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**COMMENTARY**

In this issue, two important Poe works appear: “The Mask of the Red Death” and his second review of Nathaniel Hawthorne’s *Twice-Told Tales* (he had published a brief notice of that book in the April issue). Here, Poe famously praises the tale’s generic capacity for a producing a “single effect” by subordinating character and plot to a “pre-established design.” He demonstrates this unity of effect in his tale about masquerade-goers in a “castellated abbey” (possibly in Italy) who fall victim to a deadly plague. Poe perhaps derived the idea from the cholera epidemic of 1832; N. P. Willis had published in the *New-York Mirror* (June 2, 1832) an account of an ill-fated Parisian ball. Allusions to Italy include Poe’s short review of William Roscoe’s *Life of Lorenzo de’ Medici* andWilliam Wallace’s poem “Perditi.”

Likewise, Frances S. Osgood’s poem “Venus and the Modern Belle” tells the story of the Roman goddess who instructs a young woman not to rely on jewelry to make herself beautiful but on light-heartedness and good-humor. Not only does Osgood’s poem connect with the classicism in other pieces, such as N.C. Brooks’s poem “To an Antique Vase,” but it also challenges the tacit message of this issue’s fashion-plate as well as the magazine’s general emphasis on women’s fashion.

This issue of *Graham’s* was Poe’s last as editor. He resigned from the staff around April 1st, to be replaced by Rufus W. Griswold, his later nemesis.