



“And the motto?”

“*Nemo me impune lacessit.*”¹⁴

“Good!” he said.

The wine sparkled in his eyes and the bells jingled. My own fancy grew warm with the Medoc. We had passed through walls of piled bones, with casks and puncheons¹⁵ intermingling, into the inmost recesses of the catacombs. I
110 paused again, and this time I made bold to seize Fortunato by an arm above the elbow.

“The niter!” I said; “see, it increases. It hangs like moss upon the vaults. We are below the river’s bed. The drops of moisture trickle among the bones. Come, we will go back ere it is too late. Your cough—”

“It is nothing,” he said; “let us go on. But first, another draft of the Medoc.”

I broke and reached him a flagon of De Grève.¹⁶ He emptied it at a breath. His eyes flashed with a fierce light. He laughed and threw the bottle upward with a gesticulation I did not understand.

I looked at him in surprise. He repeated the movement—a grotesque one.

120 “You do not comprehend?” he said.

“Not I,” I replied.

“Then you are not of the brotherhood.”

“How?”

“You are not of the masons.”¹⁷

“Yes, yes,” I said; “yes, yes.”

“You? Impossible! A mason?”

“A mason,” I replied.

“A sign,” he said.

130 “It is this,” I answered, producing a trowel¹⁸ from beneath the folds of my *roquelaure*.

“You jest,” he exclaimed, recoiling a few paces. “But let us proceed to the Amontillado.”

“Be it so,” I said, replacing the tool beneath the cloak, and again offering him my arm. He leaned upon it heavily. We continued our route in search of the Amontillado. We passed through a range of low arches, descended, passed on, and descending again, arrived at a deep crypt, in which the foulness of the air caused our flambeaux rather to glow than flame.

At the most remote end of the crypt there appeared another less spacious. Its walls had been lined with human remains, piled to the vault overhead,
140 in the fashion of the great catacombs of Paris. Three sides of this interior

MOOD

In lines 108–114, note the sensory details and imagery that help you visualize the setting. What mood do they create?

GRAMMAR AND STYLE

Notice Poe’s use of **formal language**, including complex sentence structures.

14. *Nemo me impune lacessit* (nā'mō mā ĭm-pōō'ně lä-kēs'ĭt) *Latin*: No one injures me with impunity.

15. **casks and puncheons**: large storage containers for wine.

16. **De Grève** (da grāv'): a red wine from the Bordeaux region of France.

17. **of the masons**: a Freemason, a member of a social organization with secret rituals and signs.

18. **producing a trowel**: Montresor is playing on another meaning of *mason*—"one who builds with stone or brick."