy, except that here, the wisdom Abby had taught him was symbolically standing guard over his mind and his life.

As said, Abby was also a musical prodigy, having an excellent singing voice as well as being a skilled pianist. There is evidence that Mathew particularly loved the music of Handel; presumably, this is something he and Abby had once shared. In fact, I have identified one piece by Handel entitled "The Great Jehovah is Our Awful Theme" (where the word "Awful" means "awesome"), which I remembered Abby playing for him, and which impressed him very deeply. In the Dec. 25, 1844 edition of the New York "Tribune," the star-signed essay on "Christmas" tells us what he specifically thought of Handel's "Messiah" (and, presumably, the "Hallelujah Chorus"). As I have addressed in a separate article, this was *not* written by Margaret Fuller, as

scholars believe—this is Mathew signing with a secret pseudonym he had used since the early 1830's:

> If ever there was an occasion on which the arts could become all but omnipotent in the service of a holy thought, it is this of the birth of the child Jesus. In the palmy days of the Catholic religion, they may be said to have wrought miracles in its behalf, and, in our colder time, when we rather reflect that light from a different point of view, than transport ourselves into it; who that has an eye and ear faithful to the soul is not conscious of inexhaustible benefits from some of the works by which sublime geniuses have expressed their ideas in the adorations of the Magi and the Shepherds, in the Virgin with the infant Jesus, or that work which expresses what Christendom at large has not even begun to realize, that work which makes us conscious, as we listen, why the soul of man was thought worthy and able to upbear a cross of such dreadful weight—the Messiah of Handel.

Note that in the opening to this story of Blifkins, Shillaber depicts him attempting to *communicate telepathically* with (but actually, *through*) the bust of Pallas. Again, both of these men were Spiritualists, but Shillaber seems to have looked askance at Mathew's attempts to actively continue his relationship with Abby across the Great Divide, which I have evidence he was doing in the early 1850's (not long after he formally separated from his second wife, Jane). Meanwhile, it should be obvious that if Mathew was attempting to communicate telepathically with Abby through a similar-looking bust of Pallas, it is far more likely that he would do this in the privacy of his own home, with his own replica of the bust, and then somewhat naively *tell* Shillaber about it, than that he would do so openly in front of Shillaber with *Shillaber's* replica of the bust in the "Carpet-Bag" office, as Shillaber has comically depicted him. We can extrapolate from this that Mathew—once he had separated from his second wife and began living alone—owned a replica of the bust of Pallas which he kept as his own personal "palladium," and that, presumably, he may have had the same arrangement earlier, when he wrote "The Raven."

As if all this wasn't enough, there is a blatant reference in this story to Mathew's brother, John Greenleaf Whittier, and his poem, "Maud Muller." Here, "Blifkins" is speaking of having been rebuffed by Mrs. Blifkins in his offer to take her on a boat excursion:

> I was, I confess, a little discomposed at this, having expected a different reception for a proposition that sought her happiness, and seated myself moodily by the table, with my head upon my hand, thinking, I am constrained to say, upon other scenes than those that surrounded me, and another form than that which made the central figure of my domestic picture, murmuring to myself, inside, 'It might have been.' Excuse the digression; but Whittier has by those few words let many people into the secret of their unhappiness who never otherwise would have dreamt of it. Had he been a married man he never would have written them for politic reasons.

This brings up the point that in all literature, there is a *deep context* from which it arises, in the life and mind of the author. For example, when we read J.R.R. Tolkien's "Lord of the Rings" trilogy, we are aware that Tolkien was a trained philologist, that he had fought in World War I, that he was a deep student of Norse mythology, and that he perceived his relationship with his

wife in terms similar to what one sees portrayed in his characters, Aragorn and Arwen. Such a deep context is fully evident for Mathew Franklin Whittier in "The Raven," but it is entirely absent for Edgar Allan Poe. We will visit Poe's bogus attempt to explain his authorship of the poem, shortly.

Now, there is one bust of Athena, or Pallas, which *does* look somewhat like the historical Abby Poyen, and that is the one recovered from Herculaneum.[5]

Mathew was fascinated with ancient ruins, and with Herculaneum in particular. The following is an excerpt from a lengthy poem which Mathew published in the May 15, 1852 edition of the Portland (Maine) "Transcript," entitled "Iorno." It is signed, as was the Christmas article concerning Handel in the "Tribune," with his long-time secret signature, a "star." Note how similar the style (as I have previously defined that term) is to that of "The Raven":

> Slowly mouldering stood Iorno in its stern and gloomy pride,
> With a barren waste and trackless, and the sea on either side;
> And its strong-hold, hoary warrior, frowned above it lone and high,
> With its grey, embrazured turrets piled against the mellow sky;
> And the ramparts round the city, whence the shaft had winged its way,
> Swords had flashed, and glancing helmets, all the long and sunny day.
> At whose feet the tide of battle oft in laboring waves had broke,

On whose side the engine vainly oft had plied its shivering stroke,
Fallen, strewed the ground, or slowly, sadly bended to their fall,
Wreathing roots and towering branches filled the breaches of the wall;
Need was none of tower or rampart, no invader came that way,
And the lawless son of rapine stood, and gazed, and turned away;
And the curious intruder, with a vague, uncertain dread,
And a stealthy, restless footstep trod the city of the dead.

As do all widowers who are deeply grieving, Mathew was very much aware of artistic depictions of women which reminded him of Abby (she died before photography was readily available). This was even more poignant for him as he seems to have given away his miniature painting of her (which I discovered in the course of my research) in an exaggerated fit of Stoicism, while he was still in emotional shock after her death. Thus, having no physical images of her at all, once that shock wore off he was very keenly aware of artwork that looked like her. One must view the comparison—which I cannot provide, here, due to copyright considerations—with the eyes of a widower in grief who no longer has any images of his beloved, rather than by the usual objective standards.[6]

Trismegistus and A. Trunk

Briefly, let us now turn to one of Mathew's poems which, in some respects, parallels "The Raven." Specifically, if the earlier poem was an expression of fresh grief, this is an expression of lingering grief; and whereas the earlier poem expresses the *hope* of a spirit contact, this poem *reports* one.

In the 1851 Boston "Carpet-Bag," Mathew had been writing under the pseudonym, "Trismegistus." This pseudonym was inexplicably attributed by Shillaber in his published memoirs to one Benjamin Drew, but I have abundant evidence that it was definitely Mathew's. He had actually pulled it out of mothballs from as early as 1828 (the period during which he was making light of Abby's esoteric teachings). There were several spin-offs from Trismegistus in the "Carpet-Bag," including a reporter who wrote in verse, signing "A. Trunk." This was probably a reference to the Atlantic and St. Lawrence Railroad, soon to become part of the "Grand Trunk Railway." Mathew had lived for many years in Portland, and still maintained his ex-wife and three children there. In December of 1851, he attended the Boston opening of a panorama of the interior of the Crystal Palace, which held the London World's Fair. He had recently attended the Fair in person, but apparently had missed seeing a statue entitled the "Nymph of Lurleiberg," based on a German myth concerning a river sprite.

There are many pieces of evidence indicating that Mathew fondly called Abby a river sprite (including in “Lady Geraldine’s Courtship”). As the show commences, suddenly Mathew finds himself face-to-face with a representation of that statue, which reminds him vividly of Abby at the time they had lost their second child, and only two weeks before she, herself, succumbed to consumption. Just at that very instant, he experiences her presence; and that night, he is also vouchsafed a visitation dream. Note the odd admixture of serious and comical, which is also found in “The Raven,” being Mathew’s literary trademark:

In one side scene, withdrawn from sight,
  The “Nymph of Lurleibergh” is sitting,
I think you’ll find her on the right,
  She holds a lute, and not her knitting,
And in her wild, dejected air
I seemed to read a fixed despair,
That blinded me to all the glare
Of pomp and pride that glistened there.

Some memory of the past came o’er me,

And days long vanished rose before me;
I thought—no matter what I thought—
Such dreams as mine are lightly wrought,
And, lightly made, as lightly shivered;
  And now it seemed as if in truth
A beam of light that gleamed and quivered
  Upon the silvery tide of youth
Came back to cheer, and not in vain,
A spirit dulled with voiceless pain;
And as I pressed my couch at night,
  Her image hovering round me seemed,
And at the first of morning light
  I jotted down the things I dreamed,
And once again to slumber sunk,
With chattering teeth, your friend,
A. Trunk.

A comparison of the nymph (which statue I was able to identify) with the same portrait, also reveals a distinct similarity to Abby's face.[7] Keep in mind that Shillaber would have been quite aware of this, inasmuch as he published the poem in his own newspaper. (Mathew expresses surprise in his next installment, having assumed Shillaber wouldn't print it, which suggests to me that the opening lines were actually written by way of a personal communication.)

Returning to "The Raven," there is evidence suggesting that Mathew's mother was deeply superstitious, and that she had taught both Mathew and his brother that ravens were evil omens. Note, for example, the following excerpt from a poem also entitled "The Raven," written by John Greenleaf Whittier and published for him by Mathew in the May 15, 1830 New York "Constellation," when Mathew was editing that paper under editor-in-chief, Asa Greene:

Thou of the evil eye,
And the dark pinion, given to the wind,
When the storm cometh, like a host behind,
  Sweeping the sunless sky—
  Evil and lonely bird!
In the dark places of the desert earth,
Where the strange [?] of the wild have birth,
  Thy fearful voice is heard;—
  A hoarse unwelcome scream,
Waking unearthly echoes by the rude,
Fall of the cataract—in the groaning wood,
  And where the sluggard stream
  Creeps through the ghostly fort.

The raven in the poem by Mathew, perching upon the bust of Pallas and reciting the one word, "Nevermore," is symbolic of the seeming finality of death prevailing over everything Abby had taught him about the afterlife. In short, while John Greenleaf's effort could be construed as a

horror poem, Mathew's is not—it is an autobiographical account of a deeply religious, and yet intellectually skeptical widower experiencing a terrible faith crisis.

Extrapolating Mathew's particular interest in ravens

There is another reason why Mathew would have chosen a raven for this poem. Throughout his literary career, he was adept at imitating various dialects in print. From his earliest work in the late 1820's and early 1830's, he skillfully represented the speech of Yankees, French, Dutch, Irish, blacks (early in his career), and even sailors. I, also, find that I have a particular fascination with dialects and impressionists, today. Presumably, Mathew not only imitated these various dialects in print, but verbally as well. I have found no direct description of him doing so; but there are at least three instances of Mathew praising expert impressionists—one by inference, and two directly in reviews. Reporting for the Jan. 18, 1862 Portland "Transcript," Mathew reports on a performance by John Gough:

> Of course, the first great element of Mr. Gough's power as a speaker is his dramatic ability. He is not an elocutionist, but a natural actor. He speaks by no rules, and certainly suits his action to no known law of gesticulation. Commencing in a quiet tone, presently up go his arms, back goes his hair, he twists his body about like an eel undergoing the process of skinning, he stoops and places both hands upon his knees, he goes crouching across the platform, pointing his fore-finger at the audience, he flings himself up in the air and waves his hand on high as if it were a banner. His power of representation is startling. Every scene, with all the actors, is brought vividly before the audience. You not only hear his anecdotes but see them. When he seizes himself by the coat collar and drags himself across the platform, you see the policemen dragging in the resisting culprit as plainly as if the actual scene were before your eyes. And then the mobility of his face! Emotions of anger, rage, joy and sorrow flit across it like light and shade across the landscape on an April day. His power of facial expression is really wonderful. Look, tone, grimace, contortion, frown, scowl, simper, sob and trembling fear—all are at his quick command. At one moment he is curtseying the old women, at the next the London rough, ready to "punch your 'ed;" again he is the tragic actor, doing the "heavy" style with indescribable scowl and anon the piteous little street boy, telling with quivering lip that "Sandy isn't well--he got run over by a cart, sir—and his arm broke, sir—and he lost his knife, sir—and sixpense, sir, and the doctor says Sandy's going to *dee*."

It takes but a small logical step to conclude that Mathew would be fascinated by the raven's ability to mock any and all dialects; and that, once again, with him we have a *deep context* for this extraordinary bird being chosen as a central figure in his poem, "The Raven."

"B." in the "Weekly Museum"

Writing a travelogue in the 1849 Boston "Weekly Museum" over the signature "B." (probably standing for "Bertram"[8]—a character representing himself as Abby's suitor in "Lady Geraldine's Courtship"), Mathew speaks of Edgar Allan Poe, not long after Poe's death. This letter to the editor appears in the Nov. 17, 1849 edition. He tells us he had attended Poe's public reading in

Boston in 1845, the year that “The Raven” was published. Poe had been paid a hefty sum to read a new poem which he was to have written for the occasion, but pleading insufficient time, he opted to read one of his old ones—which I believe he had also plagiarized—“Al Aaraaf.” (As I read some of the accounts of this event, he actually tried to *pass off* “All Aaraaf” as a new poem, while yet insinuating that he had been a child prodigy by altering its date.) Mathew tells us that Poe cleared out three quarters of the audience, and to rescue the situation, he boldly asked the stage manager if he could read “The Raven.” This, as I gather, he proceeded to do rather amateurishly or melodramatically, because, after all, he hadn’t written the poem and didn’t have a deep understanding of it.

Mathew, writing as “B.,” conveys the truth of the matter with supreme tact:

> For many reasons I consider that I was fortunate in hearing him recite his poem, “Al Aaraaf,” before the Boston Lyceum four years ago. Probably he was quite as unpopular in Boston as in any other city, and the circumstances attending his performance injured him, variously, in the opinions of the Bostonians, more than anything he had previously done. Two thirds of his audience left before he closed, but with the most imperturbable sang froid, he requested the presiding officer to announce to those still in the house, that if they would remain, he would be pleased to recite to them “The Raven.” All was hushed at once, and Mr. Poe recited that remarkable poem in a manner that will never be repeated.

“For many reasons” includes, I suspect, that he wanted to sit up front to rattle Poe, if possible—but Poe, being, as I am convinced, a sociopath, displayed “imperturbable sang froid.” Note in particular the phrase, “in a manner that will never be repeated.” Technically, this description is neutral. But because it is neutral where praise would be expected, it can arguably be interpreted as tactful disparagement. (If so, this would not be the only time Mathew has made use of this literary technique.) Here, he readily admits that the *poem* is remarkable—but he can only say, with Poe dead, that his *reading* of “The Raven” *will never be repeated*. In fairness, however, I must also give “B’s” introduction, which seems entirely favorable and sympathetic:

> Poor Poe! He is dead, and his faults of character will now, in a great measure, be overlooked, while his remarkable literary qualities will begin to be appreciated and acknowledged. The demerits of the *man*, will not lessen the merits of the *author*. 'Tis ever so, when censure can no longer pain, “or flattery soothe.” The press is already teeming with his wild, imaginative, and wonderfully melodious verses; biographical sketches, to which it is not my intention to add, are met with in all the papers of the country. Like hundreds of his elder brothers, he asked for bread, and, as in their case, so in his, it was denied; but now, when bread cannot serve him, probably in his case as in theirs, a stone will be given.

“B” also quotes the following lines from the New York “Tribune”:

> The summer tide of his life was past,
> And his hopes were strewn like leaves on the blast;
> His faults were many, his virtues few,

A tempest, with flecks of the Heaven's blue!
He might have soared in the morning light,
But he built his nest with the birds of Night!

He glimmered apart in a solemn gloom,
Like a dying lamp in a haunted tomb;
He touched his lute with a cunning spell,
But all its melodies breathed of Hell!
He summoned the Afrits and the Ghouls,
And the pallid ghosts of the damned souls!

He then remarks:

> The above lines, which I quote from a poem by Stoddard, in the Tribune, I have taken for granted (no name is given) as referring to Poe; and I have quoted partly for the truth therein, and partly that I may offer an objection or two. That *all* of Poe's melodies breathe of Hell, is not true; and that he summoned *only* the ghosts of the damned, is equally incorrect, as all who are familiar with his poems can testify.

But unless I am very much mistaken, two of the poems he alludes to are the ones Poe stole from him, i.e., "The Raven" and "Annabel Lee"—his intention being to rescue them from the general condemnation. "B." goes on to praise "The Bells" and especially "Ulalume" for their onamatopoeia—but whether this is done sincerely, or as a gesture of generosity for the dead, or even with tongue in cheek, isn't entirely clear.

