

## CORRESPONDENCE.

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To the Editor of THE FORTNIGHTLY REVIEW.

E. A. POE AND A. R. WALLACE.

SIR,—*Apropos* of Dr. Wallace's statement of his theory regarding the Limitation of the Stellar Universe, I beg to send you an extract from the essays of Edgar Poe expounding the same theory. The essay, "Eureka," from which my excerpt is taken, is called "An Attempt to Consider the Origin, Creation, and Destiny of the Material and Spiritual Universe," and despite its somewhat bizarre opening and an occasional erring or twisted argument, is a work of profound thought. It was the last work of any magnitude the poet attempted, and he himself considered it to be his *magnum opus*.

On page 162 of "Eureka" occurs the passage I refer to, which is given herewith:

"No astronomical fallacy is more untenable, and none has been more pertinaciously adhered to, than that of the absolute illimitation of the Universe of Stars.

"The reasons for limitation, as I have already assigned them, *a priori*, seem to me unanswerable; but, not to speak of these, observation assures us that there is, in numerous directions around us, certainly if not in all, a positive limit—or, at the very least, affords us no basis whatever for thinking otherwise. Were the succession of stars endless, then the background of the sky would present us an uniform luminosity like that displayed by the Galaxy—*since there could be absolutely no point, in all that background, at which would not exist a star.*"

The folio reference given is from the 3rd vol. of J. H. Ingram's edition of the works of E. A. Poe, published by A. and C. Black, 1883.

I am,

Your obedient servant,

ERNEST MARRIOTT.

*Librarian.*

PORTICO, MANCHESTER.

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