year, George R. Graham, proprietor of The Casket, bought the Gentleman's from Burton, and under Graham's editorship Poe's story appeared in both The Casket and the Gentleman's for December. Both issues carried the new heading "Graham's Magazine" on the first page of text, but each retained its individual title page and serial number, and the Gentleman's had eight additional pages concluding a continued story begun some months before. Otherwise, the two issues were identical. Each, however, served to complete a volume. With the issue for January 1841, Graham began publishing Graham's Lady's and Gentleman's Magazine (The Casket and Gentleman's United), numbered in sequence with the old Casket, and within a few months he added Poe to his staff.

TEXTS

(A) The Casket for December 1840 (17:267-270) and [Burton's] Gentleman's Magazine for December 1840 (17:267-270), both captioned on first page of text: "Graham's Magazine"; (B) Tales (1845), pp. 219-228; (C) J. Lorimer Graham copy of the last with one manuscript correction; (D) Works (1850), II, 398-407; PHANTASY-Pieces, title only.

Text (C) is followed. The Lorimer Graham correction is merely insertion of a period at the end of the final footnote — something done independently by Griswold or his printer in Works (D). The spelling decrepid was a recognized variant. There were five printer's end-of-line dashes in the first printing (A); two were eliminated for Tales, but three were allowed to remain. In B and C and in our text they fall within the line.

THE MAN OF THE CROWD. [C]

Ce grand malheur, de ne pouvoir être seul. La Bruyère.

It was well said of a certain German book that "er lässt sich nicht lesen" — it does not permit itself to be read. There are some secrets which do not permit themselves to be told. Men die nightly in their beds, wringing the hands of ghostly confessors, and looking them piteously in the eyes — die with despair of heart and convulsion of throat, on account of the hideousness of mysteries which will not suffer themselves to be revealed. Now and then, alas, the conscience of man takes up a burthen so heavy in horror that it can be thrown down only into the grave. And thus the essence of all crime is undivulged.

Not long ago, about the closing in of an evening in autumn, I sat at the large bow window of the D — Coffee-House in London. For some months I had been ill in health, but was now convalescent, and, with returning strength, found myself in one of those happy moods which are so precisely the converse of ennui — moods of the keenest appetency, when the film from the mental vision departs — the σχέδιον πείρας ἐπηνευρ — and the intellect, electrified, surpasses as greatly its every-day condition, as does the vivid yet candid reason of Leibnitz, the mad and flimsy rhetoric of Gorgias. Merely to breathe was enjoyment; and I derived positive pleasure even from many of the legitimate sources of pain. I felt a calm but inquisitive interest in everything. With a cigar in my mouth and a newspaper in my lap, I had been amusing myself for the greater part of the afternoon, now in poring over advertisements, now in observing the promiscuous company in the room, and now in peering through the smoky panes into the street.

This latter is one of the principal thoroughfares of the city, and had been very much crowded during the whole day. But, as the darkness came on, the throng momentarily increased; and, by the time the lamps were well lighted, two dense and continuous tides of population were rushing past the door. At this particular period of the evening I had never before been in a similar situation, and the tumultuous sea of human heads filled me, therefore, with a delicious novelty of emotion. I gave up, at length, all care of things within the hotel, and became absorbed in contemplation of the scene without.

At first my observations took an abstract and generalizing turn. I looked at the passengers in masses, and thought of them in their aggregate relations. Soon, however, I descended to details, and regarded with minute interest the innumerable varieties of figure, dress, air, gait, visage, and expression of countenance.

Title: In the Table of Contents this is listed as The Man in the Crowd. Motto: French unaccented (A)

\[506\]
INTERLUDE: 1840

By far the greater number of those who went by had a satisfied business-like demeanor, and seemed to be thinking only of making their way through the press. Their brows were knit, and their eyes rolled quickly; when pushed against by fellow-wayfarers they evinced no symptom of impatience, but adjusted their clothes and hurried on. Others, still a numerous class, were restless in their movements, had flushed faces, and talked and gesticulated to themselves, as if feeling in solitude on account of the very denseness of the company around. When impeded in their progress, these people suddenly ceased muttering, but redoubled their gesticulations, and awaited, with an absent and overdone smile upon the lips, the course of the persons impeding them. If jostled, they bowed profusely to the jostlers, and appeared overwhelmed with confusion. — There was nothing very distinctive about these two large classes beyond what I have noted. Their habiliments belonged to that order which is pointedly termed the decent. They were undoubtedly noblemen, merchants, attorneys, tradesmen, stock-jobbers the Eupatrids and the common-places of society — men of leisure and men actively engaged in affairs of their own conducting business upon their own responsibility. They did not greatly excite my attention.