I think the explanation is both nuanced and complex. Mathew, himself, is not quite sure how to evaluate Poe, because a great deal depends on how much of the material which Poe *claimed*, he had actually *written*. Secondly, Mathew, as a Christian, is indeed bending over backwards to give the recently-decesaed Poe the benefit of the doubt, in a spirit of forgiveness and "turning the other cheek." But at the same time, he is writing in ironic code. "Ulalume" and "The Bells" are, in my estimation, bad knock-offs of "The Raven" in particular, and of Mathew's own preferred style in general.[9] Clearly, "The Bells" falls into that category of Poe's works which "breathe of hell"; while I take "Ulalume" to be a decidedly amateurish effort (despite the one happy example of onamatopoeia which "B." cites). Mathew has, at various times, assessed Poe as a literary imposter, and as a wayward genius. That determination, once again, rests heavily on the question of *just how much of Poe's claimed work was actually his*. If my present opinion that Poe plagiarized roughly 90% of the poems he published before year 1843 is correct, then Mathew simply could not fathom the sheer degree of his piracy; and hence could come to no accurate assessment of his talents. In other words, while Mathew is still assuming that Poe *did* write some of his plagiarized works, he has to give the man his due; but this assumption is mistaken, and his earlier assessment was the correct one, after all. We will see, when we encounter Mathew's take on Poe in the 1853 "Waverley Magazine," that four years later he returns to his view of Poe as an imitator.

"In a manner…"

It so happens there is first-hand testimony substantiating Mathew's own report of Poe's idiosyncratic—and by sarcastic inference, substandard—recitation of "The Raven." It can be found in the Jan. 8, 1903 edition of the Indiana "Upland Monitor." I reproduce the brief article in full:

> **Poe's Last Recitation in City of Richmond**
>
> "I became acquainted with Mr. Poe during his last visit to Richmond, in 1849, at Duncan Lodge, the home of our mutual friend, Mrs. Jame Mackenzie, and of Poe's sister, Rosalie," says Dr. John F. Carter, in a paper in Lippincott's Magazine for November, on the American poet's last night in Richmond.
>
> "It was at Mrs. Mackenzie's that I first heard Poe recite, at her request, 'The Raven' and 'Annabel Lee,' only the family being present. From an unusually lively mood he lapsed at once into a manner, expression and tone of voice of gloomy and almost weird solemnity, gazing as if on something invisible to others, and never changing his position until the recitation was concluded. It happened that he had just before requested of Mrs. Mackenzie the loan of a sum of money which request she was for the time unable to comply with, and she now said to him, 'Edgar, what do you think of giving a public recital of those poems? It would probably prove a financial success.' The result was that about a week later there appeared in the city papers a notice that on a certain evening the poet would give a recitation of his own two favorite poems in the Exchange concert room, tickets to be had at a certain bookstore. Over two hundred of these were printed, the charge of admission being 50 cents each.
>
> "On the appointed evening I, then a young man of 24, accompanied Mrs. Julia Mayo Cabell and another lady, both warm personal friends of Poe from his childhood, to the place of the proposed recitation. We arrived some moments after the appointed time, and to our surprise, found instead of a full audience, but nine persons assembled, we, together with the usher, making thirteen in number. Some time elapsed before Poe made his appearance, when he took his place on the platform, bowed, and, resting his hands on the back of a chair, recited 'The Raven' and 'Annabel Lee,' but in a mechanical sort of way, and with a total lack of the weird and gloomy expression which had given them such effect at Mrs. Mackenzie's. On concluding he again bowed and abruptly left the platform.
>
> "The proceeds of this experiment was $6, in consideration of which Mr. Boyden, proprietor of the Exchange, would make no charge for the use of the hall, lights and attendance."

Aside from whatever it may say about Edgar Allan Poe, this confirms that Mathew was, in fact, employing a particular technique of ironic literary code when he wrote that, in 1845, Poe recited the poem "in a manner that shall never be repeated."

Thomas Dunn English

Among Poe scholars and Poe fans, the dispute that arose in mid-1846 between Edgar Allan Poe and his former friend, Thomas Dunn English, is well-known. Like two boys who are caught fighting in the school yard, and are brought into the principal's office where they are punished equally, everyone analyzing this exchange seems to imagine that both participants "gave as good as they got," and were both equally guilty of exaggerating while disparaging the other. But what if English were essentially honest (albeit on the defensive), while Poe was flagrantly lying?

On June 23, 1846, English published a lengthy "card" or response to Poe, in which there are two relevant references. I take this "card" from a book entitled "Poe's Major Crisis" by Sidney P. Moss. English writes, with regard to Poe's reading in Boston (the same that Mathew had attended):

> Want of ability prevented him from performing his intention, and he insulted his audience, and rendered himself a laughing stock, by reciting a mass of ridiculous stuff, written by some one, and printed under his name when he was about 18 years of age. It had a peculiar effect on his audience, who dispersed under its infliction; and when he was rebuked for his fraud, he asserted that he had intended a hoax. Whether he did or not is little matter, when we reflect that he took the money offered for his performance—thus committing an act unworthy of a gentleman, though in strict keeping with Mr. Poe's previous acts.

Recall Mathew's own first-hand account of this event, signing as "B.":

> Two thirds of his audience left before he closed, but with the most imperturbable sang froid, he requested the presiding officer to announce to those still in the house, that if they would remain, he would be pleased to recite to them "The Raven." All was hushed at once, and Mr. Poe recited that remarkable poem in a manner that will never be repeated.

But here, Dunn is telling us in no uncertain terms that Poe had *plagiarized* "Al Aaraaf," which he read first. Clearly it's the same poem, inasmuch as whatever date Poe attempted to hastily assign to it at that event, he had published it in "Al Aaraaf, Tamerlane, and Minor Poems" in 1829, at age 20. This dovetails precisely with my own interpretation, when comparing that poem with what I assessed as Poe's own native capabilities.

Secondly, near the close of English's "card" of June 3, 1846, we read:

> He really does not possess one tithe of that greatness which he seems to regard as an uncomfortable burthen. He mistakes coarse abuse for polished invective, and vulgar insinuation for sly satire. He is not alone thoroughly unprincipled, base and depraved, but silly, vain and ignorant—not alone an assassin in morals, but a quack in literature. His frequent quotations from languages of which he is entirely ignorant, and his consequent blunders expose him to ridicule; while his cool plagiarisms from known or forgotten writers, excite the public amazement.

This, again, is precisely the conclusion I had reached before I accessed English's assessment. And this is also what Mathew had been trying to say, with his secret literary hints—that Edgar Allan Poe was actually a literary imposter who had plagiarized the greatest portion of the work

he was thought to have written. All that is required is to *believe* that English is telling the literal truth.

George Graham's testimony

In fairness, in the May 4, 1850 edition of the Boston "Weekly Museum" is a reprint of an essay written by George Graham, of "Graham's Magazine," giving his personal reminiscences in defense of Poe's reputation:

> I shall never forget how solicitous of the happiness of his wife and mother-in-law he was, whilst one of the editors of *Graham's Magazine*—his whole effort seemed to be to procure the comfort and welfare of his home. Except for their happiness—and the natural ambition of having a magazine of his own—I never heard him deplore the want of wealth. The truth is, he cared little for money, and knew less of its value, for he seemed to have no personal expenses. What he received from me in regular monthly instalments went directly into the hands of his mother-in-law for family comforts… His love for his wife was a sort of rapturous worship of the spirit of beauty, which he felt was fading before his eyes. I have seen him hovering around her when she was ill, with all the fond fear and tender anxiety of a mother for her first-born—her slightest cough causing in him a shudder, a heart-chill that was visible. I rode out one summer evening with them, and the remembrance of his watchful eyes eagerly bent upon the slightest change of hue in that loved face, haunts me yet as the memory of a sad strain. It was this hourly *anticipation* of her loss, that made him a sad and thoughtful man, and lent a mournful melody to his undying song.

This may or may not be an accurate interpretation of Poe's inner feelings and motivations; or, Graham may have been projecting them on the scene. Conceivably, Poe was one of those persons whose circle of affection was very small, such that everyone outside of his immediate family was an enemy and fair game for treachery. However, there is a serious disconnect, here. It would have been unspeakably cruel for Poe to publish "The Raven" while Virginia was struggling bravely against her final illness—the emotional equivalent of burying her alive. And if Graham is inferring—as it seems he is—that Poe could have written "The Raven" in "anticipatory grief," I would say that there is no such psychological phenomenon. "The Raven" expresses real grief, while Poe was in a state of worry. The two are radically different emotions. Meanwhile, Poe's later explanation of how he wrote "The Raven" suggests he was devoid of emotion altogether! (We will turn our attention to "The Philosophy of Composition," shortly.)

Graham goes on to say:

> The very natural question—'Why did he not work and thrive?' is easily answered. It will not be *asked* by the many who know the precarious tenure by which literary men hold a mere living in this country. The avenues through which they can profitably reach the country are few, and crowded with aspirants for read as well as fame. The unfortunate tendency to cheapen every l literary work to the lowest point of beggarly flimsiness in price and profit, prevents even the well-disposed from extending anything like an adequate support to even a part of the great throng which genius, talent, education, and even misfortune, force into the struggle. … Let the moralist who stands

> upon tufted carpet, and surveys his smoking board, the fruits of his individual toil or mercantile adventure, pause before he lets the anathema, trembling upon his lips, fall upon a man like Poe! Who, wandering from publisher to publisher, with his fine, print-like manuscript, scrupulously clean and neatly rolled, finds no market for his brain—with despair at heart, misery ahead for his wife and loved ones, and gaunt famine dogging at his heels, thus sinks by the wayside, before the demon that watches his steps, and whispers OBLIVION.

But we have another serious disconnect, here—because it was Graham, himself, who rejected "The Raven" when a destitute Poe approached him with it. This editor obviously knew a top-flight piece of literature when he saw one; therefore, this would make of him the very villain he criticizes! Actually, the only reason he would reject this poem, and yet gift Poe $15 out of pity, *is if he strongly suspected Poe had not written it, and hence his magazine would be at risk of legal action.* But if he seriously suspected Poe of plagiarism, then this elaborate, lavishly-worded paean is severely prejudiced in Poe's favor.

"E.A. Poh" in "Yankee Doodle"

In the years 1846 and 1847, Mathew was contributing to the first American humor magazine patterned after Britain's "Punch," called the New York "Yankee Doodle." In the first or second edition of 1846 (the digital copy I have access to omits cover pages for the editions of this year), appears a satirical poem entitled "The Haunted Pasty," signed "By E.A. Poh." "Poh," of course, is a 19th-century expression of cynicism or disgust. I can definitely assign this poem to Mathew Franklin Whittier, because he has arranged for it to share the page with another piece which is clearly his, by style (a more detailed discussion can be found in my sequel, "Mathew Franklin Whittier in his own world"). As Mathew often did, here he has introduced the poem with a quote, this one being in Latin:

> Aspice quam tumeat magno jecur ansere majus.—Martial.

It is derived from Marci Valerii Martialis's "Epigrammata," and translates to "Behold, how much more the liver swells than the big goose." This is a reference to the ancient Roman practice of force-feeding geese, so as to artificially fatten their livers. Presumably, Mathew perceives Poe as artificially "fattened" in his literary ambitions, i.e., through plagiarism and assumed airs.

The poem reads:

> On a clean shelf in our pantry,
> Rat and mouse be-tenanted,—
> Once a noble pie stood sentry,
> Pie with spices powderéd.
> In the cook's especial region,
> It stood there;
> Than or canvass-back or widgeon,
> More tempting fare.
>
> Paste most delicate, glorious, golden

O’er its breast did melt and glow.
(This, alas! was in the olden
Time, long ago.)
And each gentle air that floated
Over it, awhile,
Would have twisted the most bloated
Stern face to a smile.

Pilgrims to that happy larder,
Through the tin crust saw
Visions of livers, ranged in order,
A la Perigord.
Bloated livers, livers fatted,
Anseregene,
Created to be spiced and patéd
For Earth’s loveliest queen.

Evil shapes—rats, mice, cockroaches,
Swarmed upon that paté’s face.
Mourn we then—for ne’er our clutches
More such pie shall grace—
Round about that shelf the glory
Immense that loomed,
Is a faint, dismembered story,
Now rat-entombed.

Pilgrims, now, within that larder,
Through the nibbled pastry see
Creeping things, in foul disorder,
Feasting gluttonly.
While, like hidden Stygian river,
Its deep chasms o’er,
Fiftul puffs come wiffling ever—
Sweet no more!

Mathew perceives Poe as a self-inflated hack who, upon obtaining wholesome literary “food” through skullduggery, spoils it like the vermin in the kitchen spoil the pies.

Then, in what I take to be the November 1846 edition appears another Poe parody, also signed “E.A. Poh,” this time of “The Raven” itself. It is entitled “The B—d B—g and No Other Poems,” being obviously a reference to “The Raven and Other Poems.” “No other poems” signifies that aside from “The Raven,” there *were* no other poems worthy of the name in that compilation. As with the earlier parody, another piece which is definitely Mathew’s, by style, appears with it on the page, marking it as his own. The title is followed by a brief statement in parentheses:

> (The original is much longer, but these Stanzas are respectfully submitted as specimens.)

This is code for “There’s a lot more I’d like to say, but this is what I can get away with in print.”

Inasmuch as it stands as evidence, I once again give the poem in its entirety:

Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, lolling weary
Over several curious books of sure-to-be-forgotten lore,
While I nodded nearly sleeping, suddenly there came a creeping,
As of some grimalkin peeping at an open pantry door.
So, I said, "'Tis some musquito, or some fly was here before.
Only this, and nothing more."

But full soon there came a burning that brought on uneasy turning,
And again I felt the creeping somewhat stronger than before.
Then, I cried, "There's in the blanket something worse, and I don't thank it,
For coming thus to prank it, and my quiet couch explore,
For coming thus at midnight hour my calm couch to explore,
'Tis a most confounded bore!"

So my watch I straight did handle, and I lit another candle--
When I saw a raven* b—d b—g that had stepped up from the floor.
Oh, the sight of such a monster would have made the gravest don stir,
It was such a mighty b--d b--g as you never saw before.
Such a monstrous, monstrous b—d b—g did I never see before,
And I hope to see no more.

You would never find his equal should you search Madrid a week well,
Nor in Athens should you seek well, of bad animals the grower.
And I'll bet you sundry pennies there is no such one in Venice,
Nor at Rome, where many a den is of such creatures in the floor,
Many an antiquated den is of such vermin in the floor,
Since the saintly days of yore.

Much I marveled this atrocious brute had managed so to nose us,
And I wished him at the ----- somewhere, and I rather think I swore,
And I cried, "thou very devil that art working me this evil,
Wilt thou ever let me slumber? Tell me truly, I implore,
Say, wilt thou, wilt thou ever let me go to sleep and snore?"
Then the b—g said, "Nevermore!"

"Get thee out!" I cried, up-kicking, as I felt the creature pricking,
"Get thee out, thou biggest b—d b—g that I ever saw on shore!
Leave no black scars as a token of the ills thy fangs have wroken.
Let my fair skin be unbroken, and betake thee to the door!
Take thy beak from out my toe, and thyself along the floor!"
Quoth the b—d b—g, "Nevermore!"

And the loathly reptile sprawling still is crawling, still is crawling,

And I can't give him a mauling, though thereby I should set store;
And his fangs they work as greedy as an ogre's that is seedy,
And with demon-aided speed he flies about from pore to pore,
And my body from his pincers that have marked me o'er and o'er,
Shall be shielded never more!

Q. *raving*? "What are you going on so for, like a *ravin*-distracted b-d b-g?"—SAM SLICK.

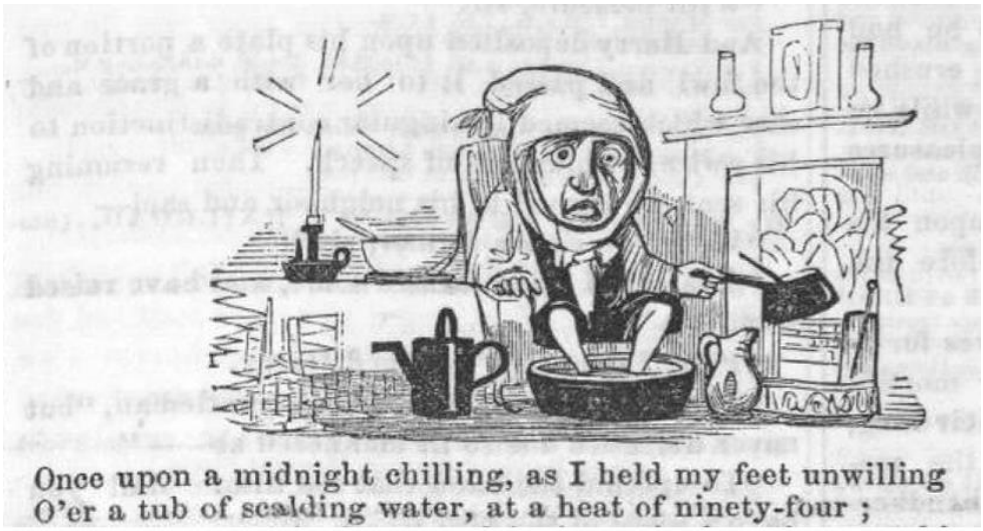
Mathew had assumed the character of a bed bug once before, in a parody of the criminal confession genre, in the July 2, 1831 New York "Constellation" entitled "Last Dying Confession of a Notorious Bloody ------." Aside from vermin in the kitchen, in 19th-century New York City, especially among boarding house dwellers like Mathew, there was nothing more hated than bed bugs. The commentary added at the bottom references a quote from "Sam Slick," a character created by Thomas Chandler Haliburton, who wrote humor in Yankee dialect similar to that found in Mathew's "Ethan Spike" series (it is my conclusion that Mathew actually invented this genre in America, with his 1825 series featuring "Joe Strickland"). Thus, he is *far* more likely to be familiar with this obscure reference than most writers would be.

