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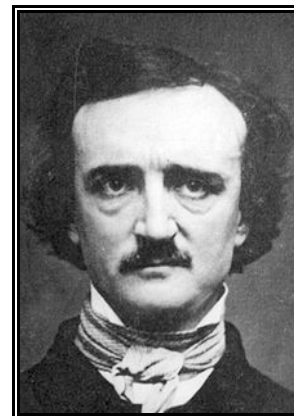
ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

EDGAR ALLAN POE.

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE genius of Poe will assuredly take care of itself. Envied by influential contemporaries, calumniated by influential clericals, sneered at by the vile mediocrity, contempt heaped upon by Pharisaic virtue, not only is Poe's character now vindicated, but his unique intellectual gift to the race is rising, has risen to a degree of admiration that the centennial of his birth, now being celebrated, assumes rank as a national ovation. The most ardent admirer of the literature bequeathed by Poe to posterity can not but admit his warmest hopes will be realized beyond expectation. If even now, when much of what Poe wrote is veiled with unappreciated mists to many of his enthusiastic critics, especially to those critics who are rendering him unwilling and unqualified homage,—if even now Poe's writings command the admiration that they do, his stature in the Nation's Hall of Fame is bound eventually to be full many a cubit higher.



Edgar Allan Poe
(1809–1849)

A fate such as this is enough to call attention under all circumstances, to men of all pursuits. There is that, however, in the fate of Poe that is of peculiar interest to the Socialist.

There is no ground in reason for genius to undergo the physical martyrdom that Poe underwent. Necessity may be the mother of invention. There is no ground in reason to expect invention from physical torture. The morality of Capital adapts its standard to its own low level. Capital justifies the cruelty it perpetrates with the claim that that extracts the best in man. This is libel. Keener is the insight of the poet who perceived that chill *{sic}* penury does rather repress the noble ardor in man, and freeze the genial current of his soul, thus keeping down to the brute's

round of toil for bare existence hearts once pregnant with celestial fire, and hands that might have waked to ecstasy the living lyre.

Poverty—to-day, as utterly unnecessary a scourge as would be the pest that periodically devastated Europe in the Middle Ages—to-day intensifies the race's mental poverty. The geniuses that rise, rise despite adversity. Nor do they gain aught in the struggle. On the contrary. They can only lose. Something of the pitch sticks to the hand or mind that wrestles with it.

To what extent Poe, the man, and Poe, the genius, suffered in the struggle, and humanity is thereby the loser, may never be ascertained. Nevertheless, after the best is said that the warmest admirer of Poe may say in behalf of his creative genius, there is a homage that may not be overlooked. It is this—no torture of mind or body left the impress of bitterness upon Poe. Though Sadness and Indignation marks much that was distilled through Poe's pen—Rancor, never.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.
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