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Recommended Citation

John H. Wigmore, *Did Poe Plagiarize The Murders in the Rue Morgue*, 13 Cornell L. Rev. 219 (1928)
Available at: <http://scholarship.law.cornell.edu/clr/vol13/iss2/4>

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DID POE PLAGIARIZE "THE MURDERS IN THE RUE MORGUE"?

JOHN H. WIGMORE*

My contribution in homage to our learned friend—the choice spirit whom we rejoice to honor in this series of essays—is one which I hope and believe will please him. It is the tale of a Quest,—a quest after an elusive literary and semi-legal fact which still remains incompletely unearthed. I know no one more accomplished than he in wide-ranged learning,—no one more broadly endowed with literary interests or more retentive of all that he has ever compassed,—no one more keen to pursue to its authentic lair the last clue to a problem of authorship. And had this quest fallen to his lot instead of to mine, I feel sure that long before now he would have reached the goal of its revelation. So I venture to offer it as having an intrinsic affinity for his special talents.

This is the tale of a quest lasting nearly thirty years,—off and on, of course; not continuously. And still it baffles at some points. Perhaps the subject of our homage may himself complete the solution.

But to the tale.

That "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" is the prototype of that form of mystery-fiction now known as the "detective-story", all agree. That it has been and still is the most famous one in any language, is beyond dispute. And that it remains among the best of its type, after eighty-seven years, in spite of the brilliant figures since created—Lecocq, Holmes, and others—will also be conceded.

But, did Edgar Poe compose it? Or did he borrow it? The iconoclastic significance of the latter alternative to literary history is obvious. Hence the interest of the inquiry.

It may be said at once that there is now no substantial reason to doubt that Poe invented and composed both his famous story and the character of his hero Dupin.

But there exists in print a story in deadly parallel which must have been *either* the source *or* the borrower of the Poe text. And its attendant circumstances are such that the question of Poe's borrowing would naturally occur as a possibility. Indeed, for nearly thirty years past, at intervals, I have been seeking, though in vain, to clear up the various clues. The story of this search will, it is hoped, furnish entertainment for the student of historical evidence.

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The materials thus far gathered may be set forth in the following stages: I, *The Discovery*; II, *The Parallel*; III, *The Problem*; IV, *The Search, and Part of the Solution*; V, *The Search, continued, and the Solution not found*. VI, *Finis?*

I. THE DISCOVERY

Nearly thirty years ago—it must have been in 1898—the present writer was spending the summer in study at Cambridge, Massachusetts. While browsing among the shelves of the Harvard Law Library, he noticed a German work bearing the following title, “Die Opfer Mangelhafter Justiz”, by one Karl Loeffler. The title-page in full, translated, read thus: “The Victims of Faulty Administration of Justice: a Gallery of the most interesting Judicial Murders of all Nations and Epochs. By Dr. Karl Loeffler, formerly editor of the Berlin ‘Judicial News’, Knight, etc. Motto: ‘Lift up your eyes, and see over your heads the likeness of your God, who though innocent was condemned and executed; and will you then lend yourself to inflicting a penalty, the error of which when once executed upon an innocent man is forever irreparable?’ Erskine, Speech in Parliament against Capital Punishment. Second Edition. Volume One. Jena, Hermann Costenoble, 1873.”¹

This work was evidently compiled as propaganda against capital punishment. It was in three volumes, each containing about a dozen cases. The second case in the first volume was entitled, “François Ramel.” On turning over the pages of this case, they presented familiar incidents. A murder in the Rue Morgue—an orang-outang—a famous detective! On returning home, the American classic was consulted. And comparison revealed the astonishing circumstance that the text of Loeffler was identical in ideas, and mostly word for word (as far as it went), with Poe’s “Murders in the Rue Morgue”!

What were the respective dates of the two texts?

1. Edgar Poe’s “The Murders in the Rue Morgue” was first published in “Graham’s Magazine”, in the number for April, 1841. Another version appeared in 1843, in a reprint by Graham, at Philadelphia, of “The Prose Romances of Edgar A. Poe”. In 1845 a collection of Poe’s “Tales” included it; and this collection was circulated and reviewed in France.

¹Acknowledgment is made of the courtesy of the late Edward B. Adams, Esq., Librarian of the Harvard Law School, in lending the volume, some years ago, for translation. A copy of the work exists also in the Elbert H. Gary Law Library of Northwestern University; but Vol. I was somehow mislaid.

2. Loeffler's "Case of Ramel" was cited by him (in a footnote) as taken "from the 'Causes célèbres' of Zangiacomi, examining magistrate in the Tribunal of Paris"; and the detective hero of the case, Allard, was described as an official active under Louis Philippe, *i.e.* 1830-1848; hence the memoirs quoted by Loeffler (which speak in the present tense) would date at or shortly before or after the time of Poe's publication. It may be added that Loeffler in all his other Cases gives the date of the case, after the title, but in this case not; also that in this case only does he cite his source, in the other cases not. Furthermore, in his preface he quotes Charles Dickens from the London Times of 1849. No other date-clues are given by him; except that the case of the Duke of Praslin, referred to in his text, took place in 1847 (as an historical fact).

