



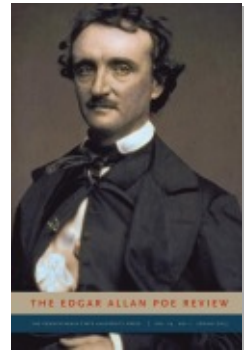
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Discarding the *Literary Emporium* : An Unauthorized Reprint
of "The Raven"

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Discarding the *Literary Emporium*: An Unauthorized Reprint of “The Raven”

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The *Literary Emporium* is a periodical of interest today to scholars and collectors chiefly because it features, in the final pages of the volume for 1845, an early printing of Poe’s famous and enduring poem “The Raven.” For no other consideration would such an unremarkable book be able to command prices in the range of \$500–\$1,500. It is usually encountered as a single volume of 378 pages, bound in cloth, with a title page that reads either “Vols. I & II” (bearing an imprint date of 1845), or as a single volume (with an imprint date of 1846). It was reissued again with no imprint date as *The Pearl Offering*, listing the publishers as L. L. Boardman (London) and H. S. Samuels (New York), probably about 1848–54.

The *Literary Emporium* is first mentioned in Poe bibliographies by J. H. Whitty in his 1911 edition of Poe’s poems, and it is collated with other versions by Killis Campbell in his own edition of Poe’s poems (1917). It is subsequently listed in the census of Poe’s printings by Heartman and Rede (1932), and again in the revised edition by Heartman and Canny (1941 and 1943). In each of the Heartman bibliographies, the magazine is listed as having vols. 1–4, with the dates as 1845–46. (These bibliographers were apparently unaware that the 1846 printing merely presents the older contents with a new title page.) In the 1969 collection of Poe’s poems, T. O. Mabbott states, with far too little explanation, that “the readings suggest that the text in the *Literary Emporium* (*L*) was authorized” (presumably because it generally agrees with most of the substantive variants of later texts).¹ Much to the contrary, my own research strongly suggests that the appearance of the poem in this rather dubious periodical was entirely unauthorized, and the text should be relegated to the long list of mere reprints.

The *Literary Emporium* was published by Rev. J. K. Wellman, a Methodist minister who seems to have had a taste for the literary field.² Such an interest should not be thought very unusual when one considers the nature of publishing in Poe's day, and what must have been a great overabundance of people with religious training, young men seeking a life away from the farms and cranked out by seminaries all over the United States. With no obvious employment in their chosen career, life as an editor or publisher must have seemed potentially attractive, and the transition from minister to litterateur was hardly unique. Rufus Wilmot Griswold, for example, who achieved considerable position as an author and editor, had been trained as a Baptist minister, and was commonly referred to with the honorary title of Reverend, although often with more than a suggestion of a sneer. The field of literature also attracted a number of people trained originally as lawyers, such as Henry Beck Hirst, and medical doctors, including Thomas Dunn English and Joseph Evans Snodgrass. Many of these would-be authors and publishers, of course, found the field more challenging than it initially appeared, and successes of any real substance were relatively rare. For every *Godey's Lady's Book*, there were dozens of periodicals that would never reach those exalted heights in terms of subscribers and income. Even the high-minded efforts of someone as talented and well connected as James Russell Lowell ended in financial ruin. (Lowell's *Pioneer* ceased publication after only three issues, and left Lowell deeply in debt.) George Rex Graham himself sold his interest in the wildly successful *Graham's Magazine* and died in poverty, the victim of failed investments. Poe's own efforts to launch the *Penn Magazine* and later the *Stylus* were constantly thwarted by a want of financial backing, sometimes undermined by the intermittent economic crises and runs on banks that were so prevalent in the decades before the imposition of regulations on the banking sector. The supply of magazine material was plentiful, if one were not very particular in regard to quality, but the challenge was always in finding subscribers to pay for that content, and to do so on an ongoing basis.

