

THE VULTURE:
AN ORNITHOLOGICAL STUDY.

AFTER THE LATE EDGAR A. POE.

The vulture is the most cruel, deadly, and voracious of birds of prey. He is remarkable for his keen scent, and for the tenacity with which he invariably clings to the victim on whom he has fixed his gripe. He is not to be shaken off whilst the humblest pickings remain. He is usually to be found in an indifferent state of feather.—*New Translation of Courier.*



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 out-skipping,

Suddenly there came a ripping whipping, at my chamber's door.

"'T is the second-floor," I muttered, "fipping 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 stirred 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 reddened nostril bore—

Nameless here for evermore!

And I recollect a certain draught that fanned the window curtain

Chilled me, filled 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.

Presently the row grew stronger; hesitating then no longer,

"Really, Mr. Johnson, blow it!—your forgiveness I implore

Such an observation letting slip, but when a man's just getting

Into bed, you come upsetting nerves and posts of chambers' door,

Making such a row, forgetting"—Spoke a voice beyond the door:

"'T is n't Johnson"—nothing more!

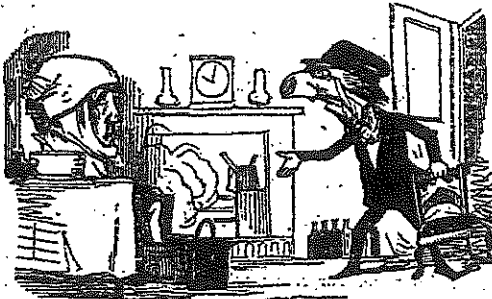
Quick a perspiration clammy bathed me, and I uttered
"Dammy!"

(Observation rested from me, like the one I made before)
Back upon the cushions sinking, hopelessly my eyes, like winking,

On some stout for private drinking, ranged in rows upon the floor,

Fixed—and on an oyster barrel (full) beside them on the floor,

Looked and groaned, and nothing more.



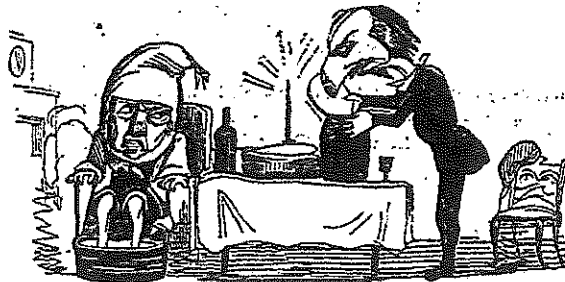
Open then was flung the portal, and in stepped a hated mortal,

By the moderns called a VULTURE (known as *Sponge* in days of yore,)

Well I kaeuw his reputation! cause of all my agitation—
Scarce a nod or salutation changed, he pounced upon the floor;

Coolly lifted up the oysters and some stout from off the floor,

Helped himself, and took some more!



Then this hungry beast untiring fixed his gaze with fond admiring

On a piece of cold boiled beef I meant to last a week or more,

Quick he set to work devouring—plates, in quick succession, scouring—

Stout with every mouthful showering—made me ask, to see it pour,

If he quite enjoyed his supper, as I watched the liquid pour;

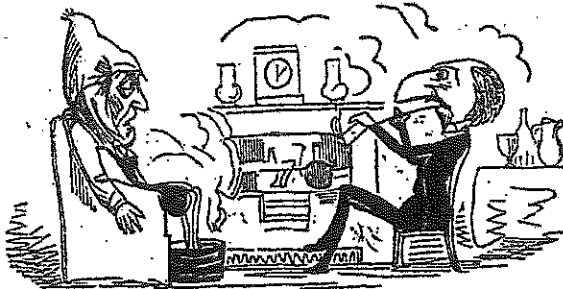
Said the Vulture, "Never more."



Much disgusted at the spacious cavern by this brute voracious
Excavated in the beef—(he'd eaten quite enough for four)—



Still I felt relief surprising when at length I saw him rising,
That he meant to go surmising, said I, glancing at the door—



"Going? well, I wou'd detain you—mind the stairs and shut the door—"

—"Leave you, Tompkins! never more."



Startled by an answer dropping hints that he intended stopping

All his life—I knew him equal to it if he liked, or more—
Half in dismal earnest, half in joke, with an attempt at laughing,
I remarked that he was chaffing, and demanded of the bore,
Asked what this disgusting, nasty, greedy, vile intrusive bore

Meant in croaking "Never more."