The tribe of clerks was an obvious one and here I discerned two remarkable divisions. There were the junior clerks of flash houses — young gentlemen with tight coats, bright boots, well-oiled hair, and supercilious lips. Setting aside a certain dapperness of carriage, which may be termed deskism* for want of a better word, the manner of these persons seemed to me an exact facsimile of what had been the perfection of bon ton about twelve or eighteen months before. They wore the cast-off graces of the try; — and this, I believe, involves the best definition of the class.

The division of the upper clerks of staunch firms; or of the "steady old fellows," it was not possible to mistake. These were known by their coats and pantaloons of black or brown, made to sit comfortably, with white cravats and waistcoats; broad solid-looking shoes, and thick hose or gaiters. — They had all slightly bald heads, from which the right ears, long used to pen-holding, had an odd habit of standing off on end. I observed that they always removed or settled their hats with both hands, and wore watches, with short gold chains of a substantial and ancient pattern. Theirs was the affectation of respectability; — if indeed there be an affectation so honorable.

There were many individuals of dashing appearance, whom I easily understood* as belonging to the race of swell pick-pockets, with which all great cities are infested. I watched these gentry with much inquisitiveness, and found it difficult to imagine how they should ever be mistaken for gentlemen by gentlemen themselves. Their voluminousness of wristband, with an air of excessive frankness, should betray them at once.

The gamblers, of whom I descried not a few, were still more easily recognisable. They wore every variety of dress, from that of the desperate thimble-rig bully,* with velvet waistcoat, fancy neckerchief, gilt chains, and filagree buttons, to that of the scrupulously inornate clergyman, than which nothing could be less liable to suspicion. Still all were distinguished by a certain sodden swarthiness of complexion, a filmy dimness of eye, and pallor and compression of lip. There were two other traits, moreover, by which I could always detect them; — a guarded lowness of tone in conversation, and a more than ordinary extension of the thumb in a direction at right angles with the fingers. — Very often, in company with these sharpers, I observed an order of men somewhat different in habits, but still birds of a kindred feather. They may be defined as the gentlemen who live by their wits. They seem to prey upon the public in two battalions — that of the dandies and that of the military men. Of the first grade the leading features are long locks and smiles; of the second frogged coats and frowns.

Descending in the scale of what is termed gentility, I found darker and deeper themes for speculation. I saw Jew pedlars, with hawk eyes flashing from countenances whose every other feature wore only an expression of abject humility; sturdy professional street beggars scowling upon mendicants of a better stamp, whom despair alone had driven forth into the night for charity; feeble and ghastly invalids, upon whom death had placed a sure hand, and

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*d deskism (A)
d set down (A)
who sidled and tottered through the mob, looking every one be-
seechingly in the face, as if in search of some chance consolation,
some lost hope; modest young girls returning from long and late
labor to a cheerless home, and shrinking more tearfully than indig-
nantly from the glances of ruffians, whose direct contact, even,
could not be avoided; women of the town of all kinds and of all
ages — the unequivocal beauty in the prime of her womanhood,
putting one in mind of the statue in Lucian, with the surface of
Parian marble, and the interior filled with filth — the loathsome
and utterly lost leper in rags — the wrinkled, bejewelled and paint-
bejewelled beldame, making a last effort at youth — the mere child
of immature form, yet, from long association, an adept in the dread-
ful coquetties of her trade, and burning with a rabid ambition to be
ranked the equal of her elders in vice; drunkards innumerable
and indescribable — some in shreds and patches, reeling, inarticu-
late, with bruised visage and lack-lustre eyes — some in whole,
though filthy garments, with a slightly unsteady swagger, thick
sensual lips, and hearty-looking rubicund faces — others clothed in
materials which had once been good, and which even now were
scrupulously well brushed — men who walked with a more than
naturally firm and springy step, but whose countenances were fear-
fully pale, whose eyes hideously wild and red, and who clutched
with quivering fingers, as they strode through the crowd, at every
object which came within their reach; beside these, pie-men,
porters, coal-heavers, sweeps; organ-grinders, monkey-exhibitors
and ballad mongers, those who vended with those who sang; ragg
artizans and exhausted laborers of every description, and all of
a noisy and inordinate vivacity which jarred discordantly upon
the ear, and gave an aching sensation to the eye.

