

is simple, clear, and melodious, and appeals to the inner self alone, because of its perfection. His verse is melancholy to the extreme. His definition of poetry was that "It is the Rhythmical Creation of Beauty. Its sole arbiter is Taste."

The qualities of Poe's poetry are rather to be felt than described. They are remote, elusive, and pertaining to another world than this. "He transports us to a visionary region, inhabited by shadows, and haunted by a sense of danger. Oppressed by all we see, or think we see, we are the prey of invisible terrors. It is as if we were in a world which has been destroyed; a purgatory from which there is no escape except into hell." His poetry is not written from the heart, and its emotion is entirely imaginary. Poe's gloom differs vastly from that of Byron; it is intellectual rather than moral. The two can hardly be compared as artists, for Byron wrote from the heart and Poe did not. The lightest touch of Poe's pencil was effective. He possessed two prime qualities of genius, a faculty of vigorous yet minute analysis and a wonderful imagination. His constructive skill was marvellous. "No modern poet, except Tennyson, is so subtly and strangely suggestive." If we accept Poe's definition of poetry his verse is not poetry for these qualities are not attributes of beauty. His definition is too narrow and Stoddard seems to think poetry can't be defined.

Poe probably began writing stories after Mr. Allan had discarded him. From 1831 to 1833 he wrote about six tales, the most of them experiments. Among them are "A Descent into the Maelström," and "MS. Found in a Bottle." His method was the accumulation of details so grouped as to palm fiction off as fact. His method was like that of De Foe but he carried it further—"from the level tract of prose into the highest regions of poetry, from things which might have happened, though they never did, to things which could not have happened at all, although he contrived to fool the imagination with them." He soon went to the mysterious and often too far. Madness as shown by Shakespeare is a sad misfortune, but as depicted by Poe it is a horrible crime. His beings are not of earth, but purely imaginary. His style is highly finished, graceful, and classical. If Poe had only written "The Fall of the House of Usher" that alone would have been sufficient to stamp him as a man of genius and the master of a classical style. Poe's secret lies in the skill with which he dealt with mystery and terror. His skill lay in his analytical powers.