In Mathew's estimation, Poe is little better than rats or bed-bugs. But specifically, he suggests, in code, that Poe is indeed a *literary imposter*, the obvious inference being that he could not have written "The Raven."

"The Vulture" in the "Carpet-Bag"

This was not the only parody Mathew wrote of "The Raven." In the Dec. 18, 1852 edition of the "Carpet-Bag," appears "The Vulture: An Ornithological Study," which is unsigned. The subject is another type of pest very high on Mathew's list of abominations, about which he wrote on numerous occasions: a "bore." Scholars, having entirely missed the poem's premiere in the "Carpet-Bag," assigned it variously to John Saxe or British humorist Robert Brough, depending on whether they found it in the Dec. 1853 edition of "Graham's Magazine," or the 1853 edition of "Cruikshank's Comic Almanack." However, this was actually part of an anonymous series Mathew had been writing for the "Carpet-Bag"—one number of which had been set in Boston, where he lived (thus precluding Brough, and limiting the possible authors to the Boston area). "The Vulture" is generally considered one of the best parodies ever written of "The Raven," and the real reason for its quality is that it was, in fact, written by the author of the original poem.

I have gone to great lengths to prove the authorship of this poem for Mathew's pen, which discussion may be found in my books. It will suffice, here, to reproduce the first few stanzas, in order to give an idea of its sheer quality and creativity, as well as Mathew's typically subtle, edgy humor:



Once upon a midnight chilling, as I held my feet unwilling
O'er a tub of scalding water, at a heat of ninety-four;
Nervously a toe in dipping, dripping, slipping, then outskipping,
Suddenly there came a ripping whipping, at my chamber's door.
"'Tis the second-floor," I mutter'd, "dipping at my chamber's door—
Wants a light—and nothing more!"

Ah! distinctly I remember, it was in the chill November,
And each cuticle and member was with Influenza sore;
Falt'ringly I stirr'd the gruel, steaming creaming o'er the fuel,
And anon removed the jewel that each frosted nostril bore,
Wiped away the trembling jewel that each redden'd nostril bore—
Nameless here for evermore!

And I recollect a certain draught that fann'd the window curtain,
Chill'd me, fill'd me with a horror of two steps across the floor,
And, besides, I'd got my feet in, and a most refreshing heat in,
To myself I sat repeating—"If I answer to the door—
Rise to let the ruffian in who seems to want to burst the door,
I'll be——" that and something more.

Mathew had been in London in mid-1851 to attend the International Peace Congress, and it would be typical of him to meet with illustrators there, comissioning a couple of pieces. Again, a more detailed exploration of this question is found in my books.

Just to establish Mathew's intense dislike of bores (and these are by no means the only examples), the following is an excerpt from another of the "Trismegistus" spin-offs, Dr. E. Goethe Digg, a caricature of academia and, in particular, of academic philosophers. This comic report appears in the May 8, 1852 edition of the "Carpet-Bag" under the title, "Treatment of Bore—Acute and Chronic":

> Case II. While I was reading Bleak House, and had become interested in the treatment of Jaundice, C.D. entered my office. I noticed, that his gait was slow and irresolute. I suspected, that he had come to consult me on a case of acute bore. I laid down my book, and proceeded to examine the patient. His pupils seemed deficient of healthy expression. He took a seat near my table, took up the book which I had laid down, and began to read. I was satisfied now, of the nature of his affliction, and while ruminating on a method of cure, I unconsciously took up his hat, and commenced piercing holes through it with a lancet. He dropped my book, asked for his hat, and through the influence of simple suggestion, said "I must be going." As he has not called on me since, I have no doubt he was cured by the use of the lancet, as above mentioned.

"The Philosophy of Composition"

I have thus far shared an incomplete description of Mathew Franklin Whittier's *deep context* for writing "The Raven," along with some of his anonymous public responses. Now let us turn to Edgar Allan Poe's attempt to create a phony back-story—his essay, published in the April 1846 edition of "Graham's Magazine," entitled "The Philosophy of Composition." Here, he pretends to be writing about composition itself, into which essay he *just happens* to bring his supposed authorship of "The Raven" by way of example. But this is all slight-of-hand. He is using the essay on composition as an excuse to indulge in what the corporate propagandists call "damage control." I would guess that's because his authorship of "The Raven" has been questioned, and he must now provide this bogus history to shore up his claim. Note that the sociopath's power to charm is specifically derived *from his audacity*. Now that Poe has publicly explained how he crafted "The Raven," in order to dispute it one would have to accuse him of committing an outrageous hoax—which, in a particular sense is precisely what he has done. It's not strictly speaking a *parody*, as some have suggested, nor is it a hoax in the sense that he falsely claimed his reading at the Boston lyceum was a hoax (while still taking the fee). It is actually a childish *scam*, and as a scam, it was in dead earnest. Remember that English has characterized Poe as being "silly," by which I would interpret, "childish." That's because, as a sociopath, Poe's emotional and moral development are stunted, despite his extreme cleverness.

The gist of the essay is that for him, the writing of "The Raven" was, supposedly, an intellectual exercise. He explains it all in terms of choosing and combining modular literary elements, as though he had built the poem out of intellectual Lego blocks. But anyone with intuitive discernment knows it's impossible to compose a truly great poem by this method. All he has actually done, is to reverse engineer someone else's poem.

Let us see, by way of example, what he has to say about the bust of Pallas:

> I made the bird alight on the bust of Pallas, also for the effect of contrast between the marble and the plumage—it being understood that the bust was absolutely *suggested* by the bird—the bust of *Pallas* being chosen, first, as most in keeping with the scholarship of the lover, and, secondly, for the sonorousness of the word, Pallas, itself.

To get a better sense of the absurdity of Poe's claim, let's summarize his supposed reasoning in composing "The Raven":

1) He decided upon a length of about one hundred lines.
2) The subject should be Beauty, meaning, "intense and pure elevation of *soul—not* of intellect, or of heart."
3) Given the subject, the tone should be sadness.
4) There should be a repeating refrain.
5) That refrain should be brief, ideally a single word.
6) That word should contain the sound of "o" as the "most sonorous vowel," combined with "r" as the "most producible consonant."
7) The word "nevermore" best fits these two requirements.
8) A pretext being required to use the word "nevermore," the monotony of its continued use would make more sense coming from a bird than from a human being.
9) While a parrot first came to mind, he settled on a raven.
10) The best subject which fits all of the above criteria, is the death of a beautiful woman.
11) This led to combining the two ideas "of a lover lamenting his deceased mistress and a Raven continuously repeating the word 'Nevermore.'"

This progression—beginning with the calculating decision regarding length, and the nonsensical distinction between elevation of "heart," and of "soul"— is childish "B.S." crafted after the fact. It's the kind of essay paper which an astute teacher would mark with a big red "F," because it is inauthentic from start to finish. But its lack of integrity is fully revealed only in comparison with the authentic back-story of the poem's real author, Mathew Franklin Whittier.

I should note, here, that scholars have suggested Poe wrote this essay as a satirical "hoax." If so, I think he was mocking those who had been fooled by his false claim, as a psychopath mocks the police detectives, rather than as a truly inspired poet would mock the "piecemeal" method set forth in the essay. This was, after all, the method he actually employed to write his poetry (excepting, of course, those pieces he plagiarized). In other words, if this was a parody, it was a parody not of this dry, intellectual method, but only of the way he supposedly derived the elements of this particular poem—since he knew full-well he had not, in fact, honestly derived any of them.

How Poe stole "The Raven"

There is a "smoking gun" among the revisions that Poe made to this poem, but we must first turn to the circumstances of its publication. "The Raven" first appeared—or was slated to first appear—in a new literary magazine in New York called "American Review." It was published in the second (February) edition, under the pseudonym "—— Quarles," this being an apparent reference to poet Francis Quarles—the same whom Mathew had reviewed from Abby's antiquarian volume for "The Essayist" almost 15 years earlier. My own past-life memory suggested to me, in a train of free associations, that Abby especially loved this poet. She had a brilliant logical mind, and was a very tough opponent in a debate. So Mathew gave her this nickname, "Abby Quarles," as a play on the word "quarrels." Thus, the pseudonym "—— Quarles" secretly dedicates the poem to her as "Abby Quarles." This would have been especially apropos in relation to their early arguments on paranormal topics, for which I have evidence. In

effect, Mathew's confusion as expressed in "The Raven" is a continuation of that argument, now internalized. This is why he would have used that particular nickname for Abby, as a secret dedication in the signature.

Now, Mathew seems to have had a habit of submitting particularly good work to fledgling publications as a "housewarming present." He had done so, for example, with his old friend and editor, Joseph T. Buckingham, for the first edition of the "New-England Magazine" in 1831. Very likely, he had followed suit here; except that for some reason his choice offering had been delayed until the second edition. The question remains as to whether Mathew submitted the poem anonymously, or the editor knew his identity. There is a clue that Mathew submitted at least one piece anonymously to the "New-England Magazine," and there are other examples throughout his career. When Poe claimed the poem as his own, and no-one else stepped forward to dispute that claim, the editor would have had no choice but to believe him. Had the editor questioned Poe about the poem having been submitted in a different handwriting, Poe could simply have asserted that he had had a professional calligrapher copy it over for him—a plausible explanation, inasmuch as this was a common practice, and Mathew did write in a calligrapher's hand.

In early 1845, both Mathew and Poe were working in New York City as literary critics, with their respective newspapers being in very close proximity. Mathew wrote for the "Tribune," signing with his long-time secret signature, a "star" or single asterisk; while Poe wrote for the "Evening Mirror." I believe that, as a literary reviewer, Poe would have typically received advance copies of new publications. Thus, he would have had in his possession a copy of the February edition of "American Review" before it hit the streets. Seeing "The Raven" in it—and having a physical copy of that poem which Mathew had given him in 1842—Poe knew he had to act fast. Making a few revisions, he may have used his handwritten copy to convince his editor, on the "Evening Mirror," that it was *his* poem, and that he had permission (which he may or may not have had) to actually scoop the "American Review" in the "Evening Mirror." And let me say that this business of obtaining permission to scoop seems to be passed over very lightly by historians. In over a decade of studying the literary world of the 19th century, I cannot recall *ever* having run across an instance wherein one editor permitted another to scoop him—*especially* in a brand new publication. And it is also important to understand that while "American Review" was a literary monthly, the daily "Evening Mirror," as I examine the actual editions from year 1845, was no great shakes from the literary point of view. It contained a great deal of mundane news, with a little bit of literature thrown in to dignify it. *I can see no reason why such a daily newspaper should be permitted to scoop a newly-launched literary monthly.*

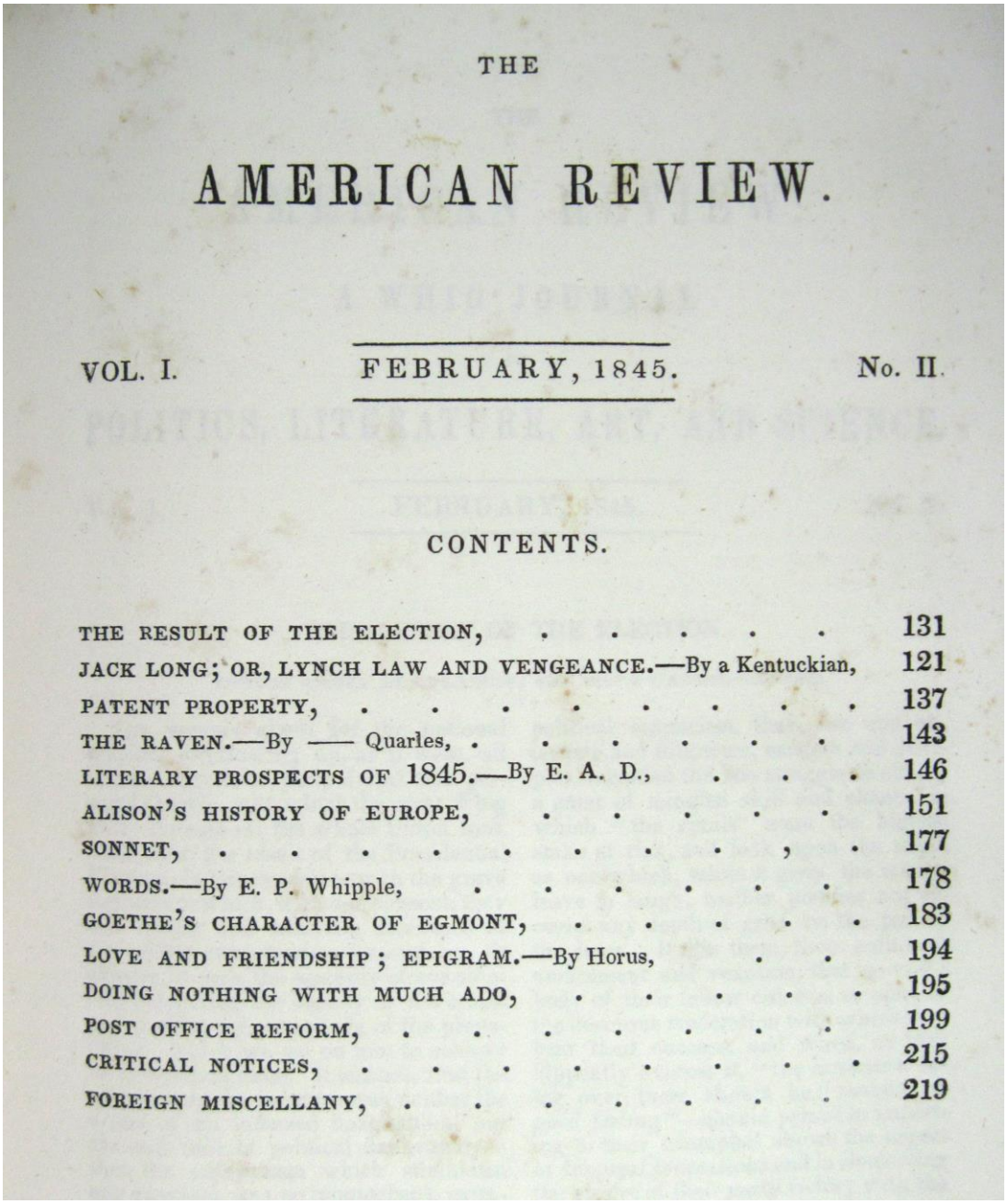
Edgar Allan Poe published "The Raven"—with a few revisions, one of which we will examine shortly—in the Jan. 29, 1845 edition of the "Evening Mirror," the paper for which he, himself, wrote reviews. The editor introduces it as follows:

> We are permitted to copy (in advance of publication) from the 2d No. of the American Review, the following remarkable poem by Edgar Poe. In our opinion, it is the most effective single example of "fugitive poetry" ever published in this country: and unsurpassed in English poetry for subtle conception, masterly ingenuity of versification, and consistent, sustaining of imaginative lift and "pokerishness." It is one of these

> "dainties bred in a book" which we *feed* on. It will stick to the memory of everybody who reads it.

As mentioned, Poe had earlier attempted to submit the poem to his old boss, George Graham of "Graham's Magazine," and Graham rejected it but, out of pity, gave the destitute Poe $15 (in 1840's currency). But this interpretation presupposes that Graham was an absurdly poor judge of poetry. I think it's far more likely that, based on his personal acquaintance with Poe, he strongly suspected the poem was stolen. Not wanting to be sued, he thought it would be wiser (and ultimately cheaper) to simply give Poe the money, without putting Poe on the defensive by explaining his reasons. This does, however, indicate that Poe had a copy of the poem before it was published in "American Review."