As the night deepened, so deepened to me the interest of the
scene; for not only did the general character of the crowd ma-
terially alter (its gentler features retiring in the gradual with-
drawal of the more orderly portion of the people, and its harsher
ones coming out into bolder relief, as the late hour brought forth
every species of infamy from its den,) but the rays of the gas-lamps,
feeble at first in their struggle with the-dying day, had now at
gained ascendency, and threw over every thing a fitful and
garish lustre. All was dark yet splendid — as that ebony to which
has been likened the style of Tertullian.

The wild effects of the light enchained me to an examination of
individual faces; and although the rapidity with which the world
of light flitted before the window, prevented me from casting
more than a glance upon each visage, still it seemed that, in my
then peculiar mental state, I could frequently read, even in that
brief interval of a glance, the history of long years.

With my brow to the glass, I was thus occupied in scrutinizing
the mob, when suddenly there came into view a countenance (that
of a decrepit old man, some sixty-five or seventy years of age,) — a
countenance which at once arrested and absorbed my whole atten-
tion, on account of the absolute idiosyncracy of its expression. Any
thing even remotely resembling that expression I had never seen
before. I well remember that my first thought, upon beholding it,
was that Retzsch, had he viewed it, would have greatly preferred
it to his own pictural incarnations of the fiend. As I endeavored,
during the brief minute of my original survey, to form some analy-
sis of the meaning conveyed, there arose confusedly and paradoxi-
ically within my mind, the ideas of vast mental power, of caution,
of avarice, of coolness, of malice, of blood-thirstiness, of triumph,
of merriment, of excessive terror, of intense — of supreme despair. I felt singularly aroused, startled, fascinated.

"How wild a history," I said to myself, "is written within that
man!" Then came a craving desire to keep the man in view —
to know more of him. Hurriedly putting on an overcoat, and
seizing my hat and cane, I made my way into the street, and pushed
through the crowd in the direction which I had seen him take; for
he had already disappeared. With some little difficulty I at length
came within sight of him, approached, and followed him closely,
yet cautiously, so as not to attract his attention.

I had now a good opportunity of examining his person. He
was short in stature, very thin, and apparently very feeble. His
clothes, generally, were filthy and ragged; but as he came, now
for (A) and still (A)
INTERLUDE: 1840

and then, within the strong glare of a lamp, I perceived that his linen, although dirty, was of beautiful texture; and my vision deceived me, or, through a rent in a closely-buttoned and evidently second-handed roquelaire which enveloped him, I caught a glimpse both of a diamond and of a dagger. These observations heightened my curiosity, and I resolved to follow the stranger whithersoever he should go.

It was now fully night-fall, and a thick humid fog hung over the city, soon enclosing in a settled and heavy rain. This change of weather had an odd effect upon the crowd, the whole of which was at once put into new commotion, and overshadowed by a world of umbrellas. The waver, the jostle, and the hum increased in a tenfold degree. For my own part I did not much regard the rain — the lurking of an old fever in my system rendering the moisture somewhat too dangerously pleasant. Tying a handkerchief about my mouth, I kept on. For half an hour the old man held his way with difficulty along the great thoroughfare; and I here walked close at his elbow through fear of losing sight of him. Never once turning his head to look back, he did not observe me. By and bye he passed into a cross street, which, although densely filled with people, was not quite so much thronged as the main one he had quitted. Here a change in his demeanor became evident. He walked more slowly and with less object than before — more hesitatingly. He crossed and re-crossed the way repeatedly without apparent aim; and the press was still so thick that, at every movement, I was obliged to follow him closely. The street was a narrow and long one, and his course lay within it for nearly an hour, during which the passengers had gradually diminished to about that number which is ordinarily seen at noon in Broadway near the Park — so vast a difference is there between a London populace and that of the most frequented American city. A second turn brought us into a square, brilliantly lighted, and overflowing with life. The old manner of the stranger re-appeared. His thin fell upon his breast, while his eyes rolled wildly from under his knit brows, in every direction, upon those who hemmed him.