Money, or the lack of it, was therefore a sword of Damocles, always hanging over the head of the would-be literary entrepreneur. A publisher might control costs by reducing the quality of paper and ink, and avoid such extravagant expenses as engraved portraits, fashion plates, and colored prints, but the lifeblood of a periodical was content. Unless a publisher had sufficiently deep pockets to actually pay for unique and appealing contributions, usually from authors with established reputations (such as J. F. Cooper and Longfellow), it was generally necessary to accept contributions written merely for the honor of seeing the author's work in print. (If we can take at least a part of Poe's own "The Literary Life of Thingum Bob, Esq." at face value, some authors were even willing to pay the editor to have work published.) Alternatively, one might rely on the scant

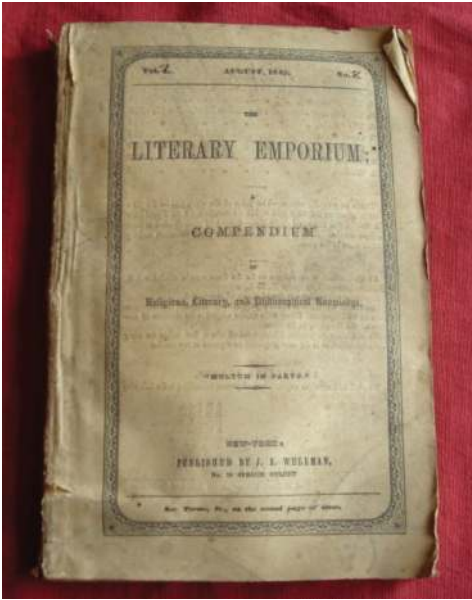


FIG. 1

enforcement of copyrights and steal liberally from the large amount of material already printed by others. Wellman evidently chose the latter route, relying in particular on a readership interested in material of a religious nature. Indeed, examining the table of contents, one finds that every item listed is a reprint from another source, and all of those items can be accounted for prior to July 1845.³

Such a fact suggests that the *Literary Emporium* is not, as has generally been supposed, a typical periodical, with issues printed and distributed every month, but little more than a struggling attempt to establish such a periodical, one composed of second- and third-hand material cobbled together by a neophyte publisher with limited funding and desperately in search of a paying audience. This speculation finds substantiating evidence with a curious copy of the *Literary Emporium* that was sold on eBay on November 18, 2011 (see fig. 1). It was a single issue of the periodical, apparently exactly as issued, and with original printed paper wrappers, dated August 1845, but with contents beginning at page 225 and running through page 378, representing all the pages remaining in the volume.⁴ (The final item, appearing on pp. 376–78, is “The Raven.”) As customary, the table of contents and index for the volume appear at the end of the issue. These special pages would be relocated as appropriate in rebinding the volume, as was the common practice. On the cover of this particular copy the printed designation of “vol. 1, no. 8.” has been altered in ink to “vol. 2, no. 2.” (see fig. 2) with the issue for July 1845 presumably constituting volume 2, number 1. The table of



FIG. 2

contents on the back of the cover indicates that the August number would have ended with page 256, and a poem by N. P. Willis. (It should perhaps be noted that the numbering of pages and the table of contents would imply a single volume covering the entire year, not one divided into issues for January–June and July–December.)

The text of “The Raven” itself, presented as the final item in the volume, and thus generally presumed as December 1845 even in the absence of a specific page bearing any such designation, was apparently taken from the *Broadway Journal* of February 8, 1845. Using Mabbott’s text, line 66 has “Of ‘Nevermore’—of ‘Nevermore,’” a change that appears first in the *Broadway Journal*, while the *New York Tribune* printing of about the same time has “‘Nevermore—ah, nevermore!’” This change appears in subsequent texts, but the point is that the text as printed by the *Literary Emporium* was available by early February 1845, although it may be reprinted from an indirect source. *The Raven and Other Poems* text (published about November 1845) has changed line 31 to begin “Back into,” while both the *Broadway Journal* and *Emporium* still have the older form of “Then into,” this combination of variants conveniently narrowing Wellman’s source to a specific version.

There is no known personal connection between Poe and Wellman, although it is certainly possible that these men did encounter each other at

some point as both were active at the same period in the heart of New York's publishing district. (Wellman's offices were at 118 Nassau Street, while the *Broadway Journal* was initially established at 135 Broadway and soon moved to 135 Nassau Street, relocating to 304 Broadway at the end of November 1845.) Had Poe authorized the printing as late as November or December 1845, he would presumably have provided the updated text rather than one that was several months old. In any case, Poe would certainly have had little sympathy with the publisher of overtly sentimental, moralistic, and heavily religious material. Indeed, as an unauthorized reprint, the chief interest in this item for Poe scholarship is as a demonstration of the broad appeal of "The Raven," and the amazing way that the poem speaks directly to people of many different backgrounds and perspectives.