We are further told that Poe then sold the poem for $9.00, but apparently this refers to the "Evening Mirror," where Poe published it in the Jan. 29, 1845 edition, and not "American Review." Some historians further explain that the reason Poe signed the poem "—— Quarles," is that "American Review" required all work to be submitted under pseudonyms. But this is not strictly-speaking correct. Its editors may have expressed the preference, when the publication was first launched, that all work be submitted *anonymously*. Some of the authors chose not to sign their works at all, and Poe could just as easily have taken this route, if he had been the one submitting it. For example, in the edition in which "The Raven" appears, of 14 entries on the Contents page, nine (including those written by the editors) have no author listed at all; two, including "The Raven," bear a pseudonym (the other being "Horus"), one is signed "By a Kentuckian," one bears the initials "E.A.D.," and one is signed with the author's real name, "E.P. Whipple" (Edwin Percy Whipple). Thus, if Poe had wished, he seemingly *could* have signed it with his own name, or at least with his own initials—as he did everything else.



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Oddly, as I read the history, Poe seems to have left the "Evening Mirror" shortly after "The Raven" was published therein. I can't help but wonder whether he was fired for lying to the editor, N.P. Willis, about having permission to scoop "American Review." Surely, if he did not really have it, the editors of these two publications would have exchanged some choice words on the subject, and Willis would have pacified the editors of "American Review" by firing Poe.

As it happens, Poe almost always signed with his own name; and the one time he did use a pseudonym, very early in his career, it was not a reference to any historical writer. It appears to me that in each of the instances in which Poe used an alias in 1827, he did so to avoid discovery by creditors. This would include his poetry compilation, "Tamerlane and Other Poems," which

he signed “A Bostonian.” If this interpretation of Poe’s motives is correct, he never once employed a pseudonym for the purposes of literary modesty, in his entire career. Mathew Franklin Whittier, by contrast, used a great variety of pseudonyms throughout his 50-year literary career, some of them being references to famous authors and philosophers, as for example “Dickens, Jr.,” “Franklin, Jr.,” “Diogenes” and, as we have seen, “Trismegistus.” Once again, Mathew also had deeply personal reasons to use this particular pseudonym, while, so far as I know, Poe had none.

There is more—as the “star,” writing for the “Tribune” two weeks before “The Raven” appeared in “American Review,” Mathew had praised, in a review of a compilation by Longfellow, a poem by Francis Quarles entitled “Sweet Phosphor Bring the Day.” And two weeks before that, signing with his first initial, “M.,” he had published a poem in a very similar style to that of “The Raven.” In the Dec. 27, 1844 edition of the “Tribune,” in the usual fourth-page poetry corner, “The Might of Words” begins in this manner:

> What to man his greatness giveth
> O’er the creeping things and birds,
> But the soul that in him liveth
> And the glory of his words?
>
> In his voice were blent the rushing
> Of the storm-winds o’er the seas,
> With the fountain’s peaceful gushing
> And the music of the breeze:
>
> And the murmur of the breaking
> Of the billows on the shore,
> With the whirlwind’s harsh awaking
> In the forest dark and hoar.
>
> Words are weapons better, truer,
> Sharper than the battle-sword!
> Strong against the evil-doer
> With the server of the Lord!

Edgar Allen Poe, meanwhile, had only published a single poem prior to 1843, which I was able to find, written in a somewhat similar style. Even this one appears to have been plagiarized, inasmuch as it expresses a religious conviction which flatly contradicts another of his published grief poems. Thus, what we see in “The Raven” was *not* Poe’s typical style—but it was indeed Mathew’s preferred style throughout his life. The first which can absolutely be proven as Mathew’s own production—being signed “Poins,” a pseudonym which was confirmed by his brother, John Greenleaf Whittier, in correspondence—is a poem entitled “The Crucifixion” published in the March 11, 1843 edition of the Portland “Transcript.” A portion of that poem reads:

> Over Jordan, vale and mountain,

Silence gathered like a pall,
Stayed the torrent, sealed the fountain,
Boding stillness over all.

On Genassaret's waters playing
Not an idle zephyr roves,
O'er the Mount of Olives straying
Not a breeze the foliage moves.

Over Hermon slowly creeping
Giant shadows silent go,
Round his hoary summit sweeping,
Veil his coronal of snow.

Earth and air are clothed in mourning,
Sheeted dead from graves appear!
From her centre, deeply groaning,
Nature testifies her fear!

Note that both of these poems are deeply religious and austere in tone—very much like the poetry of Francis Quarles. Given that all prominent figures in the 19th century had to at least give lip-service to religion, my study of Poe's character suggests he was neither religious nor genuinely spiritual (his tongue-in-cheek "Eureka" notwithstanding)—and I see no indication at all that he would have admired Francis Quarles.

There are several earlier poems signed with Mathew's middle initial, "F.," which I have concluded, by style and many other indicators, are his, and two of them are in a very similar style. The first, entitled "The Storm," appears in the April 13, 1839 edition. Sounding very much like "Crucifixion," it begins:

Lightning flashes, thunders roll,
  Nature startles from her sleep,
Shakes the earth from pole to pole,
  Frightful yawns the mighty deep.
Now the warring whirlwinds rise,
  Spreading terror all around;
Ocean's roaring, seamen's cries,
  Mingle in one dreadful sound.

O'er yon ship the billows break;—
  See the frighted sailors fly;—
Now the bark they all forsake,
  In a wat'ry grave to lie.
"All!"—not all, for, lo! there's one,
  Calm, serene and peaceful still,
Hear him say—"thy will be done,

Lord thy purposes fulfil."

Another entitled "Lines Written on Hearing 'Sweet Home'—Played and Sung," in the following edition of the 20th, appears to have been inspired by a charity concert given by Mathew's wife, Abby, in which she played harp and sang for homeless people. As one may gather from the text, when she played "Sweet Home" (known to us as "There's No Place Like Home"), one poor vagabond was so deeply affected that he begged her to stop! This, of course, also provides a glimpse of the young woman for whom "The Raven" was actually written:

Lady, deep those notes are pealing,
In my sad and lonely breast;
Sorrow o'er my heart is stealing;—
Lady, bid thy harp-strings rest--
Days of joy, and days of gladness,
Days my youth and beauty graced,
Days of pleasure, free from sadness,
Deep on mem'rys tablet traced.

All, in vivid colors glowing,
Rise before my 'wilder'ed sight:—
Oh, how sad a contrast showing
With my present gloom of night!
Fortune once to me had given
Joys none other ever knew;—
Not a spot dimmed Pleasure's heaven,
Not a cloud its shadow threw.

We now have Mathew Franklin Whittier writing more often in a style more closely resembling "The Raven," and with arguably more talent, before and after 1845, than Edgar Allan Poe did. (There are far too many of Mathew's poems written in a similar style, published after 1845 to showcase, here—I have only chosen "Iorno" as a representative example.)

The skeptic may ask, "If Mathew was the real author of 'The Raven,' why didn't he come forward publicly?" Aside from issues of personality, the simple reason is that he couldn't because he was deeply involved in dangerous undercover anti-slavery activities, having multiple contacts with the Underground Railroad (there is a plethora of evidence). He could not "blow his cover" without both rendering himself useless as an agent, and endangering the lives of many others. There *is* evidence that someone let it slip such that the matter came to Poe's attention, and that Poe threatened to sue, thus nipping the rumor in the bud. I suspect, but cannot prove, that the source of the rumor was Mathew, himself, who had probably told one of his former mercantile associates about it in confidence. (The account concerning Edward J. Thomas and a New York merchant named Mr. Benjamin is briefly discussed in "Mathew Franklin Whittier in his own world.")

One might think that Mathew would set the matter straight after Poe's death. But as we have seen, he *did*, apparently, reveal his secret to his friend, Shillaber, who proceeded to mock him. If

his own friend wouldn't believe him, who else would? Besides, Mathew was very secretive. Even after the Civil War was over, he would not have wanted to go public with this information. The only chance he would have to be believed—since no one would take seriously an author without a corresponding track record—is if he revealed *everything* he had been writing over the past decades. Had he approached an attorney, he would have been advised that he would be required to lay his entire literary history, and indeed his entire life, bare to the world; he would have to reveal his dozens of pseudonyms and his authorship of many other works—some of which had been claimed by *other* well-known authors. This, in turn, would strain his credibility beyond the breaking point. Just as I am no-doubt seen as "bats," today, people would have perceived Mathew in a similar light at the time. Very likely it would all have been for naught. The fact is that he had been writing too well, too prolifically, for too long, and had kept too well hidden.

"Lady Geraldine's Courtship"

In 1844, the future Elizabeth Barrett Browning published a two-volume set of poetry entitled, simply, "Poems." She also published an American version of the same work the following year, entitled "Drama of Exile and Other Poems." Toward the end of Volume I—for extremely implausible reasons she explained privately to her friend and mentor, Hugh Stewart Boyd—she included a poem entitled "Lady Geraldine's Courtship." I have determined that this poem, and at least three others in the compilation, were plagiarized from Mathew Franklin Whittier. I have gone into more detail on this question in another paper; for our purposes, here, we will briefly examine how this poem concerns Edgar Allan Poe and "The Raven."

It was noticed and remarked upon, when Poe published "The Raven," that it was quite similar in style to "Lady Geraldine's Courtship," suggesting an influence. More specifically, there was one nearly-identical line! In "Lady Geraldine's Courtship," we read:

> With a murmurous stir uncertain, in the air, the purple curtain

while in "The Raven" is found the line:

> And the silken sad uncertain rustling of each purple curtain

The simple and obvious explanation is that both poems were written by Mathew as tributes to Abby; and that the year after her death, 1842, he went through a phase of sharing his work with various literati—both in America, and abroad. There must have been quite a few of them, most of whom were honorable, and perhaps gave him feedback. But some few of them, being literary imposters, chose to plagiarize his samples. Neither of these public figures were aware, however, that Mathew had *also* shared material with the other; and neither suspected that Mathew had given their rival a poem with a line he had essentially re-used.

It was, in fact, Mathew's habit to re-use his favorite ideas. Typically, he might do this in a different publication, five or ten years later. In this case, the "purple curtain" would have had a deep, sentimental significance as something once belonging to Abby. Inasmuch as these were

both tributes to her—one to their courtship, and the other to her death—her own curtains appear in both.

By way of "damage control," Poe, who would rather be viewed by the public as a fond admirer of Barrett, than as the plagiarist of Mathew's poem, held his nose and pretended to be a gushing fan. In the dedication to his compilation, "The Raven and Other Poems," he wrote:

TO THE NOBLEST OF HER SEX—

TO THE AUTHOR OF

"THE DRAMA OF EXILE"—

TO MISS ELIZABETH BARRETT
BARRETT,

OF ENGLAND,

I DEDICATE THIS VOLUME,

WITH THE MOST ENTHUSIASTIC ADMIRATION

AND WITH THE MOST SINCERE ESTEEM.

But there is nothing sincere in this whatsoever. It's like the boy eating half the contents of the cookie jar who, when caught with chocolate on his mouth, says, "I did open it and taste one, but then I forgot and left the lid off, and the dog ate the rest of them."

In this example is illustrated an important element of Poe's personality—he is without scruples, and yet there is something childish in his subterfuge, as though arising from arrested emotional development. We will see another instance when we discuss Poe's riddle poem, "A Valentine."

Mathew's coded messages concerning "The Raven"

Now, I have brought us this far into the discussion by way of introduction. We haven't seen nearly all the evidence, yet, and already this article is exceeding its preferred length. What I can absolutely prove, many times over, is that Mathew embedded clues, in "code," into various of his works to tell posterity, "I wrote 'The Raven.'" There is no question whatsoever about this. The only question is whether you believe him, or not—and the evidence I've presented, so far, clearly shows that Mathew had far more integrity (and hence more credibility) than Poe; and that he was a *far* more plausible author of this work, than Poe was.

We have already seen a few examples of Mathew's coded messages in his two parodies, published in "Yankee Doodle." I have presented a great many examples in my books, and I want to be clear that I can prove beyond a reasonable doubt that this is not simply a matter of

coincidence, and that Mathew did deliberately use these techniques. Here, I will briefly touch on a few more which concern his hidden authorship of "The Raven."

In the December 5, 1846 edition of the Portland "Transcript," appears a story derived from Mathew's satirical series concerning "Ethan Spike," about the fictional Maine town of "Hornby." This one, however, uncharacteristically takes place in the town of "Libbeyville," which has grown to the point that it is just now being incorporated. Suddenly, certain people begin to put on airs, such that "a latent spirit of ambition and pride, which, in the language of Dea. Daniel Libbey, 'had hitherto lain dormouse, began to manifest and mightily exalt itself.'" Mathew is using these people as an metaphor for Edgar Allan Poe—and specifically, he is responding to that essay, "The Philosophy of Composition," which may have just recently come to his attention.

The confirmation of my interpretation is found in what immediately follows. One of Mathew's favorite tricks, which I ran into time and again in the course of my research, was to gang together his various pieces side-by-side on the same page; or, at times, to place a poem, or a quote, from someone else's work directly above or below his own. The added piece would tell you what the *real* subject of the first piece was; or, it would inform it in some other way, like effectively dedicating it to Abby's memory. There are far too many examples for this to have been a mere coincidence, even supposing that the compositor picked the pieces off a pile in the order they were received, and that Mathew's, having been mailed in a single envelope, ended up together on the page. Mathew was personal friends with these editors, and was thus in a position to make such special requests.

In this case, directly below the sketch about "Libbeyville," we see the following quote by Francis Quarles:

> Self-Knowledge.—As thou art a moral man, esteem not thyself as thou art, but as thou art esteemed; as thou art a Christian, esteem thyself *as thou art, not as thou art esteemed*; thy pence in both rises and falls as the market goes. The market of a moral man is a wild opinion. The market of a Christian is a good conscience. [Quarles. (Emphasis added)

Strangely, the quote was truncated and hence somewhat weakened in the "Transcript"; I am giving the full rendition, here. Mathew is telling us that Poe is not a Christian, and is not truly moral, whatever his claims to the contrary (and whatever some of his early, plagiarized poems might seem to suggest). Furthermore, I believe Mathew was responding, specifically, to the following outrageous, intrinsically nonsensical passage from Poe's "Philosophy of Composition" concerning "moral power" (which makes about as much sense as his arbitrary distinction between "heart" vs. "soul"):

> The next point to be considered 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 suggestion 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 insulated incident:—it has the force of a frame to a picture. It has an indisputable moral

> power in keeping concentrated the attention, and, of course, must not be confounded with mere unity of place.

First of all, Mathew set "The Raven" in his room because the events it describes took place in his room. But more importantly, there is *no such thing* as the moral power of a "circumscription of space." Such a statement could only be written by someone who has no real understanding of, nor respect for, morality. And as for Poe not being a Christian—if he is not, then he clearly plagiarized a great many of his early published poems, in which that faith is sincerely expressed. Again, if he plagiarized a number of sincerely Christian grief poems, then he has no conception of morality; and if he has no conception of morality, then he is B.S.-ing in "The Philosophy of Composition" where he invokes the term.

There is a great deal of background which I would need to supply, in order to give a full presentation of this second example. I will have to simply assert things which, given more space, I could prove (and have proven, in my books). First of all, as mentioned, it was Mathew who was writing the star-signed reviews in the New York "Tribune," not Margaret Fuller. Secondly, when Abby was tutoring Mathew, early in their relationship, for his assignment in French he was asked to translate, from French to English, the Fables of La Fontaine (these, in turn, had been based largely on Aesop's Fables, which Mathew loved). Abby, whose mother was Scottish and whose father was French, was raised in a French household, and was thus a native speaker. If she tutored Mathew, she would have undoubtedly taught him this language. And she would have been in a position, both as an excellent poet and as a native French speaker, to insure the technical quality of the translations of "La Fontaine"; while Mathew was an expert in humorous poetry, so that the quality of the *content* was insured, as well. They would both, no-doubt, have been proud of their collaboration, and after Abby's passing Mathew would have strongly associated them with her. If Mathew used "La Fontaine" to expose Edgar Allan Poe, to him, it would have been as though they were *both* doing it, together.

We will assume these assertions as fact, for the sake of the discussion which follows. Once again, the reader is referred to "Mathew Franklin Whittier in his own words," and "Mathew Franklin Whittier in his own world," for a more complete analysis.