He urged his way steadily and perseveringly. I was surprised, however, to find, upon his having made the circuit of the square, that he turned and retraced his steps. Still more was I astonished to see him repeat the same walk several times — once nearly detecting me as he came round with a sudden movement.

In this exercise he spent another hour, at the end of which we met with far less interruption from passengers than at first. The rain fell fast; the air grew cool; and the people were retiring to their homes. With a gesture of impatience, the wanderer passed into a by-street comparatively deserted. Down this, some quarter of a mile long, he rushed with an activity I could not have dreamed of seeing in one so aged, and which put me to much trouble in pursuit. A few minutes brought us to a large and busy bazaar, with the localities of which the stranger appeared well acquainted, and where his original demeanor again became apparent, as he forced his way to and fro, without aim, among the host of buyers and sellers.

During the hour and a half, or thereabouts, which we passed in this place, it required much caution on my part to keep him within reach without attracting his observation. Luckily I wore a pair of caoutchouc over-shoes, and could move about in perfect silence. At no moment did he see that I watched him. He entered shop after shop, priced nothing, spoke no word, and looked at all objects with a wild and vacant stare. I was now utterly amazed at his behaviour, and firmly resolved that we should not part until I had satisfied myself in some measure respecting him.

A loud-toned clock struck eleven, and the company were fast deserting the bazaar. A shop-keeper, in putting up a shutter, jostled the old man, and at the instant I saw a strong shudder come over his frame. He hurried into the street, looked anxiously around him for an instant, and then ran with incredible swiftness through many crooked and people-less lanes, until we emerged once more upon the great thoroughfare whence we had started — the street of the D — Hotel. It no longer wore, however, the same aspect. It was still brilliant with gas; but the rain fell fiercely,
and there were few persons to be seen. The stranger grew pale. He walked moodily some paces up the once populous avenue, then, with a heavy sigh, turned in the direction of the river, and, plunging through a great variety of devious ways, came out, at length, in view of one of the principal theatres. It was about being closed, and the audience were thronging from the doors. I saw the old man gasp as if for breath while he threw himself amid the crowd, but I thought that the intense agony of his countenance had, in some measure, abated. His head again fell upon his breast; he appeared as I had seen him at first. I observed that he now took the course in which had gone the greater number of the audience, but, upon the whole, I was at a loss to comprehend the waywardness of his actions.

As he proceeded, the company grew more scattered, and his old uneasiness and vacillation were resumed. For some time he followed closely a party of some ten or twelve roisterers; but from this number one by one dropped off, until three only remained together, in a narrow and gloomy lane little frequented. The stranger paused, and, for a moment, seemed lost in thought; then, with every mark of agitation, pursued rapidly a route which brought us to the verge of the city, amid regions very different from those we had hitherto traversed. It was the most noisome quarter of London, where every thing wore the worst impress of the most deplorable poverty, and of the most desperate crime. By the dim light of an accidental lamp, tall, antique, worm-eaten, wooden tenements were seen tottering to their fall, in directions so many and capricious that scarce the semblance of a passage was discernible between them. The paving-stones lay at random, displaced from their beds by the rankly-growing grass. Horrible filth festered in the dammed-up gutters. The whole atmosphere teemed with desolation. Yet, as we proceeded, the sounds of human life revived by sure degrees, and at length large bands of the most abandoned of a London populace were seen reeling to and fro. The spirits of the old man again flickered up, as a lamp which is near its death-hour. Once more he strode onward with elastic tread. Sudden corner was turned, a blaze of light burst upon our sight; and we stood before one of the huge suburban temples of Intemperance — one of the palaces of the fiend, Gin.