Notes

1. See James Howard Whitty, ed., *The Complete Poems of Edgar Allan Poe* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1911), p. 192, where the 1845 edition of the *Literary Emporium* is listed among the variant texts, and p. 194, where the poem is noted as having been "revised in the *Literary Emporium*." Although Whitty's notes go on to quote from a letter by Poe to F. W. Thomas, in which Poe mentions that he is sending a copy of the *Broadway Journal* "containing my 'Raven,'" that version is strangely omitted from the list of variant texts. It is hardly possible to accept Whitty's contention, supposedly based on the controversial "Recollections" of F. W. Thomas, that "Poe made up the *Literary Emporium* volume, which was further confirmed by printers who worked on the book" (196). The portions of these "Recollections" quoted by Whitty, in his memoir of Poe, do not include any references to this matter, and the recollections themselves have never been documented beyond Whitty's claims to have seen them in manuscript, apparently now lost. No statements by "printers who worked on the book" are known. Whitty further speculates that "the poem in that volume [the *Literary Emporium*] is in all probabilities the text of 'The Raven,' seen in proof with Poe while on the *Broadway Journal* by the office boy Alexander T. Crane, whose recollections have been published." Instead, it is quite clear from Crane's recollections that the version of "The Raven" he saw appeared in the pages of the *Broadway Journal*. In the *Sunday World Herald* (Omaha, Neb.), morning edition, July 13, 1902, Crane is quoted as claiming that "Poe wrote 'The Raven' while editor of the *Broadway Journal*," although this is merely a forgivable error in detail. He also states clearly that the poem he heard read from manuscript "appeared in the place of honor" in "the next issue of the *Literary Journal*," the somewhat erroneous name he repeatedly uses for the *Broadway Journal*. In the *Sunday World Herald* (Omaha, Neb.), morning edition, August 6, 1911, Crane's story about hearing "The Raven" read from manuscript is again given, with the statement that "afterwards it appeared in the *Journal*," although continuing his error that the poem was printed "in that paper first." Neither article refers at all to the *Literary Emporium*. One of these recollections is reprinted by Mukhtar Ali Isani, "Reminiscences of Poe, by an Employee of the *Broadway Journal*," *Poe Studies* 6,

no. 2 (December 1973): 33–34, but the full text of both recollections, taken from the original newspaper sources, may also be read online at <http://www.eapoe.org/papers/misc1900/19020713.htm> and <http://www.eapoe.org/papers/misc1900/19110806.htm>, accessed February 15, 2013.

Campbell, in *The Poems of Edgar Allan Poe* (Boston: Ginn, 1917), lists the “*Literary Emporium*, 1845” (246) among the variant texts, and properly supplements Whitty’s list with earlier revised reprints in the *Broadway Journal* (February 6, 1845) and the *Southern Literary Messenger* (March 1845). The only further comment he makes about the *Literary Emporium* is that the authenticity of the text, along with versions printed in various other places, was “established by a comparison of the variants” (248). For Mabbott’s brief statement, see *The Collected Works of Edgar Allan Poe*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969), 1:364.

2. According to Joshua Wyman Wellman, *Descendants of Thomas Wellman of Lynn, Massachusetts* (Boston: Arthur Holbrooke Wellman, 1918), Jonathan Knowlton Wellman was born in Farmington, Maine, January 28, 1816. He married Florella Crossman White on December 9, 1841. They had six children, one of whom was dead by 1876. Wellman himself died at Adriane, Michigan, March 14, 1873, and his wife died October 15, 1876 (also in Adriane).

Wellman appears to have moved to New York late in 1844, and attempted to set himself up as a publisher. In this mode, he produced a number of mostly minor works, some of them as reprints, chiefly featuring religious material but also touching on a variety of other topics. A sampling of his books runs from *The Doctrine of the Will*, by Rev. A. H. Mahan (New York: J. K. Wellman, 1846, reprinted from an 1845 edition by a different publisher, M. H. Newman) to *Texas and Mexico in 1846*, by Dr. John B. Newman (New York: Wellman, 1846). His most ambitious project, although he apparently did not complete it, was *The Illustrated Botany*, 2 vols., ed. John B. Newman and J. L. Comstock. Volume 1 appeared in 1846, with forty-seven colored plates. Volume 2 appeared in 1847, with forty-eight colored plates. (It may be interesting to note that the colored plates accompanying the *Literary Emporium* are also botanical in nature.) A statement in the “Editor’s Table” of the *American Agriculturalist* (vol. 6) states, “The *Illustrated Botany* noticed in our last volume, published by J. K. Wellman, has passed into the hands of B. H. Culver, 139 Nassau Street, N.Y., and is issued monthly at \$3 per annum” (6, no. 7, July 1847: 227).