Poe has recently published his compilation, "The Raven and Other Poems," and in the Nov. 26, 1845 edition of the New York "Tribune," appears a star-signed review of same. Keep in mind that this review was probably assigned to Mathew either by the editor-in-chief, Horace Greeley, or by the literary editor, Margaret Fuller. In any case, because Poe had become famous by claiming "The Raven," a review of this book would have been mandatory. But remember, also, that whatever Mathew writes, he will have to get it past these two editors. Thus, he is forced, as it were, underground:

> It has often been our case to share the mistake of Gil Blas, with regard to the Archbishop. We have taken people at their word, and while rejoicing that women could bear neglect without feeling mean pique, and that authors, rising above self-love, could show candor about their works and magnanimously meet both justice and injustice, we have been rudely awakened from our dream, and found that Chanticleer, who crowed so bravely, showed himself at last but a dunghill fowl.

"Gil Blas" and the "Archbishop" are references to a French novel by Alain-Rene Lesage. Poe himself made a reference to the story of Gil Blas and the Archbishop in a story entitled "The Angel of the Odd," published the previous year which, to my sensibilities, may have originally been one of Mathew's own, albeit heavily reworked (which means this may have originally been *his* reference—hence, the deliberate mention). In the anecdote as told by Lesage, Blas honestly reports on the Archbishop's weak performance in a sermon given after he had suffered a stroke, just as he had been instructed to do. Of course, this was not well-received. (We all know people who will swear to you that they want "honest feedback," but who can't take it when it is given.) Aside from the reference to what may have been another work plagiarized by Poe, this simply means that it too is dangerous for Mathew to attempt to expose him openly, even though as a reviewer, he is charged with speaking the truth and not falsely flattering anyone. But let us see just what Mathew is up to with this reference to "Chanticleer." First of all, along with "palladium," this is one of Mathew's favorite high-tone words. A quick digital search in my database indicates that he used it on at least seven other occasions. Keep in mind that "chanticleer" is a French term—and he is simultaneously alluding to a *French* literary work.

Mathew would use the term "Chanticleer" to refer generally to a rooster; but when we pair it with the description "dunghill fowl," taken in the context of Mathew's own associations it is clearly a reference to a two-stanza fable from La Fontaine, entitled "The Cock and the Pearl." Note that in the illustration which accompanies the text in the 1841 edition of "The Fables of La Fontaine," the cock is, in fact, depicted standing on a barnyard dung hill:

The Cock and the Pearl

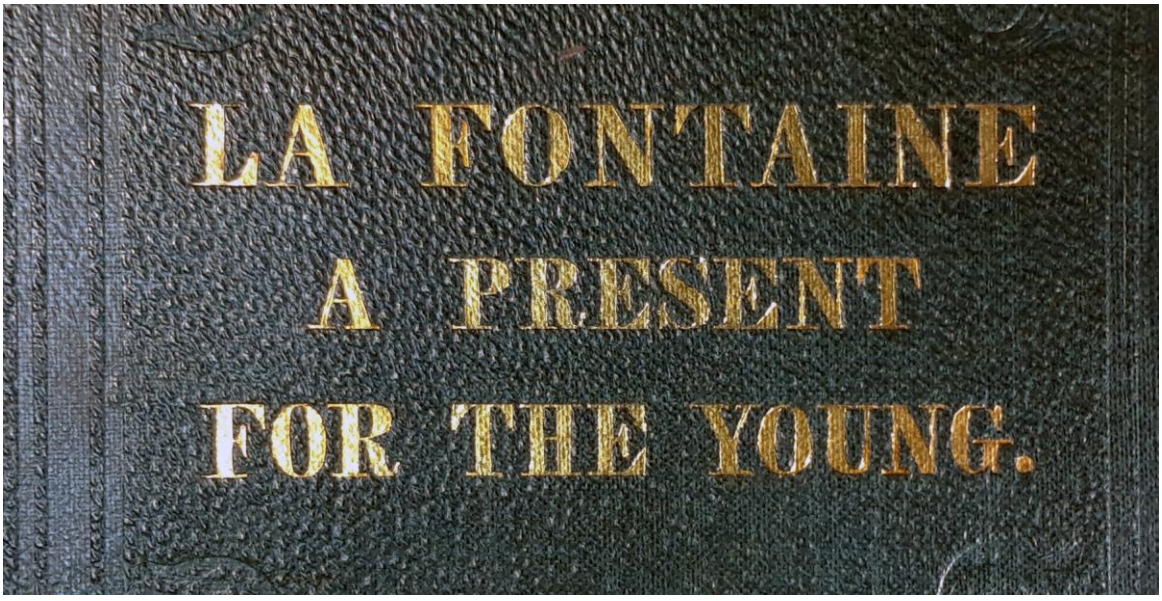
A cock scratched up one day,
A pearl of purest ray,
Which to a jeweler he bore.
I think it fine, he said,
But yet a crumb of bread
To me were worth a great deal more.

So did a dunce inherit
A manuscript of merit,
Which to a publisher he bore.
'Tis good, said he, I'm told,
Yet any coin of gold
To me were worth a great deal more.

In order to derive Mathew's secret meaning in such references, one must be able to look up the source, and then examine the text *immediately above or below* the quoted reference. This was one of his favorite coding devices. Here, it is obviously the *second stanza* which he intends for

us to read; and that stanza is a direct reference to Poe having stolen “The Raven” from him, for the purposes of worldly gain. Furthermore, it pronounces Poe a “dunce.” There is no guesswork about it, and if I have identified his reference to La Fontaine correctly, there can be no other interpretation. The reason scholars have missed it, is that they didn’t know who was really writing the star-signed reviews for the “Tribune”; and they didn’t think to connect the reference to “Chanticleer” with this particular fable by La Fontaine. We know that Mathew is referring specifically to “The Raven,” because the reference occurs in his review of “The Raven and Other Poems.” (For the record, I traced this clue in the order I’ve presented it, here—I did not work it backwards from La Fontaine to the review.)

If you look up the English translation of “The Fables of La Fontaine,” you will find as the translator, not Mathew Franklin Whittier, but his close friend, Elizur Wright. Wright was active in the same abolitionist circles as the Whittier brothers, and would soon be Mathew’s editor on the Boston “Chronotype.” Unlike Mathew, however, “La Fontaine” was his primary claim to poetry, and certainly to humorous poetry; while unlike Abby, he was not a native French speaker. A much smaller version of this book, entitled “La Fontaine: A Present for the Young,” was published anonymously in 1839, before Abby’s death; the first edition of Wright’s two-volume set was published the year of her death, 1841. I extrapolate that Mathew and Abby must have launched the smaller book—which they drew from Mathew’s original homework assignments—in an attempt to raise some much-needed cash, assisted by their friend, Elizur Wright. After Abby’s death, Mathew may have handed the project entirely over to Wright, swearing him (per usual) to secrecy. “The Cock and the Pearl” appears in the larger, 1841 edition.



“**Sublunary being”**

I have already demonstrated that “palladium” and “Chanticleer” were among Mathew’s favorite highbrow expressions. Another of these was “sublunary,” which means, everything under the moon, i.e., everything on earth. I think it amused him, and moreover, I feel that it was a much-

beloved expression of his and Abby's. Mathew seems to have embedded a great many of these personal references from his and Abby's romance into his written works, by way of keeping her memory alive. This is something he was especially likely to do with any story or poem written in secret tribute to her.

Let us briefly revisit B.P. Shillaber's tale, in his "Blifkins the Martyr" series, concerning "Blifkins' Moonlight Trip." As he encounters the "widow Thompson," who represents Abby visiting him in a dream, we read:

> "'Good evening, Mr. Blifkins.'"
>
> "Mrs. Thompson?" we queried; but without moving his eyes from the bust of Pallas, Blifkins went on:—
>
> "I started at the well-recognized tones, and there, unattended, was the widow Thompson.
>
> "'My dear Mrs. Thompson,' I said, 'this is an unexpected pleasure; to what fortunate star am I indebted for this sweet surprise?'
>
> "'That,' she replied, pointing to the moon.
>
> "'Thanks, most propitious planet,' said I, with enthusiasm: 'Luna shall hereafter be my lodestar, and that "the devil's in the moon for mischief" shall be placed among the forgotten slanders hatched in the poet's teeming brain.' I took her hand as I spoke, and then we stood by the wheelhouse together, and talked moonshine, and the nonsense born of romance, for many a mile.

A search of my digital database reveals 14 instances of "sublunary," plus eight instances of deliberately misspelled renditions like "subloonary," yielding a total of 28. This is clearly beyond chance. A digital search of Poe's works, which admittedly may not have been exhaustive, yielded only one instance, in a story entitled "William Wilson"—which, despite the scholars enthusiastically claiming it as Poe's description of his youth in England, I strongly suspect of having been plagiarized. It is a deeply moral tale of rivalry and extreme guilt, while Poe, by my lights, was amoral and hence very unlikely to have written it. Mathew, being raised Quaker, did write in a similar vein, especially early in his career. One encounters this sort of moral heaviness throughout the work of Mathew's brother, John Greenleaf Whittier, as well as in the diary of his sister, Elisabeth.

I should be clear that I am not exclusively singling out Mathew as a victim of Poe's plagiarism. As I indicated earlier, when I made a careful study of all of Poe's poetry published prior to 1843, I concluded that he must have plagiarized some 90% of it from various authors. In particular, it appears that he had an unpleasant habit of targeting grieving widowers, who tend to go through a phase of writing poetry—some of which can be quite good—despite having no pretensions to literary fame. Such amateur authors had the dual attraction, for a plagiarist, of never having been published, and of being unlikely to defend their work. Only, Poe didn't realize what he had

latched onto, when he stole from this *particular* grieving widower. It is because Mathew had so carefully hidden his work—which went back to year 1825—that Poe must have arrogantly assumed Mathew was yet another amateur poet. In other words, it is no accident that out of all the grief poems Poe plagiarized from unsuspecting widowers, it was "The Raven" which brought him instant fame.

As mentioned earlier, there is indeed objective evidence that Poe indulged in this kind of theft. It hinges, first of all, on the conclusion that Poe was not, himself, a religious or spiritual man (as Mathew also inferred in his Quarles quote concerning Christian morality). If we accept that premise, we see that a number of Poe's early published poems *are* religious or spiritual—chiefly, the grief poems. This is contradictory in itself—but then, as I had briefly alluded to earlier, we find that two of them are radically opposed to one another in their professed beliefs. "Visit of the Dead," published in 1827, expresses Spiritualist views, i.e., that when the loved one dies, she is met by spirits in a more rarified realm, and continues living there:

> Be silent in that solitude,
> Which is not loneliness—for then
> The sprits of the dead who stood
> In life before thee are again
> In death around the—and their will
> Shall overshadow thee: be still

But four years *later*, in 1831, in "Poems by Edgar Allan Poe," he published "Irene" (later renamed "The Sleeper") which just as clearly expresses the more ignorant belief that the dead sleep in the tomb:

> The lady sleeps: the dead all sleep—
> At least as long as Love doth weep:
> Entranc'd, the spirit loves to lie
> As long as—tears on Memory's eye:
> But when a week or two go by,
> And the light laughter chokes the sigh,
> Indignant from the tomb doth take
> Its way to some remember'd lake,
> Where oft—in life—with friends—it went
> To bathe in the pure element,
> And there, from the untrodden grass,
> Wreathing for its transparent brow
> Those flowers that say (ah hear them now!)
> To the night-winds as they pass,
> "Ai! ai! alas!—alas!"
> Pores for a moment, ere it go,
> On the clear waters there that flow,
> Then sinks within (weigh'd down by wo)
> Th' uncertain, shadowy heaven below.
> * * * * * *

The lady sleeps: oh! may her sleep
As it is lasting so be deep—
No icy worms about her creep:
I pray to God that she may lie
Forever with as calm an eye,
That chamber chang'd for one more holy—
That bed for one more melancholy.

The author seems to be inferring a belief that the spirit of Irene, being offended by the "light laughter" of her loved ones a mere week or two after her death, seeks a place she cherished in life, only to sink into an "uncertain, shadowy heaven below" where she will sleep forever, albeit free from worms.

Actually, one gets the distinct impression that the author of this latter poem doesn't know quite *what* to believe. But Poe's materialistic revision, in the May 22, 1841 Philadelphia "Saturday Chronicle" has her remaining in the tomb, while sleeping yet staring with open eyes. Although Poe unthinkingly retains the original poet's inference that her spirit has "changed her bed," he nonetheless keeps her in her physical body by indicating that she is sharing the tomb with "softly creeping worms":

The lady sleeps! Oh, may her sleep,
Which is enduring, be so deep!
Heaven have her in its sacred keep!
This bed being changed for one more holy,
This room for one more melancholy,
I pray to God that she may lie
Forever with unclosed eye!
My love, she sleeps. Oh, may her sleep,
As it is lasting, so be deep!
Soft may the worms about her creep!

How awful! But this isn't the end of it. By the poem's appearance in the Feb. 25, 1843 "Saturday Museum," the above lines had been further revised to:

The lady sleeps. O, may her sleep,
Which is enduring, so be deep!
Heaven have her in its sacred keep!
This chamber chang'd for one more holy,
This bed for one more melancholy,
I pray to God that she may lie
Forever with unopen'd eye,
While the dim sheeted ghosts go by!

At least he has had the decency to close her eyes! But now, despite the fact that heaven has her "in its sacred keep," she lies asleep forever with the same softly creeping worms, accompanied, now, by "dim sheeted ghosts!" In other words, Poe has *no idea* what he's talking about, but is

merely writing—or rather, revising—for effect. So here we see that the writer of the first poem could not possibly have been the same as the writer of the second; while Poe could not possibly have been the original author of either one. The first poet has studied and understood advanced occult teachings; the second has been exposed to them but is confused, imagining a kind of Underworld; while Poe, himself, is a rank materialist.

By letter of Dec. 15, 1846, Poe writes to George W. Eveleth:

> Your appreciation of "The Sleeper" delights me. In the higher qualities of poetry, it is better than "The Raven"—but there is not one man in a million who could be brought to agree with me in this opinion. The Raven, of course, is far the better as a work of art—but in the true basis of all art The Sleeper is the superior. I wrote the latter when quite a boy.

This is sheer double-talk. He is quite right that "not one man in a million could be brought to agree with him," for good reason—"Irene" is not comparable to "The Raven," either "as a work of art" or "in the true basis of all art." However, he may be partial to "Irene" because he, himself, had written it. He that poem at age 22—whether he had written it when "quite a boy" is highly suspicious, but in any case, he did nothing to improve its philosophical basis when he published it as a young man, and subsequently revised it.

Another example appears in Poe's poem entitled "Silence. A Sonnet," published in the Jan. 4, 1840 Philadelphia "Saturday Courier." It reads, in its entirety:

> There are some qualities—some incorporate things
> That have a double life—life aptly made,
> The type of that twin entity which springs
> From matter and light, evinced in solid and shade.
> There is a two-fold *Silence*—sea and shore—
> Body and soul. One dwells in lonely places,
> Newly with grass o'ergrown. Some solemn graces—
> Some human memories and tearful lore,
> Render him terrorless—his name's "*No More*."
> He is the corporate Silence—dread him not!
> No power hath he of evil in himself;
> But should some urgent fate—untimely lot!
> Bring thee to meet his *shadow* (nameless elf,
> Who haunteth the dim regions where hath trod
> No foot of man)—commend thyself to God!

We note, as indications tending to support Poe's authorship of "The Raven," that it was published before that poem, and that it contains the phrase, "No More." However, it is not written in a similar meter.

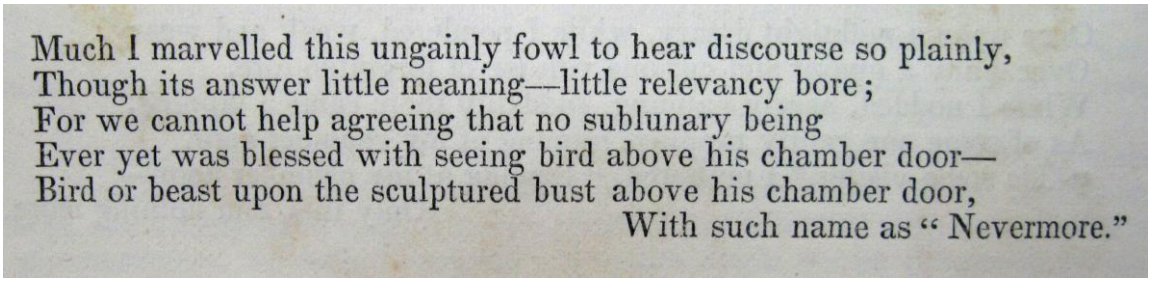
With the working assumption that Poe was indeed the author, let us take a very close look at his metaphysics, and any clue to his spirituality or lack thereof.