It was now nearly day-break; but a number of wretched intemperate still pressed in and out of the flaunting entrance. With a half shriek of joy the old man forced a passage within, resumed at once his original bearing, and stalked backward and forward, without apparent object, among the throng. He had not been thus long occupied, however, before a rush to the doors gave token that the host was closing them for the night. It was something even more intense than despair that I then observed upon the countenance of the singular being whom I had watched so pertinaciously. Yet he did not hesitate in his career, but, with a mad energy, retraced his steps at once, to the heart of the mighty London. Long and swiftly he fled, while I followed him in the wildest amazement, resolute not to abandon a scrutiny in which I now felt an interest all-absorbing. The sun arose while we proceeded, and, when we had once again reached that most thronged mart of the populous town, the street of the D — Hotel, it presented an appearance of human bustle and activity scarcely inferior to what I had seen on the evening before. And here, long, amid the momently increasing confusion, did I persist in my pursuit of the stranger. But, as usual, he walked to and fro, and during the day did not pass from out the turmoil of that street. And, as the shades of the second evening came on, I grew wearied unto death, and, stopping fully in front of the wanderer, gazed at him steadfastly in the face. He noticed me not, but resumed his solemn walk, while I, ceasing to follow, remained absorbed in contemplation. "This old man," I said at length, "is the type and the genius of deep crime. He refuses to be one. He is the man of the crowd. It will be in vain to follow; for I shall learn no more of him, nor of his deeds. The worst heart of the world is a grosser book than the 'Hortulus Animae;" and perhaps it is but one of the great mercies of God that 'er last sich nicht lesen.'

Footnote added first in B. The end of the footnote. A is dated at the end November, 1840.
NOTES

1. This quotation occurs at the end of the tale, and is discussed in note 19.

2. Poe's descriptions frequently echo Dickens' language. The most striking parallels are quoted in the notes below; others, less important, might be found. Hervey Allen in *Israel (1928), II, 515*, thought Poe's story "reveals impressions of the visit to London with the Allans," but while a schoolboy of twelve, of a refined American family, might observe large crowds in London streets by day, he would know nothing of gin-shops at first hand.

3. The Greek phrase means "the mist that previously was upon [them]." It is adapted from the *Iliad*, V, 127, where Athene removes the haze from the eyes of Diomedes, to permit him to distinguish the gods in battle. Poe used the same words in his "American Novel-Writing" (not collected by Harrison) in the *Pittsburgh Literary Examiner and Western Monthly Review* for August 1839.

4. In a review of Mrs. Sigourney's *Letters to Young Ladies* (*Southern Literary Messenger*, July 1836), Poe accuses Leibnitz of "a multiplicity of errors" on the subject of the faculty of Memory, but in another review quotes him approvingly. However, the philosopher named at this point in the earlier version of this tale is George Combe (1788-1858), now chiefly remembered as a phrenologist. He was also a moral philosopher, advocating the study of the natural world as a guide to human conduct. He visited America in 1838. Poe referred to him favorably in a review of Amos Dean's *Philosophy of Human Life in Burton's, February 1840*, and as "George Combe — than whom a more candid reasoner never, perhaps, wrote or spoke," in a review of Macaulay's *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays* in *Graham's*, June 1841. Jurgis of Leontini, on the other hand, was a statesman and sophist of the time of Plato, who gave his name to Socratic dialogue on rhetoric. His style was elaborate, to the point of absurdity. He is named also in "How to Write a Blackwood Article."

5. Eupatrids are persons belonging to the noblest families.

6. Thimble rig is the shell game.

7. The passage referred to in Lucian of Samosata is in the twenty-fourth section of his *Somnium* ("The Dream," also called "The Cock") and is used by Poe in a review of Lord Brougham's *Historical Sketches of Statesmen Who Flourished in the Time of George III* in *Burton's*, September 1839, and in "Fifty Suggestions," number 21.

8. One source of the description of the prostitutes is in "The Pawnbroker's Shop" in *Sketches by Boz*:

In the next box is a young female, whose attire, miserably poor, but extremely gay, wretchedly cold, but scrofulously fine, but too plainly bespeaks her station in life. The rich satin gown with its faded trimmings—the worn-out thin shoes, and pink silk stockings—the summer bonnet in winter, and the sunken face where a dab of rouge only serves as an index to the ravages of squandered health...and where the practised smile is a wretched mockery of the misery of the heart—cannot be mistaken.