But the Vulture not replying, took my bunch of keys and trying

Sev'ral, found at length the one to fit my private cupboard door;

Took the gin out, filled the kettle; and with a sauc' froid to nettles

Any saint, began to settle calmly down the grate before,
Really as he meant departing at the date I named before,

Of never, never more!

Then I sat engaged in guessing what this circumstance distressing

Would be likely to result in, for I knew that long before

Once (it served me right for drinking) I had told him that if sinking

In the world, my fortunes linking to his own, he'd find my door

Always open to receive him, and it struck me now that door

He would pass, p'raps never more!

Suddenly the air was clouded, all the furniture enshrouded

With the smoke of vile tobacco—this was worse than all before;

"Smith!" I cried (in not offensive tones, it might have been expensive,

For he knew the art defensive, and could costermongers floor;)

"Recollect it's after midnight, are you going?—mind the floor."

Quoth the Vulture "Never more."

"Smith!" I cried (the gin was going, down his throat in rivers flowing,)

"If you want a bed, you know there's quite a nice hotel next door,

Very cheap—I'm ill—and, joking set apart, your horrid smoking

Irritates my cough to choking. Having mentioned it before,

Really, you should not compel one—Will you mizzle—as before?"

Quoth the Vulture "Never more."

"Smith!" I cried, "that joke repeating merits little better treating

For you than a condemnation as a nuisance and a bore;

Drop it, pray, it isn't funny; I've to mix some rum and honey—

If you want a little money, take some and be off next door;

Rum a bill up for me if you like, but do be off next door."

Quoth the Vulture "Never more!"

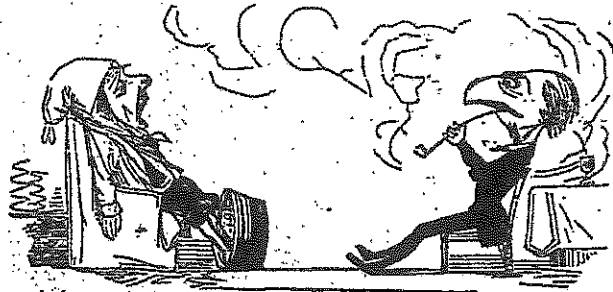
"Smith!" I shrieked—the accent humbler, dropping, as another tumbler

I beheld him mix, "be off! you drive me mad—it's striking four.
Leave the house and something in it; if you go on at the gin, it
Wont hold out another minute. Leave the house and shut the door—
Take your beak from out my gin, and take your body through the door!"

Quoth the Vulture "Never more!"

And the Vulture never flitting—still is sitting, still is sitting,
Gulping down my stout by gallons, and my oysters by the score;
And the beast, with no more breeding than a heathen savage feeding,
The new carpet's tints unheeding, throws his shells upon the floor.
And his smoke from out my curtains, and his stains from out my floor,

Shall be sifted never more.



LOVE AND LUCRE.

AN ALLEGORY.

BY JOHN G. SAKE.

Love and Lucre met one day,
In chill November weather,
And so, to wile the time away,
They held discourse together.

Love at first was rather shy,
As thinking there was danger
In venturing so very nigh
The haughty-looking stranger;

But Lucre managed to employ
Behavior so potential,
That in a trice the bashful boy
Grew bold and confidential.

"I hear," quoth Lucre, bowing low,
"With all your hearts and honey,
You sometimes suffer—is it so?—
For lack of mortal money."

Love owned that he was poor in aught
Except in golden fancies,
And ne'er, as yet, had given a thought
To mending his finances.

"Besides, I've heard"—thus Love went on,
The other's hint improving—
"That gold, however sought or won,
Is not a friend to loving."

"An orrant lie—as you shall see—
Full long ago invented,

(By knaves who know not you nor me!)
To tickle the demanted."

And Lucre waved his wand—and lo!
By magical expansion,
Love saw his little hovel grow
Into a stately mansion!

And where before he used to sup
Untended in his cottage,
And grumble o'er the earthen cup
That held his meagre pottage;

Now, smoking viands crown his board,
And many a flowing chalice;
His larder was with plenty stored,
And beauty filled the palace!

And Love, though rather lean at first,
And tinged with melancholy,
On generous wines and puddings nursed,
Grew very stout and jolly!

Yet, mindful of his truest friend,
He never turns detractor,
But prays that blessings may attend
His worthy benefactor;

And when his friends are gay above
Their evening whist or eucure,
And drink a brimming "Health to Love,"
He drinks, "Success to Lucre!"