The genuinely mystical view is that the body is an inert vehicle which has no life in and of itself, but which rather is animated by the living spirit, or soul. The body is death (here, "silence,") while the soul is life. But the poet speaks of *both body and soul* as "Silence." He further characterizes the soul as a "shadow." Authentic mysticism teaches that the body is shadow, while the soul is *substance*. Therefore, this poet is an atheist or nihilist, who is either faking, or mocking—or perhaps both—the truly spiritual viewpoint. This being the case, when he closes by advising the reader to "commend thyself to God!", it is sheer hypocrisy. We have seen precisely the same metaphysical nonsense in "Irene." But "The Raven" is an entirely different kettle of fish. That poet is not *confused* about metaphysics, nor is he an atheist or a nihilist. He is a Christian philosopher who—like C.S. Lewis in "A Grief Observed"—has temporarily lost his faith when faced with the overwhelming tragedy of the death of his beloved. In other words, if Edgar Allan Poe wrote "Irene" and "Silence," he *could not possibly have written "The Raven"*—only, it requires a sufficient understanding of esoteric philosophy to perceive the difference.[10]

Revisiting "Sublunary"

It so happens that the ninth stanza of the very first version of "The Raven," which Mathew published under "—— Quarles" in the February edition of "American Review," contains the word "sublunary":

> Much I marveled this ungainly fowl to hear discourse so plainly,
> Though its answer little meaning—little relevancy bore;
> For we cannot help agreeing that no sublunary 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."


Much I marvelled this ungainly fowl to hear discourse so plainly,
Though its answer little meaning—little relevancy bore;
For we cannot help agreeing that no sublunary 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."

Whereas, in the version which Poe published under his own signature, in the Jan. 29, 1845 "Evening Mirror," we see:

> Much I marveled this ungainly fowl to hear discourse so plainly,
> Though its answer little meaning—little relevancy bore;
> For we cannot help agreeing that no living human 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."

Poe has made the logical and reasonable replacement of "living human being" for "sublunary being." The problem is that he didn't know the word "sublunary" was one of Mathew's favorites—and more importantly, as I would guess, one of *Abby's* favorites. Even if he was vaguely aware that this was a grief poem dedicated specifically to Mathew's late wife, he didn't realize that "sublunary" was part of Mathew and Abby's private world, and was being deliberately included, here, *as a secret tribute to her*.

There is yet another subtle clue in the text of "The Raven." The second stanza reads:

> 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 tried 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.

Once again, the time of year given would have been literal—in this case, December of 1841. But the name "Lenore" is not, in fact, the name of the lost beloved of "The Raven." It is, as I interpret, a reference to a German poem by Gottfried August Burger, about a woman who follows her lover, slain in battle, to the grave when he returns for her from the dead. The *actual* name is withheld from the reader, being "Nameless here for evermore." "Lenore" is thus a *descriptive reference*, rather like saying that a visionary woman is "a Joan of Arc," or a dedicated nurse is "a Florence Nightingale." Similarly, in this poem, the grieving widower's wife is "a Lenore." Else, why would the poet state the name, say she is nameless, and then repeat it three stanzas later? This stanza translates to, "The angels call her 'Lenore,' because of the German poem that she loved, and that is what we shall call her—but her real name will not be given, here." The word "here" also means *in the poem*, not only, as it may often be interpreted, "on earth." Incidentally, there is evidence that Abby was adept at translating German texts, and also that she was especially taken with this idea of a late spouse visiting her remaining partner in spirit. Thus, the poem about "Lenore" was probably one of her own favorites, making this—like the mention of "purple curtains," the word "sublunary," and the signature, "—— Quarles," a veiled reference to Abby, herself.

The significance is that this is not a poet *pretending* to be coy about the name of his late wife—this is an actual widower who is, in fact, *hiding* his late wife's name. The line, "nameless here, for evermore" is not merely tacked on for effect. It's quite literal, as is the month of December and so much else in the poem; and we see that if I am correct in my interpretation, this precludes Poe's authorship. Poe was *not* a widower when this poem was published—and in any case, he certainly didn't try to hide his authorship, and hence, his wife's identity. Quite the contrary! Therefore, this is not an imaginative poem of anticipatory grief; it is a poem expressing real grief for a *lost spouse*, whose identity (along with his own) the author is withholding from the public. Again, wouldn't it have been cruel to Poe's wife, Virginia, who was slowly dying of consumption, to publish such a thing before her death? It would be like writing out invitations to the funeral on the dining room table in front of her. Only a true sociopath could be so heartless.

Once again, concerning this explanation of "anticipatory grief," I will put my master's in counseling on the line, here, and assert that *there is no such thing*. Emotionally, the grieving husband cannot conceive of his beloved wife not being alive, even to the very second of her death. As so many have said, "I could not imagine life without her." Therefore, Poe could only have written this poem in *imaginary* grief, never in sincere and heartfelt *anticipatory* grief—and any perceptive lover of poetry will intuitively understand that this is not a poem written in imagination.

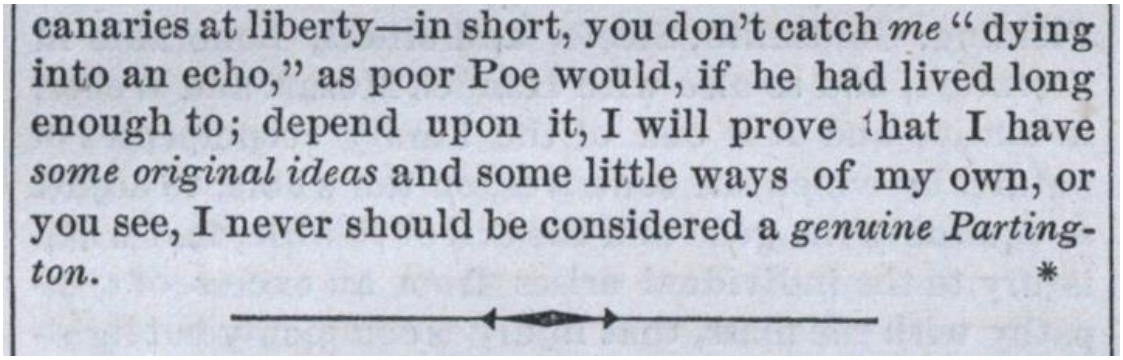
The reader may wish to point out that Poe had previously written a poem called "Lenore." But actually he hadn't. What he had written was a poem called "A Paean," in which the name "Lenore" does not appear. He only added it in 1843—*after* Mathew would have privately shared a copy of "The Raven" with him.

The "star" weighs in

Beginning in July of 1853, there is a series of letters to the editor of the Boston "Illustrated Waverley Magazine" debating the evidence that when Poe wrote "The Raven," he was influenced by a poem written by one Dr. Thomas H. Chivers in memoriam for his young daughter, entitled "To Allegra Florence in Heaven." Allegra passed on at age three in October of 1842, so the poem was written some years before Poe supposedly wrote "The Raven"; but *after* Mathew would have written it. It does seem clear there is an uncanny resemblance of certain elements; and in "Waverley Magazine," several anonymous writers give their opinions, with not a little sarcastic wit. Into the middle of this fray steps Mathew Franklin Whittier himself, signing as the "star" in the Aug. 27, 1853 edition. He writes:

> "Deary, Deary," says a *Waverly* [sic] *Partington*, "what is the world coming to? Poe has actually written in the same style of Chivers, it is said." I don't care if he wrote in a *dozen* styles. Now likely as not he was one of those that wrote *what he chose*, and *when he chose*, and the *way he chose*. A real mocking bird, wa'nt he? Well, P. always *loved* the "mocking birds," because they don't everlastingly make the *same* sounds; but *all birds havn't that gift*, you know.
>
> Girls, (now I think of it,) it never will do for you to make your bread as your grandmothers did; if you do, though the flour, and the milk and the yeast is *your own*, and you knead and bake it yourselves, your grandmothers *will have the praise*; you little "*echoes*," as sure as Fiat Justitia dines with you, I guess the roses will mount your cheeks, when he tells you, (in severe tones,) that he has tasted a crumb from an *old loaf*—that *there is no mistaking* this matter—that one loaf was taken from the other just as sure as the first was ever baked. Girls, girls, I say, make your own *receipts*, or you never will prove that you have "*originality*." True, you may gain "notoriety" as housewives, but you will never be natural cooks like your grandmothers.
>
> When *I write*, I shall startle the world by writing *without* rule, measure, or style; and for keeping house, I've a snug little plan of *my own*. My chairs will be on their sides, the tables and time-piece bottom upwards, my drawer handles inside, my kittens in cages, and my canaries at liberty—in short, you don't catch me "dying into an echo," as poor

Poe would, if he had lived long enough to; depend upon it, I will prove that I have *some original ideas* and some little ways of my own, or you see, I never should be considered a *genuine Partington*. *


canaries at liberty—in short, you don't catch *me* "dying into an echo," as poor Poe would, if he had lived long enough to; depend upon it, I will prove that I have *some original ideas* and some little ways of my own, or you see, I never should be considered a *genuine Partington.* *

For the previous two years, Mathew had been deeply involved in the Boston "Carpet-Bag," both financially and as a frequent contributor. He had written as the "star" on a few occasions for that paper, as well as for the Boston "Odd Fellow," the Boston "Weekly Museum" and the Portland "Transcript" in recent years. He was also, as we have seen, personal friends and a secret collaborator with the "Carpet-Bag's" editor, Benjamin Penhallow Shillaber. Mathew had even been permitted to write a story about one of Shillaber's "Partington" characters in the "Carpet-Bag," signing as the "star." "Mrs. Partington" was a slightly daft old lady who constantly got things mixed up. Therefore, calling one of the other writers a "Partington" means he had gotten it all wrong. As for Poe, Mathew calls him a "mocking bird," i.e., an imitator, seemingly giving him grudging praise in this regard. But his message is clear: *neither Poe, nor Chivers, wrote the original, and the debaters are mistaken.*

There is one particularly strong clue embedded in the opening paragraph, phrased with deliberate ambiguity so that posterity—if not anyone then living—would understand it. When Mathew says, "Well, P. always *loved* the 'mocking birds,' because they don't everlastingly make the *same* sounds; but *all birds havn't that gift*, you know," "P." is not, as it seems, a reference to Poe. It is, rather, a reference to his wife Abby, for whom he wrote "The Raven" in tribute, whose maiden name was Poyen. He is saying that *Abby*, a musical as well as a poetic prodigy, loved mocking birds. This, in turn, is a reference to her poem, "Ode to the Mocking Bird" (falsely claimed by Albert Pike).[11]

I have said that Mathew gave Poe *seeming* praise as an imitator. A perusal of Abby's poetry confirms that she was highly competent in a number of different styles (while Mathew, who felt most comfortable with the style we see in "The Raven" and in "Lady Geraldine's Courtship," was somewhat less versatile). Hence, what Mathew is *really* saying, here, is that "P." (i.e., Abby) had the gift of being able to write in different poetic styles, *but that Poe did not*. If this interpretation is the correct one—and I'm absolutely certain it is—then at least according to Mathew, Poe could not possibly be the real author of "The Raven." Why? Because, in the context of discussing that poem's authorship, he says that Poe was not only an imitator, but a *poor* imitator, while all agree that "The Raven" is an excellent poem.

Finally, still in code, Mathew confirms that *he* was the original author, by indicating that he is far more original than any of them. This isn't an empty boast, because he is, indeed, a font of creativity—but in this particular context, it isn't a general boast, either. It is, once again, a specific reference to the topic under discussion, i.e., "The Raven."

There is no question that this "star"-signing writer is Mathew Franklin Whittier; and there is no question about his message. But how, then, are we to explain the similarities between Chivers' poem, and "The Raven"? The logical answer, in my opinion, is that Mathew must have shown *both* men the poem in the first half of 1842. Chivers borrowed certain style elements from it later that year; whereas Poe attempted to claim the entire poem for himself in early 1845, when Mathew was finally publishing it in "American Review" under "—— Quarles." This, in turn, begs the question as to how Mathew and Chivers could have met, given that Chivers was a pro-slavery Southerner. Chivers lived off and on in New York City from 1837 until his death in 1858; and like Mathew, he was a follower of the teachings of Emanuel Swedenborg. The two men could easily have met in connection with the Swedenborgian church, there in New York. Finding that Chivers was a poet, Mathew might have shared a few of his unpublished tribute poems, including "The Raven." There are further questions concerning similarities between even earlier poems by Chivers, and "The Raven," which I have addressed in "Mathew Franklin Whittier in his own world." My guess is that Mathew had shared with Chivers an even earlier poem, written in 1838 expressing grief for his son, Joseph—and that when he wrote "The Raven," he brought back some elements from his own poem, which is now lost.

Mathew's copy of the "Ultima Thule" portrait

I still have not shared all the clues pointing directly to Mathew's authorship of "The Raven," and away from Poe's claim. For example, in the June 14, 1851 Boston "Weekly Museum," writing as "Quails,"[12] Mathew describes receiving his own copy of Poe's "Ultima Thule" portrait after Poe's death from Samuel Masury, the photographer, and broadly hints that not only the photograph itself, but also Poe, was a "counterfeit presentment." (Masury had offered to copy it for Mathew when he was studying it in the Boston studio—perhaps, mistakenly assuming he was a fan.) Mathew goes on to analyze Poe's character as essentially that of a sociopath embittered by an unhappy childhood, who "looked upon all mankind as little better than Cannibals, having no emotions of friendship above selfishness, and ready at a moment's warning to take advantage of a brother's weakness..." But more importantly, he dates this letter from June 2nd, *which was Abby's birthday*. This is not the only time Mathew has dated a secret tribute to Abby so as to coincide with a significant anniversary, as for example her birthday, the date of her funeral (around April 19th) and, as I have extrapolated, the date he had proposed to her (May 1st). In this case, her birth date is definitely known, and the message is unmistakable: "I wrote 'The Raven' in tribute to Abby."

Moreover, to drive the point home, above this installment of his travelogue Mathew has arranged to be placed a poem about forgiveness, which he, himself wrote—but to which he has ironically affixed the signature of another of his plagiarists, poet Robert Johnson. That poem begins:

> Deal kindly with thy erring brother,
> Let not base thoughts thy words control;

All anger in that bosom smother,
  Where nought but love should wake the soul.

Deal kindly, for he is thy brother,
  Nor magnify small faults too large;
We here full oft condemn each other,
  In that which should not bear a charge.

Deal gently, sister; he's thy brother;
  Forgive the sorrows of the past;
Thy kindness may, when can none other,
  Reclaim the erring one at last.

Once again, Mathew, a sincere Christian, is attempting to forgive Poe posthumously. (Note that, as with Poe, this was *not* Johnson's typical poetic style, nor was it commensurate with his poetic skill, although the poem is a precise match for Mathew on both counts.)

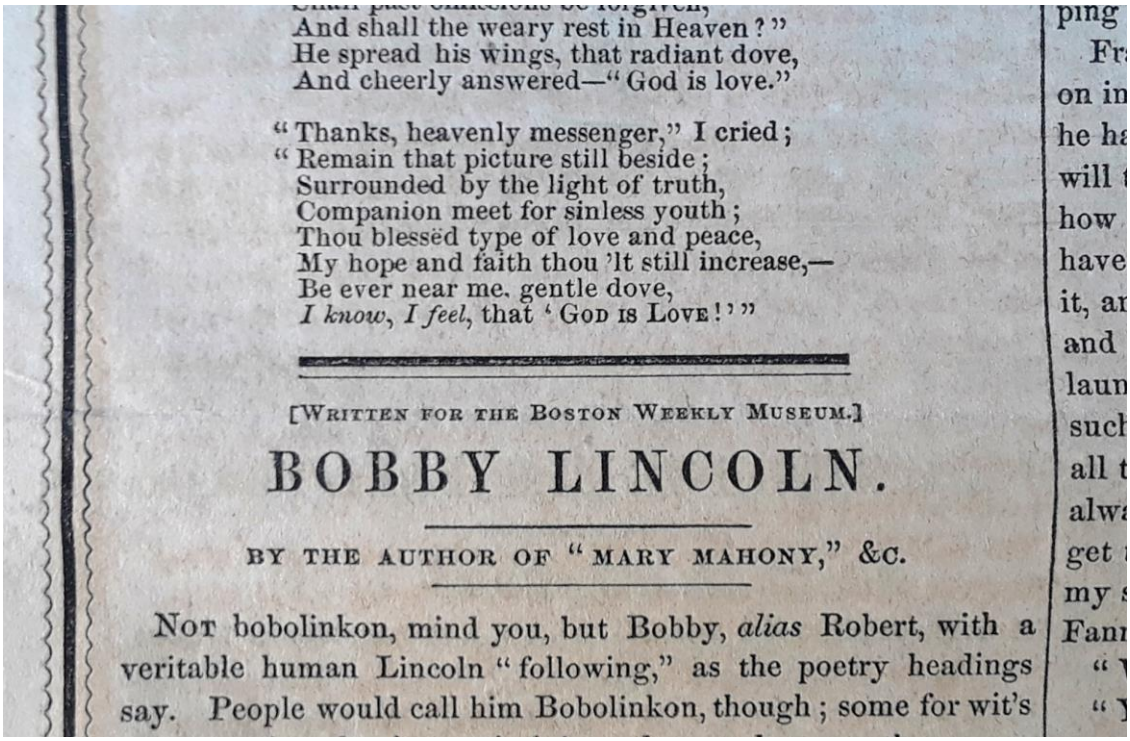
Keep in mind that Mathew was incredibly prolific. For example, I have determined that when writing for the "Carpet-Bag," he was responsible—using a variety of pseudonyms—for as many as eight pieces in each weekly edition. Therefore, as good as it was, "The Raven" was not necessarily the best thing that Mathew had ever written by the year 1845, nor that he would write before the end of his career. The particular importance of *this* poem, at the time, was that it was deeply personal. He could have had no way of knowing, in 1845, that it would become a classic of 19th-century literature. It was just another particularly good effort, as was "Annabel Lee," which Mathew *also* wrote in tribute to Abby, and which we will explore in more detail, shortly. Mathew would have deeply resented Poe's claim to these two poems, not merely for their monetary value, nor for the acclaim they ultimately received, but because they were written in grief for Abby.