10. Friedrich August Moritz Retzsch (1779-1857) was a German painter and engraver, noted especially for his illustrations of Goethe's *Faust*. In his long review of Henry F. Chorley's *Memorials of Mrs. Hemans* (*SLM*, October 1836), Poe notes that "Retzsch and Flaxman were Mrs. H's favorites among modern artists."

11. Compare "To Helen Whitman," line 42: "What wild heart-histories seem to be unwritten."

12. A roquelaure (usually spelled roque-laure) is a knee-length cloak, mentioned also in "The Cask of Amontillado."

13. This is an echo of St. Luke 9:57, "I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest."

14. City Hall Park in Poe's day was the center of life in New York City.

15. The source of much of the description of the old man and his behavior is in Dickens' "Thoughts about People," which describes St. James' Park a man who "walked up and down before the little patch of grass on which the chairs are placed for hire, not as if he were doing it for pleasure or recreation, but as if it were a matter of compulsion."

16. Compare Gray's "Impromptu," line 14: "Turrets and arches nodding to their fall." There is a similar description of dilapidated streets and houses in Poe's "King Pest."

17. This paragraph and the next owe much to Dickens' sketch of "Gin-Shops" which Poe admired enough to reprint in full in his review of Watkins' *Tottle* (*SLM*, June 1836). Pertinent parts are:

The filthy and miserable appearance of this part of London can hardly be imagined by those...who have not witnessed it. Wretched houses, with broken windows patched with rags and paper, every room let out to a different family, and in many instances to two, or even three...filth everywhere—a gutter before the houses and a drain behind them—clothes drying at the windows, slops emptying from the ditto; girls of fourteen or fifteen, with matted hair, walking about bare-footed, and in old white great coats, almost their only covering; boys of all ages, in coats of all sizes, and no coats at all; men and women, in every variety of scanty and dirty apparel, lounging about, scolding, drinking, smoking, squabbling, fighting, and swearing. You turn the corner. What a change! All is light and brilliancy. The hum of many voices issues from that splendid gin-shop... It is growing late, and the throng of men, women, and children who have been constantly going in and out, dwindles down to two or three occasional stragglers—cold wretched-looking creatures, in the last stage of emaciation and disease. The knot of Irish laborers...become furious in their disputes;...Some of the party are borne off to the station-house, and the remainder sink home to beat their wives for complaining, and kick the children for daring to be hungry.
18. Compare "Silence — a Fable": "And the lynx...lay down at the feet of the Demon, and looked at him steadily in the face."

19. The German quotation appears also (applied to a book by "Mr. Mathews") in the forty-sixth of Poe's "Fifty Suggestions." The Latin work here mentioned is certainly the *Ortulus anime cum oratiunculis* printed at Strassburg by Johann Reinhard Grüninger, January 31, 1500 (no. 8937 in Hain's *Repertorium Bibliographicum*, Stuttgart, 1826–38), of which there is a copy in the British Museum. Poe's spelling of the title and the printer's name are retained here as given in all his texts. They are those of his probable source, Isaac D'Israeli's "Religious Nouvellettes" in *Curiosities of Literature*. D'Israeli there describes the book as having indecorous illustrations. Poe presumably had some other source for his German sentence, which has not yet been found. I have not emended *er* because, although *Buch* is neuter (calling for *es*), the word *hortulus* is masculine. At the beginning of his story Poe translated the German literally, "It does not permit itself to be read." Here he took this to mean that the book was too shocking for a reader to peruse it completely; but the meaning of his source may have been that the book referred to was execrably printed, or that no copy was available. It will be recalled that in 1837 Poe boarded with the learned bookseller William Gowans, who took an interest in incunabula, of which Grüninger's "small octavo in Gothic type" is an example.
GROTESQUE AND ARABESQUE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

PHILADELPHIA:

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1840.

TALES

GROTESQUE AND ARABESQUE.

BY EDGAR A. POE.

COLLECTED WORKS OF Edgar Allan Poe

1831-1842

EDITED BY

THOMAS OLLIVE MABBOTT

with the assistance of Eleanor D. Kewer

and Maureen C. Mabbott

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