II. THE PARALLEL

That the reader may appreciate the parallel, the two forms of the story are here set forth for a few pages; Loeffler's being translated from the German by the present writer without having Poe's text at hand. The first 4500 words of Poe's text do not appear in Loeffler's; instead is the following prefatory description of Allard the detective; the parallel begins later at the quotation from the Gazette:

LOEFFLER'S TEXT

(Replacing Poe's First 4,500 Words)

"Much has been told of Vidocq's cleverness and cunning, which enabled him to deliver innumerable offenders to the authorities. But no one has yet happened to tell of a man to whom Vidocq was scarcely knee-high in abilities; I refer to *Allard*, chief of the Paris detective-service. Allard is not, as Vidocq was, an erewhile galley-convict and professional thief-catcher; he is a man of first-class scientific education and keen intelligence.

"The affair of the Duke of Praslin (to mention only one of many instances) exhibited a striking proof of these qualities. While the magistrate and the detectives were ransacking the whole mansion for traces of the murder, Allard had long since discovered him. Allard had at the very beginning entered the bedroom, and had never left it; keeping the Duke constantly under his eye, he said finally: 'My lord, *you* will be able to tell me who killed your wife!' And he proved to have made no mistake.

"I may venture to add one more example of his subtlety. At the time of the affair now to be described, he was not yet either chief of the Paris detective-force, nor chief of the Tuileries police (*i. e.* of Louis Philippe's personal police), but only an ordinary member of the force. It was the following affair, indeed, which drew attention to him and led to his being entrusted with supervising the safety of the royal person of Louis Philippe.

"I was then living in the same house with him—a small house in the Faubourg St. Germain—and we met daily either in his or my apartment.

"One day I came upon him wrapped in thought.

"An article in the evening edition of the 'Gazette des Tribunaux' was claiming his gaze. It was headed: 'STRANGE MURDER.'"

The two texts then go on in this deadly parallel:

LOEFFLER

"'Strange Murder! This morning about three o'clock the residents of the St. Roche district were startled from their slumbers by a quick succession of outcries, which seemed to come from the fourth floor of a house in the Rue Morgue. The only inmates of this house (as was well known) were Mme. L'Esparaye and her daughter. After vain attempts to get into the house, the front door was pried open with a crowbar, and eight or ten neighbors entered, with two policemen. The outcries had meanwhile ceased. As the men hastened up the stairs, however, they distinguished two or more rough voices in the upper regions of the house, but these ceased as the men reached the second landing, and complete silence then reigned. The men who had broken in rushed from one room to another. As they arrived at a large room in the rear of the second floor, the door of which had the key on the inside and therefore had to be broken open, their eyes met a dreadful and shocking spectacle.

"'The wildest disorder reigned in the room; the furniture had been upset in all directions and in

POE

"'Extraordinary Murders.— This morning, about three o'clock, the inhabitants of the Quartier St. Roch were aroused from sleep by a succession of terrific shrieks, issuing apparently, from the fourth story of a house in the Rue Morgue, known to be in the sole occupancy of one Madame L'Esparaye, and her daughter, Mademoiselle Camille L'Esparaye. After some delay, occasioned by a fruitless attempt to procure admission in the usual manner, the gateway was broken in with a crow-bar, and eight or ten of the neighbors entered, accompanied by two gendarmes. By this time the cries had ceased; but, as the party rushed up the first flight of stairs, two or more rough voices, in angry contention, were distinguished, and seemed to proceed from the upper part of the house. As the second landing was reached, these sounds, also, had ceased, and everything remained perfectly quiet. The party spread themselves, and hurried from room to room. Upon arriving at a large back chamber on the fourth story (the door of which, being found locked, with the key inside, was forced open), a spectacle presented itself which struck every one present not less with horror than with astonishment.

"'The apartment was in the wildest disorder,—the furniture broken and thrown about in all

part smashed to pieces. The bedding had been dragged from an alcove and thrown upon the floor in the middle of the chamber. A bloody razor lay on a chair. On the hearth were found two or three long locks of gray hair, covered with blood, and apparently torn out by the roots. On the floor were four gold Napoleons, an ear-ring of topaz, three large silver spoons, three smaller plated ones, and two purses with nearly 4000 francs in gold. The drawers of a desk, standing open, seemed to have been emptied, although a number of things remained in them. Under the bed was a small iron money-chest; it was open, and the key still in the lock; but it contained only a few old letters and valueless documents.

