

**EDGAR  
ALLAN POE**

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Edgar Allan Poe by E. C. Stedman

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**E. C. STEDMAN**

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*Edgar Allan Poe*  
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# Edgar Allan Poe

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To

THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH.

EDGAR ALLAN POE.



"Man doth not yield himself to the angels, nor unto death utterly, save only through the weakness of his own feeble will."—*Joseph Glanvil*. [Quoted in "Ligeia."]

## EDGAR ALLAN POE.



### I.

UPON the roll of American au-<sup>*Distinctive*</sup>  
thors a few names are written apart <sup>*reputations.*</sup>  
from the rest. With each of these  
is associated some accident of con-  
dition, some memory of original or  
eccentric genius, through which it  
arrests attention and claims our spe-  
cial wonder. The light of none  
among these few has been more  
fervid and recurrent than that of  
Edgar Allan Poe. But, as I in turn  
pronounce his name, and in my  
turn would estimate the man and  
his writings, I am at once confront-  
ed by the question, Is this poet,  
as now remembered, as now por-

trayed to us, the real Poe who lived and sang and suffered, and who died but little more than a quarter-century ago?

*The witch-  
ery of Time.*

The great heart of the world throbs warmly over the struggles of our kind; the imagination of the world dwells upon and enlarges the glory and the shame of human action in the past. Year after year, the heart-beats are more warm, the conception grows more distinct with light and shade. The person that was is made the framework of an image to which the tender, the romantic, the thoughtful, the simple, and the wise add each his own folly or wisdom, his own joy and sorrow and uttermost yearning. Thus, not only true heroes and poets, but many who have been conspicuous through force of circumstances, become idealized as time goes by. The critic's first labor often is the task of distinguishing between men as history and their works display