None of these publishing efforts appears to have been very lucrative, and by 1848 Wellman abandoned New York and moved to Michigan, but still bitten by the bug of publishing. In July 1849, he started *Wellman’s Literary Miscellany* (published in Detroit). It ran through eleven half-year volumes, although Wellman left after the February 1851 issue, when the name changed to the *Monthly Literary Miscellany*. In his valedictory Wellman notes, “Some two years since we commenced the publication of this periodical with less than 10 dollars, and without the promise of a single subscriber” (4, no. 2, February 1851). Wellman sold his interest to Luther Beecher and Mr. Daniel B. Quinby, and the magazine subsequently changed hands several times. It ceased publication after the issue for August 1854, with the death of the owner at that time. According to *The History of Detroit and Michigan*, by Silas Farmer (Detroit: Silas Farmer, 1889), the *Miscellany* “was the most pretentious and popular magazine ever printed in Detroit. . . . It soon has six thousand subscribers” (675).

By 1856 Wellman had turned to bookselling in Adriane. He reestablished his *Miscellany* there in 1870 (with the first issue dated January 1870). The opening article is by John S. Wellman, J. K. Wellman’s son. The issue ends with the note, “We have been greatly encouraged since we issued the first half of the January number” (29),

indicating, once again, a highly irregular publishing situation. Volume 7 began in January 1873, but ends abruptly. An apology in this final issue notes a delay in the October, November, and December numbers, for 1872, due to “our protracted sickness.” He goes on to state, “About the first of October, we became so prostrated that we could give no attention to the business of the Miscellany. We have not fully recovered; but rejoice that we have so far recovered as to be able to greet old friends again” (7, no. 32, January 1873). The claims of illness were not exaggerated, and the project ceased with Wellman’s death.

3. Some items are taken from sources appearing as early as 1828, although generally with more recent reprintings. Tracing items from the table of contents, that are nearest to the end of the volume, including all of what would have been the December issue (beginning with “Recollection of the Rev. John Summerfield”), shows the following:

“A Hymn of the Sea” (poem) by William Cullen Bryant: originally printed in *The Christian Examiners* (Boston) 33, no. 1 (September 1842): 95–96; reprinted in the *Christian Witness and Church Member’s Magazine* (London) 1, no. 6 (June 1844): 278.

“Song” (poem) by James G. Percival: originally printed in the *Knickerbocker* 17, no. 6 (June 1841): 449.

“Recollections of the Rev. John Summerfield” (essay) by Rev. Dr. Bethune, Philadelphia, followed by a poem about Dr. Summerfield by William Bingham Tappan. Both items were possibly extracted from an edition of *The Memoirs of the Life of John Summerfield*, by John Holland, first printed in 1829, and issued in various editions thereafter. The recollections and poem appear in an 1844 edition, in which Dr. Bethune’s recollections are dated “*Philadelphia, September 1843.*” Tappan’s poem was originally published without title in *Lyrics* (Philadelphia and New York) in 1822. It was reprinted with the new title “Rev. John Summerfield” in *The Poems of William B. Tappan* (Philadelphia, New York, and Boston, 1834), 33; and again in *Poetry of the Heart*, by W. B. Tappan (Boston: J. Buffum, 1845), 91–92. Wellman liked the poem so much that he printed it again in *Wellman’s Miscellany* in 1849.

“Parental Faithfulness Rewarded” (essay) by Rev. Herman Hooker, Philadelphia: originally printed in *Christian Family Magazine* 1, no. 2 (November 1841): 72–75.

“Time” (poem): originally printed in the *Knickerbocker* 9, no. 3 (March 1837): 295–96, where it is signed only as “J,” with a note of “Wilmington, Del.”

“On Cruelty to Animals” (poem), signed “W. L.”: originally printed in the *Metropolitan Magazine* (American ed.) 12, no. 123 (July 1841): 69.

“My Friend’s Manuscript” (story), by Mrs. Sedgwick: originally printed in the *Knickerbocker* 12, no. 2 (August 1838): 134–48.

“A Soul’s Wanderings” (poem), unsigned: reprinted in *Littell’s Living Age* 5, no. 61 (July 12, 1845): 58, acknowledged as taken from *Fraser’s Magazine*.