“Of living beings there was nothing to be seen. But a lot of soot fallen from the fireplace drew the searchers’ attention in that direction; and upon searching the chimney, they drew out a horrid object,—the corpse of the daughter, Ludmilla L’Esparaye, its head bent over backwards, which in this condition had been shoved some distance up the chimney. The still warm corpse bore several abrasions of the skin; the eyes were much torn, and on the neck were dark bruises and the deep marks of fingernails, leading to the inference that the woman had been choked to death. In spite of the most rigid search, no further traces were found in the house. But in a small plastered outhouse was found the body of Mme. L’Esparaye, the throat completely

directions. There was only one bedstead; and from this the bed had been removed, and thrown into the middle of the floor. On a chair lay a razor besmeared with blood. On the hearth were two or three long and thick tresses of gray human hair, also dabbled in blood, and seeming to have been pulled out by the roots. Upon the floor were found four Napoleons, an ear-ring of topaz, three large silver spoons, three smaller of metal d’Alger, and two bags, containing nearly four thousand francs in gold. The drawers of a bureau, which stood in one corner, were open, and had been, apparently, rifled, although many articles still remained in them. A small iron safe was discovered under the bed (not under the bedstead). It was open, with the key still in the door. It had no contents beyond a few old letters, and other papers of little consequence.

“Of Madame L’Espanaye no traces were here seen; but an unusual quantity of soot being observed in the fireplace, a search was made in the chimney, and (horrible to relate!) the corpse of the daughter, head downward, was dragged therefrom, it having been thus forced up the narrow aperture for a considerable distance. The body was quite warm. Upon examining it, many excoriations were perceived, no doubt occasioned by the violence with which it had been thrust up and disengaged. Upon the face were many severe scratches, and upon the throat dark bruises and deep indentations of fingernails, as if the deceased had been throttled to death.

“After a thorough investigation of every portion of the house without further discovery, the

severed, so that on lifting the corpse the head fell from the trunk to the ground. The body as well as the head was horribly disfigured, the former to such a degree that it bore scarcely any likeness to a human being. As yet, we are informed, not the slightest clue has been discovered leading towards the solution of this terrible riddle'.

"Thus far the article in the Paris Gazette.

"The next day's issue of the Gazette brought the following additional details, headed:

" 'THE TRAGEDY IN THE
RUE MORGUE

" 'The magistrate's examination of several persons has been held in connection with this extraordinary and shocking occurrence, but without reaching any results. The following details were gleaned from the respective witnesses:

" '*Pauline Dubourg*, washer-woman, had done washing for the deceased during the past three years. There existed the best and tenderest of feeling between the two ladies. They paid her punctually. As to their mode of life and means of subsistence, witness knew nothing, but believed that Mme. L'Esparaye told fortunes for a fee and had in her profession been able to save money. When witness brought or took away the washing she had never met strangers in the apartment, nor was any servant kept. Except on the fourth floor, the house seemed to be unfurnished'."

party made its way into a small paved yard in the rear of the building, where lay the corpse of the old lady, with her throat so entirely cut that, upon an attempt to raise her, the head fell off. The body, as well as the head, was fearfully mutilated, the former so much so as scarcely to retain any semblance of humanity.

" 'To this horrible mystery there is not as yet, we believe, the slightest clew.'"

"The next day's paper had these additional particulars:—

" 'THE TRAGEDY IN THE
RUE MORGUE

" 'Many individuals have been examined in relation to this most extraordinary and frightful affair' (the word 'affaire' has not yet, in France that levity of import which it conveys with us), 'but nothing whatever has transpired to throw light upon it. We give below all the material testimony elicited.

" '*Pauline Dubourg*, laundress, deposes that she has known both the deceased for three years, having washed for them during that period. The old lady and her daughter seemed on good terms,—very affectionate towards each other. They were excellent pay. Could not speak in regard to their mode or means of living. Believed that Madame L. told fortunes for a living. Was reputed to have money put by. Never met any persons in the house when she called for the clothes or took them home. Was sure that they had no servant in employ. There appeared to be no furniture in any part of the building, except in the fourth story'."

In the remainder of the texts (10,000 words in Poe) the stories of the witnesses are the same, word for word, with an occasional omission of a sentence. Then Dupin's careful analysis (2000 words) in Poe, does not appear in Loeffler, until its close. Then the parallel is resumed, as the sailor arrives to claim his lost orang-outang; and thence onward, the texts are the same, with occasional omissions in Loeffler. The total parallel texts make about 7,000 words.

So far as the texts go, either Loeffler's source could have used Poe by omitting parts; or Poe could have used Loeffler's source by expanding and touching it up.

The significant thing (as will later appear) is that the *names of the witnesses are identical*, barring a few errors of spelling attributable to transcription. They are as follows: Pauline Dubourg, Pierre Moreau (Mornau, in Loeffler), Isidore Muset, Henri Duval, Odenheimer (Benheimer), Jules Mignaud (Migrand), Adolph LeBon, William Bird, Alfonzo Garcio, Alberto Montigny (Montani), Paul Dumas, Alexandre (omitted) Etienne.

III. THE PROBLEM

The main problem is: *Which story was first published?* For in the present case (it must be conceded) the later publishing is inconsistent with originality.

How then does it become possible that the Allard story was first published? Because, since Louis Philippe was king of France from Aug. 7, 1830 to Feb. 25, 1848, Allard, as a detective prior to becoming chief of Louis' personal police, could have officiated for years prior to 1841, the date of Poe's publication, and Zangiacomì's memoirs of Allard could have appeared also prior to that date.