More deliberate juxtapositions, and "Annabel Lee"

Two additional instances of Mathew placing poems above or below a printed piece, in order to convey secret information, may serve to confirm this technique as intentional rather than coincidental. In the 1849-50 Boston "Weekly Museum," to which paper Mathew frequently contributed, he submitted a number of Abby's works posthumously. The last of these was a short story entitled "Bobby Lincoln," which appeared in the Aug. 31, 1850 edition. As this was the culmination of the series, we might expect Mathew to provide some tribute to her via this method of placing meaningful poems directly above or below her work, and he doesn't disappoint. Immediately above the story is a poem entitled "The Dove," with the following introduction:

> [The following lines (says a cotemporary) were composed by Miss Townsend, of Philadelphia, after hearing Edgar A. Poe's "Raven" read. Her own situation of blindness and entire helplessness is most touchingly alluded to, and the spirit of the two poems is very striking.]

Indeed, where "The Raven" had expressed Mathew's faith crisis, this tribute is a statement of faith, such that instead of "Nevermore," the refrain reads "God is love."



And shall the weary rest in Heaven?"
He spread his wings, that radiant dove,
And cheerly answered—"God is love."

"Thanks, heavenly messenger," I cried;
"Remain that picture still beside;
Surrounded by the light of truth,
Companion meet for sinless youth;
Thou blessed type of love and peace,
My hope and faith thou 'lt still increase,—
Be ever near me, gentle dove,
I know, I feel, that 'GOD IS LOVE!'"

[WRITTEN FOR THE BOSTON WEEKLY MUSEUM.]

BOBBY LINCOLN.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "MARY MAHONY," &C.

NOT bobolinkon, mind you, but Bobby, *alias* Robert, with a veritable human Lincoln "following," as the poetry headings say. People would call him Bobolinkon, though; some for wit's

Mathew had, in fact, lived briefly in Philadelphia the previous year, and so the poem could have been given to him, personally. At any rate, the message is clear—nine years after Abby's death, faith has overcome doubt. But then, immediately *below* Abby's story is a poem signed "Anonymous," entitled "Lines Given to a Friend a Day or Two Before the Decease of the Writer." I would not be inclined to literally attribute this to Abby, nor necessarily to Mathew, himself. Rather, I tentatively conclude that, as he sometimes would, he is presenting someone else's work which he particularly resonates with. It is essentially a call to Stoicism, which concludes:

When no star twinkles with its eye of glory,
On that low mound;
And wintry storms have with their ruins hoary
Its loneliness crowned;
Will there be then one versed in misery's story
Pacing it round?

It may be so—but this is selfish sorrow
To ask such meed—
A weakness and a wickedness, to borrow
From hearts that bleed,
The wailings of to-day, for what to-morrow
Shall never need.

Lay me, then, gently in my narrow dwelling,
Thou gentle heart;
And though thy bosom should with grief be swelling,
Let no tear start;
It were vain—for time hath long been knelling,
Sad one, depart!

In this instance, the skeptical explanation that it was the *editor* who placed poems which seemed, to him, relevant to the story, is eliminated. The themes of death and grief do not enter into the story of "Bobby Lincoln." Both poems are relevant only as concerns the author's own death—and this would only be known to Mathew.

An earlier example of this technique had appeared in the October 27, 1849 edition—a mere 20 days after Poe's death— in which is found Abby's story entitled "Nora." This one seems to have been revised by Mathew, inasmuch as he nested it within a letter from an elderly bachelor named "Otis Homer" to his niece, Avis. He also seems to have somewhat implausibly written this character into the narrative, rendering what may have originally been a romance into a friendship with the young Nora. Perhaps the story had been unfinished; clearly, it is autobiographical for Abby, inasmuch as her protagonist is a musical prodigy from an upper-class family in the country (here, fallen on hard financial times), who sings and plays the piano expertly. (Perhaps Mathew re-wrote the plot so as to preserve Abby's anonymity from the editor, as their personal history may have been known to him.) Immediately following this story is the poem, "Annabel Lee," with the following introduction:

Edgar A. Poe's Last Poem.

There are perhaps some of our readers who (says the N.Y. Tribune) will understand the allusions of the following beautiful poem. Mr. Poe presented it in MS. to the writer of those paragraphs just before he left New York recently, remarking that it was the last thing he had written.

This is excerpted from an obituary by R.W. Griswold entitled "Death of Edgar A. Poe," published in the Oct. 9, 1849 edition of the New York "Daily Tribune." So far as I'm aware, Griswold had no reason to suspect Poe's claim to the original authorship of "Annabel Lee." Nonetheless, I note the cryptic reference concerning those who may "understand the allusions of the following beautiful poem." The historical notes given on the Edgar Allan Poe Society of Baltimore website indicate that "all of the authorized texts are in the form of manuscripts," and more suspiciously, that "All of the manuscripts are fair-copy drafts, featuring a clean text with no corrections." This would, of course, be the case if Poe had merely *copied* the poem several times from Mathew's original, where minor revisions occurred to him each time he copied it. We know, for example, that he made relatively few changes to "The Raven" before hurriedly scooping "American Review" with it in the "Evening Mirror." In both cases he would, of course, have destroyed the original.

The Baltimore Society's historical analysis continues:

> The dates for the manuscripts, and the order of an evolving text that such dates imply, may be misleading. It may be presumed that the poem was composed in late April or early May, and that all of the surviving manuscripts were written out at about the same time, in anticipation of Poe's southern tour to drum up support for his *Stylus* magazine. Given Poe's troubles in Philadelphia, it seems unlikely that he wrote out any of the copies there. The similarity of the manuscripts, all written in the same brown ink on the blue paper that Poe often used at this period, and in a neat hand, suggest a series copied over a short sequence of a few hours or days, with the slight differences between them representing a poem that was still not quite finished in his mind. (It may be worth repeating that while the manuscripts do have some minor changes between them, both verbally and in terms of punctuation, all of the manuscripts are clean fair copies and none of them overtly record a sequence of changes. Consequently, it is difficult to apply the usual assumption of Poe's final preference in a particular draft merely based on the date that it was handed to someone. If he had all of the drafts at the same time, it is possible that he selected what he might have considered the "best" version and sent that to Griswold as that would appear in the most durable form of a book rather than an ephemeral periodical.

My explanation would be that it was in October of 1849 that Poe finally *decided* to publish "Annabel Lee," a copy of which he would have had in his possession since Mathew shared it with him—along with "The Raven"—in the first half of 1842. That he never published this exceptional work in all those years, suggests to me that Mathew—feeling that the poem was too deeply personal—threatened him with exposure if he ever dared do so. Poe would simply have lied to Griswold; and all the various manuscripts would have been written at about the same time, perhaps in accordance with his penchant for multiple submissions.

Just as Poe modfied "The Raven" when he scooped Mathew's original which would be appearing in the February edition of "American Review," so I conclude that Poe revised the concluding lines of "Annabel Lee" to better suit his Gothic sensibilities. The final stanza reads:

> For the moon never beams without bringing me dreams
> Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;
> And the stars never rise but I feel the bright eyes
> Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;
> And so, all the night-tide, I lie down by the side
> Of my darling—my darling—my life and my bride,
> In the sepulchre there by the sea,
> In her tomb by the sounding sea.

The first four lines would have been Mathew's, bringing in the night sky which they loved to wander beneath, and associating her beloved stars with her eyes. Here, he is speaking of spirit visitation dreams, which he wrote about on several occasions over the years. At the time when he would have written this poem, he may have already experienced such dreams, or they may simply have been hoped-for. Being influenced by her teachings and those of Emanuel Swedenborg, he would never have written of lying down every night by her sepulchre! His ending would have been both spiritual and elevating. The subject of "The Raven" was an acute faith crisis, which accounts for the temporary impression that death, symbolized by the raven,

has triumphed—but that was an isolated instance in Mathew's world. Like that poem, "Annabel Lee" was very much *autobiographical*, not only drawn from life but, in accordance with his usual *modus operandi*, an actual representation of his life put through a filter of emotional distance which rendered it a fairy tale. I think he would not have introduced this jarring element of materialistic madness and horror at the end. Thus, in four lines, Poe has managed to distort the original intent of the entire poem.

It is also my personal feeling that inasmuch as "Annabel Lee" was originally written by Mathew as a private poem expressing his fresh—if somewhat dissociated—grief, he would have written it specifically for Abby, addressing her as "Abigail P——." That name would actually have a crisper and more resonant sound than the mushier "Annabel Lee," which was Poe's Southern replacement. Mathew would never have intended it for publication; but since Poe's scam technique typically involved plagiarizing the grief poems of widowers, he may have specifically asked Mathew to share any of his poems in that particular genre. Per his typical naivete, Mathew would have complied.

Although many of the specific references in "Annabel Lee" could apply to both men—as for example that both Virginia and Abby died of consumption, and that both were in a "city by the sea"—there is one idiosyncratic reference which, if the poem were written by Poe, would have to be fanciful. However, if it was written by *Mathew*, it would have been true to life, for Abby. It appears in the line:

> So that her highborn kinsmen came
> And bore her away frome me,

Abby's father was a marquis, and a few days before her death on March 27, 1841, she was taken by two of her sisters from Portland, Maine, where she and Mathew were living in the American House Hotel, to her father's home in Rocks Village, East Haverhill, Mass. Her sister Antoinette writes to Mathew's sister Elizabeth on Feb. 21, 1848:

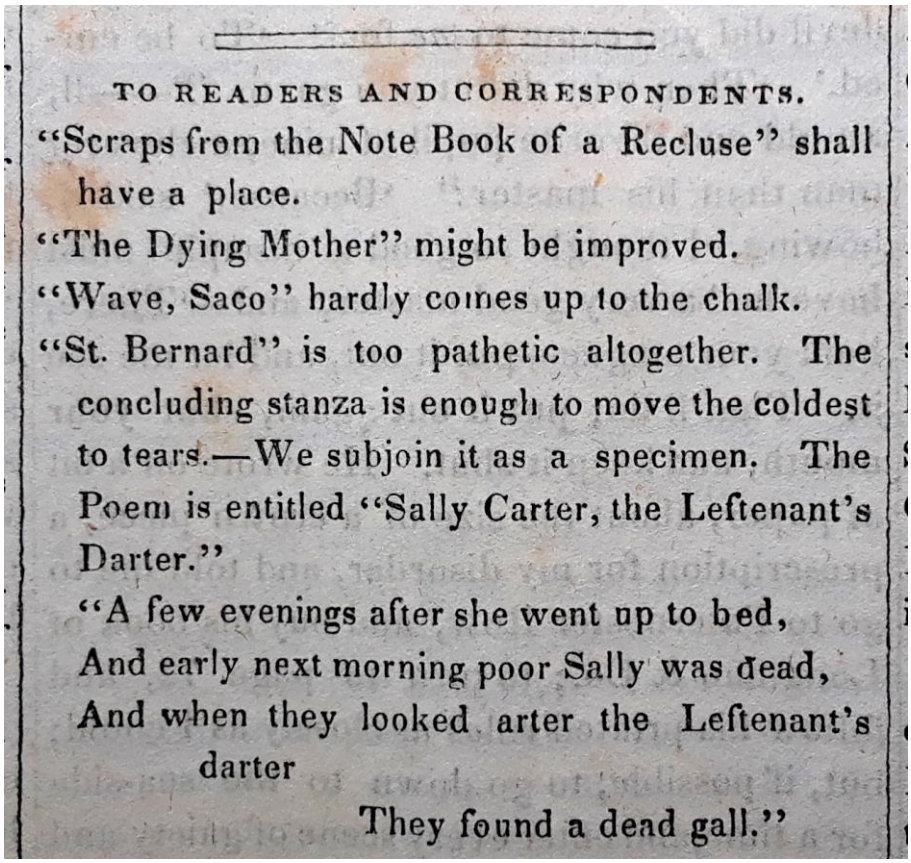
> You may readily imagine my feelings whilst their [there,] & my reflections upon the changes that had occurred in his family since I last visited him in that city in the summer of 1840. At that time [i.e., in March of 1841] I went to accompany my sister on her journey to my father's where she spent her few remaining days—I esteem Franklin [Mathew] very highly & wish him happiness & prosperity thro' all his journey in life—

The context of this letter is that Antoinette and her younger sister, Francette, had visited Mathew and his second family (an unhappy arranged marriage) in Portland, Maine in 1847 several times over the Christmas holidays. Mathew, who was not living with the family during this period, would also have been visiting for the holidays. During the first half of 1840, Abby had, as I have extrapolated, been convalescing from consumption for several months, probably in her father's native Guadeloupe. There, I believe that she was tended by her first cousin, Charles Poyen, of mesmerism fame. She had returned in July to give birth to her and Mathew's second child, Sarah. The census records for 1840 suggest that Antoinette and Francette had come to assist Abby during this time. In the 1848 letter, Antoinette is reflecting on the changes which have since occurred in Mathew's life.

A second, triangulating clue appears in the Jan. 29, 1842 edition of the Portland "Transcript," to which paper Mathew frequently contributed, and with whose editor, Charles P. Ilsley, he was personal friends. It appears in the "To Correspondents" section of the paper, where Ilsley has rejected a poem, a fragment of which he shares with the readers. I definitely recognize it, by its style and trademark dialect misspellings, as Mathew's own. He has, apparently, written a darkly humorous epic recounting Abby's death (and perhaps her life, as well). The notice reads:

> "St. Bernard" [the author] is too pathetic altogether. The concluding stanza is enough to move the coldest to tears.—We subjoin it as a specimen. The Poem is entitled "Sally Carter, the Leftenant's Darter."
>
> "A few evenings after she went up to bed,
> And early next morning poor Sally was dead,
> And when they looked arter the Leftenant's darter
> They found a dead gall."

Here, the "Leftenant" is Abby's father, the marquis, while the pseudonym, "St. Bernard," is undoubtedly a reference to the historical Bernard of Clairvaux, a French monk of the 12th century who was politically active and supported the Knights Templar. (Mathew, by comparison, was a deeply spiritual person, being politically active and a member of the Odd Fellows.) Abby had once been represented by the character "Sally" in Mathew's humorous 1831 series written for the New York "Constellation," "Enoch Timbertoes."



TO READERS AND CORRESPONDENTS.

"Scraps from the Note Book of a Recluse" shall have a place.

"The Dying Mother" might be improved.

"Wave, Saco" hardly comes up to the chalk.

"St. Bernard" is too pathetic altogether. The concluding stanza is enough to move the coldest to tears.—We subjoin it as a specimen. The Poem is entitled "Sally Carter, the Leftenant's Darter."

"A few evenings after she went up to bed,
And early next morning poor Sally was dead,
And when they looked arter the Leftenant's darter
They found a dead gall."

Mathew almost always wrote from real life, as though he were applying Photoshop filters to photographs, altering them just enough to hide the identities of the principle characters (especially, himself and Abby). In all other respects, his works were very often literal renditions of his personal history. "Annabell Lee" (or, "Abigail P——") was no exception.