“Go Forth into the Fields” (poem) by William J. Pabodie: appears as early as 1837 in the *American Monthly Magazine* 4, no. 2 (August 1837): 208. It was reprinted several times, including by *Littell’s Living Age* 5, no. 61 (July 12, 1845): 58, acknowledged as taken from the *Providence Journal*. (Interestingly, this poem and “A Soul’s Wanderings” are both printed together in *Littell’s*, from two separate sources, clearly indicating that Wellman took his reprint from *Littell’s*.)

“And Is There Care in Heaven?” (poem), unsigned: reprinted in *Littell’s Living Age* 5, no. 58 (June 21, 1845): 562, acknowledged as taken from the *Congregational Magazine*.

“The Conflicts of Mind” (essay), by Rev. Edward Thomson, acknowledged in the table of contents as taken from the *Ladies’ Repository*: originally printed in the *Ladies’ Repository*, part 1, vol. 2, no. 11 (November 1842): 322–25, and part 2, vol. 2, no. 12 (December 1842): 354–58. (The *Emporium* printing is slightly abridged.)

“Capabilities” (essay), unsigned: originally printed in *Chamber’s Edinburgh Journal* 3, no. 70 (May 3, 1845): 273–74; reprinted in *Littell’s Living Age* 5, no. 58 (June 21, 1845): 583–84, acknowledged as taken from *Chamber’s Edinburgh Journal*.

“Queen Esther” (essay), unsigned: originally printed in *Ladies Companion* 18, no. 6 (April 1843): 279–84, where it is cited as “original” and signed only as “N.”

This long list of reprints not only shows clearly the character of the periodical as focusing on a religious audience, but also overwhelmingly supports my supposition that “The Raven” is just another unacknowledged borrowing. Items in earlier issues of the *Literary Emporium* may be similarly documented. For a detailed study of the general practice of reprinting, see Meredith L. McGill, *American Literature and the Culture of Reprinting, 1834–1853* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), including two chapters that deal specifically with Poe.

4. This observation is based on a careful inspection by the seller, supported by several photographs kindly provided for my own research. The terms designated inside the front cover are as follows: “The price of the work will be \$1 00 a year in advance; \$1 25 if paid within six months; \$1 50 if paid after six months, and 12 1/2 cents single No.—A splendid plate as often as once in three months. Each Number to contain 24 pages or more, making 300 or more in the year.” Although bound copies come up for sale with some regularity, and are widely held by many libraries and collectors, no other copies in paper wrappers appear to have been described or might even have survived. It may be interesting, therefore, to quote the rare, or possibly even unique, prospectus from the outside of the back wrapper:

PROSPECTUS
OF THE
LITERARY EMPORIUM;
A COMPENDIUM OF
RELIGIOUS, LITERARY, AND PHILOSOPHICAL KNOWLEDGE.

“MULTUM IN PARVO.”

It has been so common to put forth in a Prospectus, promises which have not been met in the Magazine, that public confidence has been almost annihilated. We shall be modest, therefore, in our pretensions, while we give as true a description of our intended course as we can, in plain English. In the first place, light literature will find no place in its pages, i.e. sickly love tales, literary trash, &c. In the second place, sectarianism will not be admitted into the Emporium; that is to say, it will favor no particular denomination of Christians; but we do not mean by this that it will not advocate the religion of the Bible. It is intended that it shall do this, and in the strongest terms. It will urge the necessity not only of a change of heart, but a virtuous and holy life, in order to be truly happy in this world and to be prepared for that which is to come. It is intended that its religious matter shall be of such a nature as will be calculated to cultivate, to inspire, and please a good and correct taste—that which will inform, expand and elevate the mind, and also excite in the soul love to God, holiness, virtue, and humanity. In regard to its literary character, it is designated to be of such a nature as to water the thirsty soul that is studiously endeavoring to acquire a knowledge of man in his past and present condition; also, some information in relation to the different sciences and arts, and the variety of the works of nature, with such miscellaneous reading as will invigorate the faculties of the mind, give scope to the imagination, while it shall address itself to the good sense of all who desire to be truly elevated by reading.

Having given in the above, as clearly as possible, our design, we humbly and yet confidently invite to the candid perusal of its pages; and if you are pleased with its contents cheerfully subscribe to its support, and don't forget to recommend it to others.

J. K. WELLMAN.

New York, 1845.

Note that the month portion of the date is left blank. The complete lack of any mention of Poe's name, in the prospectus or in any of the other editorial material, which instructs that "all communications on business or for the press" are to be directed to J. K. Wellman, should also argue strongly against Whitty's contention that Poe himself was in some way associated with putting the volume together, quoted in note 1, above.