Thus, on the face of the printed Loeffler-source story, it *might* have appeared first of the two.

But *did* it appear first? This is a mere question of historic fact. But it has turned out to be far from an easy one to solve. It is the real kernel of the problem.

The problem can best be approached in two parts:

A. Could there have been a Loëffler source before Poe's publication in 1841?

B. If not, whence did Loeffler obtain his text?

A. The first question may be resolved into four elements:

- (a) Did an Allard exist, as a detective under Louis Philippe?
- (b) Did a Zangiacomì exist, as a magistrate under Louis Philippe?
- (c) Did a Zangiacomì publish a "Causes célèbres" prior to 1841?

(d) Is Loeffler's source identical with such a Zangiacomì's book?

An affirmative answer to *all* four of these questions would be necessary for proof of Poe's borrowing. But a negative answer, completely proved, to *any one* of the four would suffice to diminish any probability of Poe's borrowing; and even its possibility would be attenuated in ratio to the number of negative answers.

B. If there was no such Loeffler-source before Poe's publication, whence could Loeffler have obtained his text? And, in particular, (a) Did he obtain it from Poe's text? (b) If not, did he obtain it from some French text other than a real Zangiacomì book?

And at this point it must be explained that Poe's biographers all tell of a lawsuit in 1846 between two French journals which had pirated Poe's story. Harrison (1902) thus refers to it²: "Soon after the publication of the Murders, etc. in April, 1841, it was shown that *Le Commerce* had stolen Poe's tale from the *Charivari* and re-published it as an original feuilleton under the name of 'L' Orang-Outang'. This in turn was stolen by *La Quotidienne* and transferred to its columns,—whereupon a lawsuit ensued, when the source of the theft was shown to be Poe's tale published shortly before in *Graham's Magazine*." This journalistic plagiarism, and the lawsuit, will become significant later in our quest.

What data have we, then, for answering the above questions?

IV. THE SEARCH, AND PART OF THE SOLUTION

Let me here return thanks to the several friends who have assisted in advice and clue-questing:

To *Roy White*, lamented professor in the University of Pennsylvania Law School, foully killed by a robber, some 25 years ago; to *Stoddard Dewey*, accomplished correspondent in Paris of the *Boston Transcript*, a man of the widest learning; to *Theodore Koch*, Northwestern University Librarian, who commands innumerable friends among Paris litterateurs; to *Thomas Mabbott*, assistant professor of English Literature in Northwestern University, one of America's two or three foremost students of the Poe literature, without whose approval I should scarcely have ventured to publish the story of this quest; and to *C. P. Cambiaire*, professor of French literature in the University of Louisville, who has just published a book on "The Influence of Edgar Allen Poe in France".³

1. The quest began thus:

²p. 272.

³New York, Stechert, 1927.

In 1899, happening to cross the Atlantic on the same steamer with Roy White, I mentioned to him my discovery of the Ramel Case in Loeffler. He was going to Paris, I to Germany. At my request he promised to give some time, at the Bibliothèque Nationale, to tracing the clues.

This he did. But unfortunately his letter reporting his data has long been lost. I sent a copy later to Mr. Dewey; but both original and copy have disappeared. Mr. Dewey fortunately quoted a portion of it.

2. After some years, my curiosity revived. I tardily bethought myself of applying to Loeffler himself, the author of the puzzle. He might not be living (thirty-six years after the date of his second edition); but something might be learned. Two letters to the publisher, Costenoble, remained unanswered. A letter was then sent to the Chief of Police at Jena. To this came the curt reply in February, 1909, that the publisher Costenoble had died in 1910, and his successor could give no help; that the author Loeffler had lived in Gotha and in Berlin, not in Jena, and that he had long been dead and his relatives were unknown.

3. Something in Mr. Dewey's erudite correspondence from Paris to the Boston Transcript led me to apply to him, and his literary interest was keenly aroused. I had written to him (say) in 1905, but had received no report. Then, after the Jena correspondence failed, I once more invoked Mr. Dewey's aid. He now set himself specially to secure the answers to Questions A (a) and (c) above, *viz.* (a) Was there an Allard, the detective? (c) Did Zangiacomì veritably publish memoirs, containing a case of François Ramel? Mr. Dewey's researches resulted thus:

From *Dewey*, March 30, 1909:

"(a) Allard entered the police service in 1816 and rose to be 'commissaire' successively in two quarters of Paris, between 1825 and 1830 (23 August, just after the full entrance into power of King Louis Philippe). For one year (until 6 November, 1831) he seems to have been at the disposition of the Prefect of Police, without being assigned to a particular quarter; this is quite regular in the organization of the Paris police. He certainly cannot have left the service entirely, for at the latter date he was named to the important post of 'officier de paix.' This is the only interval in his career which could be made to correspond with Loeffler's account of his supposed action. ('He was at the time of the case not yet chief of detectives, nor yet chief of the Tuileries police,' *i. e.* the private police of Louis Philippe, but only a private person.) The public police records do not mention the fact that Allard was chief of the Tuileries police,

but simply his nomination as 'officier de paix' and his promotion to be director of the detective service in November 1832, and he continued therein till 1849. He lived until 1860. Loeffler's authority evidently knew these successive changes in Allard's official position; but he keeps silence as to Allard's previous long service as 'commissaire'.