Finally, a poem written by Abby shortly before her death, which Mathew caused to be published in the "Transcript" after his own death—appearing in the Feb. 17, 1883 edition—suggests it was written at her family home in Rocks Village, rather than from her and Mathew's hotel room adjacent Market Square (now Monument Square) in downtown Portland. It reads, in part:

I long once more to gaze
On all the beauty of the earth and sky.
Does not the sun shine brightly as of yore,
And the long shadows on the hillside lie?

Are the birds singing there
'Mid the dark foliage of the old oak tree;
And are the fields still green; the flowers as fair
As when I wandered last, with footsteps free?

Come now and place my chair
Beside the window where the roses twine.

O ‘twill be sweet again to rest me there.
And watch at close of day the sun decline.

Mathew’s lost correspondence with Poe, inferred

There is evidence suggesting the existence of an as-yet undiscovered exchange of correspondence between Mathew and Poe, in which Mathew requested that Poe come clean about the affair, while Poe mockingly strung him along before finally refusing him outright. Some of Mathew’s feelings on this subject can be seen in his poetry published in the Portland “Transcript” under the pseudonym, “Polonius.” Under this same pseudonym, Mathew solved Poe’s riddle-poem, “A Valentine,” in the “Transcript” on the *same day* it appeared (but not *quite* for the first time) in “The Flag of Our Union”—March 3, 1849. Whether or not Mathew had advance notice that the poem would appear in this newspaper is unknown—he was, instead, referring to its publication a few days earlier in the March edition of “Sartain’s Union Magazine of Literature and Art.” He had previously published poetry under “Polonius” in the Nov. 4 and 18, 1848, and Jan. 13 and 20, 1849 editions of the “Transcript.” Encyclopedia Britannica tells us, concerning this Shakespearean character:

> **Polonius**, fictional character, councilor to King Claudius and the father of Ophelia and Laertes in William Shakespear’s tragedy *Hamlet*) written c. 1599-1601). He is especially known for his maxim-filled speech (“Neither a borrower nor a lender be”). His meddling garrulousness eventually costs him his life.

My intuitive hunch is that Poe knew Mathew had published under the Shakespearean character “Poins,” in the “Transcript,” during the early 1840’s; and in their correspondence, he mockingly referred to Mathew not as “Poins,” but as “Polonius.” In defiance, Mathew, himself, briefly adopted the signature—which, conveniently, Poe would know was secretly directed at him.

In the March 3, 1849 “Transcript,” Mathew introduces Poe’s poem:

> In Sartain's Union Magazine for the present month, is “A Valentine,” by Edgar A. Poe,—in which the author, after telling his story—very kindly warns off all readers from the attempt to unravel his enigma, since they will merely have their labor for their pains. The editor of the Magaine, also calls the article a “most provoking puzzle.” We take this notice of the matter only because we are not quite willing to take a challenge from both the author and his editor.

Note Mathew’s sarcasm, “very kindly.” That is probably a response to what he knows is Poe’s hidden, personal venom. After giving the poem in its entirety, he continues:

> The reader will please note the initial letter of the opening line; the second letter of the second line; the third, of the third, and thus advancing through the entire twenty, he will make out the name of Frances Sargent Osgood.

If anyone else had ever deciphered this poem publicly, I am unaware of it, which would make Mathew the first. Mathew then points out that this wasn't the only time Poe had employed this amateurish cryptographic technique:

> About a year since, Mr. Poe furnished for the same Magazine, a sonnet, enveloping in the same profound mystery that attaches to the above, the name of another gifted poetess. We read the riddle at the time, without hurting ourself in the least.

Having provided this second example, he closes the article:

> By running through this according to the rule given for the first, the reader will discover the name of Sarah Anna Lewis. If Mr. Poe really wishes to puzzle his readers, let him attempt something in the periphrastic manner of the Troubadours of Provence, "in days of old romance," and possibly he may succeed. But such trifling as the above, is hardly worthy the ingenuity of the author of "The Gold Bug." Polonius.

Here, Mathew seems to call into question whether Poe could, actually, have been the original author of "The Gold Bug." I think that, like so many people of his own century and of ours, he could not quite believe the sheer degree of Poe's plagiarism. It is worth noting once again that Mathew had for many years been close personal friends with the editor of the "Transcript," Charles Parker Ilsley, as we see in a letter dated June 17, 1842 from Mathew to his brother, John Greenleaf Whittier:

> O by the way I had almost forgotten it. My good friend Docr. Ilsley of the Portland Transcript asked me some months ago when I wrote to request thee to do him the very great favor of sending him one or two articles for his paper. He would (I may as well tell thee) want to publish them in manual form as follows—"Written for the Transcript by J.G. Whittier"

Ilsley, in the April 3, 1847 edition of his paper's "To Readers and Correspondents" column, responds to one of his readers:

> "John." What you refer to is called "Cryptology," or "Cryptography,"—Enigmatical language. We used to be pretty good in that line. We think now we could find out or translate any secret writing.—Suppose "John" should put us to the test.

Thus, if Mathew, himself, could not so easily break Poe's code, he would have consulted Ilsley, for whom the riddle would have been mere child's play.

Poe's poem, "A Valentine," concludes with the following lines:

> Three eloquent words oft uttered in the hearing
> of poets, by poets—as the name is a poet's too.
> Its letters, though naturally lying
> Like the knight Pinto—Mendez Ferdinando—
> Still form a synonym for Truth.—Cease trying!

You will not read the riddle, though you do the
best you can do.

It so happens that Mathew adopted the pseudonym Ferdinand Mendez Pinto in a series of satires designed, apparently, to address one of his blatant imitators (John C. Moore) among the core writers for the "Carpet-Bag," from July of 1851 to July of the following year. However, as I identify Mathew's work, he had initially written in this vein, and under this identical signature, in the Nov. 8, 1847 New York "Evening Mirror" (as well as in at least one prior edition). This, of course, is the same paper for which Poe had once worked as a reviewer. The article was apparently intended to lampoon American authors who pretend to write news from Europe, such that "Pinto" outdoes them all. The historical author and adventurer to whom the pseudonym refers, is generally thought to have wildly embellished his personal accounts. Thus, this mention of Pinto in Poe's poem could be simply a coincidental, if somewhat inexplicable, direct reference to the historical figure—*or*, it might be a sarcastic private message to Mathew, admonishing him to "cease trying" (i.e., as regards "The Raven"), and presenting a challenge to decode the poem. Poe had published an earlier version of this poem under the title of "To Her Whose Name Is Written Below," in the Feb. 21, 1846 edition of the "Evening Mirror," but neither the reference to "Pinto," nor the closing admonishment, appears in this earlier rendition. The conclusion I derive from this, is that Poe dragged an earlier riddle-poem out of mothballs, added a message at the end which was secretly addressed to Mathew, then published it in not one, but two publications where he felt certain Mathew would see it.

Incidentally, it *does* appear, from my reading of the historical record, that Poe *submitted* these poems to both of these respective publications. Typically, a work would appear as "original" in one publication, then subsequently be copied—and usually attributed to the first publication—in others. Today, simultaneous submission is considered unethical—presumably, it was at least frowned upon, for obvious reasons, in Poe's time as well.

Based on the themes which appear in Mathew's poetry, it would seem that Poe strung Mathew along for several months in late 1848 and early 1849, hinting that he might relent and announce him as the author of "The Raven"; but that he never seriously intended on doing so. In the interim, Mathew may have been expressing his own long-standing fear of fame in the following "Polonius"-signed poem, which appeared in the Jan. 20, 1849 edition of the "Transcript":

An Aspiration.
Jan. 1*st,* 1849.
By Polonius.

Teach me, oh Father! on this fearful day
  Rightly to pray!
Be want or wealth in their extreme degrees,—
  Be dire disease,
Or the choice boon of health in store for me,
  Still may I be
Patient and humble; still murmuring not
  At lowly lot,

Nor vaunting, though so be the voice of Fame
  My praise proclaim.
That I may pray as did the Perfect One.—
  "Thy will be done."—
Spare, spare me, Thou! who dost all things control,
  Leanness of soul!*

Westbrook, Me. ——
*Vide Ps. cvi: 15.

There are other indications that Mathew was, at this time, maintaining a residence in Westbrook, Maine, just outside of Portland where his estranged second wife and children lived. The reference he gives is to a passage from Psalms. Remember that we must look *in the vicinity* of the quote, in Mathew's original sources, to find his secret message. Tracing back a few lines in the King James version, we read:

Then believed they his words; they sang his praise.
They soon forgat his works; they waited not for his counsel:
But lusted exceedingly in the wildnerness, and tempted God in the desert.
And he gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul.

Mathew is bracing himself to face, with equanimity, either sudden fame or disappointment. He knows that even if he becomes famous, sooner or later the ignorant masses will forget him and ignore his moral instruction. Eventually, as there was never any public admission from Poe, Mathew seems to have come to the stage of "acceptance," turning the matter over to God but warning Poe that it would go badly for him—his final message being a stark poem by Francis Quarles entitled "On Time." This poem was, as I believe, requested by Mathew to be published in the March 24, 1849 Portland "Transcript," where, assisted by editor Charles Ilsley, he had been publishing other pieces intended for Poe's eyes. It was prophetic, inasmuch as by the fall of that year, Poe had died, apparently a victim of his own wayward lifestyle.

On Time.

Time's an hand's breadth; 'tis a tale;
  'Tis a vessel under sail;
  'Tis an eagle in its way,
Darting down upon its prey;
  'Tis an arrow in its flight,
Mocking the pursuing sight;
  'Tis a short lived fading flower;
  'Tis a rainbow on a shower;
  'Tis a momentary ray,
Smiling in a winter's day;
  'Tis a torrent's rapid stream;
  'Tis a shadow; 'tis a dream;
  'Tis the closing watch of night,

Dying at the rising light;
'Tis a bubble; 'tis a sigh;
Be prepared, O man! to die.

The question may arise as to whether this constituted a *threat*, and thus whether Mathew could have somehow been involved in Poe's death. A thorough study of Mathew's life and character will allay any such suspicions, despite the fact that Mathew often wrote of vengeance in his fictional works. It was this tendency towards vengeance which prompted him to publish the poem, as a personal warning to Poe; but his Christian principles would have precluded him from ever acting on it, himself. It is, however, quite likely that Poe, who had no belief in God, *took* it as a personal threat—especially given that he was also in the process of publishing "Annabel Lee," which Mathew had warned him not to do—and this anxiety may have inadvertently contributed to his demise.

Conclusion

In an ideal world where people would permit themselves to be convinced by a preponderance of good evidence, what I have shared, in this article, *should* be enough to cause any objective person, at the very least, to take my work and my results seriously. What I have offered, here, is still only a portion of the objective evidence I have for Mathew's authorship of "The Raven." Taken as a whole, I feel that it is compelling.

I think that Mathew would have felt sick at "The Raven's" modern portrayal as a gothic horror tale in verse. It actually has more in common with C.S. Lewis's deeply personal book, "A Grief Observed," except that Mathew, who typically countered suffering with humor, could not resist applying his trademark cleverness, just as we saw in his poem signed "A. Trunk." This sincere, largely-autobiographical work was forged in the depths of the author's own pain, not intellectually pieced together in Poe's study as he described it, or even written in "anticipatory grief" as some have suggested. It is my earnest hope that before I pass on in this lifetime, I will be able to set the matter right.

Footnotes:

1) The first and second papers in this series were published in e-zine "Real Paranormal Magazine, UK."

2) There are two possible caveats. Firstly, Poe may not have been aware of Mathew's radical views (which is likely because he kept them so well hidden); and secondly, Poe may have been lying about his intentions. If he did indeed have a sociopathic personality, as I have concluded, he almost certainly had some other agenda, and would have had no qualms about lying. If, as I believe, Poe's primary method of plagiarism was to gain the confidence of grieving widows, stealing their grief-inspired poetry, he might have used the offer of ghost-writing as his excuse for contacting Mathew. At that time, Mathew would have been unaware of the ruse, and hence under hypnosis, recalling the event, I would not have been aware of it, either.

3) My methods of assigning any particular pseudonym to Mathew Franklin Whittier went far beyond style comparison. For example, many of Whittier's pseudonyms evolved as spin-offs from earlier ones, or were briefly brought back from his earlier works, and this evolution could be traced. Where the pseudonyms were meaningful, his pattern of adopting them could be compared with previous examples, and with his personal biography. Furthermore, some of his works—especially, but not limited to, travelogues and letters to the editor—revealed his location and his itinerary at a given point in time. Any particular piece could thus be compared with those produced under his known pseudonyms. If, for example, Mathew, writing as his historically-known character, "Ethan Spike," reports being in Montreal during a certain period of time, and the pseudonym under question *also* writes from Montreal during that same period, we have a possible match; on the other hand, if that second pseudonym writes from, say, Vermont at the same time that "Ethan Spike" is in Montreal, there is a contraindication. Another method of discerning Whittier's pseudonyms entailed observing his pet colloquialisms, which can be tallied in a searchable database of over 2,300 of his discovered (and digitized) works; as well as observing references which either fit with, or did not fit with, his known personality and values. For example, any portrayal of cruelty to persons or animals typically disqualified the piece under consideration from Whittier's authorship, unless it was deliberately intended to portray a villain for the purposes of moral instruction.

4) Mathew created this character name in the Dec. 6, 1851 edition of the "Carpet-Bag," with a poem entitled "Reuben and Phoebe: A Pathetical Ballad" signed "K.K. Blikins." It is an ostensibly humorous metaphor for his own courtship with Abby (one of many such pieces), in which they were eventually forced to elope because of her father's opposition to their marriage. It also serves as a parody of what I take to have been a popular poetic innovation, which deliberately lengthened the final line in a stanza, breaking the established rhythm. Thus, I can show that Mathew originated the character name "Blifkins," before Shillaber began publishing his "Blifkins the Martyr" series.

5) Photo of bust of Athena from Herculaneum by Miguel Hermoso Cuesta, Wikimedia CC by SA 3.0 licence. (color corrected)

6) A visual comparison of Abby Poyen Whittier's miniature painting, attributed to Mathew's cousin Ruth Whittier Shute, with the Herculaneum bust of Pallas, may be found in my e-book, "Mathew Franklin Whittier in his own words."

7) A visual comparison of Abby Poyen Whittier's miniature painting, attributed to Mathew's cousin Ruth Whittier Shute, with the "Nymph of Lurleiburg," may be found in my e-book, "Mathew Franklin Whittier in his own words."

8) Mathew also wrote under the pseudonym "Bertram": six times for the Boston "Weekly Museum" from June-September of 1849 (five poems and one essay); and once for the Aug. 6, 1853 Portland "Transcript." Two of the poems are written to Abby, in heaven. The 1853 poem styles her as a fairy being:

> LINES TO ------
> -----

By Bertram

I know a little fairy,
  That trips it o'er the lawn,
As lightly as the sunbeam
  Breaks through the clouds of morn.
Her heart is free from evil,
  Her tongue is void of guile,
A spirit's flood of sunshine,
  Seems gushing in her smile.

I know a joyous spirit
  That fosters only love;
An errant wand'rer seeming,
  From brighter realms above;
So full of joy and gladness,
  Of hope and guiltless mirth,
That Eden's joy might bloom again
  If such could people earth.

The toilsome path of duty
  With roses of delight,
Is strewed beneath her footsteps
  The weary to invite.
With every kindred virtue,
  In purity combined,
The maiden I have pictured,
  Adds jewels of the mind.

This gay and thoughtless creature
  The envious may assail,
Scandal may weave with cunning
  A dark insidious tale;
Let shafts of malice turning,
  Fall harmless at her side,
While pealing shouts are ringing;
  Her slanderers to deride.

9) Mathew wrote reverently of church bells in at least two early stories that I'm aware of, which were plagiarized by Francis Durivage, entitled "The Christ Church Chimes" and "The New Year's Bells." I get the sense that Poe may actually have written "The Bells" in mocking imitation of a lost poem that Mathew shared with him, along with "The Raven," in praise of church bells. Perhaps this accounts for Poe not having published "The Bells" during his lifetime.

10) The author has been a deep student of Eastern metaphysics since 1973.

11) Evidence that Albert Pike plagiarized the poetry of his 14-year-old classroom student, Abby Poyen, in 1830 is discussed in depth in my books, “Mathew Franklin Whittier in his own words” and its sequel, “Mathew Franklin Whittier in his own world.”

12) Scholars have mistakenly identified “Quails” as entertainer Ossian Dodge, but in “Mathew Franklin Whittier in his own words,” I have gone to great lengths (literally) to prove that this travelogue was entirely written by Mathew. I was able to definitely prove Mathew’s authorship of the series.