(c) "In French 'causes célèbres' there are only two series in which the Zangiacomì story could have been published: either 'Répertoire générale des causes célèbres anciennes et modernes,' Paris, 1835-7, 15 volumes with 3 supplementary series, all attributed to Saint-Edme; or 'Drames judiciaires, Causes célèbres de tous les peuples,' numbers of the Librairie ethnographique, 1848-9. The incomplete collections accessible show nothing of such a case.

"Loeffler relates that Allard's attention was called to the 'Strange Murder' by the evening edition of the Gazette des Tribunaux. Professor White says, 'I have searched *all* the Gazettes des Tribunaux from 1825 to 1838, ransacking the indexes under four different heads—1. Allard; 2. Zangiacomì; 3. Ramel; 4. Assassinats.' Allard was mentioned only twice, each time in connection with a political case; Zangiacomì oftener, but never in a murder case; Ramel, 'rather a common name, but to no purpose'; and 'Assassinats of every kind, except ours'. Professor White adds 'I feel confident that the affair, if chronicled, would not have escaped me,' and 'the Gazette des Tribunaux seems to me very near conclusive.' 'Nor is there any name Zangiacomì in the list of authors at the Bibliothèque Nationale'.

"The French literature of 'Causes célèbres' is not precisely legal; the name is given to popular publications, issued from the 18th to the middle of the 19th century in the form of two-penny leaflets. Some of them have considerable merit, others are of the rank of dime novels. All are, or profess to be, compiled from court records. It is improbable that a 'juge d'instruction' like Zangiacomì should have contributed to such publications, especially to narrate facts in the career of a friend like Allard, director of the detective service ('sûreté'). It is still more improbable that he should have done this while Allard was still in office; for Allard held his office until 1 January, 1849 (he died in 1860), that is, until long after Poe's story had become the object of an exciting lawsuit and Poe himself had been written up in the Revue des Deux Mondes (15 October, 1846); if Zangiacomì published his account *before* the publication of Poe's story, someone would have remembered it, especially as the lawsuit attacked a high literary reputation; hence it is most improbable of all that the noise created by the publication of Poe's story in French, whether before or after that of Zangiacomì, should not have led to discovery of the real author. These and other improbabilities follow from Loeffler's account, when compared with the known career of Allard.

"Moreover, Loeffler's source seems to say that Zangiacomì published his account long *after* Poe, that is, if he makes Z. responsible for the reference to the Duke of Praslin case (1847). What he says of the latter is also suspicious, for Allard had absolutely nothing to do with the discovery of the culprit, but came on the scene when the 'juge d'instruction' had him already under arrest."

So from the researches of Mr. Dewey and Mr. White, it becomes possible to answer queries (a) and (c) of Question A, thus:

(a) There was an Allard, detective, as described in Loeffler.

(c) There was no book of Memoirs by a Zangiacomì.

Nor was there any recorded murder trial of Ramel; but this is not decisive, for it does not clearly appear that the case attributed to Allard ever got to that stage.

4. At this point let me insert the result of a later discovery, *viz.* the answer to query (b): There *was* a Judge Zangiacomì at that period. In the first place, an article in the American Bar Association Journal for April, 1921⁴ refers to one M.M. Zangiacomì as President in 1839 of the First Chamber of Requests in the Court of Cassation; the authority cited is Journal du Palais, 1839, Tome 1, 3d ed., p. 371. In the next place, a Paris friend of Mr. Koch (later referred to) in searching *Le Commerce* for the tale, found Zangiacomì incidentally referred to as President of the Cour d' Assises (Superior Criminal Court) of the Seine district in 1845.⁵

5. *Solution of Question A.* Referring then, to the four elements of the first Question A, "Could there have been a Loeffler-source before Poe's publication in 1841?", the answer seems to be:

(a) There *was* an Allard, detective, just as recorded by Loeffler;

(b) There *was* a Zangiacomì, judge, who might have been in office for several years before 1841;

(c) But there were *no* memoirs of Zangiacomì, printed at any time; and there probably was no real case of François Ramel.

The third question being thus answered in the negative, the borrowing of Poe from a Loeffler-source prior to 1841 is negatived.

V. THE SEARCH, CONTINUED, AND THE SOLUTION NOT FOUND

But, with this much gained, Question B remained, *viz.* Whence could Loeffler have obtained his text?

(a) And first, Did he obtain it from Poe's text?

The answer here must be, No.

⁴Vol. VII, p. 172.

⁵*Le Commerce*, No. 7, Nov. 21, 1845.

It is true that the names of his witnesses, as well as most of his text, are identical with Poe's story. But there are two decisive opposite indicia:

(1) In the first place, Loeffler was not a journalist, but a propagandist,—not a compiler of books for profit, but a conscientious missionary against capital punishment. That was the object of his book, entitled "Victims of Faulty Justice." He gathered material, far and wide, to awaken public sentiment; his pages preach. Moreover, this is the only case in which he cites footnote authority; and he must have supposed that he had a real case before him. He would not have used a fictitious one.

(2) In the second place, his introduction substitutes the Allard personality for the Dupin personality,—a totally different one. He could not have invented the details of Paris politics, and he could not have known them from the records.

This seems to answer query (a) in the negative.

(b) Did he then obtain the story from some French source?

(1) Did he obtain it from a French edition of "Poe's Tales"?

These French translations, making Poe famous in France, began in 1846; Baudelaire's was the best known, and there were at least a dozen in all. But of course in all of these honest translations the introductory passage was the Dupin solitary-genius text, and not the Allard famous-detective text. Loeffler could not have got his text from an honest translation of Poe.

(2) Did he obtain it from *Le Commerce*, the Paris journal which is said to have first pirated it, in 1846? On this point, a kind friend of my friend Theodore Koch was good enough, in 1920, to search the files of *Le Commerce*, from 1842 to 1846 inclusive, page by page. He reported: "There is no *feuilleton* called 'L'Orang-Outang', or anything like that in, *Le Commerce* from 1842 to 1846."

This settled the question of Loeffler's using *Le Commerce*. But it started a new query as to the orthodox story, repeated by all Poe's biographers since Griswold (see the quotation above from Harrison's *Life*) of a lawsuit in 1846 between *Le Commerce* and *La Quotidienne* over the story pirated by both. It now appeared that *Le Commerce* never did publish Poe's story, and therefore never could have brought such a suit! Is that the way that biography is composed?

(3) But, at any rate, did not *La Quotidienne* (the other paper named for the lawsuit) publish Poe's story pirated, and therefore could not Loeffler have found the Allard-detective-Ramel version there told as based on a Zangiacomi's memoirs?

At this point comes in the Quest again. In 1920, my accomplished friend, Theodore Koch, being in Paris for some months, on bibliophilic literary browsings of his own, I begged him to follow up the Poe quest, if he had time. He did take much valuable time for it, and enlisted also the expert aid of some erudite littérateurs. His letter recounting the adventure is entertaining:

From *Theodore Koch*, September 5, 1920:

"I sent the part of your letter referring to the matter to my translator and asked his opinion on a certain point. Then he went away for August without returning the letter. So I did not have the references at hand. When he came back to Paris last week he cleaned out his desk—and tore up this letter, thinking it was finished business! I happened to call that same day, and then he realized what he had done. From his wastebasket he reconstructed the letter,—but the half-line giving the name of one of the newspapers was missing. [He found it later.]

"But with the reference to *La Quotidienne* I went to the Bibliothèque Nationale the next day, and had the volumes for 1842-46 brought to my table. There are two volumes to a year. The assistant librarian gave me three vols. at a time, but the library pages were less generous and doled them out one at a time (with long intervals between). I felt like talking to them about American library methods and service!

"Well, I began with January 1, 1842 and looked at each feuilleton,—and there were but few issues without them. Along about 3 P. M. when I was in danger of having paralysis of the index finger of my right hand, I found the plagiarized version near the end of the ninth volume I had examined. I enclose a digest of the beginning of the story, so that you can see how much it differs from Poe, together with the names of the characters.

"Feuilleton de la *Quotidienne*, 11, 12, 13 juin, 1846.

"*Un Meurtre sans exemple dans les fastes de la justice. Histoire trouvée dans les papiers d'un Américain.*'

"The above is the title and sub-title. The story ran through 3 numbers taking up about 160 running inches in newspaper columns of average width. The last feuilleton is signed: 'G. B.' It made me think of C. B.—Charles Baudelaire,—but, of course, this plagiarized version has little relation to Baudelaire's well-known translation,—which is nearly twice as long.

"The plagiarized version omits the preliminary discussion which characterizes Poe's story and begins 'in medias res,' something as follows:—

"I had just come from the U. S. to Paris to study the exact sciences. I was 23 years old. Now my hair is beginning to turn white. I was poor and had to economize. Every day I went to the Bibliothèque Royale. There I found myself several times seated next to a man who had the same tastes. Soon my new-found friend related the story of his life. He was born

of rich parents in the south. He had poor health. Was especially devoted to philosophy and mathematics. A political crisis took away his fortune. He retired to live in Paris. Chose a dwelling place out of the run of traffic. He was esteemed by famous savants. He would not ask favors, nor a situation. His publications were known throughout Europe. But he wrote for himself alone.

"We became more attached to one another. We took a lodging together in the Rue Clichy—au 3^{ème}—where we lived in the midst of a desert.

"My friend—Henry Bernier [C. Auguste Dupin in Poe's version] was especially interested in the theory of probability. Pascal, Bernouilli and Laplace had made progress in the study of this subject. His taste for mathematical studies led him to a study of celebrated cases. He knew the smallest details of all the famous trials. He always went to the trials of noted criminals. Bernier never cast an eye on the *Moniteur*, but he never lost a syllable of the *Gazette des Tribunaux*.

"In the middle of the summer of 18.., a crime accompanied by the strangest circumstances drew to itself the attention of all Paris. Here are the details which one of the Paris papers published,—details which all the other papers reprinted with but few changes.

"During the night of July 9-10, the house in the Rue de l'Ouest, No. —, was the scene of an inexplicable attack. Between midnight and one o'clock, violent cries were heard which came from the second story of this house, occupied by Mme. Duparc [l'Esparaye, in Poe] widow of a former employé of the War Department. She lived with her daughter, Mlle. Pauline. etc., etc.'

"At the trial the witnesses were Josephine Lambert, laundress [Poe's 'Pauline Dubourg']. M. Lacoste is the name of the notary; and Adolph Bourgoing [in place of Lebon] the young man who brought the money to Mme. Duparc. James Walker, optician, is the alias for Poe's William Bird, sailor. The Spaniard is christened Diego Lopez; and the Italian is Luigi Cicogna of Piedmont. Paul Dumas, médecin, becomes Doctor Calmel, and the sailor is Jacques Langois.

"I am not sure that these variants will be of any use, but I give them as a possible help.

"As you see, there is as yet no trace or suggestion of an Allard."

(4) The result then, of these two searches of *Le Commerce* and *La Quotidienne* is that Loeffler's text was not taken from either of them.

This result was *a priori* just what could have been anticipated. Loeffler's introductory Allard-famous-detective text could not possibly have been published in a Paris newspaper between 1841 and 1846. Allard was alive, in Paris, and was still chief of detectives

until 1849. Zangiacomi was alive, in Paris, and a prominent judge, until at least 1845. No feuilletonist would have then dared to publish in Paris a piece of fiction bringing in both of these living personages. Moreover, the Loeffler text refers to Allard in the past tense. And, still further, if the feuilletonist had been composing, not fiction, but a literary account of one of Allard's cases orally told to him by Allard, why attribute the account to a non-existent book by the living Zangiacomi?

- (5) So the Quest, at this point, ended up a tree with two queries: Whence did Loeffler obtain his text, if not from *Le Commerce* or *La Quotidienne*? And, How did Poe's biographers obtain the story of a lawsuit which could not have taken place?

VI. FINIS?

At this point might have been written *Finis* for my Quest, had not Fate brought to Northwestern University, my friend Thomas Mabbott, master of the Poe literature. And his first contribution was to deposit gently a hand-grenade in the supposed result of V, (b), 2, above, *viz.* that no feuilleton pirating Poe's story was ever published in *Le Commerce*. His letter stated:

(1). From *Thomas Mabbott*, February 11, 1926:

"The first known translations of the Murders in the Rue Morgue appeared in 1846—that in *Le Commerce* being by O(ld) N(ick), whom Prof. Seylaz of Lausanne identifies with E. D. Forgues. It was not only anonymous, but under the title of 'Une sanglante énigme'.

"Now the French translations are all made from the 1845 edition of Poe's Tales—the third version to appear, and differing in certain minute details from the first published version of Poe's story. If Loeffler follows the Tales version, he must be later than 1845—if one of the early versions he must rely on an earlier source (which may still be Poe). In early versions Poe calls the Gazette des Tribunaux 'Le Tribunal'—and in the grim details of the condition of the corpses it is mentioned that when the body was lifted the head fell off *and rolled to some distance*, while in later versions the *rolling* is not mentioned. There are countless variations—but if the translation is free they may not appear clearly."

So from this it appeared that *Le Commerce* *did* publish a pirated translation in 1846, under a title 'Une sanglante énigme' which misled the friend who was looking for a story, entitled 'L' Orang-Outang, as the Poe biographers reported it. What was the

authority for this statement? An essay by Prof. Seylaz of Lausanne. Where can that essay be found? "My copy" said Professor Mabbott, "is packed away in storage in New York, and is probably inaccessible. But meanwhile you should apply to Prof. Cambiaire of the University of Louisville, who has made a special study of Poe in France."

(2). So the next character to appear in the twenty-eight year Quest is Prof. Cambiaire; and by his ample courtesy I am enabled to clear up part of the first remaining questions, *viz.* Where did Loeffler obtain his text? And where did Poe's biographers get the story of the lawsuit?

From *C. P. Cambiaire*, December 26, 1927:

"Loeffler may have drawn from four different sources, which may be listed in order of dates in the following manner:

"1. *La Quotidienne*, June 11, 12, 13, 1846, 'Un Meurtre sans exemple dans les Fastes de la Justice, Histoire trouvée dans les papiers d'un Américain' (signed G. B.); Poe's name is not mentioned.

"2. *Le Commerce*, October 12, 1846, 'Une sanglante énigme,' (signed Old Nick); Poe's name is not mentioned.

"3. *La Démocratie pacifique*, January 31, 1847, 'Crimes de la rue Morgue.' Poe is named as the author of the original story. The version is almost accurate. However it is incomplete.

"4. 'Histoires Extraordinaires, traduites d'Edgar Poe par Charles Baudelaire,' Lévy, 1856. The book contains several stories of Poe, among which is 'Double assassinat dans la rue Morgue,' which had been published already in *Le Pays*, February 25, 26, and March 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 1855.

"In *La Quotidienne*, which contains the first version or adaptation of *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* in French, the story 'Un Meurtre sans exemple dans les Fastes de l'histoire' is a distorted version of the original by Poe. The French writer takes liberties not only with the title, but also with some parts of the text and with the names used by Poe. For instance, 'Monsieur Dupin' becomes 'H. Bernier,' 'Rue Morgue' is changed into 'Rue de l'Ouest,' and instead of living in Boulevard 'Saint-Germain,' Monsieur Dupin, now called 'H. Bernier,' lives in 'Rue Clichy.' *The introductory pages do not seem to differ substantially from Poe's story.*

"*Le Commerce* published an adaptation of Poe's story. This adaptation is much shorter than that found in *La Quotidienne*. It occupies only nine columns of the newspaper, while the version published in *La Quotidienne* appears in three serials.

"On October 14, 1846, exactly two days after the publication of 'Une sanglante énigme' in *Le Commerce*, *La Presse* published the following lines (which independently of other documents would suffice to prove that a pirated version of Poe

appeared in *Le Commerce*): 'Petty retaliation. M. Forgues can not help but thank us for informing him . . . that the feuilleton which he published in *Le Commerce* under the title "Une sanglante énigme" and signed with his pseudonym Old Nick, is, almost word for word, taken bodily and copied literally from the feuilleton of *La Quotidienne* which appeared the 11th, 12th, and 13th of last June.' On October 15, 1846, *Le Commerce* and *Le National* published Forgues' answer to *La Presse*. Among other things Forgues says: 'Further, your anonymous writer is, here again, in error . . . I shall tell him then that it is here not a matter of plagiarism, or of theft, or of copying, or of anything that resembles them. And the source of the article in question is not that which *La Presse* indicates . . . So then it is not in *La Quotidienne* but in the Stories of E. Poe, an American scholar, that I took—what? Certainly not the three feuilletons of the legitimist newspaper . . . but the central idea of the story which has brought upon me the attack to which I reply.'

"On October 28, 1846, "L'Entre-Acte" published the following: 'A great newspaper accused the author M. Old-Nick of stealing an orang-outang. This interesting animal was lounging in the feuilleton of *La Quotidienne* when M. Old-Nick saw it, found it to his liking, and seized it. . . . It appears, according always to the same great newspaper, that M. Old-Nick, after having stolen its orang-outang from *La Quotidienne*, had then transferred it to *Le Commerce* as his own property. . . . I have been constantly expecting that *La Quotidienne* would make a big fuss and would clamor for its wild man. I ought to say that I had read the story in *Le Commerce*, it was charming in its wit and style and gracefully written; *La Quotidienne* had likewise published it but in three feuilletons. The orang-outang of *Le Commerce* had only nine columns. Was it then a matter of another literary anthropoid? Certainly not! it was the same one, only it belonged neither to *La Quotidienne* nor to *Le Commerce*. M. Old-Nick had borrowed it from an American novelist whom he is just now discovering in the *Revue des Deux-Mondes*. This novelist is named Poe.'

"There was a lawsuit in connection with the publication of the two adaptations of Poe; but this lawsuit did not arise between the two papers *La Quotidienne* and *Le Commerce*, which published the versions, but between Forgues, who under the name of Old-Nick had written his pirated version in *Le Commerce*, and *La Presse*, which refused to publish Forgues' reply to *La Presse*'s accusation that Forgues had plagiarized *La Quotidienne*. As *La Quotidienne*, in its story 'Un Meurtre sans exemple dans les Fastes de la Justice,' and *Le Commerce*, in 'Une sanglante énigme,' had both stolen from Poe, they could not very easily sue one another for plagiarism.—The lawsuit between Forgues and *La Presse* advertised Poe widely. *La Presse*'s lawyer said: 'Grace à M. Forgues, tout le monde va savoir que M. E. Poe fait des contes en Amérique.'

"The introductory part of Le Commerce's version differs considerably from the introduction in Poe's story. On the other hand, the introduction found in La Quotidienne seems to be more like the original in Poe."

(3). So the Quest ends with still one question unsolved,—the second main one, *viz.* Whence did Loeffler obtain his text, since it was not from Le Commerce nor from La Quotidienne?

The introduction to the Loeffler text will prove the key to this. It must have been composed after 1860, *i. e.* after the death of Allard and (presumably) of Zangiacomi, by some Parisian journalist who had made a note of the current necrology of these personages. He thought that he could palm off the Poe text of the crime on the forgetful public, and could give it a verisimilitude by attributing it to real persons, now passed away, in the Parisian officialdom of justice.

His version must have appeared before 1873, when Loeffler's book was published. Possibly it was sent to a German journal; but not necessarily, for Loeffler used materials from the English, and doubtless was acquainted with French.

The clearing up of this final question may perhaps interest the speculations of the ingenious and learned scholar in whose homage this unworthy offering has been narrated.